

Karoly Rochlitz



My first husband. This is how we met. One time I was in great hurry after work. There was a taxi standing in front of the hospital, and I rushed to catch it. And the head surgeon, whose wife had been an assistant together with me, and who had been fired, also rushed towards the taxi. He said: 'Don't take offence, young lady, I was called to see a patient.' 'And I have a date', I replied cheekily. 'All right, I'll give you a lift downtown then.' And by the time we got there, he said: 'You could also have a date with me.' I answered: 'With a married man, doctor! Really!' 'And if I weren't married?', he asked. 'I'd put you down on the list', I said. And about three months later, his assistant, secretary, whatever, called me on the phone to tell me that that head surgeon was expecting me. God, I certainly messed up something, got a lab finding wrong, there was certainly something amiss with my work. I went up thinking 'Good lord, what have I done?' He stood behind his desk dead pale and rather severe, and asked: 'Young lady, do you remember our conversation?' I stood silently. 'You told me you don't date married men. I'm now divorced, put me down on your list.' That was my first husband, Karoly Rochlitz. Our wedding was on November 8, 1942. Three weeks after the wedding he was taken to Ujvidek [the part of Hungary that became Serbia after the First World War] as forced labor surgeon. I went to see him on weekends. The second weekend, on my way home the train was awfully crowded and I spent the whole trip standing. By the time I arrived home I was covered with blood. What with the tension and the incredible strain, the baby was

gone. I had been pregnant, for two months. My husband came back after 6 years - he was taken prisoner of war. We could not find anything to say to each other any more, we only had lived together for a few weeks before the war, life together didn't work out, and we were divorced.