

Lubov Ratmanskaya With Her Sister Vera Bayburova And Friends Sonya Grif And Sarah Shkurovich



This is me with my sister Vera and my friends Sonya Grif and Sarah Shkurovich. The photo was taken in 1924 in Kiev. When we were children, we spent most of our free time in the yard. We had a wonderful yard. I even have pictures of my friends from my backyard. We had mostly Jewish friends. There was only one German girl, Kaufman, but she was older than us. There was also a shoemaker who lived under our flat. He was a drunkard but a very nice man. He had a daughter, Nastya, who visited him often, and I made friends with her, too. The rest of my friends were Jewish: Sonya Grif, Luba Grif, Sarah Shkurovich (they moved to America). We played different games, but our favorite one was hide-and-seek. We also liked to stage different plays in the yard. We played in the yard, our audience was made up of other children, and we came up with ideas for the plays. Most of the plays were about fairies and queens. I was very good at reciting poems. Once, the son of a watchmaker invited my friend, Sarah Shkurovich, who was from quite a rich Jewish family, to take part in a competition of reciting poems. She refused to go alone and said she would take her friends. So, she took Sonya Grif, me, and I took my sister Vera, and we all went to the competition. And all of us recited poems. And I won the first prize. I was awarded a book for this, but it remained in Kiev and was certainly destroyed during the war. I don't remember any Jewish traditions in the yard, but my father took my brother and me to the synagogue - not often, but on important holidays only. Once my friend Sonya invited me to the wedding of her aunt Tanya. There for the first time I saw a chupah. There were also boys of our age who helped with the wedding. It was a rich family, they had a store where they melted figures for tombstones, made decorations and sculptures. They had a wonderful signboard but the workshop was in the basement. It was right next to our house.