

Freddy Faces the Fence

Kathy Warnes



Every day Freddy walked up to the fence. The fence had a gate, but Freddy didn't see the gate.



He just saw the high fence and the pointed barbed wire that reached the sky. Freddy and Mama and Papa had lived behind the fence for all the years of World War II.





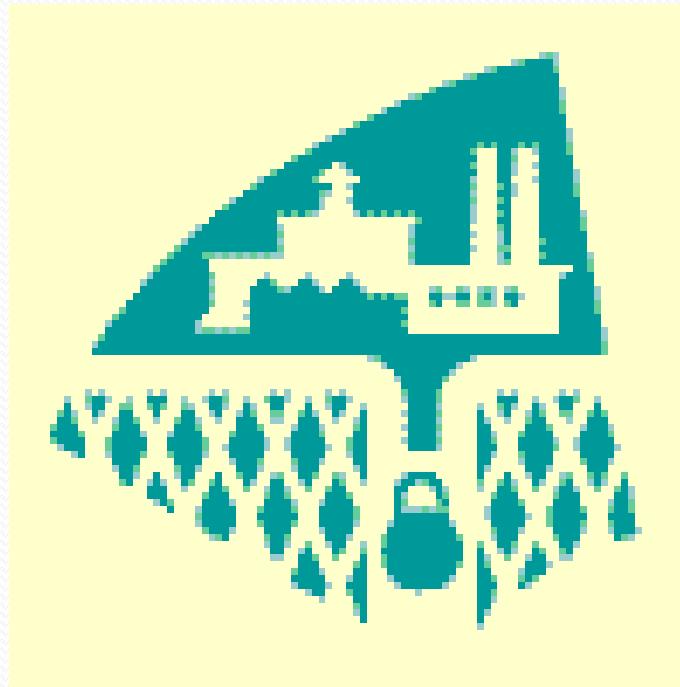
One morning Freddy's Mama combed his hair so hard that he yelled, "Ouch!"

"I'm sorry, Freddy's Mama said. "The war is over! Today is our first day outside the fence so I want you to look nice. We're going shopping."

Freddy wasn't sure he wanted to go shopping. "What are we going shopping for?" he asked his Mama. "Do we have to walk by the fence?"



“We are going to shop for a new pair of shoes for you,”
Freddy’s Mama told him. “And yes, we have to walk by
the fence and walk through the gate.”

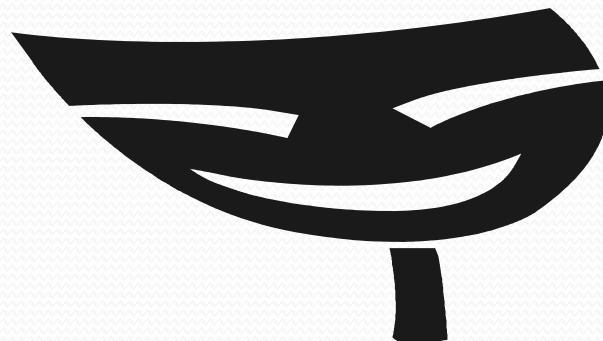


Freddy knew that Mama would walk by the fence with him. Freddy knew Papa would walk by the fence with him, but he still was afraid of the fence!



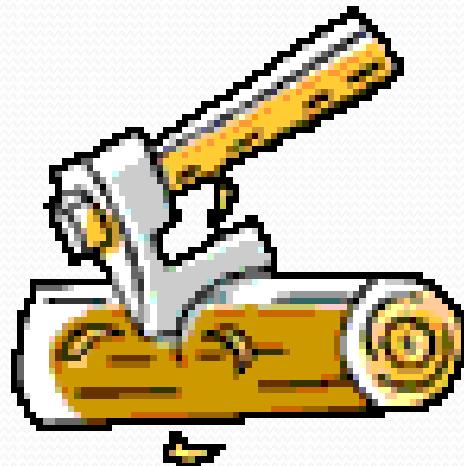
Freddy tried to think of ways he could stop being afraid of the fence. “I could wear a mask when I walk by the fence,” he told Mama.

“You could, but eventually you have to take off your mask,” Mama said.



“I could chop down the fence,” Freddy said.

