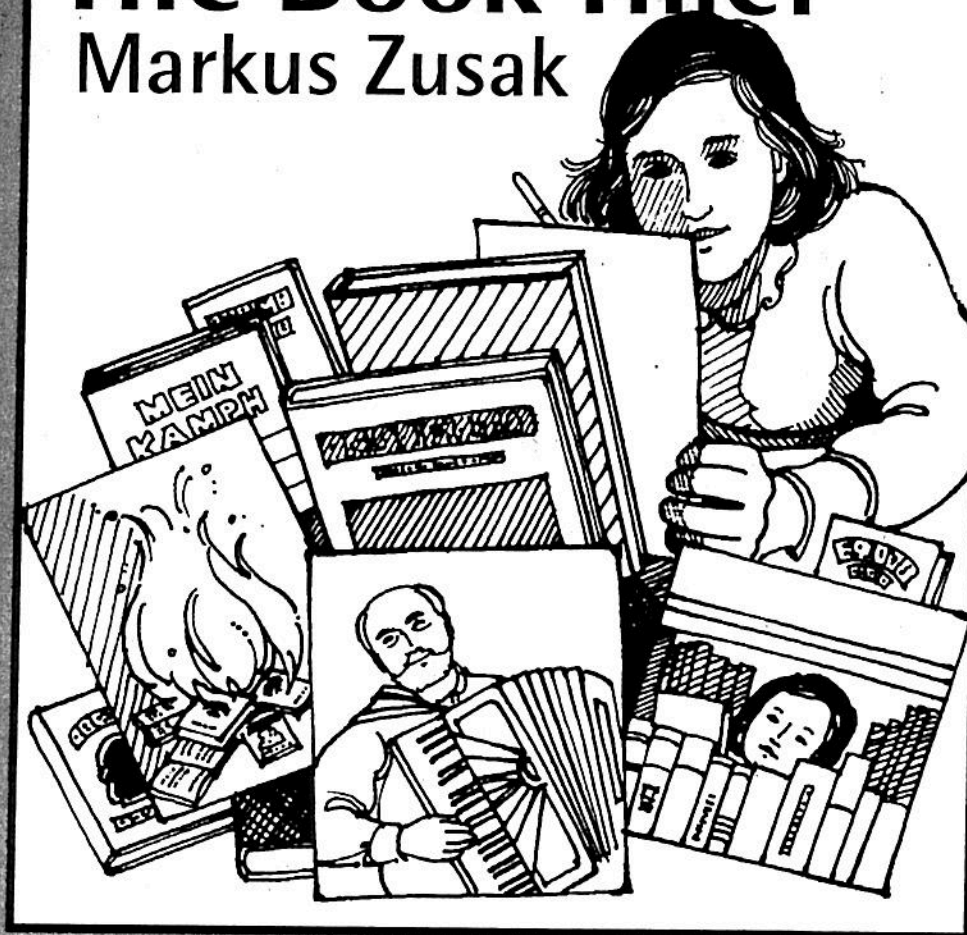


Novel·Ties

The Book Thief

Markus Zusak



A Study Guide

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Seeds of World War II

During the 1930s Germany, soundly defeated in World War I, gathered strength under the leadership of the fanatical nationalist Adolf Hitler. Hitler and his Nazi Party rearmed Germany, breaking the Versailles Treaty of 1919 that had been designed to keep peace throughout Europe. Hitler's trained thugs murdered political opponents, clearing his way to power. The Nazi leader entered into a series of negotiations that would allow Germany to dominate eastern Europe. Envisioning themselves as a superior or "master" race, the Nazis ultimately planned to rule northern Europe as well.

Hitler carefully laid his political groundwork. The 1934 non-aggression pact he signed with Poland was a ploy to keep the Poles from arming against Germany. Hitler then signed an agreement with Stalin, Russia's leader, dividing Poland between them. In 1936, the Italian leader Mussolini also signed a non-aggression pact with Germany. In 1938, the Nazi-run government incorporated Austria and parts of Czechoslovakia into an empire known as "the Third Reich."

The stage was set for another world war. When France and Great Britain failed to act quickly to stop Hitler, the Germans opened hostilities, launching a massive air offensive on Warsaw and the surrounding area. The Nazis gained control of Poland within three weeks. With Poland as its base, the German army launched its campaign across Europe, leaving destruction and death in its wake.

