



My Own Vineyard (Library of Holocaust Testimonies)

Miriam Akavia

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This rich novel, in the best tradition of family sagas, tells the story of three generations of a Jewish family in Krakow from the beginning of the twentieth century to the eve of the German occupation of Poland in September 1939. The story of this large, middle-class Jewish family is also the story of a deeply-rooted Jewish community and its considerable cultural and material achievements, until disaster struck and it was wiped off the face of the earth. At the beginning of the century, Krakow was under Austrian rule. The mother of the family died, leaving a husband and eight children. A different destiny awaited each of the them, each story reflecting the options which faced Polish Jews at that time. With the outbreak of the First World War, the eldest son joined the army and was sent to the Italian front. He returned a broken man, and died shortly afterwards. The second son married happily, became a successful lumber merchant and a paterfamilias. He veered between Jewish and European culture and regarded Poland as his homeland. One of the sisters, a natural rebel, fell in love with a Polish non-Jew. When he abandoned her, she became a Zionist and immigrated to Eretz Israel. Her older sister was happily married to an old-style religious Jew. Another sister married an assimilated Jew and was uncertain as to her national identity, while the fourth fell in love with a Communist. Their prosperous brother had three children - two daughters and a son - who enjoyed life in independent Poland between the wars. When the Germans invaded Poland, the family missed the last train out and with it the chance to be saved. Most of the family perished in the Holocaust.

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