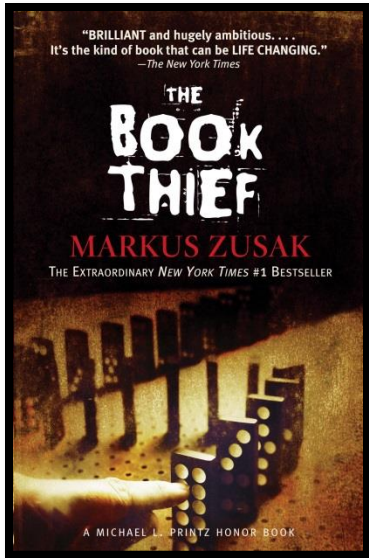


SPOTLIGHT



November 4, 2016

The Book Thief isn't a book as much as it's a work of art.

The story itself involves a girl named Liesel who lives with her foster parents, the Hubermanns, in Germany during the 2nd World War. They briefly shelter a Jewish man named Max Vandenburg. Liesel is best friends with a boy named Rudy Steiner and together they like to steal. Liesel's preferred loot is books.

But it's not the plot that makes the book remarkable—though the plot is, admittedly and memorably, intense and tragic. It's Death that sells this book. And by

capitalizing it, I'm not being hyperbolic. Death is the narrator. And what a narrator! What a voice! Death seems blessed with synesthesia, a blending of the senses, talking about the taste of colours for example, and the result is poetic rather than confusing.

Another huge risk on the part of author Markus Zusak, is Death's liberal use of foreshadowing. Constantly Death tells us what happens, then how we get there. Rather than spoil the excitement, again it surprisingly works.

And then there's a subtle theme comparing humans to words—nothing short of beautiful.

Despite the heavy issues (not to mention a lot of swearing), *The Book Thief* was originally aimed at young adults, perhaps due to the age of Liesel. Nonetheless, adults too would no doubt enjoy *The Book Thief*.

If you are looking for other books concerning war and the lessons that must be learned, check out the Remembrance Day display at Yellowknife Public Library. We also have 6 copies of *The Book Thief* on hand as part of our Book Club Selections. If you are part of a local book club or are looking to join one, ask about our Book Club Registry.

John Mutford, Public Services Librarian