Across the yard, there he was. The young little boy who my parents called “Jewish.” I never quite understood what that was or what that meant. He looked just like me. He looked just like any little boy who lived down the street. I don’t understand why people looked at him any differently or why he had wear differently clothes or symbols on his shirt to tell us who he was. I never understood why he needed to do that. I also don’t understand why he didn’t want to be my friend. I just wanted to be friends. Every time I tried to play with him, I would have to sneak out of my home because my parents would get very mad. But then once I would sneak over there, he wouldn’t come out to play.

One night there was a loud knock at the door. When my father went to open it, I hid behind the door. The two men at the door looked like police officers, very big, very scary. I heard the officers ask my father if they could take a look inside. They were looking for these “Jewish” people. I knew what I had to do. I grabbed my coat and ran out the back door.

It was starting to get dark outside. I had spent enough time staring out the window to know exactly where his bedroom was and how to warn him that there were people out there, people that were looking for him. I wasn’t sure what I was going to tell him. I wasn’t sure if they were good people or bad people looking for him.

I knocked on the door a few times. I began pounding and pounding because he wasn’t coming out. I finally saw him peak out the window. “Hi!” I shouted. I continue to yell towards him, hoping he would open his window at one point. “There are people looking for you,” I smiled right after that. I knew that wasn’t the right reaction as soon as I saw the look on his face. These were not good people and I knew that from that very moment. He had this look on his face, the same one my mommy has when she’s having a very bad day. I had to get him out of the house and hide him. The police were probably almost done with my home. I had to get him in there.

When I looked back up, the boy was gone. I started pounding on the window again. He came back with his parents who had the same frightened look on their faces. I smiled, “It will be okay.” They opened the window and the boy came out first.
As we finally reached my house, I needed to find a place to hide them. Somewhere nobody would care to look. Then I remembered about a hiding place in my closet, one that when me and my dad would play he never found me. After I hid them I had to explain to parents that we had to help them out. I wouldn't be able live with myself if I knew something bad happened to the little boy and his family. At first my father was angry because he knew we were putting our own family at risk, but after a little thinking he agreed. He told me he's proud of the choices I made to protect other innocent people.

Moments later we hear another knock. My dad opened the door and the police asked him about the neighbors. He responded that they are gone and they replied that they need to check our house again. They looked everywhere, but luckily never checked in the secret hiding spot in the closet. When they finally left it was safe for the boy and his family to come out. The little boy's face lit up and I knew that from there on I would have someone to play with because he was safe and so was his family. After that check up the policemen never showed up again. We kept the family safe until it was safe for them to finally be able to return home and live their lives in peace.

Several years later after everything I went through with my family. I grew up still living with the horrible memories from the genocide. I was sitting in a cafe waiting for my kids to come meet up with me after school. I heard a man talking about how he doesn't know what to do because he knows he needs to help people and fly to Bosnia, but knowing his life would be in danger and maybe he would never be able to see his family again. This reminded me so much of how back then I helped that family survive from the Nazis. I began speaking to the man and told him how I would never go back and change what I did for those people. I knew that I was putting my life at risk, but at the same time I was saving the lives of innocent people. Amazed with the story I told, the man named Dr. Pilav decided to risk his life for those in need. I realized that day that there is evil in the world, but it only takes one person to make a difference in someone else's life. To be someone's hero.