Alexander Kerner lives with his mother and sister in a small apartment, his Father (a Doctor) having fled to the West, apparently abandoning the family. Alex's mother, Christiane, has become an ardent supporter of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany in her husband's absence. She suffers a near-fatal heart attack when she sees Alex being arrested in an anti-government demonstration and falls into a coma shortly before the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. After eight months she awakes, but is severely weakened both physically and mentally. Her doctor says that any shock may cause another, possibly fatal, attack. Alex realizes that her discovery of recent events would be too much for her to bear, and so sets out to maintain the illusion that things are as normal in the German Democratic Republic. What commences is a heroic effort by Alex to recreate the GDR for his mother.

**Historical Background & Context**

Germany and Berlin were divided into four sectors by the Allies at the end of World War 2. The British, French and American sectors became West Berlin and Germany and remained democratic and capitalistic. The Russian sector of East Berlin and East Germany became a communist government. Berlin was located in the East German sector and thousands of East Germans used it as a means of escape. In 1961 the East German government constructed the Berlin Wall to divide the city. This is probably one of the most recognizable symbols of the Cold War.

Mass demonstrations against the government and the system in East Germany begun at the end of September and took until November 1989. Erich Honecker, East Germany's head of state, had to resign on October 18, 1989. The new government prepared a new law to lift the travel restrictions for East German citizen. At 06.53 pm on November 9, 1989 a member of the new East German government was asked at a press conference when the new East German travel law comes into force. He answered: "Well, as far as I can see, ... straightaway, immediately." (From "The Berlin Wall Online")

**Assignment**

Turn in a typed summary (including rental receipt attached) of the following topics:

1. What changes occur in the lives of the family when the Berlin Wall falls? Are they positive or negative?

2. What kinds of items are representative of the former GDR?

3. What does the family miss about the GDR?