

## The Tunnels by George Humphrey

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> The watch towers, which stood on 500 tonnes of reinforced steel, and was spread for miles across Berlin, was mounted with fully-automatic turrets fired by highly-trained marksmen: they had to carry out years of practice to protect the wall. Joining the watch towers was the wall, the wall was adorned with fully-armed soldiers, who had machine guns, at the ready, at all times; according to Frank's knowledge they had AK-47s. But some of them had handguns concealed in their jackets: Frank thought that the pistols were Walther P5s but he wasn't sure.

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> Suddenly, a gaunt-looking figure appeared and seized his shoulder. His face turned white. His pulse raced. His heart froze.

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> "Frank. What's wrong?" asked the colourless person in a voice, which he vaguely recognised. Wait! It was Müller!

> "Nothing. Why did you think something was wrong?" Frank hesitantly snapped, trying to hide his shock.

> "You just looked a bit pale, don't worry," Müller exclaimed, surprised at Frank's reaction.

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> They both knew it was time for their operation. Müller signalled for Frank to come over. Knowing what was about to happen, he grabbed his equipment and repeated in his head "One mistake could end his life or Müller's or both of their life's!"

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> They started digging. Monstrous greedy steel jaws tore through the earth! Malnourished and dehydrated, they kept on going for days, even though it felt like weeks; the urge of saving families and their families kept them alive. That is all they had, apart from hope and each other.

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> Inside the barely lit tunnel, they carried on with hunched shoulders, swollen knees; also with the odour of stale water bouncing off the muddy tunnel.

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> The tunnel lay underneath the war zone; the tunnel was enclosed in a boundless cloud of darkness. Bitterly cold, they waded knee-deep in stagnant water, mining through the solid mud. Exhausted and terrified, they burrowed through the mine all day and all night, every day. To keep energised, they would take shifts: this meant one would do a few hours then it would be the other persons go, so they can get their sleep, they could sleep even when bullets wizzed through other tunnels nearby them, because they were so tired.

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> When Müller was feeling claustrophobic, because of the coffin-like tunnel, he would try to

escape the tunnel. Or he would throw himself at the walls and pray for them to break. Within a few days, he realised it was useless so he just curled his hands into fists. The dizziness and an urge to vomit drove him crazy. Even Frank felt the symptoms of claustrophobia.

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> Suddenly, silence poisoned the air: everything turned silent. Apart from their own whispers ricocheting through the tunnel, even the sudden spatter of gunfire stopped. It was like the security guards were searching for someone.

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> Then, a shovel bashed through the clay-like mud behind them. Who was it? If it was a guard, how did they know they were there? Disaster struck! A brigade of soldiers broke through the roof of the tunnel and leaped down. They was behind them.

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> As soon as he saw them, Müller quickly grabbed the smoke grenade, from his belt, and smashed it on the floor. Smoke engulfed the tunnel. They crept past the armed intruders and climbed up the tunnel to the city and bolted, whilst releasing a few more smoke bombs. They had nowhere to go so Frank followed Müller. If they didn't have smoke bombs and Müller's hasty reflexes, they would be dead.

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> Once their brains had ceased the panic, they had to come up with a plan. Suddenly, an idea popped into Frank's head.

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> "Couldn't we just make it to the changing room and put on one of their outfit. They won't know it's us so we can make it over?" Frank intelligently asked; he felt confident of his plan so he hoped it would work.

> "Um. That might work," Müller agreed; but he wasn't sure how to get in there.

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> All of a sudden, he quietly bolted off and signalled Müller to come with him. So, Müller followed him. Frank led them to the front door and cleaned himself so he looked like he worked there. Then, Müller followed his example and also washed himself. Cleaned by the tap near the door, Frank strolled in the room with Müller behind him, refreshed and ready for anything. They arrived at a locker and opened it. There was two grubby corduroy cloth caps, with the German flag tattooed on them. Also, they had a well-worn combat top, with a matching pair of trousers each. They swiftly shoved it on and exited the clammy room, with their new suits on.

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> Now, it was time to go over the wall; it should be easy enough they thought; but they didn't know what was coming. It was the time! One mistake: two deaths. They prepared and

prepared. The East-Berliners were ready but not ready enough. What was going to happen? They stumbled for a few meters but they spotted a guard, so they attempted to act as normal as possible. With their backs straightened, they strolled past the guard; and entered the safe zone, for now, at least.

