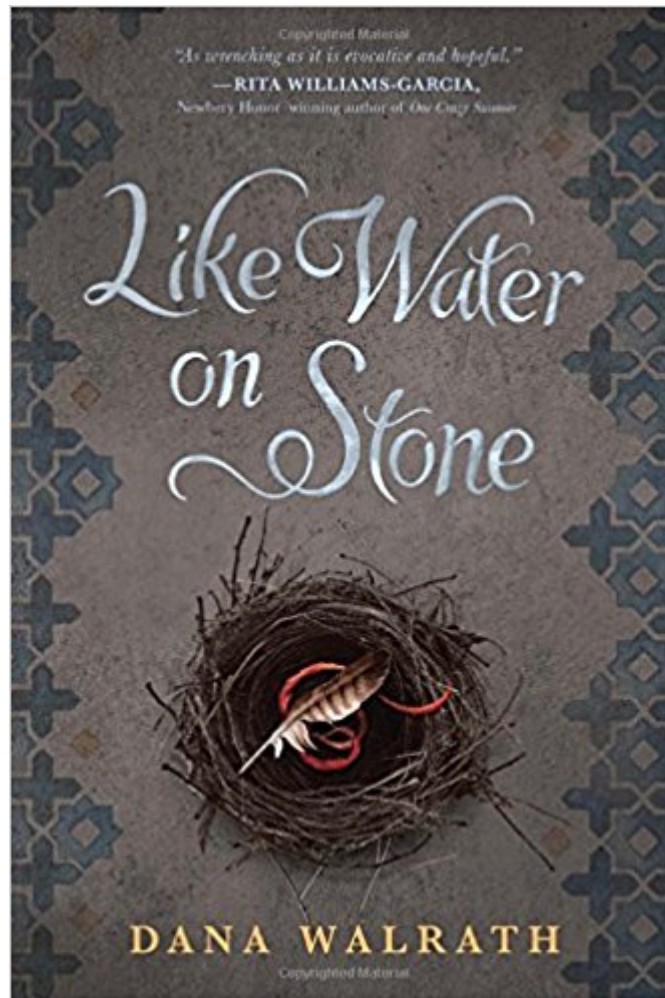




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# Like Water On Stone



## Synopsis

"Evocative and hopeful," says Newbery Honor-Winner Rita Williams-Garcia of this intense survival story set during the Armenian genocide of 1915. It is 1914, and the Ottoman Empire is crumbling into violence. Beyond Anatolia, in the Armenian Highlands, Shahen Donabedian dreams of going to New York. Sosi, his twin sister, never wants to leave her home, especially now that she is in love. At first, only Papa, who counts Turks and Kurds among his closest friends, stands in Shahen's way. But when the Ottoman pashas set in motion their plans to eliminate all Armenians, neither twin has a choice. After a horrifying attack leaves them orphaned, they flee into the mountains, carrying their little sister, Mariam. But the children are not alone. An eagle watches over them as they run at night and hide each day, making their way across mountain ridges and rivers red with blood. A YALSA Best Fiction Nomination A Notable Books for a Global Society Award Winner A CBC Notable Social Studies Trade Book of the Year A Bank Street College of Education Best Book of the Year with Outstanding Merit I have walked through the remnants of the Armenian civilization in Palu and Chunkush, I have stood on the banks of the Euphrates. And still I was unprepared for how deeply moved I would be by Dana Walrath's poignant, unflinching evocation of the Armenian Genocide. Her beautiful poetry and deft storytelling stayed with me long after I had finished this powerful novel in verse. • "Chris Bohjalian, author of *The Sandcastle Girls* and *Close Your Eyes, Hold Hands* A heartbreaking tale of familial love, blind trust, and the crushing of innocence. A fine and haunting work. • "Karen Hesse, Newbery Medal-winning author of *Out of the Dust* This eloquent verse novel brings one of history's great tragedies to life. • "Margarita Engle, Newbery Honor-winning author of *The Surrender Tree* "This beautiful, yet at times brutally vivid, historical verse novel will bring this horrifying, tragic period to life for astute, mature readers." • "School Library Journal, Starred" A powerful tale balancing the graphic reality of genocide with a shining spirit of hope and bravery in young refugees coming to terms with their world. • "Booklist The emotional impact these events had on individuals will certainly resonate. • "Kirkus Reviews From the Hardcover edition.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Gr 8 Up "Thirteen-year-old Armenian twins Shahan and his sister, Sosi, live in the 1914 Ottoman Empire with their loving parents; younger sister, Miriam; and older brothers Misak and Kevorg. A Christian like the rest of their family, their 19-year-old sister, Anahid, is married to Asan, a Kurd, and is expecting a baby. Life is pleasant in their mixed religious community where their family makes its living as millers. However, when the cruel and hateful leaders of the Ottoman Empire decide at the start of World War I that the Armenians are "traitors" and should be eliminated, genocide ensues. Anahid is hidden by her in-laws at the risk of their own lives. Forced to leave their parents and brothers behind to certain death, Shahan, Sosi, and little Miriam barely escape and make a harrowing journey across the mountains, hoping for rescue and to somehow reach their uncle who lives in America. As Ardziv, an eagle, soars above, he adds a note of magical realism and a sense of omnipresent poetic narration to the authentic voices of the family members as he witnesses their joys, shock, and heartbreak. This beautiful, yet at times brutally vivid, historical verse novel will bring this horrifying, tragic period to life for astute, mature readers who enjoy books in this format or genre such as *The Surrender Tree* by Margarita Engle (Holt, 2008) and *Between Shades of Gray* by Ruth Sepetys (Philomel, 2011). A cast of characters, and author note with historical background are thoughtfully included." Diane P. Tuccillo, Poudre River Public Library District, CO --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

