

The Book Thief by Markus Zusak

This book is unique in the way it is written, as Death is the narrator who takes you through the life of an orphaned young girl, in 1939, called Liesel.

She has been orphaned and is taken to live with a foster family near Munich. Her foster mother Rosa, takes in washing for local residents. Her foster father, Hans, is a housepainter who comforts Liesel through her nightmares following the death of her brother on the train to Munich.

Liesel steals books and with the help of her foster Papa, she learns to read them. She grows very close to her Papa. Liesel goes on to steal more books and gains comfort from reading them to herself and to others. In Hitler's Germany, Liesel comes to understand the power of words. Being able to read them empowers her, but it empowers others, too. She has a true friend in Rudy a school mate who is her accomplice. She becomes close to a Jew, sheltering in her cellar who writes a book for her. She becomes a writer herself which is how Death is able to tell us Liesel's story.

The author has been very clever in the way he only touches on the so many horrors that came with WW2, but is able to give us an insight into how ordinary people in Germany lived and survived, including the hungry children pinching food, book burnings and bombing attacks.

Death who is not human and who finds it difficult to deal with how the 'humans' treat each other, tries to distract himself from the grim task of collecting souls, by looking at the colours of the sky. Death shows us he has a heart!

It is not the easiest book to read but you will reap the reward and go through many emotions as you come to understand and love all the characters.

Initially I did not like the fact that you were given pieces of information about what would happen later on, however, it made me eager to read on and discover exactly how and when things would happen!

This is essentially a book for the young adult but some of us 'old' adults in the book club enjoyed it too! It even made some of our eyes brim!