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Mrs. Rutan
AP Literature and Composition
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Dear Mr. Markus Zusak,

When writing to such an incredible author as yourself, it is incredibly hard to know exactly what to say. Where do I start? I can begin by saying how incredible The Book Thief is, and I know you probably hear that all the time. When it comes to reading books, I am very picky. Anything that involves history seems to push me away and I can never complete the book. What intrigued me most about this story was how your title didn't reveal the book's focus on Nazi Germany. You started the book like an other story and threaded in the details and setting of Nazi Germany—I absolutely loved that. It was almost like you knew that if the readers were aware of the book's focus, they wouldn't be interested. You taught them, and myself to see past that and to love the book for what it is. *Genius*.

The way you created each character is one of my favorite things about the book. Your writing style helped us understand each character's different personality. We saw Liesel as loving, caring, shy, but at the same time strong and brave. We saw Papa as also loving and caring, but as well as understanding, patient, and strong. And of course there is Mama who was ornery, unpleasant, and loud, but she could be caring, and loving as well. We saw Max (my favorite character) as smart, kind, forgiving, strong, and understanding. And last but not least, Rudy, whom was playful, humorous, kind, and ambitious. Without your details and personality

traits added to the characters, The Book Thief would not be what it is. Readers just wouldn't be able to "feel" the book as much.

I loved this book as a whole, but there were many factors that I loved as well. At the beginning of the book, you made us aware of Liesel's inability to read. As the book went on, it was like we were with Liesel as she began to learn how to read more and more. Where, all the way to the end of the book, she could write her own personal book. We saw how others might have thought Liesel's life wasn't much, but she thought it was really something, and she wanted to write a book about it. That taught me writing skills, but at the same time, life skills. It teaches you that although you might have a rough life—a life thought by others to be uninteresting, what matters is what you believe, and what you got out of the life you had. Liesel found it hard to lose her mother and adjust to her new family at the beginning, but she found a way to love her new family and be happy.

As mentioned earlier, my favorite character is Max. Not only was he strong, courageous, and loving, he was a stranger who came into the Hubermann's home and instantly became family. He saw how Liesel had been hurt in the past, and became the brotherly figure she had lost. Throughout the book, Max was ill, slept in a basement in the wet and cold, and was mistreated because of his religion. Although he went through all of that, he remained strong and never complained. He was just happy he had a home and a family who loved him. I really loved how you added these characteristics into Max. Without them, I feel the book wouldn't give readers such emotion. The way the book ended, with Liesel losing her family and then being reconnected with Max was the icing on the cake. That just made me love his character even more!

There are many amazing parts in your book! One of my favorite parts is when Liesel goes to the big bonfire and steals a book from the fire. She hides it in her coat even though it is burning her skin. This really showed her love for books, and her hobby of stealing them. I loved the mysterious feeling when Liesel was stealing the book, and there was someone watching her. It kept you on the edge of your seat! When Liesel was walking home with the book under her coat and finally gave up because of the heat, Papa takes the book for her. He warns Liesel of doing such things, but he never told anyone and that really showed he could be trusted and how much he loved Liesel.

Whenever I write about a book, I have a problem with never writing anything negative about it. Honestly though, it was incredibly hard to find anything negative. There were two things I finally came up with. Number one: Hans leaving for war. I for sure shed a few tears at that part. Since he was so close to Liesel, this really broke my heart and it just felt like there was a piece missing when he was gone. Number two: Rudy dying at the end. Throughout the book Liesel and Rudy were best of friends and I saw them having a future together. So him dying kind of took that vision away and made me really sad. I was hoping for a happy ending for him. Surprisingly that is all I came up with! Which of course is a compliment!

Other High School students should read this book not only because of the history, but because of the writing techniques, the feelings portrayed, and the incredible connections between people. Although it is a story about Nazi Germany, it is a happy one. The ending is sad, but it is a sad ending turned happy with the return of Max. You learn how a person can be incredibly hurt, then healed by one person.

So, to reflect back on what I said in the beginning: The Book Thief is incredible. I wish I could post the word incredible on a billboard with all capitalized letters, blinking colorful lights,

and arrows all around the sign pointing at the word incredible so you can understand how incredible it is! Mr. Zusak, you are a very talented writer and by writing this book, you taught me how writing can do way more than some might believe.

Sincerely,

Emily Hausman