

The Secret Journal - Megan Justice
2nd Place
Summers Middle School, Summers County
Grades 7-8

The roar of bulldozers filled the dusty air. The fat, sweaty construction worker readied the two-ton wrecking ball. He pressed the rusty lever forward, and the ball swung along with it. Much of the old building fell to the ground with a loud crash. He repeated the action several times before stopping the machine. When he had stopped, the cleaning crew slowly walked onto the pile of rubble. They began to clean up the moss-covered bricks when one of the men shouted, “Hey guys, I think I found something!”

The other men rushed over. “What is it Carl? You think it could be worth something?”

Carl held up an old tattered brown journal. He flipped through. He stopped on one page in particular. “June 12, 1939: Today they started building a brick wall onto our house. Father won’t tell me what it is. ‘It’s not important,’ he says. I say if it is attached to my house, I deserve to know what it is. I aced my history project today. Freddy is so cute...” He stopped there.

“What do you think this is about? It says this journal belonged to...” he flipped to the front page, “Sera Muscovitz, age 13.”

He read on. “June 13, 1939: The wall is done, and the Germans have begun to load people into the area that has been fenced in. Just today, I saw 12 people in the area! I saw about five old people, four adults, and three children. They looked so sad...I wonder why. Father still won’t tell me why they are out there. Someone at school told me that the sick and poor had been sent there so that they do not spread germs. That was Suzie. I don’t trust her. She tells lies all day long and makes up stories like a young child would. Why, just the other day, she told me, ‘Sera,

I'm going to the moon for my vacation. What are you doing?' She makes me so mad that I could just pop her! Oh well, I'm going to bed now." -Sera-

"June 19th 1939: I found out what the bricks are for, and, as I suspected, Suzie lied again. Mrs. Merrill says they are called "ghettos," and gypsies, Jews, and people who are against Hitler are sent there to live alone. It is very sad. Each day I see more and more people in the ghettos. Some of them look like they have given up on living. People in the ghettos wear tattered clothing and are as thin as poles. Father and Mother think they deserve to be there, but I cannot see what they did wrong. I'll have to investigate more." -Sera

"June 25, 1939: I have continued my ongoing investigation into the ghettos and Hitler. He speaks in such large words that I can hardly understand them, but, from what I can tell, he is racist. Father and Mother follow his words like they are law. Perhaps they are the law. I don't really understand what is going on. It seems the only good thing that happened this week was running into David, a Jewish boy from down the street. He is incredibly charming and very cute. He talks all the time about being worried about his family and not being able to go to school. I try to comfort him, but he doesn't seem to listen to me. I wish he would smile once in a while. I bet his smile is beautiful." -Sera-

"July 4, 1939: Today was wonderful! David asked me to go to dinner with him tomorrow night! I didn't think he liked me in that way! Oh, isn't it wonderful? It truly has been the best week ever." -Sera-

"July 30, 1939: This is definitely not the best week ever. David and his family were sent to the ghetto. We have only been able to communicate by throwing notes on paper out of my window and into the ghetto. What kind of relationship can we have if we can't speak to one another? That is what I want to know! I am so concerned about David." -Sera-

Carl turned the page and found it to be especially stained although he could not tell whether with food or water. He read on:

“August 2, 1939: David was killed in the ghettos today. I don’t know how much more of this war I can take. It has claimed so many lives, and I fear there is no end to it. That is why my family is moving from this terrible town to the United States where there is no war, and perhaps my mind can be taken off of David. I will leave this diary here for it reminds me too much of David. Perhaps someone will find it. And so it is goodbye for ever.” Sera-

“That’s the end of it,” Carl said quietly.

“Hey, get back to work!” the boss yelled from the sidelines. As the boss approached, Carl quickly stuffed the journal into his pocket and again began to pick up debris, but he knew that he would not be able to take his mind off of the young girl and her journal.

