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**NEW CHILDREN'S PICTURE BOOK FROM ARMENIAN FOLKLORE
CONVEYS LESSONS FOR READERS OF ALL AGES**

Teaneck, N.J. and Belmont, Mass. -- An Armenian folktale retold by Armenian-American writer and book publicist Lucine Kasbarian and illustrated by Moscow-based artist Maria Zaikina debuts with Marshall Cavendish Children's Publishers in April 2011.

The Greedy Sparrow: An Armenian Tale is from the ancient Armenian oral tradition and culture, which was nearly obliterated during the Turkish genocide of the Armenians, Assyrians and Greeks in 1915. The author learned the tale from her father, editor and columnist C.K. Garabed, who would recite it to her at bedtime. He had learned it from his own grandmother, a celebrated storyteller from the Old Country. The tale was first put to paper by Armenian poet Hovhannes Toumanian at the turn of the 20th century.

The Greedy Sparrow is the first time this tale has been presented in the English language as a children's picture book. The story begins in old Armenia with a sparrow who catches a thorn in his foot. As he asks for help, he sets off an intriguing cycle of action that transports him through the Armenian countryside, encountering people engaged in traditional folkways. *The Greedy Sparrow* ends with a surprising twist and conveys moral messages about greed, selfishness and using one's judgment. To address the ethical and human components of the tale, a companion study guide will be available on the author's website at www.lucinekasbarian.com.

Though intended for readers ages 4 through 8, noted Sesame Street host and storyteller Bob McGrath says, "*The Greedy Sparrow* is actually for everyone. It's clever and humorous, and the wonderful illustrations not only add color but also truly interpret the story line." The fable is lavishly illustrated with authentic depictions of Armenian folk traditions. The tale's illustrator, Maria Zaikina, researched Armenian costumes, culture and customs before completing the illustrations for this book. Zaikina was selected to illustrate *The Greedy Sparrow* after the author and publisher viewed her Armenian folk animations on YouTube: www.youtube.com/watch?v=QJ5NAXT9pLs&feature=player_embedded.

Author Kasbarian is a syndicated journalist and Director-on-Leave from Progressive Book Publicity. She is the former Director of Publicity for Red Wheel, Weiser and Conari Press, and previously was Publicity and Marketing Manager at Hearst Books. Kasbarian is also the author of *Armenia: A Rugged Land, an Enduring People* (Dillon Press/Simon & Schuster, 1998) and was a contributing editor for Cobblestone magazine's special issue, the Armenian Americans (Carus Publishing, 2000).

A graduate of the NYU Journalism program, Kasbarian belongs to the Author's Guild, The National Writers Union (NWU); The U.S. Board of Books for Young People (USBBY), The Society of Armenian Studies (SAS); The Society of Children's Book Writers & Illustrators (SCBWI); and The Women's National Book Association (WNBA). The author and her husband, journalist David Boyajian, live in Belmont, Massachusetts and Teaneck, New Jersey. For the production of *The Greedy Sparrow*, the author served as the model for the illustrator's rendering of the bride, with the wedding costume in the book bearing a strong resemblance to that of the author's own folkloric bridal gown.

The Greedy Sparrow is a 32-page illustrated hardcover book, available through brick-and-mortar and online booksellers, as well as through the publisher for \$17.99 US; \$20.95 CANADA. To order, contact: Darcy Swanson, Customer Service Representative, Brilliance Audio, 1704 Eaton Drive, PO Box 887, Grand Haven, MI, 49417, USA; Tel: 616.935-1721; Fax: 616-935-1821; dswanson@brillianceaudio.com. Books may also be ordered directly from Amazon.com at: <http://www.amazon.com/The-Greedy-Sparrow-Armenian-Tale/dp/0761458212>

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The Greedy Sparrow: An Armenian Tale,

Retold by Lucine Kasbarian; Illustrated by Maria Zaikina;

Publisher: Marshall Cavendish Children; **Pub. date:** April 2011;

ISBN - 13: 978-0-7614-5821-0; **LOC:** 2010018172;

Genre: Trade reinforced hardcover illustrated children's picture book – folktale;

Description: A sparrow receives kindness from strangers and repays each act of kindness with a trick to get more, but at last, in a surprising twist, the sparrow is back with his original problem.