Hitler and the Jews

In 1933, when Adolf Hitler became Chancellor of Germany, a national census showed that the Jewish population of Germany numbered around 600,000, representing less than one percent of the country's total population. Of these, approximately eighty percent held German citizenship. The remaining twenty percent were mainly Jews of Polish descent. Why did this ethnic group pose such a serious threat to Hitler's ideal Germany? The answer lies in the long history of anti-Semitism, particularly in Europe. Jews were persecuted in Spain and in Russia, where they were coerced to convert to Christianity or face dire consequences. In general, the Jews tended to retain their own

religious and cultural beliefs, although some did convert in order to conform to social expectations. In addition to the religious issue, Jews sometimes acted as money-lenders and were then scapegoated for the economic problems of the citizenry.

Hitler was not Germany's first rabid anti-Semite. He was greatly influenced by Karl Lueger, mayor of Vienna, Austria from 1897 to 1910. The leader of the Christian Social Party, Lueger garnered voters with his platform of religious and racial homogeneity. He drew his support largely from the lower middle class, exploiting prejudices and attributing financial hardships to the practices of the Jews.

Hitler found it politically expedient to take the same approach. In *Mein Kampf*, he accused Jews of deliberately attempting to pollute the pure German gene pool, of robbing Aryans, and of destroying the nation's social fabric. His propaganda became effective during the Great Depression, when the economic collapse put many out of work. Hitler's government introduced a strict program of segregation of the Jews, prohibiting them from attending mainstream schools and from doing business with Aryans, or "pure" Germans. The government smiled on thugs who destroyed Jewish property and terrorized Jewish communities.

With the passing of the Nuremberg Laws of 1935, German Jews lost their rights as citizens, and intermarriage between Jews and non-Jews was prohibited. As acts of violence and outrage against Jews increased, many fled Germany. Those who remained behind suffered greatly from lack of food and medicines. Organized death squads killed thousands in Germany and Eastern Europe. In 1938, the assassination of a German diplomat by a Jewish teenager touched off a Nazi retaliation of astonishing brutality—*Kristallnacht*, or "night of broken glass," when Nazis and SS storm troopers smashed the windows in Jewish stores, committing murder and acts of violence along the way. There were also mass arrests that resulted in the expropriation of Jewish monies and properties by government officials.

In 1942, the Nazis instituted the concentration camps, where prisoners were worked to death, shot, or gassed. The vast majority of German and Polish Jews ended up in these camps; relatively few survived Hitler's Final Solution. The Allies liberated the camps in 1945, with the defeat of the Axis Powers. Hitler would not live to face trial for the genocide he had orchestrated. He committed suicide in April, 1945, when the Red Army invaded Germany.

Jesse Owens

James Cleveland Owens was born in Lawrence County, Alabama in 1913 and raised in Cleveland, Ohio. Owens, the grandson of a slave, was often sick as a child. He was given the name *Jesse* by a teacher in Cleveland who did not understand his country accent.

Jesse grew up in poverty, taking odd jobs delivering groceries, loading freight cars, and working in a shoe repair shop as a young teenager. During this time, he realized that he had a passion for running, encouraged by his junior-high track coach.

Owens first came to national attention when he was a high school student and equaled the record of 9.4 seconds in the 100-yard dash and long-jumped 24 feet 9½ inches at the 1933 National High School Championship of Chicago.

Owens attended Ohio State University where he won a record of eight individual NCAA championships. Although Owens enjoyed athletic success, he had to live off-campus with other African-American athletes. When he traveled with the team, he had to eat at “black-only” restaurants, and sleep in “black-only” hotels.

In 1936 Owens was selected to compete for the United States in the Summer Olympics in Berlin. Adolf Hitler was using the games to show the world a resurgent Nazi Germany and the superiority of the Aryan race. Owens, however, won four gold medals. Hitler publicly snubbed Owens, shaking hands only with German victors.

When Owens returned to the United States, he was given a hero's welcome, but it was short-lived. As an African-American before the Civil Rights movement in America, Owens suffered the injustices of his race and eventually filed for bankruptcy. It wasn't until 1966 that his rehabilitation began and he lived out the rest of his life as a U.S. goodwill ambassador. Owens died of lung cancer at the age of 66.

PROLOGUE, PART ONE

Vocabulary: Draw a line from each word on the left to its definition on the right. Then use the numbered words to fill in the blanks in the sentences below.

