

Alice Klimova



This photograph was sent to England in 1939, on the basis of which I was selected. This is what I looked like at the age of 11. I attended school of course. Rather than talk about what I liked in school, I'll tell you what I didn't like: handiwork. To this day I remember how in Grade 5 we had to knit a row of faggoting onto some apron. I was completely incompetent. So I took it home, but my mother was just as incompetent at it. Nevertheless she helped me with it somehow. So this definitely wasn't my favorite subject. I didn't like penmanship either. Otherwise I passed with more or less average marks, I always had at least one to three twos [out of five, roughly equivalent to between a B and a C], in penmanship and handiwork. I probably liked gym class the best. My sister and I played the piano. This young lady teacher used to come to our place, a saint, because it would have been hard to find someone as musically untalented as my sister and I. I loved her. She was amazingly patient with us. And it's true, that when I listen to music today, I enjoy piano most of all, so I guess something of it must have rubbed off on me. When I was little, I wasn't really

interested in anything very much. My parents were desperate, that I didn't like to read. Until once, I don't know how, I got hold of a book called 'Irca vede jedenacku' by some author named Hüttlova, one of those books for girls. Thanks to it I got into reading and today I can't imagine life without a book. But back then I was more likely to be jumping around somewhere, doing handstands and cartwheels. My father used to say, 'You're more on your hands and head than on your feet.' I attended rhythmic gymnastics twice a week. But I didn't have any special interests as such.