



# The Day It Rained Forever: A Story of the Johnstown Flood (Once Upon America)

*By Virginia T. Gross*



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When a cheaply constructed dam above Johnstown bursts under the onslaught of torrential rains, Christina and her family struggle to escape the floodwater which bears down upon their town.



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**The Day It Rained Forever: A Story of the Johnstown Flood (Once Upon America)** By Virginia T. Gross **Bibliography**

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### **Editorial Review**

From School Library Journal

Grade 3-5-- A historical novel about the bursting of a poorly constructed dam and subsequent flooding of Johnstown, PA, in 1898, as experienced by a fictional child and her family. The rains begin shortly after the death of 11-year-old Christina's infant sister, with preparations meanwhile under way for an uncle's wedding. Although it rains for an extended period, the family feels relatively safe from high water on their farm. They do, however, worry about Mama, who is involved in wedding plans in Johnstown when the dam gives way. She is swept by the flood into the branches of a tree, where a wooden tub containing a newborn baby also becomes lodged. Both are rescued and returned to the farm, and the family keeps the unclaimed infant. Much weakened by contrivances and coincidences, this story is uninvolving. The statement, "The millionaires who formed the South Fork Hunting and Fishing Club took shortcuts to save money," as an explanation for the shoddy construction leaves readers wishing for solid background information. The mixture of fact and fiction muddies the waters, raising but not answering questions about the historical event and its aftermath.

- Susan Patron, *Los Angeles Public Library, CA*

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From Kirkus Reviews

In one of the better entries in the "Once Upon America" series, young Christina and her family are among the survivors of the disastrous 1889 flood that occurred when an inadequate dam, built to provide fishing for the millionaire members of a local club, loosed a 70-foot wall of water on the mill town of 12,000 people. Christina's home is safely out of the flood's path, but her older brother is among those trying to warn others of the danger, while her mother--visiting Uncle Herbert's fianc,e, Lenora--is caught in the swirling waters and survives after a harrowing adventure in which she saves an unidentified newborn; Lenora and Herbert are both lost. The story closes with the poignant acceptance of baby Hope by Christina, who has feared that her mother imagines that Hope replaces Christina's beloved baby sister Eva, who has recently died. Gross deftly sketches a believable cast and neatly interweaves the flood's events, issues surrounding it, and their private tragedies. Fine beginning historical fiction. Illustrations not seen. (Fiction. 8-12) -- *Copyright ©1991, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.*

### **Users Review**

**From reader reviews:**

**William Powell:**

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**Terrie Newlin:**

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**Jonathan Bean:**

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