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| 1. affable | a. showing intensity of feeling |
| 2. lethal | b. promising; favorable |
| 3. vehement | c. harsh; grating; disorderly |
| 4. auspicious | d. scold |
| 5. raucous | e. state of disease, death, or unwholesomeness |
| 6. catalyst | f. fatal; deadly |
| 7. abducted | g. without warmth of feeling |
| 8. morbidity | h. carried off unlawfully |
| 9. berate | i. agent that stirs a person or thing to action |
| 10. frigid | j. easy to approach; pleasant |
-

- After working as the congresswoman's aide, I was a(n) _____ supporter of her candidacy for governor.
- Most people consider a wedding to be a(n) _____ occasion.
- The _____ of the movie makes it unsuitable for children to view.
- Uncontrolled by their government or military officers, ordinary soldiers _____ enemy foot soldiers and officers.
- Thrusting out her hand stiffly, my new neighbor offered me a(n) _____ but polite welcome.
- This _____ flock of crows frightened away all of the smaller birds in the area.
- The bite of a scorpion is not always _____, but it is certainly harmful.
- I waited for my teacher to _____ me when I failed to turn in my report on time.
- A persuasive leader can be a(n) _____ for positive or negative change.
- My uncle's _____ manner makes him a favorite with children and adults.

Prologue, Part One Comprehension Questions:

1. What did Death find painful about his duties? _____

2. What mistake did Death make at the train line? _____

3. What tragedy struck Liesel's family while aboard the train? _____

4. Why were Liesel and her brother Werner supposed to be placed in foster care in January 1939? _____

5. Why did Death think it was foolish for the poor to travel to escape poverty? _____

6. Why was the book about grave digging significant to Liesel? _____

7. What helped Liesel adjust to her foster home? _____

8. Why was school a failure for Liesel? _____

9. What was Rudy's father trying to teach his son on the night of the Jesse Owens incident? _____

10. Why did Liesel insist on participating in the reading examination? Why did it end in disaster? _____

11. Why did the narrator's workload increase in the beginning of September 1939? _____

PARTS TWO, THREE

Vocabulary: Synonyms are words with similar meanings. Draw a line from each word in column A to its synonym in column B. Then use the words in column A to fill in the blanks in the sentences below.

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------|
| 1. flippant | a. thoughtful |
| 2. culminate | b. disturbance |
| 3. prolific | c. disrespectful |
| 4. agitation | d. conclude |
| 5. animosity | e. culprit |
| 6. transgressor | f. enmity |
| 7. benign | g. abundant |
| 8. pensive | h. good |

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1. As the victim of an automobile accident looked over the people on the police lineup, he hoped the _____ would have a guilty expression on his face.
2. Although I was expecting the worst, I had such a(n) _____ visit with my aunt that she invited me back again.
3. My expression changed from _____ to jubilant as I realized the letter from a stranger announced that I had inherited a great deal of money.
4. The tour will _____ in a visit to the Grand Canyon, and then we will return home.
5. Her _____ attitude was inappropriate to the serious circumstances.
6. The artist was so _____ that he ran out of room to store his paintings.
7. The suspect's _____ became obvious when his body trembled as the police questioned him.
8. The _____ between the two neighboring nations finally erupted in warfare.

Comprehension Questions: Parts Two & Three

1. How did Hans Hubermann's Christmas gift to Liesel reveal the depth of his feelings for her? _____

2. Why did Mama Hubermann decide to risk sending Liesel on the important business of laundry pickup and delivery? _____

3. Why did the Hubermanns avoid any discussion of Liesel's mother in front of Liesel? _____

4. In what important way did Hans Junior differ from his father? _____

5. Why did Hans Junior accuse his father of cowardice? What was the "mistake" Papa Hubermann had committed? _____

6. Why did the people of Molching hold a bonfire? What shocking realization met Liesel when she listened to the speaker at the bonfire? _____

7. Why did Papa Hubermann slap Liesel? _____

8. Why did Papa Hubermann buy a copy of Hitler's *Mein Kampf*? _____

9. Why did Liesel avoid the mayor's house for some time? And then, why did she change radically and look forward to delivering laundry to the mayor's house? _____

10. Why did Max Vandenburg read a copy of *Mein Kampf* on the train? _____

PART FOUR

Vocabulary: Antonyms are words with opposite meanings. Draw a line from each word in column A to its antonym in column B. Then use the words in column A to fill in the blanks in the sentences below.

- | | |
|----------------|---------------|
| 1. malignant | a. cheerful |
| 2. ostracism | b. confidence |
| 3. capitulate | c. gentle |
| 4. morose | d. benign |
| 5. dormant | e. subtle |
| 6. abrasive | f. acceptance |
| 7. trepidation | g. resist |
| 8. blatant | h. active |

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- Failure to conform to society's accepted values may lead to a person's _____.
- In winter, frogs and fish lie underneath the ice in a(n) _____ state.
- The _____ tone of the speaker angered and offended many in the audience.
- With great _____, the boy knocked on the door of the spooky old house.
- "You cannot possibly expect me to believe such a(n) _____ lie!" shouted the angry man.
- With the enormous loss of troops, the general was forced to _____ to the enemy.
- It was typical in old silent films for the villain to wear a(n) _____ sneer at all times.
- Judging from my friend's _____ expression, I assumed he had just received some terrible news.

