



# **Ravished Armenia and the Story of Aurora Mardiganian**

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*“Ravished Armenia” and the Story of Aurora Mardiganian* is the reallife tale of a teenage Armenian girl who was caught up in the 1915 Armenian genocide, the first genocide in modern history. Mardiganian (1901–1994) witnessed the murder of her family and the suffering of her people at the hands of the Ottoman Empire. Forced to march over fourteen hundred miles, she was sold into slavery. When she escaped to the United States, Mardiganian was then exploited by the very individuals whom she believed might help. Her story was published in book form and then used as the basis for a 1918 feature film, in which she herself starred.

The film *Ravished Armenia*, also known as *Auction of Souls*, is a graphic retelling of Aurora Mardiganian’s story, with the teenager in the central role, supported by Anna Q. Nilsson and Irving Cummings and directed by Oscar Apfel. Only twenty minutes of the film—the first to deal with the Armenian genocide—is known to survive, but it proves to be a stunning production, presenting its story in newsreel style.

This revised edition of Anthony Slide’s *“Ravished Armenia” and the Story of Aurora Mardiganian* also contains an annotated reprint of Mardiganian’s original narrative and, for the first time, the full screenplay. In his introduction, Slide recounts the making of the film and Mardiganian’s life in the United States, involving a cast of characters including Henry Morgenthau, Mrs. George W. Vanderbilt, Mrs. Oliver Harriman, and film pioneer William Selig. The introduction also includes original comments by Aurora Mardiganian, whom Slide interviewed before her death. Acclaimed Armenian Canadian filmmaker Atom Egoyan, who created a video art installation about Mardiganian in 2007, provides a foreword.

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