

Natalia Zilberman With Her Husband Boris Zilberman



My husband Boris Zilberman and I, Natalia Zilberman: our wedding. Photoshop in Sennaya square, Kiev, 1940.

In 1935 I finished lower secondary school -8 years with highest grades. There were 3 best students in our class: Tania Sekunova, Itzyk Shoihet and I. I entered Kiev Medical Institute.

I met a young man in Nemirov when I was 16. Odiya Serdyuk, my classmate, had a gramophone and Syutka Finkelshtein my best friend and I came to her to dance on the verandah. Once an acquaintance of mine Vassia Rudenko brought a young man wearing glasses. He was a student of Leningrad conservatory David Matzyevskiy, Jew. He played the violin. He courted me. His mother turned out to be a christened Jew. He left for Leningrad and we began to write letters. I learned a lot about Leningrad, because he sent me many cards with views of the city. He came from Kharkov where he finished music and drama institute. He took part in an international contest of violinists. Next summer David came to Nemirov again. He fell in love with me, but I wasn't in love with him. I enjoyed his company, but my mother wasn't very happy with this development of events. The following summer she took me to her brother Naum in Uglich to keep me far from David.

My mother believed that it was necessary to get education before thinking about marriage. I continued writing letters to David. He graduated from the Conservatory and returned to Kharkov where he became the first violin at the opera theater and assistant in the Conservatory. He was earning lots of money. He was waiting for me to graduate from the Institute and marry him. I got a job assignment to the district center of Andrushevka, but I knew that I was going to Kiev. I liked Matzyevskiy, but I didn't love him.

Once my mother had a patient. That woman broke her artificial teeth and my mother treated her. In half a year after her visit her son returned from the Finnish war and came to my mother to have his teeth fixed. I was sitting on the sofa reading for my final exam. He came nearer to me asking "May I see what you are reading?" I raised my head and saw that he was blushing like he never blushed in the following 44 years. On a 3rd day he proposed to me. He was my husband to be Boris Zilberman. He was 5 years older than me. He graduated from Aviation College and was a student of Bataysk pilot school. He understood that piloting was a risky profession and entered Kiev Polytechnic Institute. During the Finnish war in 1939 he was a pilot. His plane fell on a forest. One pilot was killed and another pilot and Boris survived. They were both wounded. Boris climbed down a pine tree and fainted. He had his forearms fractured and he was shell-shocked. He stayed in hospital for a long time and almost lost speaking abilities. His mother was very worried about him and that was at that time when her artificial teeth broke.

My husband to be, Boris Zilberman was born to a wealthy Jewish family in Kiev in 1913. His father Isaac Zilberman had a very high position. He finished a Commercial College in Warsaw. He got married but he didn't love his wife Esther. They had 3 children. Before the revolution Isaac bought a 6-room apartment in Kiev. He was Chief of Northern Forestry Planning Department, chief of Northern Caucasus forestry and went on business trips almost all the time. When Boris got married Isaac settled down in Kiev and became deputy manager of Department at the Ministry of Soviet Farms.

Boris and I were wed in the registry office near the Opera Theater on 9 July 1940. His friend Grisha was with us. Then we went down to Kreschatik and celebrated our wedding at the restaurant of the Grand Hotel. We had Champaign, black caviar and delicacies. I came home and felt dizzy from Champaign. I told my mother that we celebrated the receipt of diplomas. We didn't tell my parents that we got married. We believed it was more romantic in this way and it was to be a surprise for them. On that evening they went to visit their friend, eye doctor Binshtock and Boris came to see me.

At 11 in the evening I told my husband to leave because my parents were to come back home soon, but he said that now that he was my husband he was going to stay. My parents came home and I told them that Boris and I registered our wedding. My mother almost fainted such a huge surprise it was for her, but then we celebrated this event at home again. My parents were happy for us - they liked Boris a lot.

On 19 July 1940 we had a small wedding party at home big wedding parties were not customary before the war; we didn't have a huppah either. There were 3 friends of my husband and my friends at our party. We didn't have a place to live. Boris' parents, his younger sister Bella born in 1921 was studying at Kiev Medical Institute and Boris lived in the apartment in Shevchenko Blvd. Boris' older sister Manya was married, had a daughter - Talka, and they lived in Mikhailovskaya Street. My husband was director of Mechanic Plant. I had to take my job assignment in Andrushevka. Boris and his boss went to the Central Committee to solicit for my employment in Kiev, but they failed. I had to go to Andrushevka and we kept visiting each other on that year.

I had collected works of Boris Lavrenev - I was fond of reading his books. When my husband started a conversation about Lavrenev and his biography I opened my mouth. He knew such details that I admired his intelligence. I fell in love passionately and married him in two weeks. Few days before

Boris and I got married Matzyeskiy came to Kiev to marry me. I ran away from him and he beseeched me and stayed in Kiev 5 days before he left without saying "good bye". When I was married I received a letter from him where he wrote that he was desperate and that he was madly and hopelessly in love with me. I didn't respond. Later I found out that he volunteered to the front when the war began and perished in the vicinity of Kiev. I believe that his mother cursed me. She might have thought it was my fault that I made her son so unhappy. She probably believed that if I had married her son, his life would have been different.