



# Whisperings in the Blood: A Memoir

*Shelley Davidow*

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## **Whisperings in the Blood: A Memoir** Shelley Davidow

An exquisitely compelling story of courage, destiny and the search for home When orphan girl Bertha Frank gets onto a ship in New York in February 1937 to go to South Africa to marry a man she's never met, she doesn't know that she is repeating a journey to escape poverty and the persecution of the Pogroms made by her father from Lithuania to America in 1913, or that she is foreshadowing a journey Shelley Davidow, her granddaughter, will make from South Africa to America decades into the future. In 1937, she doesn't know that it will be fifty years before she returns to visit her home, nor that she will live through tumultuous social upheaval in an Africa on the brink of transformation. As a hopeful young adult, she cannot imagine the beauty, the love and the irreparable loss she will experience as a Jewish migrant in South Africa. Nor does she know that far in the future, her grandchildren will retrace her steps backwards to escape the violent, decaying outpost of white colonialism. In the 1980s, at the height of Apartheid in South Africa, Shelley Davidow decides to run from her country, and spends the next two decades searching for home. Then, in 2012 she discovers a box of Bertha's letters and diaries. Shelley realises that her life is an echo of patterns and repeating journeys; that there is a whispering in the blood of our forebears that tells the story of all our lives. From the Pogroms of Eastern Europe, to America's Great Depression, to the rise and fall of Apartheid South Africa and finally to Australia in the 21st century, *Whisperings in the Blood* explores the emotional legacy that we inherit from our immigrant ancestors and the complex heartache of leaving the land of one's birth.

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