Comprehension Questions: Part Four

1. How did Erik Vandenburg save Hans Hubermann's life in the first World War? _____

2. How was a relationship between Hans Hubermann and Erik Vandenburg's son Max created? Why did Hans feel compelled to help Max? _____

3. Why did Hans's business go into decline after 1933? _____

4. Why did Max Vandenburg feel guilty? _____

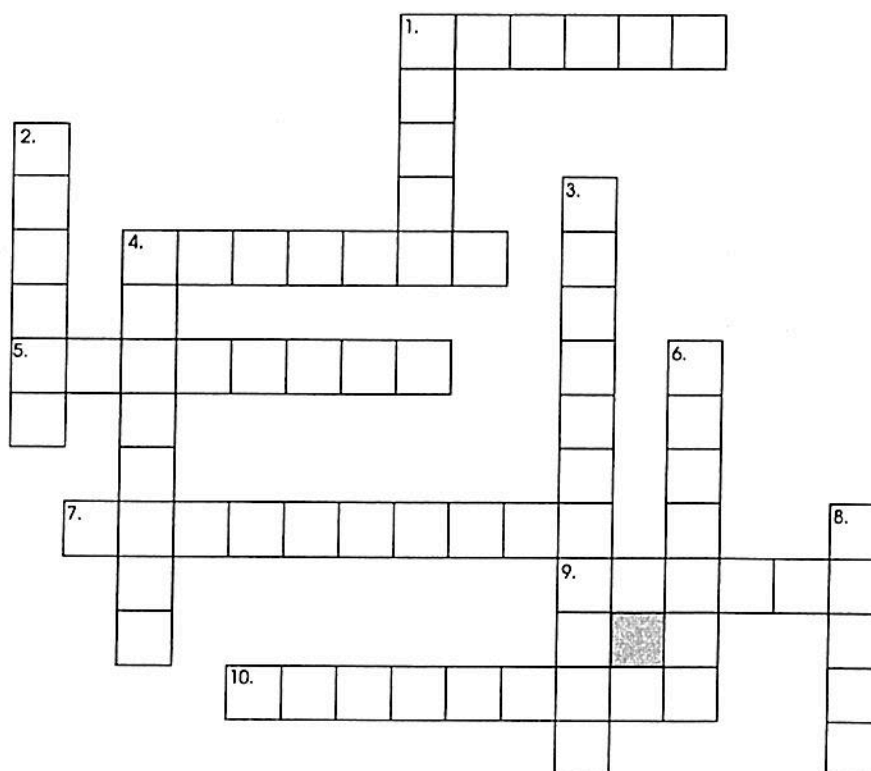
5. Why did Hans risk frightening Liesel terribly? _____

6. What factors helped to create the bond between Max and Liesel? _____

PART FIVE

Vocabulary: Use the words in the Word Box and the clues below to complete the crossword puzzle.

WORD BOX			
admonish	commence	frugal	malice
amiable	diminutive	hypocrite	rebate
audible	frail	hypothermia	venom

**Across**

1. spending as little as possible
4. able to be heard
5. begin; start
7. extremely small in size
9. return of part of a payment
10. one who practices or professes beliefs that one does not hold

Down

1. physically weak; delicate
2. desire to harm others or see others suffer
3. abnormally low body temperature
4. scold gently
6. good-natured and likeable
8. poison, in a snake or insect

Comprehension Questions: Part Five

1. Why did Liesel scavenge from garbage pails on the days she went on her laundry route? _____

2. How did Max make time pass as he spent days and weeks in the Hubermanns' basement? _____

3. Why was Liesel outraged by the mayor's wife? _____

4. Why didn't Rosa Hubermann punish Liesel after learning how Liesel had insulted the mayor's wife? _____

5. Why had Viktor Chemmel assumed the leadership of the gang of thieves? _____

6. Why was Tommy Müller punished during the Hitler Youth drill? Why was Rudy Steiner punished along with him? _____

7. Why did Liesel and Rudy feel compelled to commit a significant robbery by themselves? _____

8. What evidence showed that almost all of the German population was suffering under the Nazi regime? _____

Vocabulary: Part Six

Word analogies are equations in which the first pair of words has the same relationship as the second set of words. For example: ASCENT is to DESCENT as TRAGEDY is to COMEDY. Both sets of words are opposites. Choose a word from the Word Box to complete each of the analogies below.

