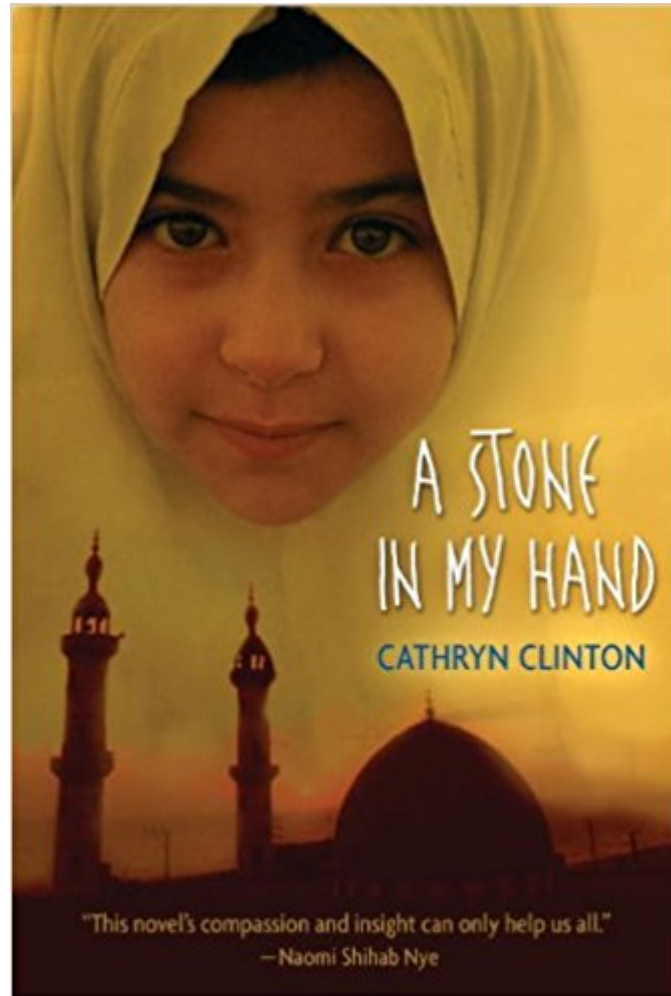




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# A Stone In My Hand



## Synopsis

FOUR STARRED REVIEWS! Now available in trade-paperback is the haunting story of a sensitive, observant girl who finds her voice in 1988 Gaza City. The year is 1988 in Gaza City, and it has been a month since eleven-year-old Malaak's father left to seek work in Israel, only to disappear. Every day Malaak climbs to the roof and waits, speaking little to anyone, preferring the company of the little bird she has tamed. But her twelve-year-old brother, Hamid, has a different way of coping. He feels only anger, stoked by extremists who say violence is the only way to change their fate. Malaak's mother begs him to stay away from harm, but Malaak lives in fear of losing her brother as well. What will it take for her to find her voice and the strength to move past the violence that surrounds her?

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 3.3 out of 5 stars 19 customer reviews

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Age Range: 10 and up

Grade Level: 5 and up

## Customer Reviews

Working in a wholly different but no less ambitious vein than in her impressive debut, *The Calling*, Clinton proves to be as versatile as she is daring. Set in a Palestinian community in Gaza City during the intifada of 1988 and 1989, the novel opens with its narrator, 11-year-old Malaak, traumatized, barely talking and immersed in a fantasy life involving a tame bird. Eventually readers learn that Malaak's father was killed five weeks earlier, as he traveled to Israel looking for work;

ironically, the bus he had taken was blown up by Islamic Jihad. Contrary to their family's principles, Malaak's older brother, Hamid, and his friend, Tariq (who saw his own father killed by Israeli soldiers), secretly become shabab (defined here as "youth activists"), throwing stones at Israeli soldiers and even joining in terrorist activities. Patiently counseled by her wise mother, visited in her dreams by her father (in one, "He went to the moon by jumping from star to star"), increasingly concerned about Hamid and Tariq, Malaak roots herself once again in the difficult world around her. Malaak's victories are hard-won, without benefit of a happy or tidy ending, and poetically wrought. The harsh portrayal of the Israeli occupation will be painful for many readers-and may even anger some-but Clinton's overall message is transcendently humane. A memorable achievement. Ages 11-up. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Grade 5-8-A moving story of courage, loss, personal growth, and familial love, set in 1988 in the Middle East. A month earlier, Malaak Abed Atieh's father left their home in Gaza City and never returned. Every day, the 11-year-old climbs up to her roof and waits for him, for she does not know that the bus he was on became a terrorist target. Since his disappearance, she hasn't spoken to anyone except her dove, a gift from him. Her mother finally tells her what happened, and the child begins to worry about her 12-year-old brother, whom she fears is becoming involved with a radical group. For his sake, Malaak comes out of her shell to try to save him from the growing violence that surrounds them. Malaak is a strong character who longs for her father's physical presence but finds solace and comfort when communicating with him on a spiritual level. Events move quickly and consistently throughout the story, and all of the characters are well drawn. With a sharp eye for nuances of culture and the political situation in the Middle East, Clinton has created a rich, colorful cast of characters and created an emotionally charged novel. The glossary of Arabic words and their English meanings is helpful. Janet Gillen, Great Neck Public Library, NY Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

