

Lukas Smilak #23

"Peek into Your Past!"

I am writing about my mom. My mom's story is about how she escaped from Czechoslovakia in 1982, when she was 10 years old. After listening to her story, I learned that life is unpredictable, because decisions that you take can sometimes have disastrous consequences or can sometimes turn out to change life in wonderful ways.

This photo is important because it represents the freedom her family felt after escaping the oppressive communist regime in Czechoslovakia.

Her parents didn't even tell her that they were going to escape because they were afraid that if my mom or her brother told anyone about their plans at school, the communist authorities would come and arrest them.

My mom's family escaped on foot through the mountains between Yugoslavia and Austria. My grandmother and my grandfather took a dangerous journey at night. They climbed the mountains, with my grandma walking from the mountaintop down to Austria, while my grandpa returned to Yugoslavia where my mom and her brother were left sleeping in a tent. The three of them then crossed the border by car (they had to lie about my grandma's whereabouts!) and started looking for her. They didn't even know if she survived. It took them a long time to find her.

The most valuable thing I learned about this photo is that some decisions you take you cannot undo. My mom and her family didn't know whether they would make it safely to their destination, nor did they know whether their new "home" would be everything they hoped it would be. They didn't know whether they would ever see their families back in Czechoslovakia again. They took so many risks!

Sometimes though, especially when things get unbearable, you just have to take that leap and hope that you land.

