

Ranana Kleinstein On An Excursion In Moscow With Fellow Travelers



This is me (fourth from left) on an excursion in Moscow in the Red Square in 1950. I don't remember anybody in the picture. These were just fellow travelers. We never met again after we returned home. I kept on studying right after I went back from the orphanage, where I was since my mother was sick in hospital. I had straight 'fives' and was a very active Komsomol member. I was constantly busy, either organizing a tour or attending the theater, editing the paper, having classes with those who were lacking behind, etc. When I started the tenth grade, I found out that I was one of the candidates for a gold medal. But things turned out to be different. I was a serious girl on one hand, and on the other hand I was romantic and prone to be infatuated. I didn't go dancing as it was considered frivolous for a girl of my age and it was disapproved by the social opinion and headmaster of the school. Once, my friend talked me into attending a dance pavilion in the park. It was a disaster. We met two soldiers in the park. One of them was Russian and the other Buryat. One word led to another and one dance to another and Matvey Malkhanov, the Buryat, and I couldn't part. He was a very interesting person, erudite, polite and well-bred. In short, we fell in love with each other and soon became very close. We actually became husband and wife. When Matvey asked my mother for my hand, she went berserk and didn't want to give her consent. Matvey wasn't a Jew, and had a rare and unusual appearance. Not only my mother, but the whole Jewish Vilnius was against it. Nobody could do anything. When the two of us went to the state marriage registration office I was pregnant already. I had to transfer to the evening school, and finished it the same year without a gold medal of course. In 1951 I gave birth to my son, Alexander. I lived with my mother. By that time she liked my husband very much and they called a truce. She couldn't help loving him. He was a wonderful and kind person. Matvey was born in 1928 in Kacha, Novosibirsk oblast, Krasnoyarsk. In 1947 he was drafted into the Soviet army. His unit was in Lithuania. Thus, he turned out to be in Vilnius. Matvey's parents didn't meet me before we got married. He only wrote to them that he had met the woman of his dreams and gotten married. After a few years we went to his motherland. They welcomed me like their own daughter. They

always treated me and our children very well.