School Library Journal starred review, August 2014 "This beautiful, yet at times brutally vivid, historical verse novel will bring this horrifying, tragic period to life for astute, mature readers [ ]" Publishers Weekly starred review, September 2014 "A shocking tale of a bleak moment in history, told with stunning beauty." From the Hardcover edition.

If you are looking for a short, quick and thrilling read this is it. Very captivating and full of information as well.

Great book!

\*\*\*Review posted on The Eater of Books! blog\*\*\*Like Water on Stone by Dana WalrathPublisher: Delacorte PressPublication Date: November 11, 2014Rating: 5 starsSource: ARC sent by the publisherSummary (from Goodreads):Newbery Medalist Karen Hesse calls this story for readers of The Book Thief and Between Shades of Gray "a fine and haunting work." Blending magical realism and lyrical free verse, this is an intense survival story of three siblings caught up in the horrific events of the Armenian genocide of 1915.It is 1914, and the Ottoman Empire is crumbling into violence.Beyond Anatolia, in the Armenian Highlands, Shahan Donabedian dreams of going to New York. Sosi, his twin sister, never wants to leave her home, especially now that she is in love. At first, only Papa, who counts Turks and Kurds among his closest friends, stands in Shahan's way. But when the Ottoman pashas set their plans to eliminate all Armenians in motion, neither twin has a choice.After a horrifying attack leaves them orphaned, Shahan and Sosi flee into the mountains, carrying their little sister, Mariam. Shahan keeps their parents' fate a secret from his sisters. But the children are not alone. An eagle named Ardziv watches over them as they run at night and hide each day, making their way across mountain ridges and rivers red with blood.What I Liked:This book. Oh, my heart. I knew this one would be a powerful read, but experiencing the novel, the story... I so wanted to cry while reading this book. Historical fiction meets magical realism - this book was amazing.This book is written in verse, and follows four different perspectives. No, don't get upset, it never FEELS like too many. Usually, I get irritated with more than two. But with this story written in verse, and the nature of the fiction, four perspectives totally worked. This isn't your typical fiction novel, with an epic plot, someone saving the world, a prominent and sweeping romance. Don't get me wrong though, this book was all kinds of epic and sweeping.Shahan, Sosi, and Mariam are three Armenian siblings living in 1914, during the fall of the Ottoman Empire. The animosity between the Armenians and the Kurds is palpable. Anahid, their older sister, married a Kurd (which is frowned upon). When soldiers start to pillage and burn villages, the siblings' parents send the three siblings into the mountains. Sosi and Shahan are twins, in their teens, but Mariam is five. This is their story, of how they fled their village, left behind their parents, and began to survive and find their way out of the crumbling world.I LOVE the setting of this novel, the history, the political conflict, the portrayal of the war, the effects of the deteriorating empire... Walrath really did her research, to make this book come alive. I love historical fiction, and this novel is no exception. It feels almost like non-fiction, like an actual account of children's life during the Armenian genocide.The nature of this