1. ROOF is to EXTERIOR as KITCHEN is to _____.
2. WALK is to _____ as RACE is to SPRINT.
3. STURDY is to MARBLE as _____ is to CRYSTAL.
4. BRINK is to _____ as ATTEMPT is to TRY.
5. BALANCE is to TIGHTROPE WALKER as _____ is to GUARD.
6. _____ is to PUZZLE as FEAR is to TREPIDATION.
7. _____ is to MINUTE as FATIGUED is to RESTED.
8. VICTORIOUS is to ADVANCE as DEFEATED is to _____.

Comprehension Questions: Part Six

1. How did "Death" characterize the year 1942? _____

2. Why was Christmas Day 1942 a special time for those who resided in Hans Hubermann's home? _____

3. Why did Max wait so long to reveal his illness to the family? _____

4. Why did Liesel blame herself for bringing snow into the basement in order to build the snowman? _____

5. What did Liesel hope to accomplish by bringing presents to the unconscious Max? _____

6. Why did Rosa Hubermann make an unplanned visit to Liesel's school? _____

7. Why did Liesel deliberately injure her leg while playing outdoors? _____

8. Why did Death say that the sky was "the color of Jews"? How did Death respond to the mass destruction of human lives? _____

PART SEVEN

Vocabulary: Draw a line from each word on the left to its definition on the right. Then use the numbered words to fill in the blanks in the sentences below.

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. depleted | a. fear of future trouble or evil |
| 2. trilogy | b. used up |
| 3. formidable | c. pretend |
| 4. loathsome | d. dreadful; menacing |
| 5. apprehension | e. useless |
| 6. feign | f. unchangeable |
| 7. immutable | g. three-part work of literature |
| 8. futile | h. offensive; disgusting |

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- Having enjoyed the first two plays, I looked forward to seeing the last play in the _____.
- My feelings of _____ grew as the storm approached.
- Once our supplies of food and water were _____, we knew we had to be rescued before nightfall.
- With a cast protecting my broken leg, I knew it would be _____ to try out for the basketball team.
- Afraid that I would be a(n) _____ competitor, my opponent dropped out of the tennis match.
- The cause of the _____ odor that filled the kitchen was a glass of milk that had been left out on the counter overnight.
- Having been tipped off ahead of time, I could only _____ astonishment when everyone cried, "Surprise."
- Faced with the host's set of _____ rules and regulations, the guests became uncomfortable and left early.

Comprehension Questions: Part Seven

1. What caused the brief period of contentment for Liesel and Papa Hubermann during the summer of 1942?

2. Why did Liesel conclude that she was a criminal even though Ilse Hermann gave her permission to steal books? _____

3. Why didn't Death feel sympathy for the Germans who hid in their basements during the air raids? _____

4. Why did the possible bombing of Molching place Max in particular danger? _____

5. What did Liesel do to calm people down during the second air raid on Molching? _____

6. Why did Max have to leave 33 Himmel Street? _____

7. Why did Hans Hubermann feel so guilty days after the incident at the march? _____

PART EIGHT

Vocabulary: Use the context to determine the meaning of the underlined word in each of the following sentences. Circle the letter of the definition you choose.

1. We asked everyone to wish us good luck before we began our _____ hike up the steep, rocky mountain.
a. gradual b. perilous c. safe d. fortuitous
2. It is dangerous to return to the fire zone because the ashes are still _____ on the ground.
a. leaping b. crackling c. smoldering d. dousing
3. I was so absorbed in the book I was reading that I was _____ to the storm that was raging outside my window.
a. oblivious b. conscious c. listening d. engaging
4. Aware that I had not trained hard enough, I had strong feelings of _____ as I began the race.
a. anxiety b. victory c. exhaustion d. relief
5. Knowing that I had been out of work for the past year, the doctor agreed to accept _____ payment for the treatment.
a. anticipated b. dwindling c. total d. partial
6. The rubber patch was only a _____ solution for my tire problem.
a. permanent b. temporary c. practical d. judicious
7. My students' _____ stares made it perfectly clear that they did not understand the lesson.
a. accusatory b. inquisitive c. vacant d. disinterested
8. It is _____ to expect an untrained actor to play the part of Hamlet.
a. dramatic b. fortunate c. solemn d. ludicrous

Comprehension Questions: Part Eight

1. Why did "the coat men" visit Alex Steiner's house? _____

2. Why was Rudy selected for examination by the Nazi medical authorities? _____

3. Why were Alex Steiner and Hans Hubermann get drafted into the army even though they are both middle-aged? _____

4. Did Hans Hubermann like his job in the German army? Explain. _____

5. Why did Liesel and Rudy go to observe the third march of the Jews to Dachau? _____

6. Why did Liesel take Rudy to his father's abandoned shop on Christmas night? _____

PART NINE

Vocabulary: Use the context to figure out the meaning of the underlined word in each of the following sentences. Then compare your answer with a dictionary definition.

