

## Aurora business owner is first-time novelist with The Red Apple



Revital Mula and her grandmother shared an unbreakable bond.

Growing up in Montreal after emigrating from Israel, Revi spent just about every Saturday with her grandparents as they shared harrowing stories about their journey to Canada, fleeing Poland near the start of the Second World War, and doing everything they could to survive.

As she got older, she knew these stories had to be preserved for posterity, and at one point even formed the kernel of a book ? but doing anything further with the story was put on hold when marriage, motherhood to twins, and the establishment of Monaco Interiors took over.

But the lessons she learned from her grandmother took on added resonance when war broke out in Gaza following the attacks of October 7, 2023.

?I woke up on October 8 and said, ?Okay, I have to be involved in what's going on and I have to finish this story,? says Mula.

The result is *The Red Apple*, a first-time novel for the Aurora-based designer.

*The Red Apple* follows sixteen-year-old Hanna who is forced to flee with her boyfriend, Ben, ?leaving behind everything she knows in a desperate bid to survive.?

?From the occupied streets of Lublin to the freezing depths of a Soviet labour camp, *The Red Apple* follows one young woman's harrowing journey through violence, loss, and unthinkable choices,? reads the synopsis. ?Haunted by what she witnesses ? and what she must do to stay alive ? Hanna clings to the only constant left: love.

?But survival comes at a price. Raw, intense, and unflinchingly honest, *The Red Apple* is a powerful work of historical fiction, based on the true story of the author's grandparents. In a world at war, this is a story not just of endurance, but of the quiet, defiant strength it takes to keep going.?

In picking up the story, Revi says she wanted people to ?truly understand? what people like her grandmother experienced ? ?leaving everything behind, losing your entire family, all the while being in love.?

"I think it's a story of love, and I think it's a story of hope," she says. "I really grew up with this feeling that everybody was equal, that racism was evil, and I grew up that way, I think, because of my grandparents' experience," she says. "It's not just about her being Jewish, it's about families that got obliterated because of hate."

In picking up the threads of the book again after so long, Mula undertook extensive research of the era, seeking out anything she could get her hands on "to really get a sense of what young women felt like during that time."

"There's a lot of vulnerabilities that women would feel I know men wouldn't feel, and I really wanted to include those vulnerabilities, maybe more so than what my grandmother was willing to share," she says, noting that some of the rawer details in the story may have been omitted by her grandmother. "I feel like she never wanted to hurt me or traumatize me further because they really did tell me a lot of things. My grandmother suffered a lot of PTSD after the war and I think talking about it made me feel better but, at the same time, I don't think she wanted me to suffer alongside her. There's a lot of generational trauma there. Women were really, really at risk every day. They're at risk every day in the war, not unlike some of the gender-based violence that happens in any war is 99 per cent targeted at women. I think it's important that people can truly resonate with and understand what's happening in the greater world through her eyes and experiences."

Despite the fact that when Revi told her grandmother she had visited Poland and saw many of the places she described in her stories she was greeted by, "Why'd you waste your money and go there?" her granddaughter ventures she would have been proud with the finished product that is *The Red Apple*.

"I think she would have been very happy the story lives," she says, adding that being a first-time author is a bit surreal. "I think I am still living in that suspended world where I can't believe I wrote a book, it's published and people are reading it. I want people to enjoy the novel, first of all. I think it's a great story, moves quickly, and it's interesting and suspenseful in some ways. When they get to the end, I would like them to remember that hate has consequences " and it's not just about Jewish people. Hate has consequences for everyone and if people can put the book down and tell themselves that they will move through their life without carrying that burden of hate, I think that would be the greatest thing in the world for me."

A book signing with author Revi Mula will take place at Royal Rose Gallery (15210 Yonge Street, Aurora) on September 21 at 7 p.m. To register, call 905-503-0121. For more on *The Red Apple*, visit [theredapple.ca](http://theredapple.ca).

By Brock Weir  
Editor  
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter