

EVENTS

Indoor Sports Day

The characters in *The Book Thief* use sports to persevere through the difficult times in which they live. Find out more about *The Book Thief* and take part in fun sports activities for the whole family. Climb the rock wall, race on scooters, shoot some hoops and more. Ike the Spike and the Nittany Lion will make appearances. We'll also be giving away copies of the book!

Sunday, January 22, 1-3 p.m.
State College YMCA, 677 W. Whitehall Rd

***The Book Thief* Panel Discussion**

Panelists from the scholarly, creative writing, and publishing worlds will puzzle over the sometimes porous boundaries between "adult" and "young adult" literature categories, commenting on Markus Zusak's *The Book Thief* as a test case. Set during the Holocaust, Zusak's popular novel has been marketed around the world as "adult fiction" but as "young adult literature" in the United States. Following opening statements, the panelists will invite questions from the audience.

Tuesday, February 21, 4:00 p.m.
124 Sparks Building on PSU's campus
Members of the general public welcome.

Skype Appearance by Author Markus Zusak

From his home in Australia, author Markus Zusak will speak, via a video call, to Centre County residents about his motivations for and experience with writing *The Book Thief*. WPSU's Patty Satalia will moderate.

Tuesday, March 20, 7 p.m.
Mt. Nittany Middle School Auditorium
656 Brandywine Drive

Grim Reaper

Writing Contest

In *The Book Thief*, Liesel's story is narrated by Death. Enter your best writing, from the point of view of death, in one of the following categories.

Best Short Fiction (7500 words or less)
Best Poetry
Best Parody
Best Entry for a Writer Under 18

\$200 Grand Prize
Additional prizes for winners
in each category
Entries due February 24

Send your entry to
calswritingcontest@gmail.com

Be sure to include a cover letter with your name, address, contact information and a brief biography. Winning entries to be displayed at Schlow Centre Region Library.

**Sponsored by the Center for American
Literary Studies at Penn State**

BOOK DISCUSSION GROUPS

Centre County Library
Wednesday, January 18, 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Centre Region Senior Center
Wednesday, February 15, 12:15 p.m.

Schlow Centre Region Library
Tuesday, February 21, 6:30 p.m.
Sun Room

Tuesday, March 27, 2:30 p.m.
Community Room

Discussion Questions

1. Discuss the symbolism of Death as the omniscient narrator of the novel. What are Death's feelings for each victim? Describe Death's attempt to resist Liesel. Death states, "I'm always finding humans at their best and worst. I see their ugly and their beauty, and I wonder how the same thing can be both." (p. 491) What is ugly and beautiful about Liesel, Rosa and Hans Hubermann, Max Vandenburg, Rudy Steiner, and Mrs. Hermann? Why is Death haunted by humans?
2. What is ironic about Liesel's obsession with stealing books? Discuss other uses of irony in the novel.
3. *The Grave Digger's Handbook* is the first book Liesel steals. Why did she take the book? What is significant about the titles of the books she steals? Discuss why she hides *The Grave Digger's Handbook* under her mattress. Describe Hans Hubermann's reaction when he discovers the book. What does the act of book thievery teach Liesel about life and death? Explain Rudy's reaction when he discovers that Liesel is a book thief. How does stealing books from the mayor's house lead to a friendship with the mayor's wife? Explain how Liesel's own attempt to write a book saves her life.
4. Liesel believes that Hans Hubermann's eyes show kindness, and from the beginning she feels closer to him than to Rosa Hubermann. How does Hans gain Liesel's love and trust? Debate whether Liesel is a substitute for Hans's children, who have strayed from the family. Why is it so difficult for Rosa to demonstrate the same warmth toward Liesel? Discuss how Liesel's relationship with Rosa changes by the end of the novel.
5. Abandonment is a central theme in the novel. The reader knows that Liesel feels abandoned by her mother and by the death of her brother. How does she equate love with abandonment? At what point does she understand why she was abandoned by her mother? Who else abandons Liesel in the novel? Debate whether she was abandoned by circumstance or by the heart.

Find more questions at www.randomhouse.com

About Centre County Reads

Centre County Reads encourages county residents of all ages to explore the human condition and the issues of community by reading the same book and coming together in discussions anytime, anywhere, with anyone.

CCR Coordinators

Center for American Literary Studies at PSU
Centre County Library and Historical Museum
Centre Daily Times
Pennsylvania Center for the Book
Schlow Centre Region Library
School Districts: State College, Philipsburg-Osceola, Penns Valley, and Bellefonte

2012 Partners

Barnes & Noble
Centre County Community Foundation
State College Spikes
WPSU
YMCA of Centre County



Previous Books

2003 To Kill a Mockingbird
2004 The Giver
2005 Riding the Bus with My Sister
2006 A Walk in the Woods
2008 When the Emperor Was Divine
2009 Persepolis
2010 The Maltese Falcon
2011 Half Broke Horses

Printing Sponsored by

Friends of Schlow Centre Region Library
and King Printing.

About the book

Courtesy of www.randomhouse.com

Liesel Meminger is only nine years old when she is taken to live with the Hubermanns, a foster family, on Himmel Street in Molching, Germany, in the late 1930s. She arrives with few possessions, but among them is *The Grave Digger's Handbook*, a book that she stole from her brother's burial place. During the years that Liesel lives with the Hubermanns, Hitler becomes more powerful, life on Himmel Street becomes more fearful, and Liesel becomes a full-fledged book thief. She rescues books from Nazi book-burnings and steals from the library of the mayor. Liesel is illiterate when she steals her first book, but Hans Hubermann uses her prized books to teach her to read. This is a story of courage, friendship, love, survival, death, and grief. This is Liesel's life on Himmel Street, told from Death's point of view.

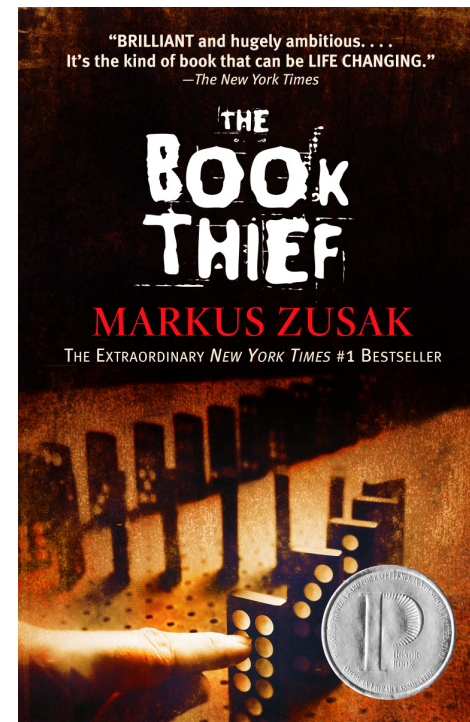
About the author

Australian author Markus Zusak grew up hearing stories about Nazi Germany, about the bombing of Munich and about Jews being marched through his mother's small, German town. He always knew it was a story he wanted to tell. Zusak is the award-winning author of four previous books for young adults: *The Underdog*, *Fighting Ruben Wolfe*, *Getting the Girl*, and *I Am the Messenger*, recipient of a 2006 Printz Honor for excellence in young adult literature. He lives in Sydney.

Get The Book

Copies of *The Book Thief* are available for check out from Centre County libraries or for purchase at Barnes & Noble and other bookstores.

CENTRE COUNTY READS 2012



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