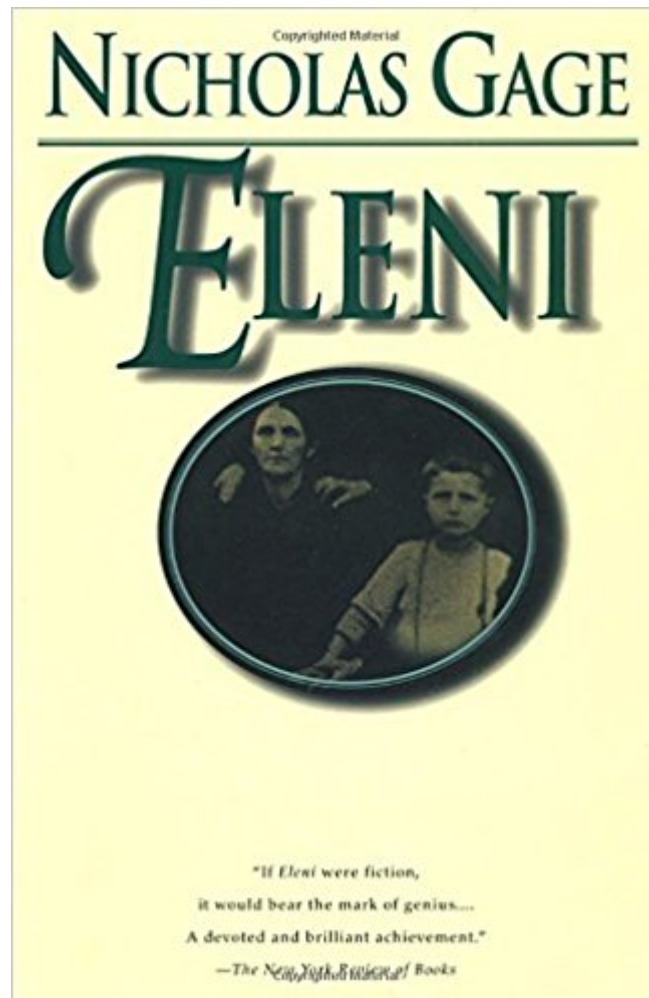




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# Eleni



## Synopsis

In 1948, as civil war ravaged Greece, children were abducted and sent to communist "camps" inside the Iron Curtain. Eleni Gatzoyiannis, forty-one, defied the traditions of her small village and the terror of the communist insurgents to arrange for the escape of her three daughters and her son, Nicola. For that act, she was imprisoned, tortured, and executed in cold blood. Nicholas Gage joined his father in Massachusetts at the age of nine and grew up to become a top New York Times investigative reporter, honing his skills with one thought in mind: to return to Greece and uncover the one story he cared about most: the story of his mother. Eleni takes you into the heart a village destroyed in the name of ideals and into the soul of a truly heroic woman.

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## Customer Reviews

"A Story Assigned By Fate...Minutely Observed And Eloquently Rendered."-- The New York Times Book Review  
"A Remarkable Work Of 'Faction'...I can think of no higher praise of this book than to say that it is fit to stand as a monument to Eleni Gatzoyiannis."-- The New Republic  
"Remarkable...Brilliant... Unique...Eleni lives through this book. Her son has done her justice."-- USA Today

In 1948, as civil war ravaged Greece, children were abducted and sent to communist "camps" inside the Iron Curtain. Eleni Gatzoyiannis, forty-one, defied the traditions of her small village and the terror of the communist insurgents to arrange for the escape of her three daughters and her son, Nicola. For that act, she was imprisoned, tortured, and executed in cold blood. Nicholas Gage joined his

father in Massachusetts at the age of nine and grew up to become a top New York Times investigative reporter, honing his skills with one thought in mind: to return to Greece and uncover the one story he cared about most: the story of his mother. Eleni takes you into the heart a village destroyed in the name of ideals and into the soul of a truly heroic woman.