1. It was difficult to keep the present a surprise because it protruded from his front pocket.

Your definition _____

Dictionary definition _____

2. To those who have never suffered from poison ivy, the bright green three-leaved plant seems innocuous enough.

Your definition _____

Dictionary definition _____

3. Even if you are in a terrible mood, please attempt a semblance of civility.

Your definition _____

Dictionary definition _____

4. The angry parent delivered a reprimand to her son who had worried her by staying out well past his curfew.

Your definition _____

Dictionary definition _____

5. The engineer will blow the whistle three consecutive times as the train approaches the station.

Your definition _____

Dictionary definition _____

Comprehension Questions: Part Nine

1. Why do you think Michael Holtzapfel killed himself? _____

2. Why do you think Rudy's attitude toward thievery changed? _____

3. What did Death mean when he commented about Liesel as she observed the dying survivor of the plane crash, "She did not back away or try to fight me, but I know that something told the girl I was there . . . she knew me and she looked me in my face and she did not look away . . . we both moved on"?

4. Do you think that Rudy and Liesel tried to aid the downed "enemy" pilot? Explain your inference. _____

PART TEN, EPILOGUE

Vocabulary: Draw a line from each word on the left to its meaning on the right. Then use the numbered words to answer each of the questions below.

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| 1. overcast | a. free from error |
| 2. unkempt | b. person or persons saddened by death of a loved one |
| 3. threshold | c. determine by reasoning |
| 4. pensive | d. overspread or covered with clouds |
| 5. accurate | e. expressing thoughtfulness, usually marked by sadness |
| 6. bereaved | f. firmly resolved or determined |
| 7. calculate | g. place of entering or beginning |
| 8. resolute | h. untidy; messy |

.....

1. If you observe that the sky is *overcast*, what items might you carry when you leave the house?

2. How might someone improve his *unkempt* appearance?

3. What worries might you have on the *threshold* of a new career?

4. Under what circumstances might someone seem *pensive*?

5. If you want your bookkeeping to be absolutely *accurate*, what steps might you take?

6. In your culture, how do the *bereaved* behave and dress?

7. How might someone *calculate* the time it would take to travel to their destination during rush hour?

8. Under what circumstances have you needed to be *resolute*?

Comprehension Questions: Epilogue

1. How did Liesel survive the air strike on Himmel Street? How did words once again save her life? _____

2. How did Rudy save Liesel's life? _____

3. How did Ilse Hermann inspire Liesel to write her own story? _____

4. What did Liesel realize when she found Rudy's body after the bombing? How did she attempt to reach him? _____

5. Who took care of Liesel after she was orphaned for the second time? _____

6. Who was the unexpected survivor of the war? _____

7. Did Liesel resist Death at the end of her life? Why or why not? _____

THE BOOK THIEF REFLECTION PROJECT: SPLIT MIND MIRROR

In order to reflect on the *The Book Thief*, you will create a **split mind mirror** about **one (1)** of the following characters:

- ☐ Hans Hubermann,
- ☐ Rosa Hubermann,
- ☐ Liesel Meminger, *OR*
- ☐ Rudy Steiner

Mind Mirror Directions: In a **Split Mind Mirror**, students should communicate the thoughts, feelings, concerns, dreams, and frustrations of a character.

Your Mind Mirror should include ALL of the following:

From the 1 st half of the story, you should have...	From the 2 nd half of the story, you should have...
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two (2) quotes from the text marked with "quotation marks" and cited with the page number.• Two (2) ORIGINAL phrases you created that describe what the character is thinking or feeling.• Two (2) symbols (objects that represent something deeper) that communicate important ideas about the character• Two (2) illustrations of an important scene.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two (2) quotes from the text marked with "quotation marks" and cited with the page number.• Two (2) ORIGINAL phrases you created that describe what the character is thinking or feeling.• Two (2) symbols (objects that represent something deeper) that communicate something important about the character.• Two (2) illustrations of an important scene.

