

# THE STONE CARVERS

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NARRATED BY NICKY GUADAGNI

JANE URQUHART

*"Breathtaking"*  
— *Time*

*Jane Urquhart*

## **The Stone Carvers**



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When the world was still reeling from the staggering losses incurred in the First World War, an unknown sculptor was raising a colossal monument in France, where therefore many of his countrymen had fought and died.

At the centre of a large cast of characters can be Klara Becker, the granddaughter of a master carver, a seamstress haunted by a love affair cut short by the First World Battle and by the frequent disappearances of her brother Tilman, afflicted since childhood with wanderlust. Moving from a German-settled village in Ontario to Europe after the Great War, *The Stone Carvers* comes after the paths of immigrants, labourers, and dreamers and of two people whose lives are marked by obsession and changed by artwork. Unveiled in 1936, the Memorial at Vimy Ridge still stands as a stark reminder of the a large number of Canadians who offered their lives in France and as a testament to the vision and single-minded obsession of its architect, Walter Allward. Sweeping across three countries and two centuries, *The Rock Carvers* brings together two long-estranged siblings and a visionary nineteenth-century German priest with the tale of the obsessive Walter Allward. Grasping her character types as few authors do, Jane Urquhart carves a radiant and enduring tale simultaneously vivid, dark and redemptive.



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A novel about art I read Urquharts "Aside" before the *Stone Carvers*. The sculpture is definitely consigned to reduction. As in *Apart*, the *Rock Carvers* is set on two continents, 1st Canada and France. The author

truly takes you there. The structure permits the background of every character to evolve in soft installments, but with smooth clarity.". (This happens as well seldom) I slowly recognized that whereas *Away* was about the character types, the *Rock Carvers* is in fact about artwork and handicraft.. The solid female character, the fantastic like affairs, the wandering brother, were important, but secondary, background designs to the desire for and the like of art."I went for a walk. We find out so much in regards to a small component of Canada, and have to admire the settlers in the past due 1800's and early 1900's who had been willing to battle this environment in a wilderness for a home of their very own. The theme of "wandering" in both books intrigues me and makes me wish I could sit straight down with the author and have her if she's every experienced someone like this in her own life. In *Away* the the necessity to be near a big body of water makes the heroine keep her husband, child and baby. In the *Rock Carvers*, it is not so much the necessity to arrive as it may be the need to get away. I fear We haven't done this novel justice, and, of program, We wouldn't want to let you know the story. I resided with my artist hubby for 40 years, therefore i am very tuned into the artistic side of things. In this 5th novel, her eccentric, parochial individuals emerge from the harsh, often punishing 19th-century scenery of a pioneer community in Southwest Ontario and stretch out to today's monument of the 20th century. It is rich plenty of to charm to every reader. As different since it was from *Aside*, I loved it as much and I strongly encourage you to learn it.. Redemption through timber and stone Jane Urquhart offers demonstrated in *A Map of Cup and Joseph* really wants to pass on his artisan skills to his boy, Dieter, but it is Dieter's child, Klara, who blossoms quietly mainly because a carver, and in addition learns to understand tailoring from her grandmother. how a person can be transformed by the energy of art and memory. The characters are occasionally made entire, or shattered, or both. Others might find this novel from a completely unique point of view. Allward: "Carve it together with your heart then.. He lands in the valley of Shoneval, a farming and mill city of hard working people who haven't had the time or inclination to attend church, and lures them to Mass by arranging a Corpus Christi procession that invites community participation and planning. We are launched to Josphe Becker, a farmer and wood-carver with a rare talent, who befriends Father Gstyr and creates beautiful sculptures for the new church. The one thing missing for the priest is definitely a bell. He is obsessed with obtaining one, as he was in Bavaria--and overlooked by the King. His obsession can be one of the character's fanatical wishes in this publication. The story progresses non-linearly, but with active forward movement. I felt as though I were living in a wilderness Canadian village, and standing on an ordinary, in front of an enormous monument in France. The Underpainter Her brother, Tilman, named for the great sculptor Tilman Riemenschneider, is definitely too restive to remain and make figures-in-

the-circular from limewood; he's a wanderlust, and leaves the family when he's twelve after his parents chain him to the barn for roaming too often and too much from your home. Also, Urquharts love of her native Canada comes through simply as highly in this novel as in the last one...We followed the street. With Eamon dropped, she felt connected to no one. he linked to a bridge and compared it to home:"He loved that bridge with a child's love, the way a boy will love a tree house.Dad Gstir was sent by the tone of voice of God and King Ludwig from the pastoral scenery of Bavaria to the outback of Ontario, to minister to German-Catholic communities."All her faith was gone and with it the desire to have carving, for making something spiritual out of real wood.But he loved it too in ways peculiar to his own nature, since it gave him shelter without closing him in.Ignore it out of your center and into the stone."Tilman becomes a hobo, and learns a lesson about love from unusual occasions. The prodigal son's return is fraught with signifying and a courageous stride into the future. Tilman functions in stoveworks for a while with Refuto's son, Girogio, trying to tame his meandering spirit, but takes off to become listed on as a soldier in WW 1. He meets another tramp, Refuto, on his travels, who enfolds him into his big, Italian, warm-hearted family members. There is indeed much to discuss about the final chapters, nonetheless it is difficult to accomplish without adding spoilers. Her sorrow and subsequent repression stems from a tragic relationship with a young guy, Eamon O'Sullivan, when she was twenty. Eamon was seduced by aeroplanes into WW 1, and departs to follow a burning dream of learning to be a pilot. She devotes herself to the church also to her seamstress activities, and embraces her spinster self. I have been so impressed with Away, loved it actually, that I feared another reserve could never live up to Away.."As he wandered, he embraced the spines of hills and the vocabulary of drinking water;"The themes of the tale get together in the third portion of the novel, near Arras, France, where sculptor Walter Allward is commissioned to make a monument to the Canadian soldiers who died at Vimy Ridge during WW1. Urquhart synthesizes the real existence Allward into her novel to herald a compelling story of loss cumulating into redemption, obsession into letting go, repression into interest, and the prevailing, ubiquitous power of storage and the salvation of art.At first, I actually had difficulty adjusting to the last section of the novel, which removed me from the charming village of Shovenal. However, Urquhart convinced me, ultimately, by having her motifs and designs to this climactic achievement in history, a monument of storage, arranged by the obsessive Allward but animated by his artisans. Even the change from wood-carving to marble is normally symbolic, as the lifeless stone is taken to lifestyle in significant, poignant ways.Klara Becker, an attractive seamstress, has worked on a timber carving of a medieval abess for over 20 years, and finally abandons it to the barn with her grief intact. Her characters have a tendency to be repressed, isolated,

and sexually chaste, or proceed through a long period of continence after a short, signifying affair within their youth.. Although the individual characters are important, what remained with me were the perfect bell, the rock church, the reddish colored vest, the obsession with timber carving, the obsession with perfection, the movement from real wood carving to rock carving,(until then I kept thinking why the book was titled the Stone Carvers) and the brooding overpowering final masterpiece of design. There have been no impenetrable wall space, no doors that might contain locks. It had been a book that stayed with me and that I continue steadily to think about.

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