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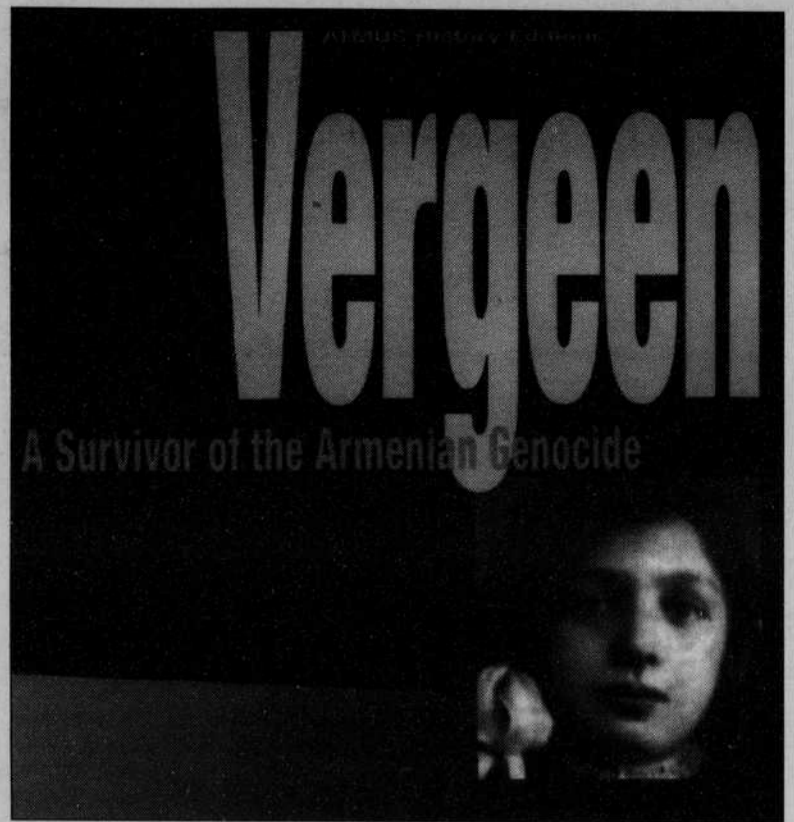
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## 'Vergeen' story fuses satisfaction, sadness

### Book review

**Natasha Chilingirian**  
Advice Columnist

The solemn 24-hour reading of the names of victims of the Jewish Holocaust in the EMU Amphitheater on Monday and today has undoubtedly triggered remembrances of humanity at its worst for many. But some may not know about the Armenian Genocide of 1915, another unjustified persecution of human life.

"Vergeen," written by Mae M. Derdarian, is the true account of 13-year-old Vergeen Kalendarian's survival of the relentless attack by the Ottoman Turkish government during World War I — in which two million Armenians perished. Derdarian is the daughter of Kalendarian's close friend.

Although the book was published in 1996, this novel should be brought off the shelf today and in the future for its suspense and historical significance. The story of Kalendarian begins with her happy childhood in the prospering nation of Armenia, where locals thrived on their cultural advancement and Christian faith, which set them apart from neighboring Muslim countries in the Middle East.

When the Turkish government began its scheme to "purify the race" and gain more land, Kalendarian endured deportation and was led on a "death caravan" through

the Arabian Desert with her mother. She witnessed sights of brutal slaughtering and littered corpses of her people and experienced extreme hunger, filth and sickness before being captured as a slave for an Arabic family.

Miraculously, Kalendarian survived and escaped to a Syrian railway camp where she found work in a hospital and met other Armenians with whom she developed friendship and love.

