

The Fall
or
All the People's Horses and All the People's Men
by Hilary B. Bisenieks

They say that Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall, and that he had a great fall, but what most people don't know is which wall he sat upon.

The year was 1978 when that enormous egg climbed, with great personal risk, to the top of the most well-known and iconic wall in the whole of the free world, the Berlin Wall. It was very late at night, and Humpty had chosen a fairly secluded portion of the wall. It was an addiction: he had sat upon every wall he could find, the bigger and more well-known the better. It had all led to this moment.

He had darkened his shell with greasepaint, and waited for a moonless night. The nearest patrolling officer was hundreds of feet away, smoking a cigarette. It was the same every night, Humpty knew. Now was his chance to get the high of a lifetime.

As silently as he could, Humpty leaned the towel-wrapped top of his over-sized ladder against the top of the wall and began to climb, trailing a section of carpet. When he neared the top, he threw the carpet over the concertina-wire that sat between him and his destiny.

Trembling, Humpty climbed the last few rungs and threw one leg over the top of the wall, then the other. He sat, pupils dilated completely, an idiot grin spread across his face, on the line between capitalism and socialism, in his own world. The staccato crack of automatic gunfire coming from somewhere nearby roused Humpty from his reverie. The guard had been returning on his patrol when he must have spotted someone else trying to cross the wall.

Humpty scrambled to get back down the wall, for fear that he might also be shot. In his haste, trying to get his feet back onto the rungs of his ladder, he lost his balance, and, as if in slow motion, tipped over the wall and out of the free world. It was a great fall indeed.

When Humpty awoke, he found that he was in one piece, although he didn't know why. Slowly, his surroundings swam into focus around him—the sterile white walls, the clinging antiseptic smell in the air, the steady beep of an EKG. Humpty was in a hospital.

From the hallway there was the sound of footsteps: three, maybe four people, walking in step. The door to Humpty's room opened, and four men in drab green uniforms walked in. Each wore a small sword and shield emblem emblazoned with a red star on his chest.

“Comrade Dumpty,” the most senior of the men said, “you are wondering why we put you back together again?”

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