

## Reyna Lidgi As A Baby



Here I am as a baby. There is no stamp of a photo shop on the back. The photo looks like a postcard - there is an inscription - CARTE POSTALE - on the back.

It was probably my mother who had written on the back: 'Rencheto [diminutive from Reyna] at 8 months and eight days, Sofia, 24th November 1929'.

I was born in an apartment house, which was situated on the corner of the streets 'Tzar Simeon' and 'Tetevenska', now 'Budapeshta'. Afterwards my family moved house to Pavlovo quarter because at the age of five I got dysentery. My father decided to rent a little house in Pavlovo and to live there until my recovery.

When I was two months old there were nannies to look after me because mum was working as in insurance agent at Asicurazione Generale. ['Asicurazione Generale': a joint-stock company. The headquarters of the company were in Trieste, Italy. In 1927 the company opened a branch in Bulgaria. The company offered services in the sphere of life and property insurances. It existed until 1944.] I can't remember where it was situated. The deepest traces in my memories were left by granny Natalia - a Russian. She was of noble origin. Her husband had been a general killed by the bolsheviks. She fled the country with her three daughters by sea and all the jewels were sewn in a doll. When disembarking from the ship, the doll fell into the sea. After that she was living in poverty and she was forced to almost gather potato peels in order to provide for her daughters. She accepted to become a nanny in our family. She looked after me for three or four years as if I were her own child. I loved her very much. She didn't use Russian with me; she used to speak to me in Bulgarian with strong Russian accent.

My mother played the most fundamental role in my upbringing and my life, my father used to go to work. And he died very early, when I was only eleven years old. My mother worked at the beginning, because she was educated - she had a college education. She started work as an insurance agent in an insurance company, but when I caught dysentery at a very early age she was forced to quit and remain at home to look after me.

Mum wanted me to spend more time at home, not to meet a lot of children so that I wouldn't catch some disease. I used to have some very interesting toys - a sleeping doll Freda, a little gramophone with records, a car that could be wound and made curves, a jumping monkey, the Monopole game. All those were bought from abroad and ordered by my father, probably to friends or colleagues. I can't be sure. I didn't like the dolls so much as a one-legged teddy bear. Usually the children came to me, to my place. Or, if I was ill, and I was ill very often, I put the toys on the windowsill and the children looked at them from the outside. When dad was ill and stayed in bed at home, we would play cards.