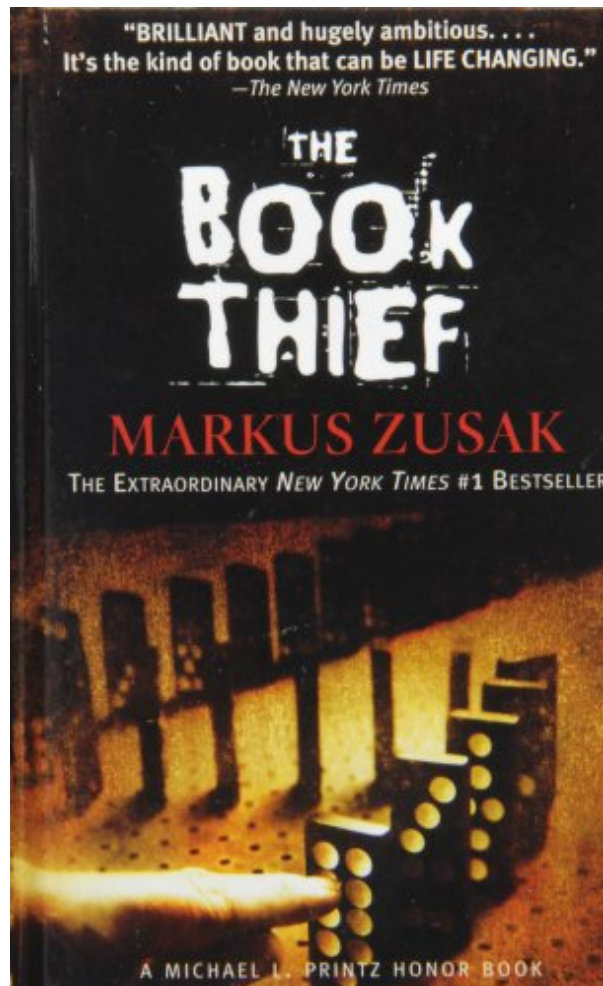


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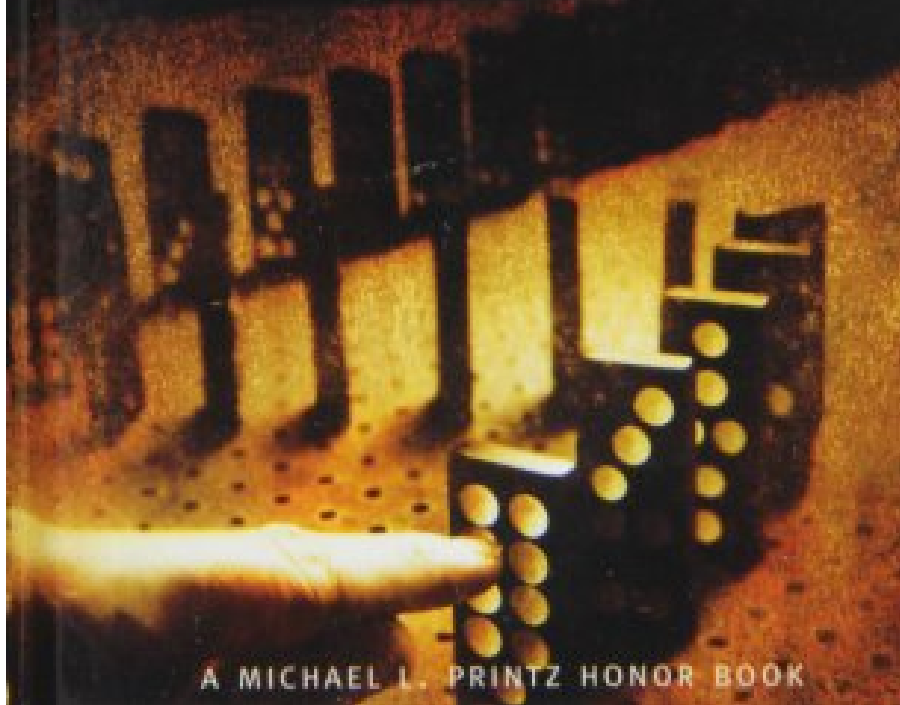
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# THE BOOK THIEF BY MARKUS ZUSAK PDF

The extraordinary #1 New York Times bestseller that is now a major motion picture, Markus Zusak's unforgettable story is about the ability of books to feed the soul.

It is 1939. Nazi Germany. The country is holding its breath. Death has never been busier, and will become busier still.

Liesel Meminger is a foster girl living outside of Munich, who scratches out a meager existence for herself by stealing when she encounters something she can't resist—books. With the help of her accordion-playing foster father, she learns to read and shares her stolen books with her neighbors during bombing raids as well as with the Jewish man hidden in her basement.

In superbly crafted writing that burns with intensity, award-winning author Markus Zusak, author of *I Am the Messenger*, has given us one of the most enduring stories of our time.

- Sales Rank: #1746036 in Books
- Published on: 2009-04-09
- Original language: English
- Binding: Library Binding
- 552 pages

From School Library Journal

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Most helpful customer reviews

10 of 11 people found the following review helpful.

