

# Honorable Mention

## Division I – Writing

Rebekah Garner, Grade 7

*Dear Girda*

Copley-Fairlawn Middle School

Jennifer Adair, Instructor

Word Count 1000

## Dear Girda

September 14, 1939

Dear diary, today I am turning 7! I got you as a gift. I shall give you a name. I think either Christa or Gerda will suit you nicely. I forgot to introduce myself! I am Margrit Meier. I believe your name will be....Gerda. Margrit and Gerda, how fun!

Today as a family gift, my mother let me open the new radio. We got it all the way from England! That's why it took so long to arrive. My mother says it was invented 44 years ago! I think the reason we got the radio, well the reason why my Father said, is that it will save us money in the future because we don't have to buy newspapers, we shall even get the news even quicker! Father told me not to tell Mother that it cost him 1878.05 Reichs. Here's a fact about me: I love math! 1878.05 Reichs is a lot of money, that's over 22 years of pocket money for me! I get 2 Reichs a week now that I am a whole 7 years old.

The first thing the radio told us was that we had to have cute little stars sewn on all of our clothing. I love them. My sister, Kaethe does not. Don't tell anyone, but she has an outfit that does not have a star! Even mother and Father are unaware! She says she has them because people treat her differently when she has the star on. The only difference for me is that when me and Mother go to town, we are only able to go half the stores we used to before the stars.

We get to go on a vacation and Mother says I can't bring you because you were expensive. So I will tell you all about it when I am back. I can't wait!

-Bye for now Gerda, love Margrit

September 15 1939

Dear Gerda, the radio told us we can not go on vacation anymore. My parents say it's because of the Germans. I am quite sad because I have been looking forward to this vacation for forever. Although I am confused because we are German too. Mother was so sad when she went to buy the train tickets and they refused. When Father heard about this he went to a protest and came back with a big cut on his face. But my elder sister, Kaethe whispered to me that it's really because we're Jewish. I asked her how she knew, and guess what. She said the radio. Even though we're Jews, Kaethe snuck me to the movies without telling Mother or Father!

Bye Gerda, I must go unpack. Love Margrit.

September 22 1939

Dearest Gerda, I am so sorry I have skipped writing to you for so long, but nothing has happened to me of interest. Until today. Father is fully healed and Mother said our vacation is back on! She said that the radio told us the Germans would come and take us on a vacation. Mother said I am only allowed one bag, I have to carry it, and one toy. So, I begged her and you can come too! Do not tell anyone but, Kaethe said that we're really moving! I hope it's a bigger house and maybe I will even have my own room! I have got to pack my bags. Goodbye.

Love, Margrit

September 24 1939

Dear Gerda, I am in my closet right now! Mother said the radio said to hide. I don't know why we're hiding, but mother just said it was a game of hide and seek and not to come out no matter what. I have packed my bag with my best dress, favorite coat, lots of warm wooly socks, one doll, extra ink and my best feather pen....Did you hear that? Somebody just banged on our front door. Not to worry, I think Mother is answering it now. I need to stay quiet. Somebody loud is coming into my bedroom. They are coming closer to the clos~~

October 1 1939

Dear Gerda, what happened at the end of my last entry is what you are probably wondering. The people in my room opened the closet and yelled something in German while grabbing my arm. Mother says I should know German by now, I suppose that was another testament to what she said. Going back to the matter at hand, the man in brown grabbed me, and I was only able to grab you in the nick of time. Mother says I am quite lucky. As the man in brown grabbed me, I saw my room in complete disarray! They then took us to a new neighborhood. Kaethe says it's called a Ghetto. They said it's where we will live now. This place is not at all where I thought we would move to. I thought I may get my own room and here I am sleeping in the same room as all of my family. We only have the little belongings we packed. I am so hungry. The only thing I look forward to now is writing to you.

October 15 1939

Dear Gerda, I am almost out of ink so I am trying to savor it for something special. So, here is the big news, we get to go somewhere else! The men in brown came in and told us we will be leaving the Ghetto! Although a rumor is going around that it will be worse and they may work us to death. Mother says not to worry. Everything will be right in the end. That's her saying. We get to leave tomorrow for the new place. This will be goodbye though. They are not letting us take anything, this makes me believe the horrible rumor. I will find you when I come back. No matter what I will not work for them and I will keep strong for you.

Hugs and Kisses, Margrit Meier

#### Works Cited

Elvgren, Jennifer Riesmeyer. *The Whispering Town*. Lerner Publishing Group, 2014.

Smith, Frank Dabba. *My Secret Camera: Life in the Lodz Ghetto*. Frances Lincoln Children's Books, 2008.

*Through Eva's Eyes*. Landmark House, Limited, 2009.

Webster, Ian. "CPI Inflation Calculator." CPI Inflation Calculator, Official Data Foundation, <https://www.in2013dollars.com/us/inflation/1939?amount=557.40>. Accessed February 5 2025 February 2025.

"World War II and the Mass Killing of Jews." Holocaust Encyclopedia, <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/timeline-group/holocaust/1939-1941>. Accessed 5 February 2025.