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Mrs. Rutan

AP Literature and Composition

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Dear Markus Zusak,

I recently read your book The Book Thief; at first I wasn't sure about the book, but now I am absolutely in love with this book. You used many creative thoughts and great detail in your book; I would like to write this letter to tell you what I liked the most and what I didn't like the most about your story The Book Thief.

The one thing that confused me at first was how the story is shared with the reader—as you know already it is told by death's point of view—although as I read more of the story it began to make more sense to me. I was impressed because it was a very unique choice to tell the story from. I have to say it was pretty genius idea because it gave the book a good voice—like at one moment death could be talking to you—as the reader—then he could be telling the story of Liesel again. I thought that telling the book from death's point of view was a very creative choice and something different than other books.

Many of the choices you choose to tell the story of The Book Thief helped me understand the book more and it left me more interested in reading it. One creative choice I thought was really interesting was when you put these small pieces of information in bold throughout the book. “Himmel = Heaven” (25) was one example you used that I thought was really interesting because in the beginning Liesel loves her home with the Hubermanns but later the town gets bombed and the reader begins to question as to whether Himmel Street really is heaven. I loved those small pieces of information because they were like extra thoughts for the reader to know and it helped me understand more about what was happening at the moment of the story.

Another great creative choice you used in the story was how you incorporated pictures of Max's book, *The Standover Man*, for the reader to look at and show how important the book was. By showing

pictures of the book you learn how much this book or story meant to both Max and Liesel. Also the pictures were very interesting to show the difference between the Jews and the Germans. One thing that was interesting was how Max draws the Jews as birds and draws the rest of the Germans as regular people. This shows the reader what the ideal of a normal person was in Germany during the Holocaust. Max's story was a very strong element in the book to show how different Jews were compared to Germans. After reading the book Liesel begins to learn and understand Max's situation. I believe by putting Max's story in the book it helped the reader learn more about how life was like for the Jewish during that time in history.

The next story Max leaves Liesel is *The Word Shaker*, which has to be the most important and creative story out of the two. *The Word Shaker* tells the reader and Liesel how words helped Hitler rise to power and how Liesel—who was once without words—learns how powerful words can really be. The story I thought was very powerful because it gave the whole theme of Words in the book an even bigger meaning. Throughout the book the main theme—the power of words—is stressed, from words that save Max's life in a basement, to words or ideas Hitler tells the people of Germany. Really throughout each chapter you learn more about how words have a huge impact on life and that's what I love the most about the book.

One other creative piece I saw that I had to bring up was the picture on the cover of the book. I wasn't sure if you picked it out, but I thought it was a very interesting choice by using the picture of domino's. After learning and reading about the Holocaust I realize what the cover symbolizes; the dominos symbolize people and when you tell one person a certain idea the ideas spread or in the case of dominos they get knocked over. In the book it is Hitler who raises these certain ideas of Jews being horrible people and people of Germany begin to not like the Jews because they listen to Hitler. Anyways I thought the cover of the book was an appropriate choice for The Book Thief and I loved how the cover of the book related to the theme of words and ideas.

One last thing I thought you did well, was that you used very great detail in your book. The whole time I was reading I had a great picture in my mind because you used many different literary

devices and descriptive writing. One literary device you used very well throughout the book was Imagery. The line I liked the most that used imagery was when Hans and Liesel went around painting, “Traces of bread crumbs were in the creases of his overalls. Paint-speckled hands made their way across the buttons and raked over the keys, or held on to a note for a while. His arms worked the bellows, giving the instrument the air it needed to breathe.” (355). I liked this quote because it gives you a great picture of that exact moment in time. Another great literary device you used throughout the book was foreshadowing. Many times in the book, death tells you something that could happen and one of my favorites was when death said “hard times were coming. Like a parade.” (358). This foreshadowed that Nazis were capturing more Jews and later in the book the Jews parade through the town on their way to Dachau. I thought you did an amazing job using very descriptive and different ideas in your book.

After telling you what I liked the most, I would like to discuss what I didn't like in your book, The Book Thief. One thing that I didn't really like was how long it was and how slow it started out in the beginning. In the beginning the story felt very slow at first because nothing wasn't really happening, not until Max came into the picture at least. If I were to change the story I would have shortened the beginning of the book so that it wasn't as boring in the beginning. By shortening the beginning of the book the book wouldn't have been as long. Although other than that minor thing, I have to say I enjoyed the book and I thought it was an amazing book to read.

After finishing the book, I would definitely recommend your book to other people. Your book should be read because of how much you could learn from it. People could honestly learn more about how Nazis ruined Jewish treasures including books. I think most people would enjoy your book because of how much thought you put into it. You used many different and creative things in this book that other authors don't use. I loved every little detail and story you put into this book. I would have to say that almost anyone would enjoy your heartfelt book and everyone needs to read it.

As I finish my letter I want to say I thought the ending was sad because Liesel almost lost everyone she ever loved. Although the ending had to make the book even better because without a devastating ending there is no story. I want to say again—after many times—I thought your book was

just an amazing book to read; you used a lot of great details, creative choices, pictures, different literary devices throughout the book, and an interesting point of view. Overall I thought the book had more good things than bad things and that is a pretty good thing, right?

Sincerely,

Samantha Alwood 😊