Price: \$17.99 US; \$20.95 CANADA;

To order: dswanson@brillianceaudio.com and/or

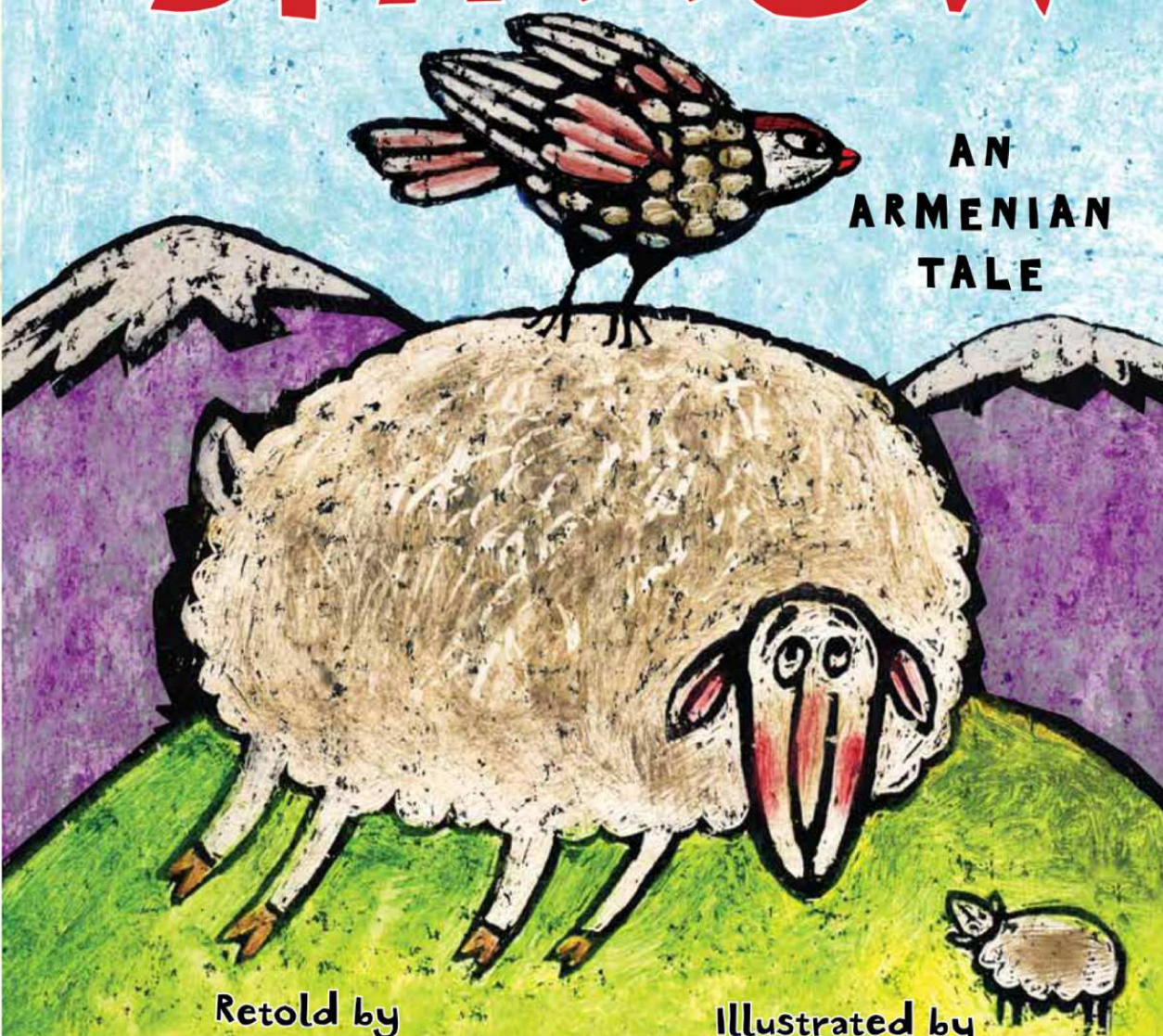
<http://www.amazon.com/The-Greedy-Sparrow-Armenian-Tale/dp/0761458212>

