

## Zelda With Her Husband And Their Friend



This picture was taken in Tozkoparan in 1950, in the northern part of the neighborhood we lived in. I was recently engaged to my husband. The one on the left is my husband's friend Albert, I don't remember the last name, I am next to him, and my fiancé and future husband Nesim Ers. That day we were out for a little stroll, there was a photographer on the street and we took a souvenir together. Albert was a very good friend of my husband, they were friends since childhood. He liked gambling a lot. As soon as my husband got his weekly paycheck from work, his friend would come and say "Nesim, give me some money". He spent all his money on gambling. My husband would stay penniless. We were engaged then and my husband would not tell me about this. One day, when I pressed, I learned the truth. My husband was giving money to Albert, and when Albert lost the money gambling, my husband was left without money. I told him that when he got his paycheck I will keep the money so that he can tell him "no". That's how I put him in line. I know that this friend now lives in Israel. My spouse Nesim Ers was born in Istanbul in 1928. He finished elementary school. His mother tongue was Ladino. His father's name was Marko Eliyezer Ers and mother's name was Anetta Ers. My husband had 3 siblings. His older sister Suzan Ers (Mizrahi) had 4 children: Sara, Eliyezar, Klara, Smulik Mizrahi. His older brother Izak Ers had 2 children: Eliyezer and Moiz Ers. His younger brother Sami Ers never married, did not have children. All 3 siblings passed away. When I was around 15, they settled in the flat underneath us as a family. My spouse's mother and father, Anetta and Marko Eliyezer Ers had left for Israel around 1948. When they couldn't manage there, they returned within a year. When they came back they were looking for a house. They knew my mother and my mother told them there is an empty flat underneath us, come and take a look. They came, they looked and decided to rent the house and started living here. We did not see each other with my husband then. He would go to work, I would go to work. My husband had close friends in the neighborhood. He did not socialize with us. We never talked or anything. One day, a friend of his named Albert comes to our house and says to my mother: "we are going to gather in my house on new year's eve, girls and boys, is it possible for your daughter to attend, we are short one girl?" My mother says "listen, if my sons hear about it, they will be angry" and the kid says "don't worry, we are very close anyways, we will just have fun together,

keep it a secret, nothing will happen". My mother finally gives permission. I wasn't even 16 then. I went to that meeting that night. I had a very nice evening, we ate, we danced. The place we went to was in Kurtulus. At night to return home, since we are neighbors, my husband accompanies me and brings me home. I felt the electricity at that meeting. Two months passed. We used to go to the same place for work, to Eminönü. There weren't a lot of vehicles at the time, we would walk. We always walked both directions then. One morning, as I was going to work, there was a newspaperman in Sishane, he would sell newspapers on the floor. My husband is waiting in front of the newspaperman. As I am about to pass him, he stops me and greets me. In reality, we had already met but it was evident that he wanted to become friends with me. But I was in love with another young man, Jano Alkabes, but he was much older than me. I was 16, he was 27. But I was very much in love with him. But they were about to emigrate to Israel as a family, I had to separate. By separate I mean, we didn't socialize much but we had an intimacy. He was the friend of one of my friend's older brother and we would meet every Sunday and dance. Truly, I don't know if it was puppy love but I loved him a lot. When my husband appeared that morning we went to work together chatting all the way. At the time my deceased brother also went to work in Eminönü. Sometimes we went together, sometimes we met on the way, we would return together. Our work places were close anyways. If needed, I would go and come back with him. Next morning, I see my husband is there again. Again we went to work talking all the way. This went on for 1-2 weeks. Gossip spread right away then. ? had cousins, they immediately informed my mother. Zümbül is constantly going with someone, who is this, they asked. My mother was a smart woman, she was aware that I was walking with the neighbor but she did not say anything. This lasted almost 3 months, we started returning together from work in the evenings as well as mornings. One evening, after work, we spent too much time walking around and I got home at 9 instead of 7. I said I cannot enter home, who knows how my mother will confront me. He said don't worry, I am here. Just as I entered the house my mother confronts me with a stick. As soon as she said: "May you be cursed, where have you been?", my mother-in-law appeared, "don't worry, she comes and goes with a Jew, what is wrong with my son, does he lack anything?" she said and shut my mother up. Later on my mother said: "they are going to be engaged this week, this subject is closed". And that is how it happened. We married in the Zülfaris synagogue in 1953.