

Name: _____ Teacher: _____ School: _____

Grade 6: *The Wall* (Chapter 5)

August 19, 1961

East Berlin

1:15 A.M.

The door to his apartment clicked shut softly behind him, and Franz realized that he might never set foot inside his home again. His grandmother and grandfather remained inside, and Franz's heart sank knowing that he had just said his last good-bye to them. His grandparents couldn't go with them. They didn't think they could make it over the wall. They feared they would slow the family down or—even more horrifying to imagine—cause them to get caught.

"We've lived in this neighborhood our whole lives. This is our only home," his grandfather had told Franz. "But tonight, your new life begins."

Franz considered his grandfather's parting words and tried to imagine what the future would hold for him on the other side of the wall. What would life be like in West Berlin? Would he make friends at his new school? But the question that loomed largest was whether his family could even make it over the wall—and what would happen if they didn't.

"Franz, it's time. We must leave now," his father said. "Are you ready?"

Franz looked into his father's eyes, and in them he found the courage he needed. The future was unknowable, but he felt ready for anything.

Franz and his parents set off into the night. Though Franz had walked these same streets a million times before, he felt he was seeing them for the first time. All of his senses were heightened. His mind was on full alert, and adrenaline raced through his veins. Every sound and shadow caught Franz's attention as he scanned the streets for soldiers and police. Though they didn't live far from the crossing point, the family took a **circuitous** route around the neighborhood, in case they were being followed. They couldn't risk having a guard notice that they were making their way to the wall.

The family moved swiftly, passing long rows of trees that looked like silver columns in the moonlight. Whenever he saw a passerby, Franz slid into the night shade of the trees. When the family finally emerged from the plaza, the **hulking**, menacing wall loomed before them. It had grown even taller and sturdier since Franz had first laid eyes upon it.

Franz pointed eagerly to the section of the wall standing just ahead of them. "There it is! That's the spot!"

Just as Franz had described it in the note, there were no guards standing by the wall. The family cautiously made their way toward it, glancing up and down the street to make sure there was no one who might see them. To their left and right in the distance, Franz could see two guards patrolling the wall, still walking with their backs to the family.

"This is our chance!" said Franz's father. "We must go before they turn and face us. It's now or never. Hurry!"

Franz had played this moment in his mind a thousand times, and now it was actually here. His heart raced, and the air crackled with electricity. He and his father hoisted his mother up the wall first, and with outstretched arms she fumbled for something to hold onto other than the sharp barbed wire. At last, her searching hands found a metal pole, and she pulled herself up. As she edged over the top of the wall, she noticed that it was sparkling strangely in the moonlight. Then she realized why. Jagged shards of glass were embedded along the surface. She warned Franz and his father before safely lowering herself down the other side.

As soon as Franz's mother was safely across the wall, his father tossed their bags over to her, then boosted his son up to the same metal pole. Franz used all his strength trying to pull himself up, but his feet kept slipping against the wall's slick surface. As he struggled to the top of the wall, he heard a voice booming from the street behind them, followed by the rapid clacking of boots against the pavement. To his dismay, he saw a soldier running right toward them. In a moment of panic, Franz's grip loosened and his hands slipped off the pole. Falling backward, he grabbed for the top of the wall and his palm skated across the broken glass. A shard cut a deep gash in his hand, but he was able to maintain his grip through the pain. He pulled himself onto the top of the wall and stood as close to the edge as he could and still avoid the barbed wire. When Franz looked back, his face went pale.

Karl stood with his back to the wall, pointing a rifle at Franz's father directly in front of him.

Franz's father looked closely at the soldier's face and breathed a sigh of relief. "Hello, Karl. I am your friend Franz's father. We've known each other for years."

Karl hesitated but kept his rifle lifted. He seemed as scared and confused as Franz felt. Only when Karl looked up and saw Franz on the wall with blood running down his hand did he finally lower his gun. "Listen to me carefully," said Karl, breathing heavily and glancing over his shoulder. "Other soldiers will be here any second. You have no time. Please hurry. There is nothing more I can do to help you."

"Thank you, Karl," Franz's father whispered. "My family and I will never forget you."

Then Franz's father swiftly scaled the wall. He helped Franz past the treacherous barbed wire and down the other side. From the West Berlin side, Franz watched helplessly as his father struggled to get himself over the dangerous barrier.

Franz couldn't see what was happening across the wall, but he heard more voices, and they were getting louder.

"Anhalten! Anhalten!"

Franz stared in horror when he realized his father's shirt was caught in the barbed wire. "Hurry! Hurry, Father! The soldiers are coming!" he pleaded. His heart pounded like a drum, and the only sound he could hear at this point was its thudding beat. Suddenly the crack of gunfire reverberated through the air. The next thing Franz saw was his father falling toward him and landing on the ground. Franz ran to his side, tears instantly welling up in his eyes.

"Father!" he shouted. "Are you hurt?"

His father staggered to his feet, dazed but not injured.

"I'm . . . fine, son," he said, checking his body to make sure. "That must have been a warning shot. I was able to get my shirt free before they fired again." His father took a step and Franz could see he was limping. But his father was less worried about his leg and more worried about his son. He put a hand on Franz's back. "I'm afraid I saw the soldiers arresting Karl . . . there was nothing I could do to help him."

Franz and his parents stood in silence, each of them contemplating what Karl had done for them. The wall had once again taken someone away from Franz.

His father took his hand, and then his mother's, and gently led them away from the shadow cast by the wall. As they walked toward their new home in West Berlin, Franz knew that they would never forget the struggles and sacrifices of their family and friends on the other side of the wall.

Independent Activity

Your independent assignment is to write a paragraph explaining how someone in *The Wall* demonstrated the theme: *People often make sacrifices for the good of others*.

- Begin your paragraph with this sentence:
In the historical fiction story, *The Wall*, which is about the Berlin Wall, the author develops the theme: *People make sacrifices for the good of others* through the characters' actions.
- Then, choose a character that sacrificed for Franz and describe what that character did.
- Include the last line from the text in your paragraph.
"As they walked toward their new home in West Berlin, Franz knew that they would never forget the struggles and sacrifices of their family and friends on the other side of the wall."
- You may choose to begin by citing the text with a sentence starter like this *The author ends the story with this statement, ...*
- Remember to use quotation marks since this is a direct quote.