For further information: Jenny Parnow, jparnow@amazon.com

Author website: www.lucinekasbarian.com

The **GREEDY** **SPARROW**

AN
ARMENIAN
TALE



Retold by
LUCINE KASBARIAN

Illustrated by
MARIA ZAIKINA

Advance Praise for
The Greedy Sparrow: An Armenian Tale
Retold by Lucine Kasbarian,
Illustrated by Maria Zaikina
(Marshall Cavendish Children, April 2011)

"This folktale, The Greedy Sparrow, is actually for everyone. It's clever and humorous and the wonderful illustrations not only add color, but truly interpret the story line."

-- Bob McGrath, author, singer, storyteller, and Sesame Street Host, Teaneck, NJ

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"This spare, and very pleasing retelling of an Armenian circular tale should read aloud beautifully. And the clear, large typeface should make it an easy kid read too. The story is enlivened by letting much of the action be shown via speech bubbles and the repeated phrase "it was no use arguing". A simple, yet fulfilling retelling."

-- Dr. Margaret Read MacDonald, storyteller, folktale author, children's librarian, Kirkland, WA

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"This retelling of The Greedy Sparrow is true to the Armenian tradition in all its charm and wit."

-- Nonny Hogrogian, author and illustrator of the Armenian folktales One Fine Day (Simon & Schuster), Rooster Brother (Macmillan) and The Contest (Greenwillow Books), and illustrator of the Armenian folktales Once there Was and Was Not (Little Brown), Three Apples Fell from Heaven (Little Brown), and The Golden Bracelet (Holiday House), Northampton, MA

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"This charming fable, reminiscent of the style of versatile Armenian author Hovhannes Toumanian is told in the Armenian tradition of story-telling. The Greedy Sparrow is a beautifully written, delightfully engaging adaptation of one of his allegories that had originally been part of the Armenian folklore for centuries. What stands out in the Greedy Sparrow is the deliberate, interlaced yet seamless journey through the traditional, the historical and the cultural with emphasis on the moral message. The colorful, time-honored, crisp illustrations depict the storyline situations with clarity. Lucine Kasbarian has added the label of modern-day fabulist to her already eminent resume. She is anchored in her heritage and is proud to transmit its essentials to the young reader."

-- Gilda Kupelian, Armenian Studies Coordinator, Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), New York, NY

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Advance Praise
continued...

"Author Lucine Kasbarian has introduced an insightful Armenian folk tale with lessons apt for contemporary society. Her delightful rendering of the Greedy Sparrow and the engaging illustrations by Maria Zaikina will be enjoyed by children of all ages. We look forward to presenting the Greedy Sparrow to children at the museum's next "family day" event. The author's traditional folk tale preserves the wisdom of a culture and shares it with the world."

-- Gary Lind-Sinianian and Susan Lind-Sinianian, Curators, Armenian Library and Museum of America, Watertown, MA

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"Although perfect for any time, this Armenian fable about the greedy sparrow seems to speak particularly for our current times. Throughout the centuries fables have entertained children (and adults) while providing a moral lesson. How fortunate we are that Lucine Kasbarian's father remembered this tale, told to him by his grandmother, and passed it down to his daughter, who now has preserved it in this delightful book beautifully illustrated by Maria Zaikina."

-- Iris Papazian, Director of Communications and Publications, Armenian Prelacy of the Eastern USA, New York, NY

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"This retelling of the sparrow fable is very positive, uplifting, and gives a lesson for all to follow, young and old. It is a gift about distant worlds -- a story that contains culture and meaning -- for Armenians and non-Armenians to enjoy. I love how the author mentions and incorporates ancestral Armenian lands into this story - Mt. Ararat, Lake Van, Aghtamar, the Arax River and Lake Sevan - very different from Toumanian's version. Children are drawn to fables, as long as they are colorful, short, and kept simple. This beautiful product meets these criteria."