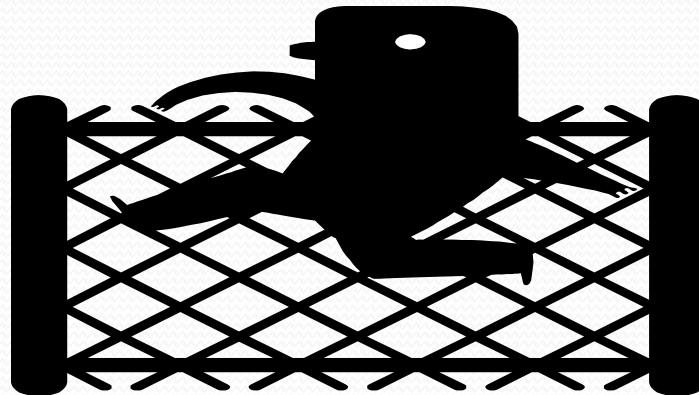
“You could, Papa said, but someone will just build it back up again.”



“Can’t we climb over the fence?”

Freddy asked Mama.

“We can’t climb over the fence,”
Mama said. “I’ll tear my new dress
and the fence will still be there.”



“I could dig a tunnel under the fence,” Freddy said.

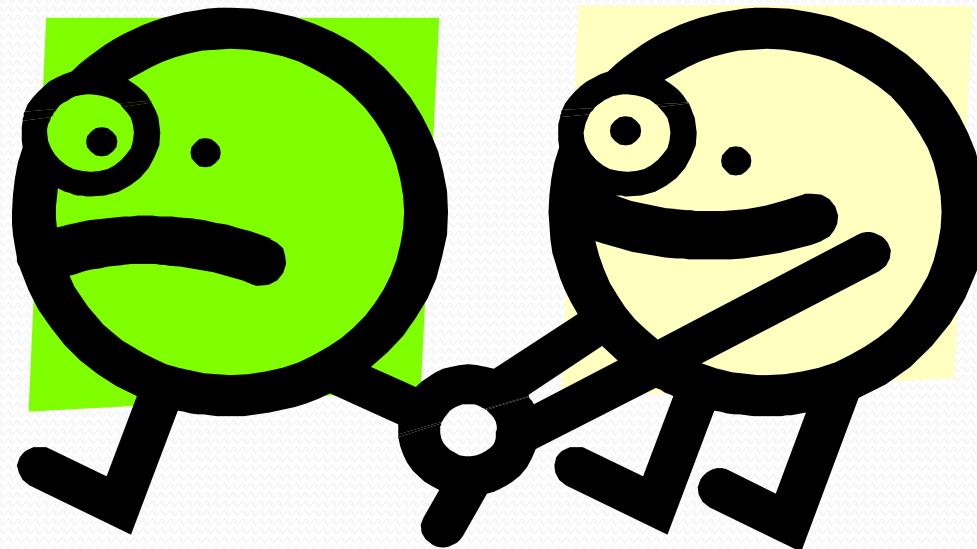


“You could, but it will still be there when you’ve finished digging,” Mama said.



“You have to walk past the fence and through the gate all by yourself,” Mama told Freddy.

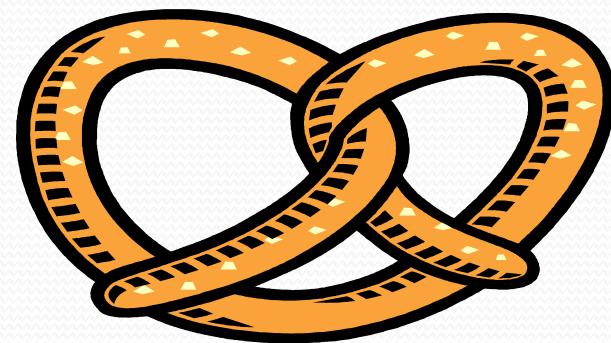
“But Papa and I will be right behind you.”



