

Pesya Shapochnik And Her Friends



This is my mother Pesya Shapochnik in the center. To the left is her friend Fanya Berekhman. I don't know the girl to the right. The picture was taken in Kishinev in the late 1920s.

My mother was born on 25th December 1902. They said that my mother was a rare beauty in her childhood. The neighbors used to say, 'Go look, what a beauty has been born from Gersh.' The maid, a Moldovan, who worked for my grandmother, crossed herself and prayed saying, 'What a miracle, such a beautiful girl is born on Christmas!' My mother, the only daughter in the family, was the favorite. In her early childhood tutors came over to teach her so that she would be prepared for lyceum. It was a state lyceum. There were wonderful teachers in it. My mother remembered her Russian literature teacher Orlov, who plied her with love for Russian classics. My mother recited poems written by Pushkin, and Lermontov till the end of her days. She was very knowledgeable about Russian playwrights. She was interested in theater in her adolescence, following in my grandmother's footsteps.

My parents fell in love at once. In 1929 they got married. They had a wedding in Kishinev. The newly-weds were rather modern and unreligious, but in spite of that they went under a chuppah, in the central synagogue. There was a posh wedding with music and many guests from Leovo and other cities. My mother wore a gorgeous dress. It wasn't snow white, but pinkish. When I was a child I often asked her to show me her wedding gown and imagined myself in it.