excellent

Many people probly are missing out on reading this book- and they definately need to read this! its a very sad tale of a young palestinian girl who longs for her father's return- he went to look for a job in israel. When turmoil breaks out- malaak is able to stay strong- this is her incredible story. I recommend this 100%

The story provides a good foundation for young teenagers to learn the issues facing the Middle East today. The story is told from the viewpoint of an 11 year old Gaza Strip Palestinian girl.

I had to purchase this book for my son's Social Studies project. The book was new and look very nice.

This book was required reading in my daughter's 6th grade history class. This is a work of pure fiction by an author with an anti-Israeli agenda. I felt compelled to tell my daughter that this is a work of fiction and that the Israelis don't actually strip search 5 year old girls or shoot 14 year old boys during a funeral procession. The book portrays the Israelis as laughing and singing, drunk and with weapons, when Malaak visits her brother in the hospital. Having spent a fair amount of time over there, I can tell you that would never happen, and if a soldier dared do such a thing they would be in jail. I told her that the author is trying to make a point and since it is a work of historic fiction they were free to overstep, which they did. I strongly recommend that this book not make any required reading list.

Eleven-year-old Malaak has stopped talking to her family and friends since her father disappeared a month before. The roof of her building in the Palestinian community of Gaza City provides her only refuge. It is here that she speaks to her pet dove Abdo, a gift from her father. In this place, she says, "I soar out of the Gaza Strip. Nothing stops me, not the concrete and razor wire, not the guns, not the soldiers." It is the first intifada of 1988 and Malaak experiences the mounting conflict between the Palestinians and the Israelis. When Malaak learns that her father was killed on a bus by a terrorist's bomb, she retreats to an inner world where she sees her father in dreams. All around her the violence increases as the youth on the streets or the "shabab" take on the Israeli soldiers with stones for weapons. Malaak's mother and her sister Hend, decry the violence of the Islamic Jihad. However, her 12-year-old brother Hamid is drawn in by its angry self-righteousness. Malaak loves her brother, her protector and a poet, but is scared to see him move increasingly under the influence of others in the jihad, who embrace violence as a solution to the occupation of the Gaza Strip. The power of *A Stone in My Hand* is its insightful portrayal of the scars left on those children living in a zone of armed conflict and unending violence. From the silencing of Malaak by grief, to the rash and dangerous decisions of Hamid, we see children living in a world out of their control, coping in ways that are more instinctual than rational. The damage made by the ravages of armed violence is

evident. However, for Malaak, the love of her family and the memory of her father is the balm to soothe the wounds.

Malaak is an eleven year old girl living in Gaza City in 1988 during the first intifada. Her father has left for Israel, hoping to find work, and Malaak spends hours on the roof of her house watching for his return. Waiting with her is a small bird she has named Abdo. As the days pass, Malaak stops talking and at times she feels her consciousness soar with Abdo. "Silence flutters down on us. It feels like Abdo lighting on my shoulder. This is safe. This slight moment, this space of rest, feels larger than now." Most of the time, Malaak lives in fear. She thinks that with Abdo's eyes she can see her father in prison. Malaak's mother and sister bustle around the household protectively, but they are hiding something. And Malaak's beloved older brother, Hamid, and his friend, Tariq, have become shababs, or young activists, and even attend a meeting organized by the Islamic Jihad. "I look at Hamid. He is eager. He eats these words. His mouth opens and shuts. He clenches and unclenches his fists. 'We will not dishonor our heroes, our martyrs, by forgetting them. We honor the martyrs today. They are willing to sacrifice their lives to free people from the occupation. There are people all over the world today who are fighting against oppressors. Some will die. Every revolution has its martyrs.' Tariq stands there, unmoving. He doesn't even blink. I wonder if he hears anything. Maybe he is part stone already. A stone for someone to pick up and throw at a soldier..." Malaak spends her youth balancing between trying to keep her family safe and withdrawing into a mystical and silent world of her own. Poetic, yet sparse, the language of the book is hypnotic, and I, too, felt the seduction of withdrawal. It's a beautiful book, written for young adults, but I would recommend it for anyone interested in the Palestinian situation.

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