



Mariah Steiger, Age 11, Grade 6
Individual Entry
Windsor, CA

Dear Bette Greene,

Summer of My German Soldier was a book that my school librarian thrust into my hand after my teacher told my class to pick a book for a school assignment. After the first sentence, I was hooked. I was surprised to find myself at a train station in Jenkinsville, Arkansas. By the end of the touching story, you had changed me as a reader, and as a person.

Before I read your book, I was scared to learn about the Holocaust. I am a Jewish girl growing up in California, and I was frightened to learn about the deaths of so many of my people. Reading your book helped me realize that it is better to be educated about the horrors of the human race's mistakes, than not be.

I won't lie; this was a hard book for me to read. Not because the words were difficult for me to comprehend, but because I was amazed that each time I finished a chapter, I would be filled with so much emotion. Sometimes it was wonderful, but other times, I felt tears in my eyes. You wrote this book with so much thought and experience, that I can do nothing but look up to you.

You have taught me that relationships are what change the world. We don't need good and evil to have a universe. We don't all need to be the same religion, or think the same. What makes our world stay alive is love. Hate is a horrible thing for us to have, but anyone who says it is possible for humans to be capable of having complete peace, doesn't look at the circumstances from an ethical point of view. Without knowing what hate is, would we know and recognize love? You have inspired me to be a better person, and to think big.

Patty's relationship with Anton helped me learn something that has helped me very much in my life. Everyone needs to know that someone loves them. Sometimes, when a friend is feeling sad, telling them that you will always be there for them helps the friend recover. Patty searched for love, and she found someone prepared to give it to her.

Summer of My German Soldier will be on my bookshelf for many years. I will keep it until I am an adult, and then I will read it to my children. I think it is an extremely important story to tell generations, because I feel that we must be educated about the Holocaust. Thank you for writing this amazing book.

I love to read, write, and play sports. I've wanted to submit my writing for a while and this contest seemed like a perfect opportunity. I hope there is less hate and no more war. As far as my future goes, I hope to be able to be a journalist one day, or a women's rights lawyer.