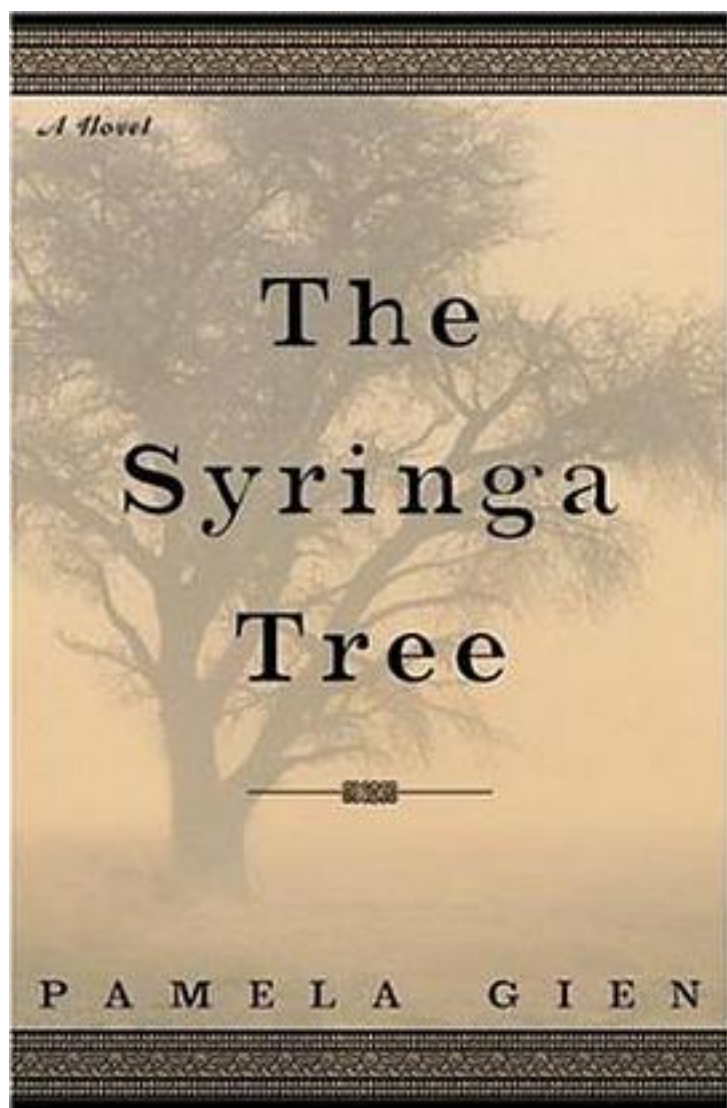


The Syringa Tree



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著者:Pamela Gien

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In this heartrending and inspiring novel set against the gorgeous, vast landscape of South Africa under apartheid, award-winning playwright Pamela Gien tells the story of two families—one black, one white—separated by racism, connected by love.

Even at the age of six, lively, inquisitive Elizabeth Grace senses she's a child of privilege, "a lucky fish." Soothing her worries by raiding the sugar box, she scampers up into the sheltering arms of the lilac-blooming syringa tree growing behind the family's suburban Johannesburg home.

Lizzie's closest ally and greatest love is her Xhosa nanny, Salamina. Deeper and more elemental than any traditional friendship, their fierce devotion to each other is charged and complicated by Lizzie's mother, who suffers from creeping melancholy, by the stresses of her father's medical practice, which is segregated by law, and by the violence, injustice, and intoxicating beauty of their country.

In the social and racial upheavals of the 1960s, Lizzie's eyes open to the terror and inhumanity that paralyze all the nation's cultures—Xhosa, Zulu, Jew, English, Boer. Pass laws requiring blacks to carry permission papers for white areas and stringent curfews have briefly created an orderly state—but an anxious one. Yet Lizzie's home harbors its own set of rules, with hushed midnight gatherings, clandestine transactions, and the girl's special task of protecting Salamina's newborn child—a secret that, because of the new rules, must never be mentioned outside the walls of the house.

As the months pass, the contagious spirit of change sends those once underground into the streets to challenge the ruling authority. And when this unrest reaches a social and personal climax, the unthinkable will happen and forever change Lizzie's view of the world.

When *The Syringa Tree* opened off-Broadway in 2001, theater critics and audiences alike embraced the play, and it won many awards. Pamela Gien has superbly deepened the story in this new novel, giving a personal voice to the horrors and hopes of her homeland. Written with lyricism, passion, and life-affirming redemption, this compelling story shows the healing of the heart of a young woman and the soul of a sundered nation.

Praise:

A gripping first novel in the tradition of such great southern African writers as Nadine Gordimer and Doris Lessing. Spare beautiful prose builds to an unforgettable climax.

--BOOKLIST, starred review

Pamela Gien's novel is impressively affecting. She is a wonder. *The Syringa Tree* as a play was uniquely moving, but Gien has taken it beyond its walls, and given us remarkable writing that stands freely as a deeply affecting and fresh telling of this classic story. —Lillian Ross

The story of a young girl and her cherished caretaker is the

story of a heartbroken country. Pamela Gien brings South Africa to vivid life, illuminating how the bonds of love are stronger than the forces of history. I read the end of the book through tears.

--Amanda Eyre Ward, author of How to Be Lost

This book plunges us inside the skin of humanity and is suffused with a rare understanding. The Syringa Tree reminds us that every life can be a drop--and a great deal more--in the sea of history.

--Scott Simon, NPR, author of Pretty Birds and Home and Away

Evocative and impassioned. Gien captures perfectly the voice of the child Elizabeth and the grown woman she becomes. -- Baltimore Sun, Summer List

Highly recommended...Gien here illuminates the shameful history of a country, by highlighting the juxtaposition of race, anti-Semitism, and class privilege. -Library Journal

A spare, yet poetic account that steadily works its magic on the reader as both a portrait of individuals, and a country, in the tumultuous time of apartheid. --Seattle Post-Intelligencer

Gien...renders South Africa...as a virtual paradise, which

painfully contrasts with the blood spilled on its soil. She's an expressive, fluent writer whose best passages are lyrical yet intimate, bringing you right into the room. --Seattle Weekly

A gorgeous, hopeful, heartrending novel. . . . This uncommonly moving, deeply humane novel nearly dances in a reader's hands with the rhythms and the colors, the complicatedness and the inimitability of southern Africa."-- O The Oprah Magazine

From the Hardcover edition.

作者介绍:

目录:

[The Syringa Tree 下载链接1](#)

标签

评论

[The Syringa Tree 下载链接1](#)

书评

[The Syringa Tree 下载链接1](#)