Franka Ronen To Fannie, Kiev August 30, 1922.Doc

Franka Ronen to Fenya Ronen Battalen Kiev, August 30, 1922

Good day, dear sister:

At last, we received a letter from you. You can't even imagine what this letter means to us. We do not believe our eyes, that we have it. My God, I have read the letter a few times and even now can't believe that it is from you, that you had written it with your own hand!

Fenya, dear! Thank you so much for the great joy that we have now – your letter. Mother was overjoyed. Sarah and I were at your former mistress, Genya. Sarah is teaching her daughter and she in turn sometimes sews for Sarah. We were sitting at Genya's and talking about you. I was very angry with you for not having letters from you. Genya told us that you are very negligent in general. But I answered her, how could it be that you had forgotten your relatives, knowing that we live here worse than you there. Genya was calming us: that maybe you write letters but we do not receive them. And suddenly our mom runs in, in such condition that I at first was scared. She cries: "A letter, a letter from Fenya," but I thought it was not true. When I looked at Mom's face I understood – it is the truth. We were running along the streets and people, all the people there paid attention to us. You know, I thought I would never get home, though it is only a few blocks from Genya's apartment to ours.

At last we are home and I myself am reading the letter, crying with joy, with tears. I can't even describe how we all felt. We cried, were noisy, Mom was weeping...

But okay, it is enough, let us write something different. I am willing to tell you about so many things. But I am so happy that I cannot concentrate, too many thoughts.

I need to pull myself together and begin.

I don't even know about what to write you first: about our life today or about those horrible days...Dear Fenichka, every time it comes to my mind, I can't stop crying and weeping, why did it happen? Though it happened long ago (it seems to me just lately), in 1919, when, as you know almost everybody got sick with typhus. At that time our relatives from Fastov came to us, escaping from armed gangs. The bandits killed our uncle and they were so scared. There was nothing to do but to have them stay with us, though we had a very small apartment and their family consisted of eight people. So they stayed with us and all of them got sick with typhus, and this disease is very contagious.

I don't know how we got typhus, maybe from them. Soon Sarah got sick, then father and after father, me. Nechamka took care of us, as Sarah and I had enteric fever, which is not as contagious as spotted fever.

Father had spotted fever and we took him to the hospital. Fenichka, please don't worry; all these events were long ago. It would have been good enough if we had not had one death at home.

It is impossible to describe our sufferings. No money at all. Some kind people helped us out. The times were so bad that even for money you could not get anything. Our mother and Avram could not look after us; only Nechamka was a good nurse.

Poor girl, she'd suffered a lot giving us all her time, health and nerves. When we were almost recovered, she got the typhus. You understand, she was very exhausted and famished, and could not endure it. She had brain complications and after three weeks she died. It happened on December 8, 1919.

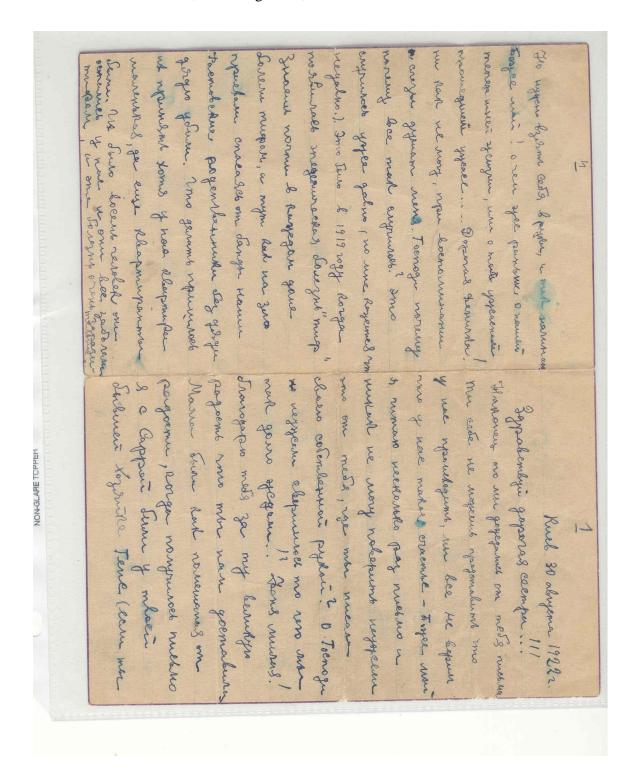
If you only knew what a nicer person she was, so capable and smart.

Dear Fenya, sorry for having told you all that. But sometime you should have known it, somehow. I think this was her destiny, not to suffer any more.

Now I will try to give you a picture of our life. I feel terribly for writing this unhappy letter to you and thus making you cry. But you, in turn, will write us only good letters!

I feel especially sorry for Mom; she has been working all day long baking bread, to sell. This is unbearable work for her. And, in order to start something else we need money. Everywhere, look around; we have to have that money. As for our father, you know him; if he had been more energetic we all would have lived better. He looks so tired, like an old, old man. He works very slowly. We could not have lived on his salary. But Mother is the only breadwinner.

I do nothing, I can't find a job. I don't have a specialty or any skills. And besides that I have no luck in life.



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