



0. Bridge of Spies - Story Preface

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The Glienicke Bridge, spanning the river Havel, as it appears from Babelsberg Park, near Potsdam, Germany. This bridge has a Cold-War-era name: "Bridge of Spies." Copyright-free photo.

*It is possible that in the foreseeable future
an American of equivalent rank
will be captured by Soviet Russia or an ally;
at such time an exchange of prisoners thru
diplomatic channels could be considered to be
in the best interests of the United States.*

James B. Donovan
Arguing to Judge Mortimer W. Byers
Against the Death Penalty for Rudolf Abel
November 15, 1957

He was just starting a vacation with his wife, Mary, when James Donovan got the call. Would he please consider representing a Soviet spy - called Rudolf Abel - in his upcoming criminal trial?

Jim, that Russian spy the FBI just caught. The Bar Association wants you to defend him. What do you think? (See Strangers on a Bridge, by James Donovan, at page 9.)

Ed Gross, Donovan's partner who put the question, didn't think it was such a great idea. Mary agreed with Ed.

It was a decision only Jim could make, but he wanted some help to think things through. He asked the advice of his friend, Ed Hanrahan, who was also vacationing in Lake Placid:

I strongly advise you against accepting the assignment. It's bound to take a lot out of you before it's over ... let them find a criminal lawyer to handle the defense. (Strangers, page 10.)

Still thinking about the request, Donovan showed-up for his prearranged golf lesson. The resident pro, Jim Searle, expressed what he thought of the job and the accused spy:

Why in [heck] would anyone want to defend that no-good bum? (Strangers, page 10.)

After some more thought, Donovan finally accepted the job. But ... the case seemed like a total loser. And ... who was that "no-good bum" he was going to represent?

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

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See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/Bridge-of-Spies>

Media Stream



Glienicke Bridge Viewed from Babelsberg Park

A bridge over the river Havel, near Potsdam, has spanned the river since the 17th century.

This is how the Glienicke Bridge appears today, as it is viewed from Babelsberg Park.

The image depicts the bridge which, in German, is called *Glienicker Brücke*. This famous place also has another Cold-War-era name: "Bridge of Spies."

Click on the image for a better view.

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