

**Great Escape, The
Paul Brickhill**

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The Great Escape is often known for the movie it inspired, but the book itself has much to offer. It is a story about the mass escape from a German prisoner of war camp during the second world war. The book chronicles the lengths these POWs went through to construct their tunnel 30 feet deep complete with a railroad system and workshops. From blackmailing a young guard and sweet talking an old cook to stealing pipes and dismantling their beds. As well as the lengths the Germans took to find their tunnels; from guards hiding in the roofs listening to conversations to a spiritual tunnel diviner.

I loved the book. I have a tendency to be bored by non-fiction books, but this one reads like a novel. I couldn't wait to hear about the next phase of the operation. The book brings you right into the middle of Stalag Luft III with the men planning the operation. The author, Paul Brickhill was one of the POWs at that camp and provides an insight into both the perspective of the POWs and a familiar description of all the characters involved. However, that also means that the perspective is slightly one-sided. There is less in terms of German perspective, but that was perhaps to be anticipated.

This is probably better for older age ranges as this is still a war story. It could potentially get boring for anyone under the age of 13 without a good understanding of the basic historical context behind this since there are some specific subjects that are assumed to be common knowledge (WW2, Hitler, Axis, Allies etc.). There are also deaths that occur as it was war and Nazis don't have a lack of atrocities. I would recommend this as a gift. It is a book that could be reread again and again and never lose its appeal.

Recommendations:

- Reach for the Sky by Paul Brickhill
- Inside Delta Force by by Eric Haney
- The Bridge Over the River Kwai by Pierre Boulle