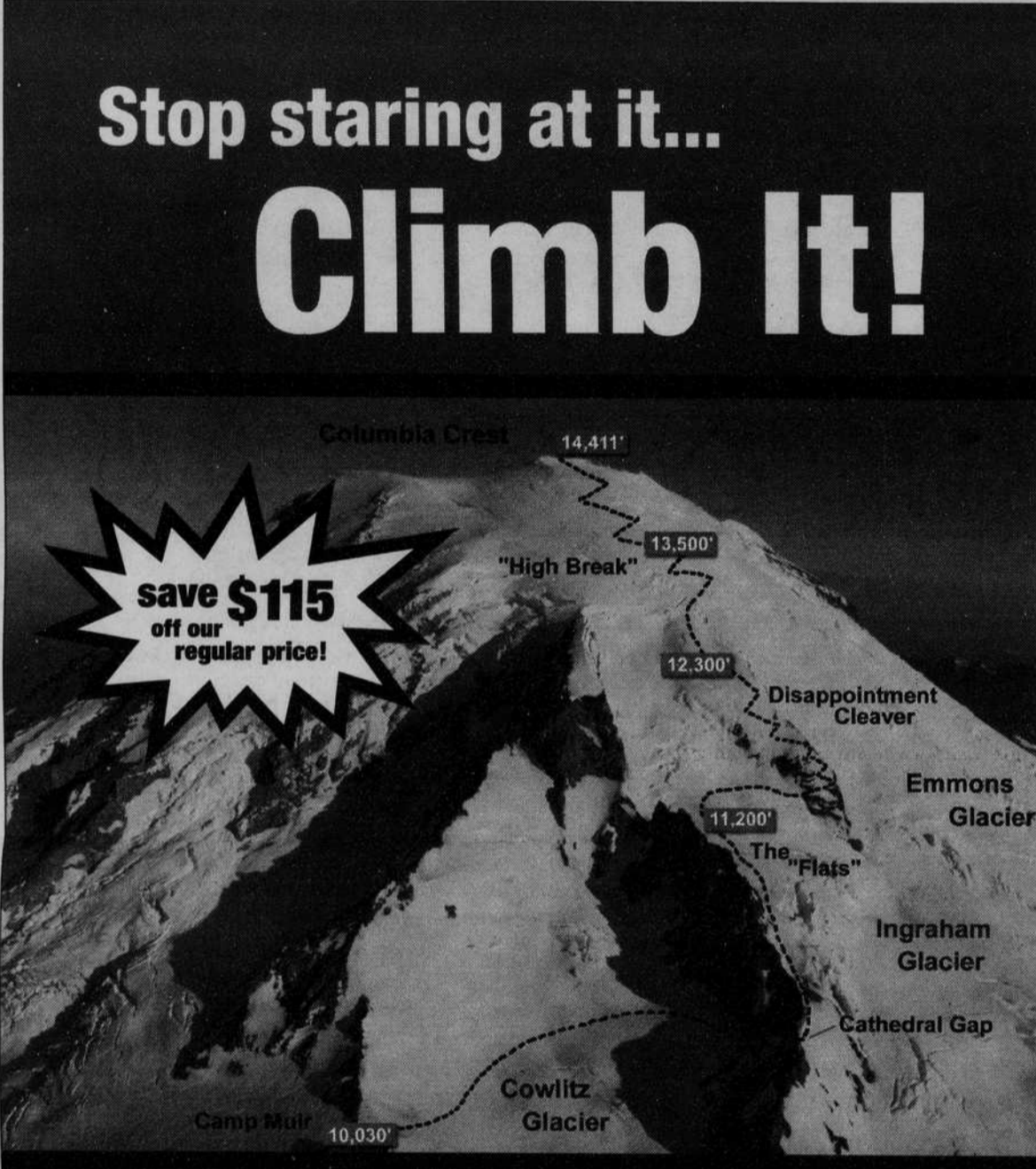
"Vergeen" is not breezy vacation reading. Its detailed depiction of the horrors endured by the Armenians will evoke disturbing feelings for readers. The chapters describing the "death caravans" are similar to brutal images conjured up in Elie Weisel's "Night" and scenes from the film "The Pianist." Although difficult to digest at times, this book will lead the reader to a feeling of great satisfaction through Kalendarian's persistent strength in her

fight to stay alive. It is a quick-paced tale, written simplistically and sprinkled with Armenian, Turkish and Arabic words for an authentic feel.

Aside from being an engrossing read and a provider of historical knowledge, "Vergeen" has the capability to create a deeper appreciation for life in spite of the mindless destruction humans have inflicted upon each other throughout history.

Contact the Pulse columnist at [natashachilingirian@dailyemerald.com](mailto:natashachilingirian@dailyemerald.com).

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## Ask Nat

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symbolizes the death of your current life and the birth of a new one. This likely represents the dramatic differences you will soon face post-graduation. Nighttime wedding images also mean commitment, and the fact that your wedding did not run smoothly could mean you are wary of commitment. Re-examine your current se-

rious engagements, such as with relationships or employers, to make sure they are right for you.

Lastly, don't be disappointed that you never found any undergarments in your dream. You wouldn't be wearing them for long on your wedding night, anyway!

Contact the columnist at [natashachilingirian@dailyemerald.com](mailto:natashachilingirian@dailyemerald.com). Her opinions do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald. Send questions to [advice@dailyemerald.com](mailto:advice@dailyemerald.com).

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