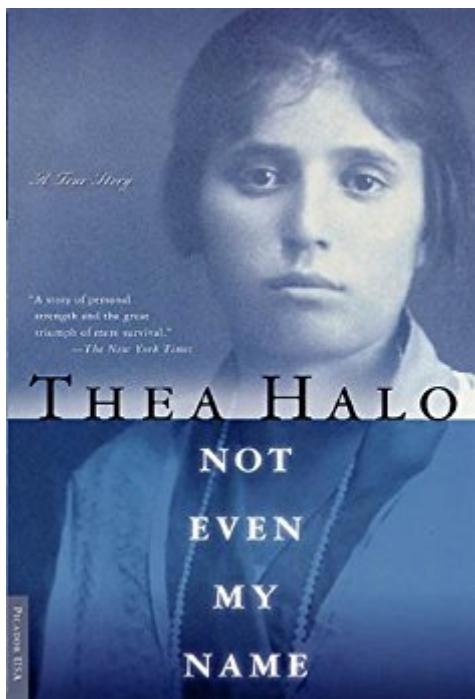


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# Not Even My Name: A True Story



## **Synopsis**

A riveting account of exile from Turkish genocide, brought to light for the first time ever in Sano Halo's personal story *Not Even My Name* exposes the genocide carried out during and after WW I in Turkey, which brought to a tragic end the 3000-year history of the Pontic Greeks (named for the Pontic Mountain range below the Black Sea). During this time, almost 2 million Pontic Greeks and Armenians were slaughtered and millions of others were exiled. *Not Even My Name* is the unforgettable story of Sano Halo's survival, as told to her daughter, Thea, and of their trip to Turkey in search of Sano's home 70 years after her exile. Sano Halo was a 10-year-old girl when she was torn from her ancient, pastoral way of life in the mountains and sent on a death march that annihilated her family. Stripped of everything she had ever held dear, even her name, Sano was sold by her surrogate family into marriage when still a child to a man three times her age. *Not Even My Name* follows Sano's marriage, the raising of her ten children in New York City, and her transformation as an innocent girl who was forced to move from a bucolic life to the 20th century in one bold stride. Written in haunting and eloquent prose, *Not Even My Name* weaves a seamless texture of individual and group memory, evoking all the suspense and drama of the best told tales.

## **Book Information**

File Size: 1781 KB

Print Length: 363 pages

Publisher: Picador; 1st edition (April 1, 2007)

Publication Date: April 1, 2007

Sold by: Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B003J5UIFU

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #319,022 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #12 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Biographies & Memoirs > Historical > Europe > Greece #39 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > History > Europe > Greece #53 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Biographies & Memoirs > Historical > Middle East

## Customer Reviews

"Not Even My Name" is an extraordinarily powerful book that forced me to understand the Pontic, Assyrian, and Armenian genocides it describes in individual, human terms. After all, it's much easier to distance oneself from a holocaust than from the individuals who are its victims. In addition, the book has provided me with an important analog to the history of my own family, Greek Jews, many of whom suffered their own holocaust. I intend to read this book with one of my classes, not only because it is a fine piece of literature, but also because it will remind us in a very compelling way how foolish it is to try to prove that one holocaust was bigger or more important than another. We all suffer from the "It's my dead rat" syndrome, a foolishness this book exposes fearlessly. Equally important, the structure of the book, framed by a double odyssey and complex exodus, provides the experiences of the author, Thea Halo, and her mother, Sano, nee Themia, with just the right context to make the journey very worthwhile for the reader as well as for its two main characters. Halo's descriptions are beautifully drawn, and her inferences are understated, which is what makes them so powerful. This is a universal story "writ large" and passionately. It took me almost no time to see that it is also my story, placed in a different context, but one that I could recognize easily, in small ways as well as large. How fascinating, for instance, to discover that the Pontic Christians celebrated Easter with egg-breaking contests almost identical to the Greek-Jewish tradition during the Passover Seders. The book is extremely well written and incredibly moving.

Following the First World War, the government of Turkey, under the leadership of Gamel Ataturk, established a campaign of, which we in our modern usage call, ethnic cleansing. The goal of this government was "Turkey for the Turks." They set out to rid Turkey of non-Turkish ethnic groups which included the Armenians, Greeks (which included the Pontians, Ionians, and Kappadokians), and Assyrians. This campaign succeeded in eliminating, by means of death marches, massacre, murder -- genocide -- 1.5 million Armenians, 750,000 Assyrians, 360,000 Pontian Greeks. Many more survivors of this genocide went into exile in Syria, Russia, and some in the United States. Changing time and place, Thea Halo successfully tells the story of one individual who lived through and survived the uprooting of her family and people who were forced on a death march from their homes in the north of the country, eventually into Syria. This survivor, through a series of serendipitous events, wound up in New York City, finally safe from the persecutions of the Turkish leadership. She gave birth to 10 children, one of whom is the author of "Not Even My Name." Ms. Halo has accomplished one of the great values of life. She has honored her ancestors and kept their spirits and history alive. She has honored her mother Sano (Themia) even during her lifetime.

Thea's mother, never forgot her family and her life in their Turkish home. Very quietly she would say their names over and over to herself. These memories are her treasure. Sano can have peace and pride that her story, and the stories of her people, have been added to the volumes of our human history.

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