

Ester Khanson With Her Father Yakov Kljass And Brother David



The picture was taken in Tartu in 1924. Father liked to take us for strolls and surprise us. Once during our walks he took us to the aerodrome and we got on a small plane. These were unforgettable impressions.

My elder brother David was born in 1917, and I was born in 1919. Only German was spoken at home, and my brother and I learned how to speak German. It was our first language.

I had a very happy childhood. The house in which my parents rented an apartment during my childhood was located in a wonderful, large garden. Father loved roses and cultivated them himself. We had a horse and two dogs – the bigger one, the watch dog lived in the yard, and the small one in the apartment.

I remember my brother's and my portraits were hung on the wall in the drawing-room. When David turned four, my mother had an artist make his portrait. David was a very handsome boy. The artist depicted him sitting on the sofa against a blue background. The portrait was made in pale shades. My portrait was made by the artist Rudolf Kreli, a Baltic German. He painted my portrait in the garden. I was holding a blooming branch of an apple tree in my hand and was smiling. Mother always made me a bow from bands that looked like a butterfly. I wore a pretty white dress with flounces with pink trimming. Those pink trimmings were not depicted on the portrait. I was very disappointed as I liked those flounces so much!

We had a wonderful nanny, whom I will never forget. Her name was Minna, and my brother and I called her Minenka. She loved us like her own children. She was a dear person to us. She warmed me with love and care in my childhood.