

Estera Guth



This lady here is my mother, Estera Guth, on her wedding day, all dressed up in her wedding dress. I may be subjective, but for me she looks absolutely beautiful here. My mother was born in 1907 in Sibiu county, near the village of Scoreiu, and she studied in Cluj [Cluj Napoca], at the Tarbut Jewish Lyceum [4](#), also in Hungarian. She always considered that period, 1920-1924/5, her 'golden times': she enjoyed high school very much; she was a star in that place, very, very popular, and from what I understood, her Jewish and Zionist feelings there were very strong. She married my father, Iuliu Guth, at the synagogue in Fagaras in 1930. It wasn't an arranged marriage, but they probably got to know each other in the Jewish circles, because Brasov is close to Fagaras. My father told me that he had made a huge blunder at the wedding: he was a quiet, well-red man, and there was an elderly fellow who was making quite a scandal. And my father asked my mother's best friend, Sari, 'Who is that causing all the scandal?' 'My father!', she replied. 'No, I know Tig bacsi, I meant the one next to him', my father tried to explain. 'That's my brother!', she answered. My mother wasn't

religious, but she always lit the candles on Friday evenings and said the blessing, something she had learnt from her mother. But there was no challah in our house, and the food wasn't kosher. I remember my mother had a ketubbah from her marriage though. My mother was a housewife, but when I went off to college, in 1950, she took a job at the town's second hand bookshop - back then the only one in town - which she ended up running for a long time. There was a funny incident involving my mother as a librarian, which later became a good anecdote in all the bookshops in the country. In those times, under communism, you entered whatever shop, asked for something, and the invariable answer was, 'We don't have any'. It was true. So an elderly gentleman entered my mother's bookshop and asked her, 'Do you keep any books in ancient Greek?'. The answer was, 'We don't have any.'. The man, probably aware that that was the standard answer, tried again, 'You know, the ancient Greek, Hellene' 'I know, Sir, but we don't have any' 'But ma'am, the ancient Greek language, in which the Iliad and the Odyssey were written?' 'I know, Sir!', answered my mother and started to recite the first verses from the Iliad, in ancient Greek. The man was stunned. He blushed, bowed, and said, 'Please excuse me, dear madam!' And he kept on bowing and walking with his back to the door until he went out like this.