A story I will revisit often

By Meagan

I LOVED this book. We started listening to the audio version in the car before I bought the paperback. My son is an audio learner, so we are constantly looking for books to listen to. We had recently listened to another WW2 book told from a kid's perspective. This was recommended to us, but we were warned the content was much more mature than the first book, even though it is also focused on a "child". While that was true, it wasn't a bad thing. I really enjoyed the narrator for the audio book, and I am quite picky. I ended up buying the paperback because I couldn't stand to wait to see what happened since I only listened with my son in the car. I was enjoying it enough to think it was worth the purchase. I'm glad I bought it. It is "heavy" but I did fall in love with the characters and know I'll be revisiting it again and again. One thing that I found unique about this book was that it was told from the view of "death", or maybe a grim reaper...but it is not in any way fantasy. Looking back, I can't imagine it being told from any other perspective and I'm so glad the author seemed to realize that too.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

*The Book Thief* This is a beautifully balanced piece of storytelling by a young Australian writer

By Amazon Customer

*The Book Thief*

This is a beautifully balanced piece of storytelling by a young Australian writer: Marcus Zusak. The book is narrated by death himself. Death is rendered vividly. He is a lonely, haunted being who is drawn to children, who has had a lot of time to contemplate human nature and wonder about it. We are introduced to this narrator in the beginning and he is with us till the very end. It gives away the end and still wants you to keep reading on.

The narrative is easy flowing with glimpses of what is yet to come: sometimes misleading, sometimes all too true. We meet all shades of Germans, from truly committed Nazis to the likes of poor Hans Hubermann who hides a Jew in the basement of his very modest home. I was humbled by the realization that most of us are

incapable of doing what noble souls Hans and Rosa do for saving the human race. This is what makes this novel truly remarkable.

The author says he was inspired by two real-life events related to him by his German parents: the bombing of Munich, and a teenage boy offering bread to an emaciated, withered Jew being marched through the streets. Both the boy and Jewish prisoner were whipped by a soldier while hapless crowd looked on! It is also the way in which Zusak combines such terrible events with truly believable characters and the details of everyday life in Nazi Germany. All this made *The Book Thief* so special for me.

In addition to the protagonist Liesel (the book thief of the title), there are some very important characters in the story. Those who particularly stood out for me are Rudy Steiner, a close friend of Liesel who is obsessed with the black athlete Jesse Owens. Ilsa Hermann, the mayor's wife, who has never recovered from the loss of her own son. Liesel's adoptive parents Hans and Rosa Hubermann and of course Max Vandenburg the Jew decorator whose father had saved Hans' life during the first world war when they are both German soldiers. The growing relationships between Hubermanns and Liesel and, later, Liesel and Max Vandenburg are central to the plot. Max writes and illustrates a strangely beautiful short story for Liesel over whitewashed pages from a copy of Hitler's *Mein Kampf* (the original print can still be seen through the paint). The powerful short story and illustrations almost broke my heart.

Hans, who can't read very well himself, teaches Liesel to read. Liesel is effectively an orphan. She never knew her father. Her mother disappears after delivering her to her new foster parents. Her younger brother died on the train to Molching where the foster parents live. Death first encounters nine-year-old Liesel when her brother dies. It (death) hangs around long enough to watch Liesel steal her first book - *The Gravedigger's Handbook*, left lying in the snow by her brother's grave. Death has in his possession (I have always considered death as 'she') the book Liesel wrote about 1939 to 1943. In a way, they are both book thieves. Liesel steals randomly at first, and later more methodically. But she's never greedy. Death pockets Liesel's notebook after she leaves it, forgotten in her grief, amongst the destruction that was once her street, her home, her mama and papa. Death carries the book with him.

As I went through the book I kept feeling how real Liesel was! She was a child living a child's life. A life that has chores, soccer in the street, stolen pleasures, school fights, sudden passions and a full heart! Around her bombs are dropped, maimed veterans hang themselves, bereaved parents move like ghosts, Gestapo take children away and the dirty skeletons of Jews are paraded through the town.

However, there are a number of things that prevent this book from being all-out depressing. It is very powerful from the beginning but not morbid. A lively humor peeks through the pages. (a comment about German's loving pigs, the childish chats between Rudi and Liesel). Furthermore, the vivid descriptions as well as the richness of the characters lift your spirits up. In this balanced story, ordinary Germans - those with blond hair and blue eyes are as much at risk of losing their lives, or are being persecuted, as the Jews themselves. It made me cry.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

Wow

By Knightsbridgelvr

I just finished reading this book and I wanted to rush here to write down my thoughts but now I realize that there are too many to summarize in a simple book review.

Many have said this about "*The Book Thief*" but it is truly an endearing story. Throughout the entire book, I kept thinking to myself, how can the same species of human beings be so absolutely dreadfully evil and also be so strong, brave, hopeful, and loving?

The evil side of humanity was shown, obviously, in the power plays of Hitler shown not primarily through a Jew's point of view like a lot of Holocaust/WWII stories but from the point of view of a living-in-poverty German family who were also victimized by Hitler, obviously in a different way but stricken nonetheless.



The hopeful and loving side of humanity was shown not in the obvious ways. But in the way that Liesel and Rudy always stood by each other no matter what even while throwing insults at each other. In the way that Hans embraced a girl as his own daughter without question. In the way that the mayor's wife indirectly gave Liesel her most treasured possessions and, eventually, a safe place to grow up. In the way that a little German girl connected with the Jewish young man hiding in her basement and created a bond of souls that surpassed words (though ironically created by words themselves through books).

And although the subject of this book was very heavy and dark, there were moments that made me laugh. Not because the circumstances were funny, but because of the things the characters would say in such circumstances. For example, after Liesel and Rudy steal a plate of cookies, their most pressing thought is, "What are we going to do with the plate?"

But there are 2 lines in this book that are so profound and will stay with me forever. The first line serves as a wonderful example of how artfully Markus Zusak wrote this story. The book is narrated by death and at one point death says, "It kills me sometimes, how people die." What an interesting and ironic line. Even death itself can be shocked at how people die. I would like to think that if death was a personified being, he really would say something like that.

The second line is the last line of the book. We readers are concluded with death's last note, "I am haunted by humans." As this beautiful, tragic tale comes to an end, I too am haunted by humans--the characters of this story.

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