



Chapter 7

Can you tell me briefly how you met Val?

Well, after the war I eventually landed up in a hospital. It was a hospital that Hitler turned into a hospital, it was actually an agriculture school and rich people sent the children there to study. And it was connected to the cloister and the brothers and the nuns were teachers so they were all educated people. And he turned the school into hospitals. It was properly – they had hospital beds, big rooms and operating rooms, everything where they brought in the German soldiers who got wounded. Now when we were liberated they found a lot of ill people between us. Some of them couldn't move, they were, we call them 'musselmen' because they were just bone and skin. An American soldier could lift up one of our men who survived. And some of them didn't survive even though the doctors tried to feed them carefully, they couldn't survive any more. So I landed up there because there were a lot of Jewish doctors but there were some of the German doctors left there and I was in the administration. And one night, day, I went upstairs and went into the room where the ill people were. Some of the boys were already well and up and I was already coming out of the room and I stood at the door and I looked across and there was this face. All I could see, his brown eyes looking at me. And I asked the fellows, "Who is he, what's the matter with him?" and they said that he's still ill and he can't walk. And I came out. About a week or so after I was going into work and I could see this chap in the pyjamas walking, so I said "Oh crikey he is getting better".

And then a while after, a month or two after they were giving us, the men got suit lengths to have their suits made. They brought cotton because I had the warehouse with food and cotton and whatever they brought in, they brought in that warehouse and there were great big reels of cotton and one of those reels made 2 suits so I had the job to give 2 of them one of these reels and they went in and they made them the suit. And one afternoon I was in my own place where I lived and this chap came up, my husband, and he said that he understand that I gave the cotton, would I give him a reel of cotton. And I looked at him and I said to myself "No I'm not going to send him down to find a partner." I gave him the cotton. And I said "You know this is for two, will you

find yourself a partner?" and I gave it him. And that is how I met him. Then I got to know him better.

And after the war, what happened to your father and your sister because we know you came to the UK?

My sister and I and my father survived. My mother and my two little sisters they went in the gas chambers the same day.

Some of the girls that we were together, two of them decided to go back to Hungary and they lived near to us, to our town. So I told them to see if my father is alive. I also had a boyfriend that I was going to marry, whether he has survived. And on the way already on the train they found a chap who just went to visit my father, he was in a hospital. So they found out that he is alive. And when this fellow was told that we too were alive he got off the train and waited for the next train to go back and tell my father that we are alive. And my father jumped out of the bed, got his clothes and the nurses came and the doctors came, said "Where do you think you are going?" he says "I am going home, my girls are alive, there is nothing wrong with me" and he wrote us a letter that was the first letter I heard from him, that was already August. And he told me I have to tell him if I want to come back to Hungary, he will do what we want to do, and I did I thought he might want to, I don't want to go back to Hungary. And he said well we have to sit there quietly, he will come out when he can because it was under the Russians. So he had to come out illegal and it was February '45 or January when he actually came to join us, when he arrived. And he wasn't long with us, about 4, 5 months after, he got himself his job and he moved away. He got a house and he asked me if I am serious about my husband because I went out with him. My boyfriend from home, he didn't survive. So he said "Are you serious about him?" and I said "Yes". So he says "Well in that case you'd better get engaged and get married, I don't hold with going out". So in August we got married. And in '48 the two of us, we got an invitation to England and we came to England to join his cousin, and my father and my sister they went to Israel. And that's what happened.