



An Italian Renaissance: Choosing Life in Canada

Robert Eli Rubinstein

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After the end of World War II, Holocaust survivors Bela and Judit Rubinstein, their families having been murdered by the Nazis, returned to Hungary. This chronicle follows them first there, and then to a refugee camp in northern Italy, the only haven for homeless Jews in postwar Europe. The account also describes the unexpected opportunity for the Rubinsteins to immigrate to Canada, and narrates their life there—the home that they establish, the family they raise, and their social and professional integration into the Toronto community. Along the way, Bela and Judit reclaim their ravished ancestral faith, an act that imbues their lives with meaning and purpose. Written with sensitivity and eloquence by their son, this biography breaks with the tradition of tragic Holocaust literature to present a story of the astounding process of healing and recovery undergone by so many survivors, who had to overcome unspeakable personal trauma to build successful new lives. The universal message of hope that emanates from this book will inspire a broad range of readers.

Winner of:

2011 Canadian Jewish Book Award, Holocaust Literature

Recent decades have seen an outpouring of literature about the tragic destruction of European Jewry during the Second World War. Yet virtually nothing has been published about the astounding process of healing and recovery undergone by many survivors of the Holocaust, who had to overcome unspeakable personal trauma to build successful new lives. The present book, written with sensitivity and eloquence by the loving son of two such people, breaks important new ground in describing and shedding light on this remarkable phenomenon.

The story follows Bela and Judit Rubinstein as they return from the camps at the end of the War, their families having been murdered by the Nazis. Seeing no future in the land of their birth, they flee Hungary and end up trapped in a refugee camp in northern Italy, because homeless Jews are welcome nowhere in the world. Finally, an unforeseen opportunity arises to immigrate to Canada. The Rubinsteins establish a new home, raise a family, and integrate into the Toronto community. Achieving unimagined material success, they remain warm, decent, unassuming people. Along the way, they reclaim their ravaged ancestral faith, and this imbues their lives with meaning and purpose.

The book's universal message of hope is sure to inspire a broad range of readers.

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