

# GHOST WALKER

A SHORT STORY BY ANDREAS INGO

My name is Alfred Rothschild. I'm a German citizen by royal descent. Connected to the royal family and sharing space with other boys in a private school. A school for coming captains, squadron-leaders and government informers.

I spend my free-time in the courtyard of the school. A courtyard with brown autumn trees. Built within a larger framework of buildings where boys and girls share space with each other. Occasionally playing, occasionally cleaning the courtyard.

In my resting hours I read a lot of books. Books about lone conquerors. About historical figures such as Julius Caesar and Alexander The Great.

I read a lot and I'm becoming better at it.

I start to predict several historical events. Due to similarity between different historical contexts. I behave well in school. I do good at tests and manage to supply the "real" answers with my own "alternative" views.

In my teenager years I start to discover the joy of the opposite sex. Also mountain climbs on nearby mountains. Sharing these moments with girls of my own age. We climb the slippery surfaces. Move beyond protruding cliff segments.

Climbing with good discipline as taught in school. With great strength and courage.

Resulting in heavy breathing.

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A time of occasional peace is ending with a large scale war. It's a war of sudden bombardments. Of marching of local troops to the front. Of squeaking tank processions. I meet soldiers. People often younger than me. The war is demonstrating many losses: Dead soldiers, poor families and corrupt officers.

Survivors promoted to higher ranks.

In the midst of war I'm promoted to a middle-age lecturer. My theoretical knowledge of war and leanings towards "important" subjects have persuaded my teachers. I just sit silently in my library. Also having some lectures.

Talking to students. Reading books, reading news, getting the general impression that war is a complex apparatus.

Complex as it costs the country a fortune. Many die, many complain about the general state of affairs. But supplying the young recruits with a shared goal. With a sense of enthusiasm. Working towards a bigger goal.

But "victory" seems very far away indeed.

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One day I meet a couple of revolutionaries. Two students that want to take action and become soldiers. I talk to them. I try to use my intellect to discuss the details of "The Cause".

"We're taking our chances right now!" One of them says to me, "To use critical analysis and bold application to surprise our enemies before they do the same thing!"

I talk about about the dangers of military life. To cunningly divert the revolutionaries *away* from their chosen profession. As a refuge from *ordinary* matters: Illusory seeing "totalitarian freedom" and "democratic rule" as different sides of the same coin.

I can't say it aloud. My alternative views becomes an obstacle to my personal career. In a school where I find a way to personal

power. To attain intellectual stimulation and find many contacts with highly intelligent people.

A school I can talk fondly of despite the totalitarian regime.

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The autumn leaves fall to the ground and circulate away by the movements of the air. It has been hard to judge my path in the lens of a true observer. My winding path. My instant calling to surprise myself with new modes of thoughts and feelings.

A seriousness of intense playfulness.

The war continues in several leaps. Intensifying. Sending soldiers along a winding path to fight a war more devastating than all other wars in human history.

These soldiers include the two revolutionaries I met at school. But something terrible is revealed in newspapers: A description of the deterioration of people at the front. Meeting "the enemy" in the form of clueless locals.

A conversation arising from common need.

The two revolutionaries mysteriously take opposite sides. Confronting each other in the global conflict. I'm suspected for treason. I'm questioned regarding the two students. And I have to prove myself on the battle-field.

So I have to fake an injury. An injury of a broken leg. Broken on a climbing event in the mountains.

I'm believed.

\* \* \*

Months later.

A fire has been lit in my office. My leg is better. I have a time of cerebral reflection. Celebrating Christmas in my own way.

Building decks of cards from the application of my mind. Creating ideas from government sources.

At some point the two revolutionaries return to their hometown. I meet them. Rumours circulate about a young woman with an empty stare. A woman grown ugly from countless struggles and defeats. And a young man turning nihilistic. A man forgotten by all townspeople including his own parents.

Fighting an “evil” conspiracy on the “wrong” side.

I meet them separated. I talk with them concerning their paths and the choices made on the way. Not as a typical lecturer. But as an intellectual with a keen interest.

Describing classical conflicts in an unpretentious way.

“The war was never wanted.” The woman says to me. “It was a way to harness other powers.”

“What powers?” I ask her.

“The powers of the spirit and the imagination.” She says, “Of intellectual ambition.”

Days later the young revolutionaries are said to be found dead in a field of corn. Fighting a battle of different ideas.

Coming to their last conclusions.

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Time moves on.