Very intimate and engaging story that leaves no room for anything short of applause. Gage's non-fiction work does read like fiction (engaging/engrossing/emotional), yet it is pure non-fiction and supported by exhaustive investigative journalism. Where the book could have been dry, his research and writing brings the characters alive and while you know Eleni's fate early on, you could not help but continue to read the book and admire her resolve and dedication in saving her family. Gage wisely omits his opinions/thoughts throughout most of the book, only interjecting when necessary. Unlike many seemingly similar immigrant stories, Gage makes the story accessible to all. You are not at all required to understand Greek culture to enjoy this book, although you may be inclined to afterwards. He provides the appropriate historical context and touches on universal topics as he tells his mother's story--family first, human perseverance, unfairness, loss and acceptance.

I read this long ago and am rereading it after sent it to me. This remarkable book by Nick Gage tells of his courageous mother Eleni Gatzoyiannis daring to speak truth to power and being executed for it. Nikola (Gage as a child) has a terrific memory and was doubtless assisted by his older sisters. Eleni had to overcome being The Amerikana simply because her husband Christos emigrated to America (though he was born in Lia, Epiros, Greece). She was generous to the neighbors and relatives just the same. She made herself a decoy so that her children could escape to America and was executed in the mountains above her village. She was a heroine just as worthy of praise as any Odysseus and Achilles.

This book is written for the most ordinary person and by the most extraordinary man. It is a compelling story presented in a way that resonates with a broad audience. Above all else it is story telling at it's finest. Be prepared to be convicted in a way that challenges your assumptions about how we often make our decisions and form our opinions. This book is informative as any historical accounting should be but it really makes one look at the human spirit and sense of mission and duty. The topic of genocide does not interest a lot of people but as presented here it should. An Ordinary Man is a cautionary tale and it reminds me of how important it is to live consciously. It

portrays people in the ugliest way but through this author it validates the strength and beauty of the human spirit.

This is a tough read. It's way too long, and requires you keep a notepad to write down the names and various guerilla groups. It tells the story of the endless, brutal, not well known civil war in Greece from 1939 to 1949. During that period, the author's mother was cruelly tortured and murdered because she secreted her children successfully away from her village, but she couldn't make the journey. The author was 9. Decades later, as a grown investigative reporter for the New York Times, he returns to Greece to try to understand what happened to his mother. The personal story is more gripping than the history lesson. I found the war part hard to follow. I did not love this book and wouldn't have read it or finished it if it weren't a book club book.

I have been meaning to read this book for years, knowing it would be a difficult story for me to absorb - one that would not be forgotten. I am a Greek American, whose Yiayia and Papou emigrated to the U.S. around 1920. Although I may have relatives in Greece that were affected by the violence of WWII and the Greek Civil War, I do not have personal knowledge of any. Read this book, and you will suffer with the Gatzoyiannis family. It gave me an insight into some of the customs practiced by my grandparents, my US-born father (to a lesser extent), and our Greek Orthodox church community. This story of Greek against Greek (Communists versus Nationalists), which continued to rage after WWII was over, is horrifying to those of us proud of our heritage. Nick Gage (born Nikoloas Gatzoyiannis) painstakingly reconstructed the history and events leading up to his escape from the Communist-occupied town of Lia, along with his sisters, as well as the execution of his mother (who instigated their escape to safety). It is a wrenching story of love, unfathomable hardship, and betrayal.

A sad, sad story that was difficult to put down. As a Greek American whose own grandfather was a mayor of five villages during the civil war, and subjected to imprisonment and torture by the Communists in the Peloponnesos, I identified with Mr. Gage's narration of the tragedy endured by the villages that were occupied. Thankfully, in our case, our Papou was saved by the Nationalist forces. I found the book to be an extraordinary account, graphic but necessary, yet a story that had to be told. I shudder to think of what Greece would have become, and what the country would have endured, had the Communists prevailed. A classic tragedy of catastrophic proportions.

Battle tactics and troop movements, very little else. I was expecting a beautiful story about a man learning about his mother.

Read this book many years ago and it was a heart rending story.. lost my original and plan to read this story again. just shows how politics affects all our lives and all too often in negative ways.. not to mention gossiping, jealous people.. Nicholas did a wonderful job in showing the world just what an amazing person his mother, Eleni was.. It never ends, just look at what is happening in the middle east right now, and all the suffering the innocents have to endure!! But this is and will be a neverending story, it is unfortunately, human beings..

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Eleni

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