

From "The little Jew"

Step is the hardest

Grief had fallen on the family Moishe Abramovich: the middle son, most capable, were taken into the army. No, if not the war, it would not be terrible for the boy. But the war went on for almost two years, Russia struggled, became exhausted and Jews, as always, were to blame. What will be the child there, among the embittered Russian soldiers? Oh, how many tears were shed on those seeing off! And he Lejbele, Levushka, burst into tears, though it did not have to face the future soldier.

After three months, showing him like thirty years, he had been at the forefront. He had been taught at unarmed combat, and marksmanship, and even the front step. In general, he was a quick learner: Leva fastest in training company disassemble and assemble the bolt action rifle, he deftly acted and bayonet and butt, even in the end was quite bearable speak in Russian.

Comrades treated him well, but sometimes they unpleasant habitually spoke about Jews. He had used to it. And at night he saw in a dream his mother, told her about his life, soothed her.

And here's a guy standing in front of the commander of a combat infantry platoon officer Ustin Tarasovich Bondarchuk.

- Little Jew? - Casually asks the platoon commander, knight of the three soldiers' George Cross - and the officers', recently.

- That's right, I'm a Jew, your honor! - Valiantly responses Lev.

Bondarchuk spits, closes for a moment his full of hate eyes.

- Okay. Let's try you in the case.

Lev arrived at the busiest time of preparation to attack

In the evening, the platoon commander asked the soldiers, causing volunteers to go to investigate.

Immediately there were some hunters. The ensign selected only three of the most experienced and spat, squinted - and added:

- Little Jew, too, will go.



The drawing of Alexander Gerson

Abramovich looked back.
But there were no other Jews there.

- Yes, yes, - affectionately sung Bondarchuk - and you, and you, little Jew. Senior will be Alliluev. You have to capture a prisoner for interrogation. I firmly hope for you, my Eagles.

In the last sentence he clearly imitated the company commander Martynov soldiers favorite, but only later realized it Lev.

That night recalled the newcomer like a dream.
They got out of the trench and crawled to the positions of the Austrians, thundering by the commotion raised by the groups, distracting attention of the enemy.

Approached safely, martial his affair, Lev did not even have time to get scared, as it should. And then he realized the German speech: it was like the Yiddish. He realized that the officer, puffing a pipe, was the chief and that he accused other officer of excessive caution.

Lev translated this in a whispering voice to Alliluyev, and Alliluyev oriented himself instantly.
After a while, they piled into his trench the pipe smoker.

After this case Siberian Ivan Alliluyev and Jew Leib Abramovich were friends. The division has successfully led the offensive, the ensign several times sent volunteers to the exploration and always melodious added:
- And the little Jew, too, will go.

The young soldier quite soon got used to overcome fear: the main thing is to be a busy affair, firmly engaged, and believe that everything will be fine. But, as before, he found himself on the look of hatred of his commander. Lev also hated him, for this reason he was himself called to investigate.

In February 1917 and Alliluyev and Abramovich had two of the cross of St. George.

The Mortal Enemies

And then Lev was shot. At the back. This was shortly after the second bestowal of Order. After beating a surprise attack of only yesterday fraternized with them Austro-Hungarian troops, Russian troops were thrown into a counterattack.

Lev was running fast, furious with all the yelling battle "hurray", but suddenly someone from behind as if pushed him, and he fell.
He tried to get up and felt a strong pain. He groaned.

Ran straggler Alliluyev, raised him - and he lost consciousness. He came to his senses on a hospital bed. Ivan was sitting next to him.

- Revolution is in Russia, - he said - get you well soon! And shot at you, brother, you know who? Bondarchuk. We wanted to slap him, but resisted Martynov: he will be judged, Martynov said, this is necessary. And the reptile escaped before this Court. Where is he now?

A month later Lev was discharged from the hospital, found fit for further service in the infantry. But he was a different Lev: he knew what he wanted and that he would fight for. Together with the Bolshevik and his faithful friend Ivan Alliluyev.

And both were in a cavalry regiment of the young Red Army. They fought bravely, sick with typhus, were injured. They wanted to learn: Lev - a doctor, Ivan - an agronomist.

Once in their camp approached the gypsy, offered to tell fortunes. She agreed for the meal. And she black-eyed said, staring at the hand of Jewish fighters, in his eyes - and laying cards out:

- There will be a lot of bumps on the your fate Lev, you'll lose loved ones, but the love is waiting for you, about what others only in dreams see. Life will beat you, but you'll conquer the evil enemy of you And you will die easily in the dream.

- How many years will I live?

- Why do you want to know? You will live. You'll babysit your grandchildren.

She made a new layout.

- And you, Ivan, for many, many girls will give a joy, but you will fight like a fish on the ice, between state-owned Kings. And the evil wind will carry you into strange, distant lands. There, you'll be ...

- Get out of here - Alliluyev became angry. - Go, go! You are talking about the small stuff - and do not blush!

- How did she know our names, huh? - Checked himself Abramovich.
- Yes, we called out to each other. About Martynov she was not asked where he was sent by Trotsky, and about Bondarchuk: where he is fighting against us.

The last was seen on the same day. In the fight near the hamlet of Black Log were captured by the Red Cossacks several wounded, among them was Bondarchuk. While questioning prisoners, the White squads attacked, and the Red threw the prisoners to themselves and their legs barely carried away.

The Love

In November 1919 the friends were in Omsk. During the capture of the city Abramovich was shot in the leg - and was in the hospital, and his friend went to war without him.

They said goodbye joylessly: they used to be always together, as it were intermarried. Six weeks later the soldier Lev was discharged from hospital. The foot had failed him, he walked with a limp - and Leva asked to send him on an armored train. In the meantime, he took a corner on the street Podgornaya, on the left bank of the river Om.

Daughter of the owner of the hut, named Lena Shlykov was low, but she has a beautiful figure. She was funny girl of seventeen, graduated from the parish school and worked as a seamstress at a dressmaker.

Lev immediately took her ax, chopped firewood, lit the stove. He took the rocker and toddled to take the water.

Lena at first seemed not to notice the guest. But on the fourth day she loudly laughed at his jokes, and it cheered the lodger. He began to talk in the evening about his military affairs, trying not to brag, but only laugh Lena.

He remembered his childhood, there was also a lot of humor in his opinion. He liked her childlike laughter, liked the way she shyly braided her hair at this time, as every now and then she covered her laughing mouth with her fingers so cute. When he took her hand in his two hands, she looked him straight in the eyes and said softly:

- Do you want to marry me?

He became hot, without a smile, he replied:

- Only agree! I'm still lame, but it is said it will pass. But the fact is that I am Jewish, of course, that will remain ...

- You do not know me, and you want to get married. That is wrong. As for a lameness and a Jew, if I really believe you and like you, it does not matter. I need a husband, and children need the father. That's the main thing, you Levushka-curly head.

The last words came to him as a marvelous, sweet music, even his head began to spin slightly.

Shlykov-father, who lost in the recent epidemic his wife and two younger children, in response to a request by Abramovich to give him Lena sighed and shook his head - weather sorry, or negative.

He paused, silent hard. Utter:

- She will live, so, she will decide. Just be not in a hurry: she is still a child. And no hurry at all.

- How no hurry, Nikolai Andreyevich? I leave on the train, and then the other man can woo ...

- The separation is not a dangerous for Big Love, and how can you fall in love, if only two weeks you know the girl?

- I know only one thing: I will not love another girl.

- Okay, we talked, - wearily concluded Shlykov. - Come back and let's talk. We'll see.

In the evening armored train was moved to the east.