

## LITHUANIA 1886

“Love flickered and glowed in the dying embers of a shtetl (village) once called home”.

Miriam sat beside Joseph beneath an apple tree in full bloom with its sweet scent pervading the air. The fields around her were covered in flowers and cattle grazed contentedly nearby. Although it was the beginning of Spring she felt a chill in the air.

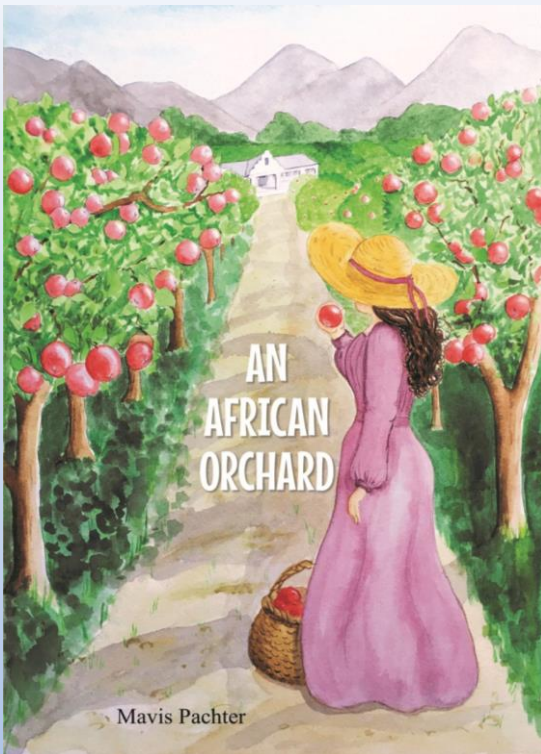
“Joseph, what’s a pogrom?” she asked in a hushed voice leaning in towards him. I overheard two people talking in the village.

“Ask your Papa,” he said standing up and glancing at rain clouds hovering above them. “We’d better go home it looks like it could rain any minute.”

“Why won’t you tell me?” She reached out to touch his hand. “We always tell each other everything.”

Joseph shook his head as he helped her up and then pulled her towards him and kissed her. He took something out of his pocket closing her hand over the item. “I made this for you.” His voice was hoarse as he ran his hand over her silken hair. He breathed in deeply and cupped her face in his hands. “Miriam, you’ll always have a special place in my heart.”

Miriam taken by surprise lost her balance and Joseph steadied her as she looked at a small heart carved out of wood. She could hardly breathe as she whispered, “It’s beautiful, Joseph.” She was aware of him in a way she had never been before. Her eyes sought his as she admired his newly grown beard and how grown up it made him look. Together they walked home hand in hand, and Miriam found herself unable to stop talking. “Papa says we’ll all be together on Friday night. I’m going to wear a new dress that Papa bought me for special occasions.” She glanced at him puzzled as he disengaged his hand from hers when they reached their village. They walked past wooden houses standing side by side with smoke



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