

Mikhail Katsenelson's Wife



This photograph was taken in 1947 in one of the Leningrad photo studios.

It shows my future wife Ludmila. Here I'd like to tell you about our meeting and marriage.

At the end of 1940s one of my fellow-students invited me to his friend. There I saw a large young crew and noticed a girl whom I saw home that night. Her name was Ludmila Berezovskaya.

Soon she became my wife. Ludmila graduated from the Leningrad Technological College, she is an electrical engineer.

Ludmila was born in Leningrad. During the war her father was at the front line, and she together with the mother Fira Lazarevna had to stay in the besieged Leningrad. Fira Lazarevna worked at a factory (she spent 2 hours and a half to get to her factory).

Ludmila with other girls and women watched city roofs to put out German fire-bombs. She used to draw water from the Neva River through an ice-hole. She saw people falling down dead from starvation in the streets.

In 1952 I graduated from the Academy and went to serve to Lipetsk. I was already married and had a one-year-old child. That place was familiar to me, because during the war our regiment was located there some time.

But at that time we spent all our time at the airdrome and did not manage to see the sights of the city: in the daytime we prepared our planes for fighting starts and at nights we fulfilled those

starts. That winter was very snowy: if it was necessary to reach the city, we used sledge.

Now I was going to live in that city with my family. I liked the city. There is a beautiful river Voronezh in it. The city is ancient: it was founded on the place where people mined iron ore in the XVIII century. I was going to deliver lectures at the Higher Educational Tactical Air Courses.

My subject was called Martial Art of Use of Radio-Electronic Equipment. I'll never forget my first lecture. I entered the lecture hall and listened to the report of officer in charge. He was in the rank of colonel, and I was only a senior lieutenant.

I was very nervous. I came up to the table and opened the class-book. I looked at the students and could scarcely believe my eyes: I saw 33 colonels sitting in front of me! But I was carefully prepared for the lecture (I read that lecture at home for imaginary audience!). So everything was fine.

It was always very interesting for me to teach. I understood very well what kind of people I trained. Almost all of them were fighting pilots of high class, most of them overcame all stresses of war.

Besides I knew that knowledge gained from my lectures they would use during flights on the planes of the latest design (if it would be necessary, they would use it during fighting starts).

Soon together with my colleague Kostakov we wrote a textbook Navigation and Sighting Devices. The textbook appeared to be very useful, and it proved to be true absolutely unexpectedly.

Soon after the textbook was published, a group of cadets arrived at our Academy for flying practice. I was introduced to them as the author of their textbook.

One of them said 'Do you know where we keep your book?' - 'So where?' - 'We use to sit on it.' And I understood that it was a compliment: if they left the textbook on a table, someone was able to grab and take it for his own.