

Ester Vee With Her Brother Leo Rokhlin



This is me and my little brother Leo having a walk. This photo was taken in Tallinn in 1940.

I loved children and was dreaming of having a little brother. Whenever my family asked me what kind of gift I wanted, I always replied: a brother. Adults always laughed at this for some reason, giving me dolls or drawing albums, etc.

In summer 1939, when I was eight, I went to a school summer camp. I devised a little game for myself. There is a children's game with a stone, which you throw up and then have to catch. I dreamed up that if you catch the stone a hundred times, and it doesn't touch the ground, then it would become a lucky stone. Then you had to leave it where it could easily get lost. During the day lucky stones are still, but at night they move to a happy land. When these stones got there, they made your dearest wish come true. My cherished wish was to have a brother.

All children knew about it, and each time I thought of this wish. Of course, other children kept teasing me saying that stones were not to help in my case. One day I received a letter from my father where he wrote that on 25th July 1939 my little brother was born. All of a sudden all children believed in lucky stones. Until the very day of departure the children kept throwing up their lucky stones.

My baby brother was given the name of Leo. I loved helping Mama to take care of Leo. I quite forgot my dolls. All I could talk about was Leo and how he learned to smile, how his first tooth was growing. I always had stories to tell my friends.