

# **“Outcasts -- A Love Story”**

**By Susan M. Papp, Published by Dundurn Press, available in bookstores across Canada now.**

## **Advance praise for Outcasts: A Love Story**

*"A lyric story of love within an epic saga of hate. You know it's true; inventing it would be impossible. It really is a fascinating and highly readable book."*

-George Jonas, author of *Vengeance: The True Story of an Israeli Counter-Terrorism Team* and *Reflections on Islam: Ideas, Opinions, Arguments*.

*Susan Papp has done a masterful job at what was an extremely difficult task. She has chosen a poignant love story to explore and explain a part of Europe in a time of crisis and extraordinary danger. As Papp eloquently explains, in this highly contested part of Europe, survival was paramount. Her book tells us much about the catastrophes that befell Europe both before and during the Second World War and the possibilities that came with the War's end. Papp gives us an immensely readable book that tells a personal story with big implications.*

-Robert C Austin, Centre for European, Russian and Eurasian Studies, Munk Centre for International Studies, University of Toronto.

**Outcasts: A Love Story** is a bittersweet story that has taken two families through war and peace -- from Europe to Canada -- amid happiness and heartbreak.

Central to their saga is the true tale of a man and a woman who chose the worst possible moment to fall in love -- and their surviving brothers' lifelong search for understanding and forgiveness.

Their story unfolds in Nagyszollos—the city of wine, in a region of rolling riversides, nestled in the foothills of the Carpathian Mountains of Central Europe, where Hungary, Ukraine and Slovakia converge.



Panoramic view of Nagyszollos, circa 1930s.

The town was a place of tolerance, where families of many creeds pursued their lives in harmony. But by 1944, Central Europe has been shattered by three years of war, and the vineyards of the Carpathian foothills are under the Nazi shadow. It is during this perilous environment that a young businessman named Tibor Schroeder and a stunning beauty named Hedy Weisz fall in love, and pledge to marry. She works as the office manager for his company.



Hedy Weisz (furthest left)

Tibor and Hedy's love for each other blossoms at the worst possible time. Tibor is a Christian, Hedy a Jew -- their relationship is a violation of Hungarian Law. What is more, Tibor is the son of the head of the press corps for the Hungarian army.

Tibor is a reservist in the Hungarian army. His unit receives its orders to leave by train. Hedy's fate is much more ominous. She and her family are herded into the Nagyszőllos ghetto.

Tibor resolves to try to save her. His plan is to hide her in a railway baggage car on his troop train and take her to safety -- wherever that may be. He constructs a secret compartment out of ammunition boxes, and stocks it with food, blankets and tokens of his love. He promises that he will desert and they will journey together to a new life.

But Tibor's plan collapses. After one night in the compartment, Hedy tells him that she cannot abandon her family. She returns to the ghetto, awaiting transport to Auschwitz, and almost certain death. The lovers are swept apart by the war and its aftermath.



Tibor, on the left -with his brother Istvan- at home in the vineyards

Twenty-five years pass before the lovers are finally reunited in Canada.

"Outcasts – A Love Story" is a sensitive and compelling human story, but it also is, in many ways, the story of all of Canada's immigrants, and the lives and loves they left behind. This story is one of the millions that formed the unique mosaic of Canada after World War II -- a new nation built of displaced families, broken lives, and lost loves. By the time Canada reached its Centennial in 1967, the war had receded far into the past -- but for one man in Toronto, and one woman in Montreal, history and heartbreak were far too strong to ever be forgotten.

In the poignant climax of the book, we join Tibor in Canada's Centennial year of 1967, aboard a train from Toronto to Montreal, bound for a reunion with his beloved Hedy and what, he dreams, will be a renewal of a love stronger than hate and war .

Based on true events, this sprawling love story of hope, courage, and redemption will stay with readers long after finishing the book. A documentary, based on this story, from Postmodern Productions is scheduled for release in Summer 2009.