story actually made me want to know more about the Armenian genocide. I know a good deal about the two World Wars and many other events that occurred in the 1900s, but the Armenian genocide isn't well-thought in grade school, and I didn't know much about it. I love how well Walrath writes about this tragic time in history, how she incorporates small details that make such a difference. But I also love how this book made me think, made me wonder, made me curious, made me sad. Oh, how this story was heartbreaking. It's one of those books where you're sure that everyone is going to end up dead. That is not the case (no spoilers, but that's not the case), but I could see how Walrath could have made that happen. Walrath includes content such as prejudice (between the races), gender roles, rape, pillaging, death, death, death. What happened during this time is so incredibly tragic and heartbreaking. My heart aches for the mother of the three siblings especially. I love how well-written this book is. It's completely in verse, and it is beautiful. I was skeptical about how I would respond to the novel being written in verse, but I loved it. It totally works for this story, because it makes it so much more powerful. This story would not have read the same way, if it had been written like freestyle fiction. Each of the siblings are so different. Shahen wants to go to America. He is small for a boy, almost feminine. Sosi wants to stay in the village and marry Vahan, a clock-maker's son (someone she can never marry because of other factors). Mariam is five and loves that her brother (Shahen) is teaching her to write. We get each of their perspectives, in the first person. It's interesting to see the evolution of Mariam's perspective - a child. The fourth perspective will remain unknown... mwahaha. I love this book so much. I would totally reread it, and I wish that everyone would give this book a chance. Don't like historical fiction? Okay. But this is like, non-fiction historical fiction. It's real, it's powerful, and it sheds light on a very real and very tragic historical event. Excuse me while I go cry! What I Did Not Like: I can't think of anything! I always say, no book is perfect, and there is always something that a reader does not like about a book... but I can't think of whatever that is at the moment. Would I Recommend It: YES! Historical fiction fan or not, read it! It's worth the read, if not for the historical fiction aspect, for the beautifully written verse! Rating: 5 stars. Well deserved (you know I'm stingy with the 5-star ratings)! This is definitely one of those books that will stick with me for a long time.

Genocide is incomprehensible. Maus made the European Jewish Holocaust more accessible, using a graphic novel format. Walrath uses verse to tell of the Armenian Genocide, reminiscent of the book of Lamentations describing the desolation of Jerusalem after the Babylonian siege in 586 BCE. But Walrath's story is more personalized, based on her own family's experience, weaving the elements of people, events, and attitudes strand by strand, and with an interwoven thread of

mystical empowerment in the form of an eagle character. The eagle evokes other times when oppressed people have relied on symbolic soothing such as the transcendent dancing of Hassidim in Eastern Europe and of Aboriginal North Americans. We know from the map at the beginning of the book that someone survives and eventually arrives in New York. All of these elements - the story, in verse, the eagle, the map - make the process of understanding the Armenian genocide less starkly overwhelming, and so creating the possibility that readers will be able to finish this tale of real terror and perhaps appreciate the implications of this horrific crime enough to join with others in calling for human rights and justice for these people and all people subjected to murderous regimes. At the core of Walrath's story is the question of whether it is ever possible to overcome ethnic hatred. History is sobering, with prominent, recent, and ongoing examples of mass violence and the sluggish responses of potentially powerful protectors that are usually too late. Are we doomed to repeat these experiences? Can books such as this help us to move civilization toward more effective and longstanding proactive efforts? I hope so.

A beautiful book, both in design and content. Beautiful in intent as well, as it tells the story of the 1914-15 Armenian genocide, too often forgotten by the world, through the experience of one Armenian family, forced to flee their country. Dana Walrath succeeds all the way in this, her first novel.

A beautifully written, creatively laid out story that resonated deeply for me who has not reached into the human story within the Armenian genocide. Powerful... Moving... A must read. I read it in 24 hours and its legacy will remain with me endlessly. Thank you, Dana Walrath... This book is an insightful, deeply connecting work that clearly comes from your passionate love of ancestors and heritage..

I wish I'd had this book when I taught 9th grade humanities. It brings to life an important, too often overlooked historical event--one which has so much to teach us still. Walrath handles a challenging topic in a way that is both nuanced and accessible for readers of all ages. The imagery is breathtaking and the characters lovable and complex. The last 100 pages flew by as I hurried to find out what would happen to Sosi, Shahan, and Mariam.

With a simple clarity of language matching the growing maturity of each character, Dana Walrath succeeds in telling through the eyes of children the before, during and after of the Armenian

Genocide. In addition to exploring the questions of individual and collective identity, group-think and the human penchant for rationalization leading to dehumanization, balanced at times by individual examples of empathy, *Like Water on Stone* also explores the human relationship with time and space, and with our communion through spiritualization of the nature world. All of this wrapped into a relatively quick narrative that, considering the topic of genocide, is safe and accessible for readers of a wide range of ages. Vahan Bournazian

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