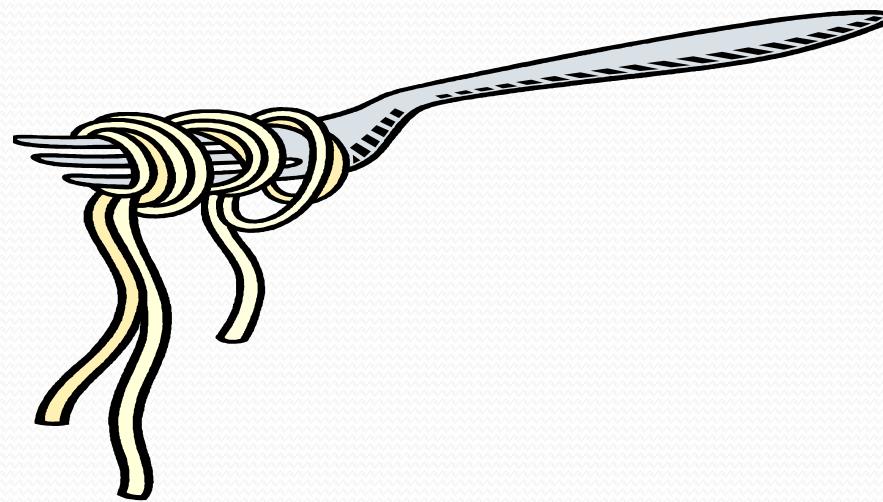
Freddy shivered when he thought about the fence. It looked as big as a baseball field and the barbed wire touched the sky.



Freddy 's stomach twisted like a pretzel, but he combed his hair and put on his good clothes. He waited while Mama and Papa combed their hair and put on their good clothes.



Freddy was so afraid that he felt like a
limp piece of spaghetti.



Mama and Papa and Freddy closed the front door behind them and walked through their front yard. They walked toward the fence.

“We were afraid of the soldiers and the people outside of the fence,” Mama said.



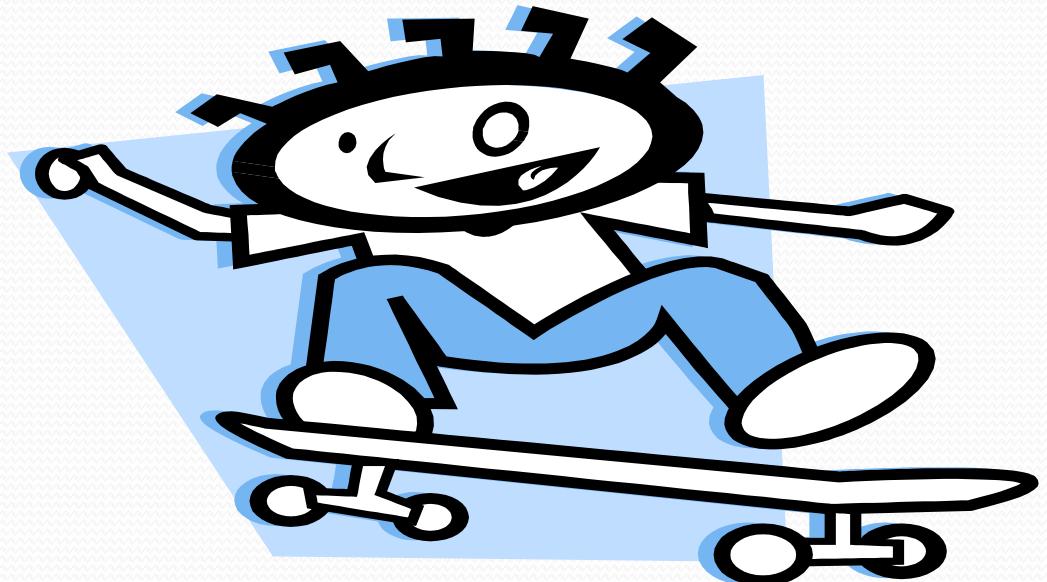
“But we had to make our fear smaller so we would have to courage to do what we had to do. We had to walk up to the fear first. We had to make the fear smaller and us bigger,”
Papa said.



Freddy shouted to the fence,
“I’m afraid of you, but I’ll keep
walking toward you! I’ll think
you smaller and me bigger!”



Freddy rolled up to the fence on his skateboard. The fence stayed smaller. It didn't get any bigger as Freddy got closer. Freddy kept rolling on his skateboard.



Freddy pretended that he was kicking a soccer goal through the fence. He kept kicking even though fear still sat in his stomach.



