

A NIGHT DIVIDED by Jennifer A. Nielsen



A Night Divided is set during the Cold War when the Berlin Wall was built. East Germany was controlled by the communist government of the Soviet Union while West Germany was controlled by the United States, France and Great Britain. Young Gerta is caught in the middle of the conflict when her father and brother are inadvertently trapped on the Western side while she, her mother, and brother are trapped in the East.

EXPOSITION / CONFLICT



On Sunday morning, August 13, 1961, Gerta awoke to discover that a wall of barbed wire had been built through Berlin to separate East and West. Her father, Aldous and brother Dominic were trapped on the other side. Devastated, her mother, brother Fritz, and her were left in the East with no way to contact them.

RISING ACTION



The story flashes forward 4 years. The wall is now 12 feet high and guarded. 12-year-old Gerta misses her father and brother and hates the wall that imprisons East Berlin, the fear, and lack of freedom. She doesn't fully express this to anyone except her brother Fritz. Even her best friend Anna encourages her to keep quiet. One day, she spies Dominic and her father on the other side of the wall and her father appears to be sending her a message!

CLIMAX / TURNING POINT



Gerta uncovers the meaning of her father's message: a way to escape East Berlin is by digging a tunnel from the basement of a building that is against the wall. It is a perilous plan that could result in them getting killed, but Gerta and Fritz take the extreme risks to dig the tunnel in secret. They try to finish before Fritz is forced into the army. They hide their efforts by using the dirt from the tunnel to plant a garden.

FALLING ACTION



Gerta and Fritz discover that their father and brother have been tunneling from the other side. They convince their mother to escape and bargain with an East German guard, Officer Muller to join them with his family. While they make their dangerous escape, Anna also joins them with her family. They are almost through the tunnel when they are discovered and race to freedom with guards shooting at them.

RESOLUTION



Officer Muller sacrifices himself by pushing Gerta out of harms way. He is tragically shot and killed. His wife and child, along with Anna's family and Gerta and her family are able to make it to the other side of the tunnel to West Berlin and to freedom. They are all overjoyed. While it is true that the sun always rises in the east, Gerta feels as though it rose in the west and ended their long, dark night.