

Name: _____ Teacher: _____ School: _____

Grade 6: The Wall (Chapter 3)

August 17, 1961

East Berlin

Early Morning

Raindrops tapped gently against the crystal of Franz's watch face. It was just a few minutes after seven o'clock in the morning when he stepped out into the light rain to walk to school.

Though it was difficult to get out of bed that morning, Franz had made sure to rise good and early—even before his mother's usual wake-up call. He wasn't going to risk leaving too late and not running into Karl.

What if he's spoken to Father?

People passing Franz on the street looked suspiciously at him as he walked around, looking left and right, forward and backward, over and over again, waiting to spot the familiar deep green uniform of the Combat Groups of the Working Class.

After a disappointing twenty minutes, Franz ended up having to run to school, despite his early wake-up. This was the fourth day in a row he hadn't seen Karl during his morning walk to school.

The school day seemed to drag on for an eternity. Franz's mind was filled to the brim with what-ifs: What if his father wasn't able to cross the wall? What would happen to him if he tried? Would Franz's note get him trouble?

Franz stirred from his daze when his classmate Agatha Richter asked hesitantly, "Um . . . so then, why did they build the wall here?"

Confused, Franz looked over at the boy next to him, whose textbook, unlike Franz's, was open to the correct page. The class must have been discussing the Great Wall of China.

When the teacher hesitated to answer, Agatha added, "Was it to keep people out, like the Great Wall of China? Or to keep people in?"

It was obvious to everyone in the room that the teacher did not want to answer any of these questions. He nervously wiped the sweat from his forehead and managed to fumble out, "Die Mauer, mein Schulkind (The Wall, my Children) . . . is, ah, in our best interests. The government believes that, ah, it will help us . . . with the economy, and things like that."

He tugged on the collar of his shirt and, ignoring the apparent dissatisfaction of the class with his response, returned to his lesson about ancient China.

Franz could feel his face grow hot. *In our best interests? My dad is stuck on the other side of the wall!* He wanted to get up, scream in his teacher's face, and stand up for his father and all the other people whose families were divided by the wall—but he knew better. His mother wouldn't approve of disobedience in school, regardless of the reasoning behind it.

When the school bell rang, Franz hurried out before everyone else. He said good-bye to Roland in passing, telling him he had to hurry home to give his mother a hand with chores. In reality, Franz just wanted to be alone with his thoughts. Once the school building was out of sight, he slowed down and began shuffling **morosely** down the streets, kicking pebbles and stomping in puddles.

“Oof!” Franz exclaimed as he hit his head and fell backward into a puddle. He had been so hunched over and focused on his feet that he must’ve walked into something. Franz shook away his haze and rubbed his forehead, then shifted his gaze upward. No, he hadn’t walked into *something*—he had walked into someone.

“Karl! Boy, am I glad to see you!” Franz leaped to his feet with renewed energy, paying no attention to his soaked clothes.

“Oof, Franz,” said Karl. He rubbed his chest, which Franz must have hit with his forehead.

“Es tut mir leid,” (I am sorry) Franz apologized. He was so relieved to finally see Karl that he couldn’t get the words out fast enough. “Have you heard from my father?” he asked.

The soldier shook his head apologetically. “*Nein*, not yet, Franz. I haven’t been able to get the message across the wall.” He could see the disappointment wash over Franz’s face and he took a second to think. “But there is a truck bringing some cargo across the border tonight. I’ll try to send the message with one of my friends.”

That lifted Franz’s spirits a bit. He thanked Karl excitedly and apologized again for walking into him. They parted ways there, Karl needing to return to his patrol and Franz needing to get home for dinner.

When Franz sat down to eat with his mother and grandparents, he didn’t bother telling them about his meeting with Karl. The last thing Franz wanted to do was get his mother’s hopes up. She had been quiet and withdrawn for days. Franz never thought he would miss his mother’s nagging him to do his homework.

With the help of Franz’s grandparents, the after-dinner chores were done quickly, so Franz was able to get an early start on his schoolwork. It was a good thing, too, because after today’s incident, his teacher had assigned a significant amount. As the clock ticked on and the time neared 10 P.M., Franz found his eyelids growing heavier and heavier. Instead of answering his homework questions with long, detailed paragraphs, he began scrawling short sentences and phrases. The last thing Franz remembered before his eyes locked shut for the night was his doodle of **menacing** barbed wire wrapping around his sentences.

Independent Activity

We’ve talked a lot today about the structure the author is using and that time has been an important element. Chapter 4 takes place on August 18, 1961. That’s the next day after the events in Chapter 3. So, what do you think is going to happen in Chapter 4? Your independent assignment for today is to write the first couple of paragraphs (you can write more if you want to) of Chapter 4—your prediction, of course, because I’m pretty sure you haven’t read this story before. To write in a way that is like the author, start with the time of day that the chapter begins. I’ve also noticed the author usually uses some dialogue—either inner thoughts of Franz or actual conversation between character. So, decide who Franz talks to at the beginning of Chapter 4, and include that in your writing. You may find a place to

include something from the informational text we read about the Berlin Wall to make sure you are keeping the “historical” in “historical fiction”!

When you finish your writing, go back and check for correct capitalization and punctuation. If you have dialogue, you’ll want to use quotation marks.

So, to recap your assignment:

- Write the first few paragraphs of Chapter 4 in the same style as the author has done in Chapters 1-3
- Include the time that the chapter begins.
- Have dialogue between two or more characters.
- Check for correct punctuation and capitalization.
- Be Creative!



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