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A TIME FORGOTTEN, THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE – A STORY OF HOPE AND SURVIVAL

Local Author pens, A Perfect Armenian, a fictional story inspired by his own family's survival of the Armenian Genocide.

Michigan - April 24 marked the anniversary of the largest genocide you have never heard of: the Armenian genocide. Michigan author Keri Topouzian's book, *A Perfect Armenian*, captures the suspense and fear of that time through the story of a good man born into a life of violence, illegal business, and tough decisions.

On the 24th of April in 1915, the first phase of the Armenian massacres began with the arrest and murder of hundreds of intellectuals, mainly from Constantinople, the capital of Ottoman Empire (now Istanbul in present day Turkey).

Topouzian's book, *A Perfect Armenian* is work of historical fiction wrapped in adventure and mystery that was inspired by his own family's story of survival during the Genocide and the need to raise awareness about a tragic time in our world's history that is unremembered.

"If it weren't for fiction, I believe we would know very little about our world. A list of historic facts might come and go, but when our imaginations become involved, we learn. When we are able to place ourselves within the story and laugh or cry with the characters, we remember. Not many people know much about Armenia, its history or its people. I hope that this novel will open a small and interesting window into this culture. My culture," said Topouzian, author of *A Perfect Armenian*.

Topouzian's paternal grandmother, Varsenig, came from the village of Tchingiler, a city that is an integral part of *A Perfect Armenian*. In 1915, Turkish soldiers forced Varsenig, her family and the rest of their village to walk from their homes to the desert near Damascus, Syria. They walked hundreds of miles because the soldiers had convinced the villagers that they were traveling to safety from World War I. In reality, they were deprived of food and water, and left to die.

1.5 million Armenians were killed in the genocide.

Topouzian's book, *A Perfect Armenian* was inspired by his family's story of survival and the need to raise awareness about a tragic time in our world's history.

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Keri Topouzian, a Bloomfield Hills resident, was born in Detroit, Michigan. He graduated from the University of Health Sciences, College of Osteopathic Medicine in 1982. Dr. Topouzian's mother, a journalist, was born and raised in Detroit while his father, a mechanical engineer, was born in Utica, New York. His grandparents hailed from four different villages in Ancient Armenia (now part of Turkey), each immigrating separately to the United States.

Topouzian practices holistic and alternative medicine with offices in Grand Rapids and Detroit. He is active in the Armenian community but spends most of his free time with his wife and four growing children.

A Perfect Armenian

When Armenian drug smuggler, Tavid Kaloustian, fakes his own death and escapes, it is the first in a series of dangerous events that transform him into the champion of his people, even as he deals in the dark, deadly world of the opium trade. As the Turkish military closes in on him and his family, Tavid is forced into extreme choices in order to spare the lives of his fellow Armenians and to extract justice from the Turks who rule them. As World War I erupts, who will die and who will survive in this complex lethal game of ethnic pride and principles?

The Armenian Genocide

The **Armenian Genocide**, also known as the Armenian Holocaust, the Armenian Massacres and, traditionally among Armenians, as the Great Crime was the Ottoman government's systematic extermination of its minority Armenian subjects from their historic homeland in the territory constituting the present-day Republic of Turkey. It took place during and after World War I and was implemented in two phases: the wholesale killing of the able-bodied male population through massacre and forced labor, and the deportation of women, children, the elderly and infirm on death marches to the Syrian Desert. The total number of people killed as a result has been estimated at between 1 and 1.5 million.

The starting date of the genocide is conventionally held to be April 24, 1915, the day when Ottoman authorities arrested some 250 Armenian intellectuals and community leaders in Constantinople. Thereafter, the Ottoman military uprooted Armenians from their homes and forced them to march for hundreds of miles, depriving them of food and water, to the desert of what is now Syria. Massacres were indiscriminate of age or gender, with rape and other sexual abuse commonplace.

Turkey, the successor state of the Ottoman Empire, denies the word genocide is an accurate description of the events. In recent years, it has faced repeated calls to accept the events as genocide. To date, twenty countries have officially recognized the events of the period as genocide, and most genocide scholars and historians accept this view.