-- Talin Derderian-Artinian, Principal, Taniel Varoujan Armenian School, Glenview, IL

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"Lucine Kasbarian is the author of a joyful adaptation of an Armenian tale, 'The Greedy Sparrow,' or 'the legends of the lost land.' The talented Maria Zaikina offers her personal and so gorgeous touch to the book: each image is a drawing of naive art revisited by a modern approach. This tale is a feast for the eyes and testifies to the fact that Armenians are still alive, nearly a hundred years after the Armenian Genocide (1915). Thanks to both of you."

-- Seta Papazian, Illustrator, La Reine Anahide: Conte d'Armenie (Le Bonhomme Vert) and Alphabet Armenien Vol. II (Collection Clin d'oeil de la Lettre) and President of Collectif VAN [Vigilance Arménienne contre le Négationnisme] Armenian Watching against Denial; www.collectifvan.org, Issy-les-Moulineaux, France

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Advance Praise
continued...

"Retelling the story of a well-known Armenian folk tale (Dsidig' or 'The Sparrow,' in English), author Lucine Kasbarian is bridging the culture of a century-old tale by bringing it to contemporary young learners.

In the old days, grandmothers were the storytellers. They told stories to their grandchildren, stirring the imagination of the young and giving them a moral lesson. Here we have colorful pages and well-chosen words with which to travel to historical places of Armenia. As the sparrow is jumping from one location to another, we are learning the traditions of Armenian village life paralleled with a message: 'When the motive is greed, in the end, you are on your own with your pain!'

I admire Ms. Kasbarian's dedication for dusting off this almost forgotten Armenian tale, which was retold in Armenian by a revered and prominent children's writer: Hovannes Toumanian. To my knowledge this is the first translation to come to life for English readers. Elementary classroom teachers as well as parents would enjoy it immensely and benefit from it, as well. This picture book helps to organize the actions of the main character with appropriate repetitions to build a logical sequence in the mind of the young reader. At the end the objective is clear... there is a lesson to be learned!

Let's celebrate the birth of a wonderful picture book that author Lucine Kasbarian and illustrator Maria Zaikina are offering as a literary gift to readers of all ages."

-- Zarminé Boghosian, Principal, Holy Martyrs Armenian School, Bayside, NY

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"A wonder-filled gift for the Armenian kids in your life: "The Greedy Sparrow" is an Armenian fable filled with helpful life-lessons. This tale, which was passed along from parent to child for hundreds of years, was first written down by the poet Hovaness Toumanian. It is retold brilliantly in English by Lucine Kasbarian in this beautifully illustrated 2011 book published (w/reinforced binding) by Marshall Cavendish."

-- Aram Suren Hamparian, Executive Director, Armenian National Committee of America (www.anca.org), Washington, DC

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To order: Marshall Cavendish Corporation, Toll free: 800-821-9881;
Fax: 914-332-1888; www.marshallcavendish.us/kids
For further information: Brian Buerkle, Marketing Manager: bbuerkle@marshallcavendish.com
Author website: www.lucinekasbarian.com

**Suggested Interview Questions
for Lucine Kasbarian, author of
The Greedy Sparrow: An Armenian Tale
(Marshall Cavendish, April 2011)**

1. How did you learn of this tale and what made you want to retell it?
2. Your retelling ends differently from the popular version of the tale. Why?
3. Is the illustrator Armenian? How did you find her?
4. What relevance does this tale hold for children (and adults)? What, if anything, can it teach them?
5. What does this tale tell us about Armenians and their culture? What significance do you feel folktales possess?
6. Some people believe that writers should abandon the retelling of folk tales as passé or old fashioned. How do you feel about that?
7. How did you find a publisher for this tale?
8. What was most interesting part of the book publishing process?
9. What attracted you to writing and publishing? How does publishing run in your family? (How many relatives work in the publishing field, and in what capacity?)
10. Your first book was published more than 10 years ago. Why did it take so long to publish your second book?
11. What did you read when you were growing up, and what do you wish you had? Whom do you admire in the literary field of folklore?
12. What role did or does the Armenian press play in your career?
13. Are there any publishing misconceptions you'd like to dispel?
14. What advice do you have for Armenians who want to break into publishing, and for aspiring book writers who want to find an agent or publisher?
15. Future plans?

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