**A Forgotten or Abandoned Village**

Spring …It is time when the world wakes up. Warm bright sunbeams touch gently the ground and you can see how everything is filled with life. People with happy smiles run out of their houses and meet spring. Every house, street, village and town comes to life. But, unfortunately, there are places that are dead despite the arrival of spring. It is difficult to express any feelings when you see abandoned villages, empty houses with broken windows. Some houses are still quite strong and it seems to me that their owners have just gone to somewhere for a short time. But it’s not true. A person has not entered the thresholds of these houses for many years. There are abandoned fields overgrown with bushes and thistle near such villages. Many abandoned and forgotten villages exist in the world, but one of them is especially close to me because my great-grandfather Yury Demyanovich and great-grandmother Anastasia Stepanovna lived there and my granny Irina Pavlova spent her carefree childhood in this countryside. The name of such a lonely village is Petrivschina.

My grandmother told me that Petrivschina was a small village where kind, sympathetic and cheerful people lived. The houses were never closed because all villagers were like one family. The neighbors always helped each other in difficult situations. In quiet summer evenings people gathered together to take a break after hard work, talk about life, enjoy the beauty of nature. When I was a child my granny often told me about her native place. And I held my breath, absorbed every word spoken by her and drew fabulous pictures of nature in my imagination. It seemed to me that it was difficult to find more beautiful place than Petrivschina. It is unique in different seasons: in a pensive autumn when trees dress up in gold, in a cold winter when the whole earth is covered with a snow-white carpet, in spring when nature wakes up again after a long winter sleep and birds sing songs in an endless blue sky. But it is especially good in summer. The village is situated on the hill surrounded by an old forest. Slender birches, evergreen pines, thin aspens ... every breath of the wind brings their quiet whispering and it seems that you get into a fairy tale where the characters are colorful flowers, magnificent trees and shrubs in a bright green dress decorated with precious emeralds. Colorful moths soar silently above the boundless green meadows .The village resembled a real fairyland. And I should say that even now when Petrivschina is abandoned the surrounding nature has not lost its magical beauty.

People have always associated the brightest memories with their childhood. So we often come back in our thoughts to that happy time when we thought that life was full of happiness and joy. Such memories really warm our soul, make smile sincerely. When my granny tells about her life in Petrivschina her cheeks turn pink, the body is filled with energy, the wrinkles on her face smoothen as if she comes back to her youth. It is so nice to see my grandmother so carefree, so full of life. She told me many interesting stories. And all of them will remain forever in my memory. Her stories are like an invisible thread that connects me with the history of my family. Now I would like to share with you, Mr. Gerry, and give you this wonderful drug (a story) that will be able to fill your life with a little joy and warmth. I hope so.

My granny tells:

"When I was a young girl I lived through a lot of interesting moments. Some of them I remember vaguely and some event left the deepest and brightest impression in my memory.

It was a snowy winter, the time of the most magical holiday - Christmas. December 24, 1957. Christmas Eve. Since early morning my mother and sister had tidied the house and then they began to prepare Christmas dinner which according to an old rite consisted of such dishes as herring with oil or fish, kvass with mushrooms, pancakes with poppy seeds, oatmeal and finally kutia. We put the cooked kutyu before sunset in the so-called "red corner" where the icons were placed. When it began to grow dark and the stars appeared in the sky we put some hay on the table covered with a cloth. The whole family gathered together at home: mother Anastasia, father Yuri, sister Lola, brothers Vladimir and Yuvenaly and me. After Christmas dinner we went out into the street which at Christmas time was always full of young people. All boys and girls sang carols, joked, played games. After that the girls told fortunes. At that time it was believed that divination could predict who would be your "betrothed." And the guys went to the neighboring village Shabany. Among them were my neighbors Ivan Dunets, Viktor Karavatsky and Ivan Lushchyk. They knew that at that time I made friends with Tadeush Litvinovich who lived in Shabany. Then the guys decided to play a trick: to steal Tadeush’s horse and bring it to our barn. Early in the morning my mother as usual went to the barn to milk a cow. When my mum started to milk she heard that somebody was sneezing loudly behind her. It was Tadeush’s horse which had woken up from the noise of pouring milk in the bucket. My mother was so frightened when she saw a strange horse (our family did not have any horse at that time)! My mother ran quickly outside. The milk was spilled. Tadeush’s parents noticed the loss of their horse and woke up the whole village. Some time later when it became clear what had happened, who "had stolen" the horse, our villagers couldn’t stop laughing. "

  