I’m forced to participate in naval wars. A time of submerged horror. Entering a German submarine with a group of marines and naval officers. It’s a hellish situation. We have surrounded a fleet of British cruisers. Nailed them down to a situation of no escape. But it’s a difficult situation. British air force command has discovered the plan of my superiors.

We abandon the siege and move on towards the depths of the Atlantic ocean.

There we stand still. I'm asked about my prior merits. Working as a lecturer in a certain school. I'm questioned in depth. But I lie sweet lies about the reason for my previous lectures.

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Days later I'm down in the torpedo room. Changing the fire mechanism of one of our secret weapons. I'm down there. I change the fire mechanism of the torpedoes. So that they fire much earlier than intended.

I have to do this as we have found a lone battle-ship in the middle of the Atlantic. Small islands can be seen arising from the Atlantic ocean. A dull rain of silvery drops splashes on the surface. We stand still in hunt for the lone target.

Firing our torpedoes prior to intent.

The debate continues continuously. What was the error of the torpedo firing mechanism? I have saved lives. With no suspicions from my superiors.

I continue with my intellectual pursuits.

As this story moves forward news are heard from inland intelligence. It's revealed that the Allies have found evidence of military installations in a German town.

These installations are the place of a secret weapon. It's said. A weapon with the potential to win the war for the Axis powers. And to start the "glorious" times of a new empire.

I now use the central command in the night to anonymously misinform the Allied powers of the "real" location of the secret weapon. In a ghost town miles away from my home.

It's important to direct the allied forces to another town as the city with the secret weapon is filled with many civilians and also accounting for the fact that the weapon is a *fiction*.

The Allies receive my secret messages. They accept my "evidence" for a new location. I'm using the intellect, true research and unconscious powers to unveil lies so effective as to prove the errors of the information experts.

It's a strange relief.

It's a complex information process and a daring endeavour. A milestone building on previous guessing games. I start to change the course of the entire war. Saving civilians and covertly misinforming superiors on both sides of the war.

In the middle of this process I start to catch images from surrounding areas. Revealed in the vision from our periscope. Strangely I discover a military boat with human shapes.

Shapes reminding me of the two revolutionaries I tried to convert. Away from the madness. Away from the war.

I start to find trouble with my own superiors. It's talk about a lone traitor. A genius working on his own terms to change the course of human history. He could be found anywhere. Working as a cloaked intellectual on his own terms.

Maybe using several locations to misinform, to convey the message that he already is dead.

One day my superiors discover strange texts in my sleeping unit. It's not readable texts but scrambled texts using old language not known in the modern world.

Old Latin.

"Is this yours?" The captain asks. "What does it mean?"

"It means I'm trying to learn new languages." I say, "Old languages useful in the lectures in my own town. It's really a silly affair."

“Well good then.” The captain says and laughs at me.

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Months later our submarine returns to our harbour. On the way we are intercepted by Cruisers and bombed from air. We dive down towards the bottom of the ocean. And we stay there much longer than intended. It all ends gloriously though. As the Allied forces suspects we are dead.

In the harbour I walk into a cafe where I suddenly see the shapes of the two dead revolutionaries. The same shapes I witnessed in the periscope in the Atlantic ocean.

“You remember me?” I ask the “dead” woman. A woman fooling the German powers with her own methods.

“I surely do.” She says, “And now the war is over.”

“But why did you lie to me?” I ask her. “I didn’t take side.”

“I lied as nobody could be trusted.” She says.

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The situation escalates contrary to plans. The leaders of the different nations work against each other for a deceptive peace. A peace witnessed on the news. In reality a cold war begins with numerous powers engaging in deadly conflict.

They use my “method” to covertly deceive each other.

I have to erase this knowledge. I have to use the secret network of the “revolutionaries” to spread lies to misinform the war intelligence.

But it doesn’t happen.

I’m taken in for a hearing. I’m questioned about the real motives of my intellectual pursuits. They find and decipher my old Latin texts. I’m revealed as a liar, a great deceiver.

Working for peace in a world that is thirsting for war.

I escape with unconventional methods.

I'm put to my own devices. Using a shot-gun to end my life. I pull the trigger of the shot-gun only to find it's empty.

I try another shot to no use.

I fire another shot with a pistol. It clicks. I take a knife and put it on the ground. Projecting the knife's edge towards the night-time sky violently shaking.

Falling down.

A sudden suicide with dark intentions.

# THE END