

Boris Kristin



This is a picture of my first husband, Boris Kristin. The photo was taken around 1925. I liked to go to the cinema with my friends. There was a jazz band playing in the vestibule before the screening of a film. I liked the young fair-haired pianist that played in the orchestra. I simply fell in love with him. I dreamed that we would be together. He rented a room from our neighbor. One evening this man came to our home and asked my parents their consent to our marriage. They were stunned since I was just 15 years old and studied in the 9th grade at school. Boris Kristin, that was his name, told my parents that he would wait until I finished school and my parents gave their consent. My parents didn't mind that he wasn't a Jew. I became his fiancée. I looked forward to coming of age and getting married. Boris' grandmother was Czech and his grandfather was French.

Boris' real last name was Kristain. I don't know how his family came to live in Russia. They lived somewhere in the south of Russia. Boris' father, Alexandr, was a postmaster before the Revolution. He died a long time ago, leaving his wife with 13 children. I didn't know them. I only knew Boris' sister Lidia and his brother Alexei. Boris was much older than I. He was born in 1906. He was very good at music. Besides working in the orchestra Boris played at a restaurant in the evenings. A year and half passed quickly. Boris and I were never alone, we could only meet in the presence of adults. They probably stood guard over my virginity. He visited us at home and we had tea with our family. Sometimes he took me to the cinema holding my hand. Boris addressed me with the formal 'You' until we got married. He promised that after we got married he would take best care of me. During my last year at school my parents prepared me for getting married. They bought me two dresses, a crepe de Chine one and a woolen one, fabric for a suit and a woolen coat. Before this I had walked in the street barefoot wearing my sister's clothes. We had a small wedding party in 1936 when I was 17 years old. A big table for guests was set up in our garden. Our guests were musicians from the orchestra, colleagues from the cinema, my sisters and their husbands and our neighbors.