- ❖ Your mind mirror should be creative and original.
- ❖ It should show what is going on in the character's mind *towards the beginning of the story AND towards the end of the story*

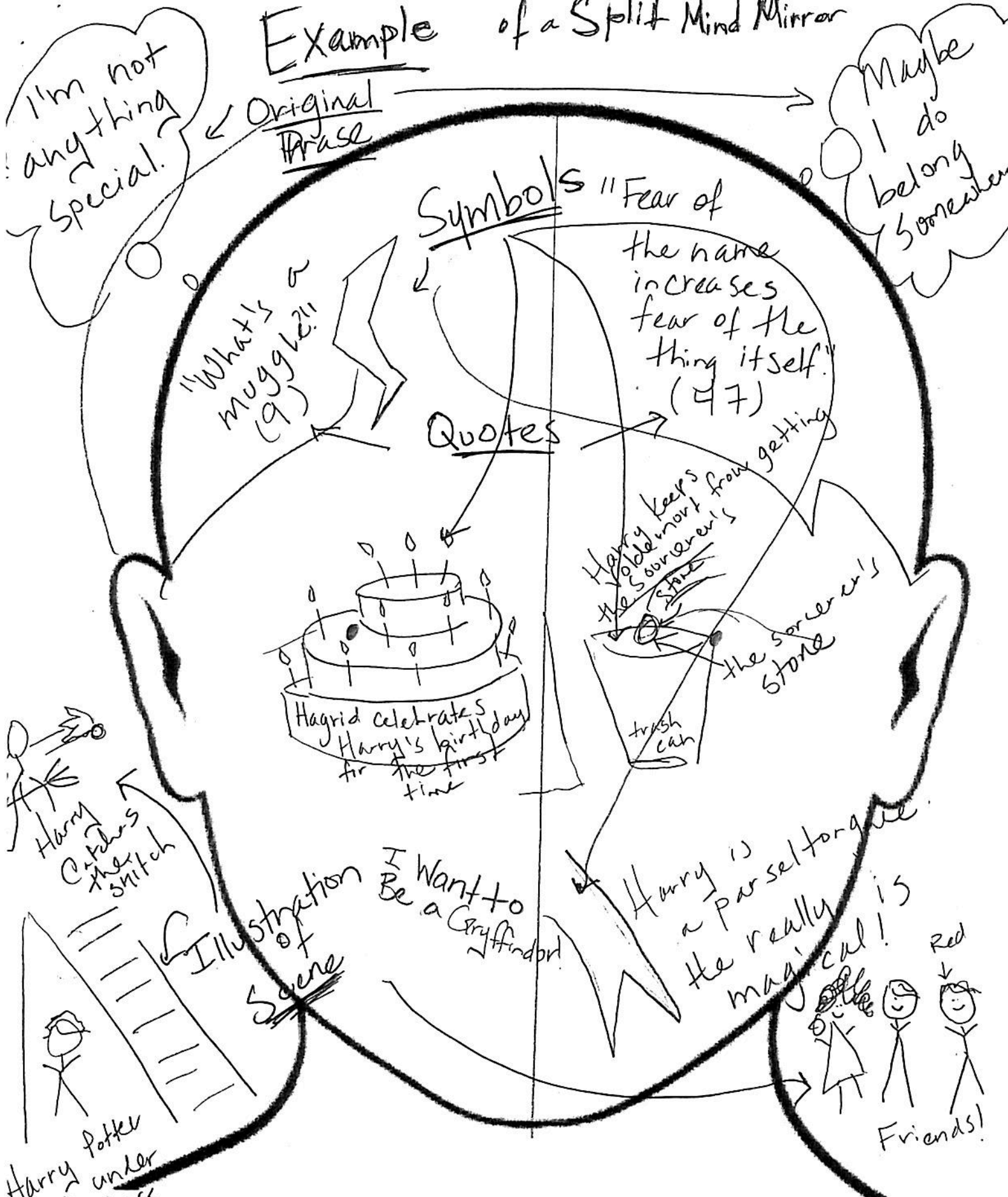


SPLIT MIND-MIRROR RUBRIC:

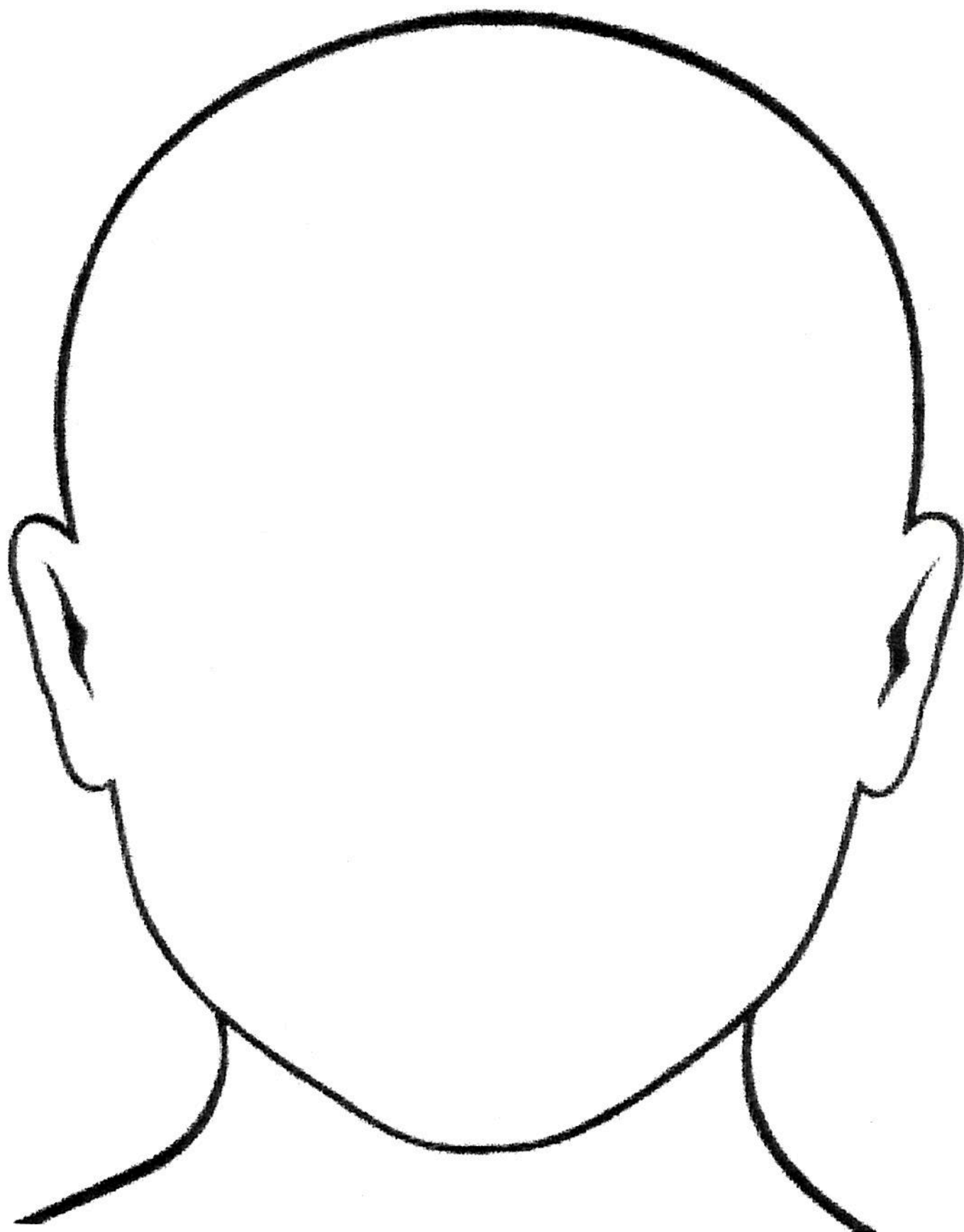
Which character is your mind mirror reflecting? _____

On your poster,...				
	YES		NO	
Is your mind mirror split into two sides, one to reflect the character's values at the beginning of <i>The Book Thief</i> , and one to reflect the character's values at the end?				
On each side of your mind mirror, did you include two (2) quotations that reflect the character's values?				
Did you put each quotation in quotation marks and include the page number on which you found each quotation?				
On each side of your mind mirror, did you include two (2) symbols that reflect the character's values?				
On each side of your mind mirror, did you include two (2) relevant scenes that reflect the character's values ?				
On each side of your mind mirror, do you include two (2) relevant original phrases that reflect the character's values?				
	4	3	2	1
Are each of the elements (i.e. quotes, symbols, scenes, and original statements) placed thoughtfully?				
Is all writing legible, spelled correctly, and big enough to be seen from at least 10 feet away?				
Did you incorporate three or more colors?				
Are all illustrations neat?				

Example of a Split Mind Mirror



SPLIT MIND MIRROR OF Harry Potter



SPLIT MIND MIRROR OF _____

