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School: Valencia High

Grade: Junior

Book Title: The Book Thief

Book Author: Markus Zusak

Rate 1-5 (1-lowest to 5-highest) – 4.5

Set in the small German town of Molching at the height of World War II, *The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak revolves around the life of a young orphaned girl by the name of Liesel Meminger. After losing her parents to the malicious Nazi party and witnessing the death of her younger brother, the heavily traumatized Liesel is adopted by new foster parents in Molching. At first a shy and passive person, Liesel is nursed back to a state of well-being by her loving adoptive father (Hans Hubermann) and sharp-tongued mother (Rosa Hubermann). Life is difficult but exciting in the small town, as Liesel must learn to navigate the difficulties of the rising Nazi party and her rapidly changing world. Things get even more interesting when a struggling shadow from Hans's past life in the First World War comes knocking on the door one day, begging for help.

The Book Thief is a deeply thrilling novel, written specifically to provoke thought and evoke emotion. Zusak chooses to construct the novel from the point of view of Death, who's described as a fully functioning, sentient being who sees the passing and going of people through time. The character Death is interested in Liesel's story, and decides to follow her through her incredible journey. Personally, I thought the entire concept of writing a book from the point of view of Death was fascinating. Additionally, Zusak's descriptions of the setting and plot are carefully written from the perspective of a child, offering a new insight into how the Nazi world must have looked for the children of that age, as opposed to what we often learn about it in our textbooks. The combination of the unique perspective, excellent language, and exciting plot make *The Book Thief* a fantastic read.

As such, I would definitely recommend this book to anyone trying to get a glimpse into the reality of Nazi-occupied Germany. While the novel is written from the eyes of a young teenager, *The Book Thief* can be applicable and enjoyable to people of all ages. By putting a human face to the tragedy and struggle of life during that time period, Zusak works to better educate people of our current time regarding the horrors of war and pain of loss, all while creating a nail-biting, gripping piece of literature.