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> All of a sudden, a horde of troops pelted to the wall and one bellowed in a rough voice: "Make sure nobody crosses the wall. Now; come on; we have a two run-aways from East-Berlin." Everybody scattered looking for Frank and Muller. They froze and followed everybody else. Then, a guard, with a badge that had sergeant on it, told them to line up then they can see who are the run-aways. So, they did.

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> They were lined in a long queue along the wall. They checked everybody to see if they work there; by their ID; and asking them questions. But, Müller and Frank didn't know the answers so Müller told Frank to listen to people to know the answers to the questions. Then, they listened very carefully to the people in front of them. But, before they knew it, it was Müller's go.

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> "Hello. Let me quickly check your ID," the inspector checked it and confirmed; Müller was lucky he looked similar to the persons ID: "Alright that is good. I am just going to ask you some questions."

> "Ok. Let's start," Müller replied, hoping they do the same questions for everybody.

> " Ok. What is the number one rule to being a guard," he asked.

> Müller stated, " Whenever people try to escape; we shoot them dead," he only knew it because he heard people say it.

> The inspector explained, " I have to move on now, bye."

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> The good news was Müller wasn't caught; the bad news was that is was now Frank's go. Müller prayed that Frank had listened to the people in front of him.

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> "Hello. I am the inspector and I am going to ask you some questions," he told Frank.

> "Ok," Frank replied, praying he knew the answers.

> "First, can I have your ID," Frank gave him his false ID but he looked anxious and Frank realised the inspector was looking suspiciously at him, " I am going to ask you some questions. What is the second rule of patrolling?"

> Frank didn't know so he nervously guessed , " You always need to wear your outfit."

> "Wrong! There is only one. I found the run-away!" he announced to everybody. The guards bolted over to see if he actually found the runaways.

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- > Once they arrived there, they bellowed, " Where are they then. I don't see them."
- > "What do you mean them; there is only one of them here," he questioned, not sure what they meant.
- > "What! There is two here. Find the other one!" the one in a different suit yelled, so Müller predicted that he was the general.
- > "Well there is only one here,"he stated: suddenly, a brilliant idea popped into Frank's head. So he poked Müller to get his attention and mouthed, " Go when I tell you to."
- > "Well there is two here so find the second one!" he argued.
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- > Perfect timing! Because they were arguing, they could escape. He dropped some smoke grenades and told Müller to go, on there way out he threw a couple more. They went back over to East-Berlin. Müller had no idea why but he still followed Frank. He led Müller to the other staircase, which was connected to the wall; to go over the wall, they climbed the staircase and crossed the wall, exciting to see their families again.
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- > Müller slightly remembered where his children and wife had lived, well at least 7 years ago: it was time to go to Kantstraße. He left Frank to find his own family and they planned to meet in a couple of hours.
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- > Müller clearly recalled the street name being Hohenzollerndamm Platz, he only remembered the name because he would dream about it every day. Müller discovered the street! It was near the south-side of East Berlin. The street was poor, filled with homeless people , it wasn't like that when he used to live there. It used to be posher and wealthier. Finally, he saw the house, which he used to live in. Bravely, he knocked on the door; not knowing what to expect. Then a child ran to the door and opened it, they boy was his son, but a lot older: he thought the boy would not know who he was but he did.
- > He bellowed for his mum to come. Obediently, she did just as he asked. And, once she got there she screamed in delight. She was so happy that he wasn't injured and that he was there.
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- > Now, it was Frank's go to be reunited with his family, he explored and ascertained the house! He prepared himself and nervously knocked on the door, hoping they still live there. Then, a young child opened the door to see who was at the door. It was his son.
- > He explained to the child that he was his dad and he should get his mother. His son went to retrieve his mum. He came back with his mother following closely behind. Once she saw him, she was so thrilled to discover that he was safe and healthy.
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> Then, the next morning they met up and Frank told him that his family was happy to see him, well and happy. And, Müller explained that they were happy and they recognised him. They were so happy that they crossed the wall and they stayed in contact for the rest of their lives.