



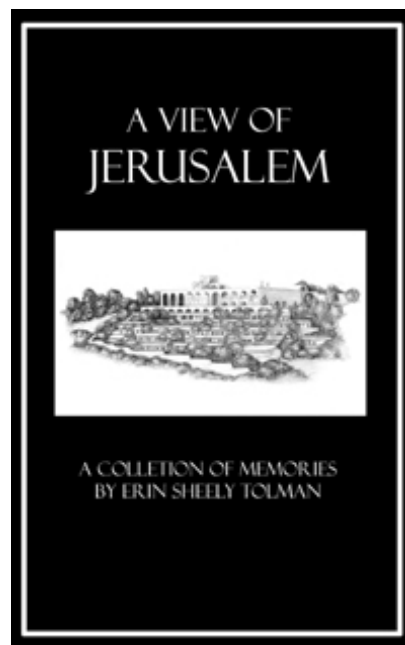
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A Collection of Memories***

by
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~ TREADING THE WINEPRESS ~

The mood is festive outside the Center near the vineyard. Grapevines creep up the wooden trellises and the fruit hangs heavy over the earth and stone pathways. Chattering students with jeans cuffed up to their knees surround a large pool made of what looks like cement topped with brick-shaped stone. Shrieks and laughter mingled with sounds of disgust ring through the hazy afternoon air. I find an empty patch of grass, remove my shoes, and roll up my pants. I walk barefooted, feeling the rough walkway with my toes, to where a professor is managing the queue.

Another professor dumps a basketful of round purple grapes into the barrel as students dance and stomp, spraying juice and pulp onto each other's bare legs. When it is my turn, I step into the stone tub and instantly understand the disgusted screams I had heard earlier. The wet pulp and seeds squish against my feet and give me the same twisty feeling in my stomach I get when I pull pumpkin innards out of a potential Jack-o-lantern. Luckily the feeling quickly subsides and I relax into the repetitive stomp stomp stomp of making wine.

The girls I am with make a ruckus and I laugh with them as our feet splash in the reddish purple juice. After a while it becomes tiring – stepping, stepping, stepping. It would take us hours to reduce all of the grapes to liquid even though there are about ten of us jammed into this one winepress. I hear a male voice, speaking almost as if to himself. I recognize the voice as Matt's and look over my shoulder. Matt sits behind me in Old Testament class and his Biblical

knowledge, passed on through clandestine comments during our lessons, has often given me a different perspective of a symbol or point of doctrine. I catch his eye and he solemnly repeats what he had said, "I have trodden the wine-press alone...and none were with me."¹⁴ I don't know if anyone heard him but me.

I look down again at the beginnings of wine beneath my feet and then I step out of the press, wipe off my legs and feet on a towel, and turn down my jeans. I walk over by the grapevines and sit, pondering his words. What would it mean to "tread a winepress alone?" I think of the dozens of students tromping over the grapes and the weariness in my own legs after just fifteen minutes of pressing.

What the Savior did for us, He did alone. Through the weariness and pain, He completed His Atonement in solitude. Through the fruit of the vine He asked His disciples to remember His blood which was shed for all of us. I trod the winepress with nearly two hundred students on a beautiful fall day but the Savior trod the winepress alone.