“Look, Mama!” Freddy shouted. “I’m facing the fence!”



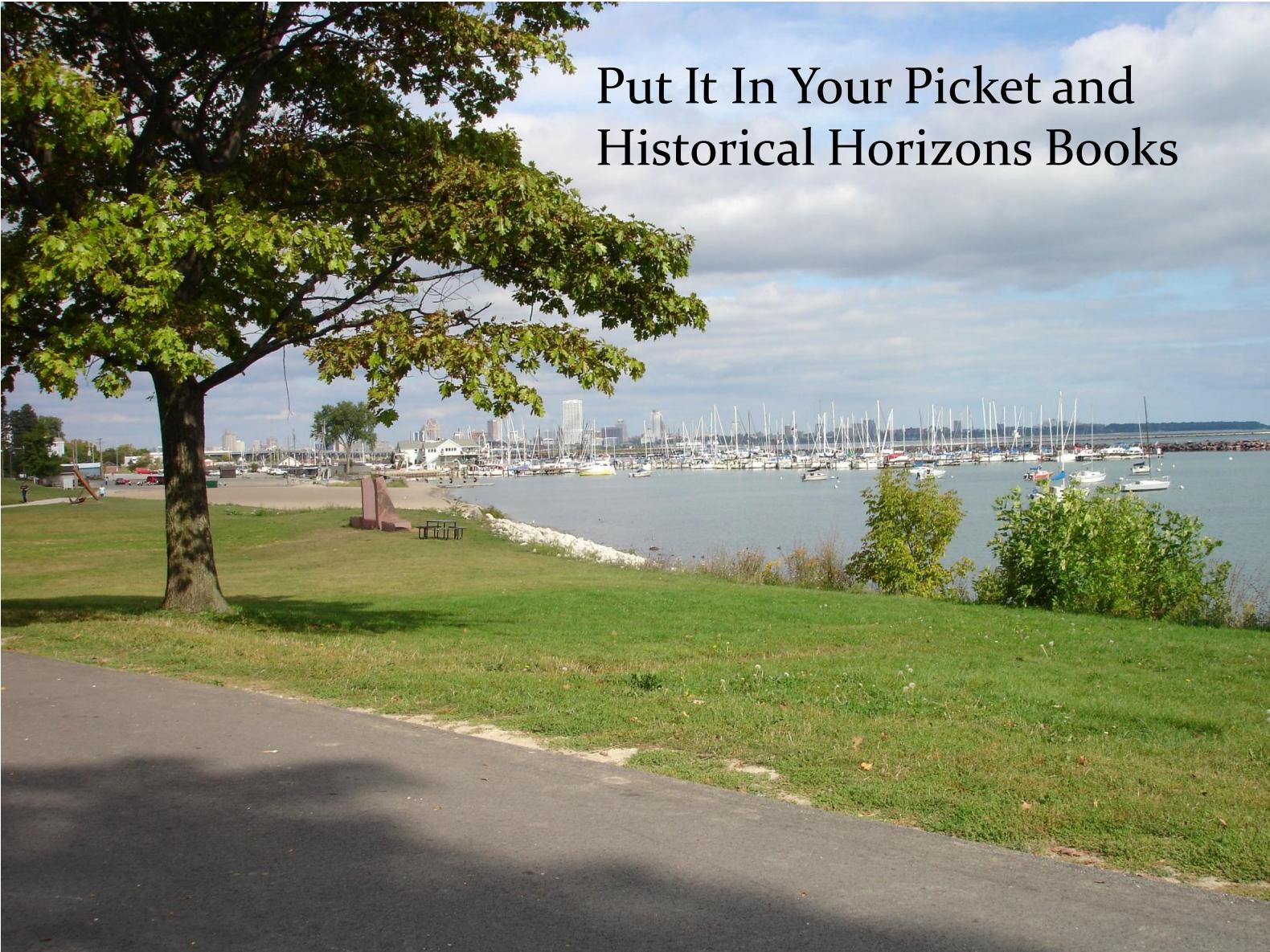
Mama smiled at Freddy and Papa patted him on the back.

“If you keep facing the fence and you keep growing up, someday you will be the same size as the fence.”



“Someday you might grow bigger than the fence,” Papa said.
And Freddy is still growing.”





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