

INSIDE THE WALL OF SHAME

A Dramatic Monolog
(May also be used as an oration)

by
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It was a cold, rainy evening in late December, and I had retired for the night. The rain was beating fiercely against the windowpane as I pulled my covers closely about me. A feeling of loneliness and dejection overwhelmed me. Everything had been wrong for me that day. My classes had been unusually hard, my teachers impatient, and my friends seemed neglectful. I was so tired, and I fell asleep.

As I slept, I dreamed. In my dream, I was in East Berlin inside the Wall of Shame. Yes, I repeat, "Inside the Wall of Shame." There was no laughter there, no friendly greeting, no happy children at play. The whole atmosphere revealed only an atmosphere of fear, anxiety, and hunger. Not only hunger for food, but hunger for freedom, for a glimpse of the outside world beyond this prison wall.

In my dream, I, too, was one of them. I walked slowly down the streets looking for a chance to escape. Communist soldiers were everywhere. I felt so helpless. I stopped one man near a small shop and asked if he could help me find a room. I was so tired from walking. He muttered something in German and hurried on his way looking nervously about as if he were afraid to offer a helping hand.

It seemed that I walked forever hunting some asylum from this terrible place. As the weather grew colder, I put my hands in my pockets to keep them warm and found a few pennies. Perhaps this would be enough to buy a little food. I came to a little store and when I opened the door, I saw that it was a bread shop. The only person in the shop was an old lady; her face was deeply wrinkled, and the look in her eyes told me she had seen much suffering.

I held out my hand with the pennies and asked if she would sell me some bread. Not saying a word, she handed me some stale bread. Then in broken English, she said, almost in a whisper, "You are an American." A great feeling of relief swept over me. Maybe here at last was help. I told her that I didn't remember how I got here but that I wanted to get out--to get to freedom.

"Freedom," she said, and a strange look came over her face. "I would still have my sons if they, too, hadn't been looking for freedom." Then she slowly told me this story.

"My husband died and left me with three young sons to care for. It was a hard life, but I did the best I could. One day, two years ago, government soldiers came in trucks and built the Wall. The Communist soldiers started taking more and more things into control, and finally we could do only the things that they dictated to us. Hans, my oldest son, had, without my knowledge, joined a secret society of people whose goal was to crash through the Wall. Hans finally told me about his plans and wanted the whole family to go. I agreed, and plans were made for us to climb the Wall on a certain night. As time drew near for us to make our escape, Conrad, my youngest son, became ill with a fever. As his fever grew worse, I knew that Conrad and I couldn't go. My older sons decided to go and find a place for us to stay, and as soon as Conrad was well we would also escape.

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