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General

Shadow of the Rock
Eileen Haavik McIntire
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The Shadow of the Rock is a fictional story based on facts recorded in Florida history, and various other sources in Morocco, St. Thomas, and Gibraltar, on the Mediterranean coast of southern Spain. Eileen Haavik McIntire shares a fascinating tale that begins with Rachel Levy and her father, Moses, who set sail for America in 1781. En route, Barbary Coast pirates attack their ship and the Levys are taken to Morocco to be sold.

Concurrent with the frightening events of that capture, the author tells a parallel story of another woman in 1941, Ruth. She details the flight of Jews from the Nazis to Denmark preceding World War II, and their subsequent invasion, capture, and death. Her focus is a girl of nineteen, Ruth, who secretly transports something precious from Spanish shores. In alternating chapters the reader becomes aware of the familial connections between Rachel, Ruth, and yet another young woman, Sara Miller, who's living in Martinsburg, West Virginia, in 1998. At her Grandmother Ruth's death, Sara accepts the challenge of searching for links to her ancestors. We learn of early Florida settlement, and its first senator, David Levy Yulee. Sara's adventures take her throughout the state, and beyond.

McIntire employs the lives of real people—Rachel Levy and her father, Moses—to skillfully unfold her fiction. The historical value of her work is enhanced with authentic events: the Spanish Inquisition and the Sephardic Jews who escaped the Nazis, and also the backgrounds of the pirates: "Ferdinand and Isabella had forced the Moorish ancestors of these men … out of Spain and confiscated their property and possessions … [and they] had turned to piracy to survive."

Chapters move quickly in a mixture of danger, excitement, and pure enjoyment of the author's rich description. A bit of repetitious detail is forgotten among beautifully written complex sentences and unobtrusive dialogue that skillfully imparts information. The reader is immersed in Rachel's exotic setting: an ancient ship's rigging, and its human cargo, hidden

among the pigs and chickens; the city of Mogador, Morocco, with camels on the beach, scenes of slave trading, and glass cups of hot mint tea in the king's harem; Ruth's secret life in West Virginia, and her wish that her granddaughter will fill in the family tapestry; and Sara's investigative trip, meeting new friends in tropical dress, who serve bowls of cashews, mango chunks, and glasses of chilled white wine.

The Shadow of the Rock is a bold adventure into three centuries of one fascinating family. Readers of history, fiction, mysteries, and romance will enjoy and appreciate it.

Mary Popham