

Talented Bankers Literary Panel
Book Introduction 153

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The Book Thief.
Markus Zusak

'1939

Nazi Germany. The country is holding its breath. Death has never been busier. Liesel, a nine year old girl, is living with a foster family on Himmel Street. Her parents have been taken away to a concentration camp. Liesel steals books. This is her story and the story of the inhabitants of her street when the bombs begin to fall.

This novel is narrated by death.'

Narration on the back cover.

If you read this then how can you not end up picking up the book? Well I did and then let me tell you that this was no simple read.

An outline

By her brother's graveside, Liesel's life is changed when she picks up a single object, partially hidden in the snow. It is The Gravedigger's Handbook, left behind there by accident, and it is her first act of book thievery. So begins a love affair with books and words, as Liesel, with the help of her accordion-playing foster father, learns to read. Soon she is stealing books from Nazi book-burnings, the mayor's wife's library, wherever there are books to be found. But these are dangerous times. When Liesel's foster family hides a Jew in their basement, Liesel's world is both opened up, and closed down.

The book is written in a way where Death himself is the narrator. There are scenes where death describes the colour of sky when he is out taking or collecting souls. He also describes about the souls. He says he is haunted by the humans.

The style of book is quite different and that may sometime be a hurdle for some. Even though the book is about the world war 2 the story is around Liesel and how her life is affected by the war. The book is a slow read and for those who cant stand that this is not for you. It took me months to finish this one book and usually I am a fast reader. But this one was different. I will admit saying that at points the book got boring. But yet I went back to it. Such was the attraction it held for me.

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