

Reading Guidance Web
***The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak**

Summary: Death is fascinated by a young girl that he keeps brushing past as he picks up souls in World War II Germany. Liesel, a foster child, uses her love of books to cope with the tragedies and challenges of living in WWII Germany. As she faces countless tragedies she realizes that she needs the comfort that her books bring her in order to survive. Told from the perspective of Death, *The Book Thief* chronicles Liesel's journey into maturity as the world falls apart around her.

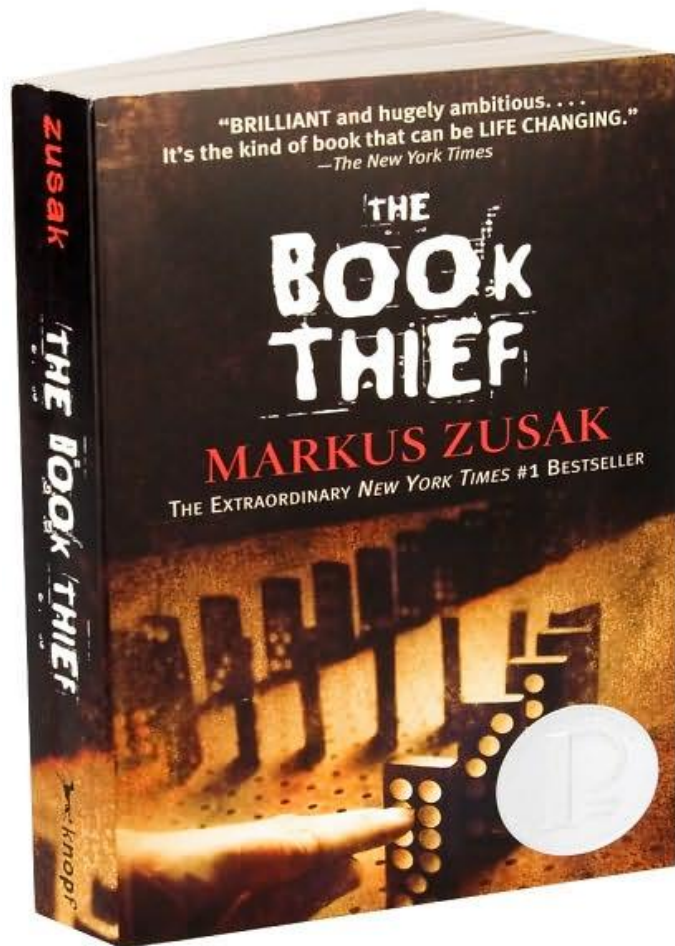
Profile of the reader:

- This book would definitely appeal to upper high school readers who are beginning to question the reasons that things happen.
- It would be best appreciated by a strong reader. There are many departures from the main plot line as Death adds his own observations and opinions on what is happening in Germany and the surrounding areas. Death also does a lot of foreshadowing (that can be quite frustrating if you know that a character is going to die before the end of the book) and a struggling reader may get lost and confused by the lack of a linear plot and just give up.
- I think it would appeal to both a male and female audience.
 - Male because the story is told from the perspective of death which comes off as a very masculine character. Even though most of the story is based around a female, she is portrayed through the understanding of Death.
 - Female because Liesel is a strong character who is struggling to find understanding in a dark world. I think girls will be able to relate with her.
- Current Trends in YA Literature:
 - *The Book Thief* would definitely be considered YA literary fiction. It is very well written and thought provoking. I am not surprised that this was a Printz honor winner in 2007.
 - The book is narrated by Death which fits in with the trend of unique narrative perspectives in the text.
 - Markus Zusak is an Australian Author and this book has been published for both adults and teens making it a crossover novel.
 - The last trend that this book fits is the frankness and realism of the story and the characters. Most novels that deal with the Holocaust are about people overcoming the odds and doing the heroic thing. There is some of that in this novel but there is also the real fact that some people did nothing to help. This book does not hide the realities of war, nor does it sugarcoat the actions of the people in this small town outside of the Dachau Concentration camp. The characters and the emotions are real and it is left up to the reader to determine whether this is a good or bad thing.

Resources Used:

- Booklist
 - Vol. 102, Num. 15, p.42. Over a Thousand Hills I Walk With You by Hanna Jansen(YALSA Best Book, 2007)
 - Vol. 103, Num. 17, p. 86. Strays by Roland Koertge (YALSA Best Book, 2008)
 - Vol. 104, Num. 14, p. 67. Three Shadows by Cyril Pedrosa
 - Oct. 1, 1997. Stones in Water by Donna Napoli. (YASA Best Books, 1998)
- NoveList website via the Howard County Public Library
- School Library Journal
 - Vol. 49, Issue 4, p. 171. Getting the Girl by Markus Zusak
 - Vol. 51, Issue 2, p. 36. Looking for Alaska by John Green
 - Vol. 51, Issue 2, p. 144. I am the Messenger by Markus Zusak (YALSA Best Book, 2006; Printz Honor 2006)
 - Vol. 52, Issue 12, p.140. The Fighter by Jean-Jacques Greif
 - Vol. 52, Issue 12, p. 149. Keturah and Lord Death by Martine Leavitt
- The Book Thief Image taken from: <http://greenwichblog.com/2011/04/the-book-thief-at-perrot-library/>

If you liked...



Then you might enjoy...

Books about Death

- Keturah and Lord Death by Martine Leavitt
- Three Shadows by Cyril Pedrosa (Graphic Novel)

Books about Life during World War II

- The Fighter by Jean-Jaques Greif
- Stones in Water by Donna Jo Napoli

Books about Loss

- Looking for Alaska by John Green
- Over a Thousand Hills I Walk With You by Hanna Jansen
- Strays by Roland Koertge

Other Books By Markus Zusak

- I am the Messenger by Markus Zusak
- Getting the Girl by Markus Zusak