



The Book Thief

Author
Markus Zusak

Year Published
2005

Original Language
English

OVERVIEW

Words Can Change the World

Death tells the story of Liesel, a young girl growing up in Nazi Germany. While her family hides a Jewish man from the Nazis, Liesel steals books to learn to read. The city crumbles around her, and Liesel learns that words can change the world—but they can't save the people you love.



The Book Thief

Drawn to words, Liesel learns to read a book stolen from a grave digger.

Liesel & Max

Max hides in the basement, where he and Liesel explore the power of words.

Liesel's Book

Liesel begins to write about the events and people that have shaped her life.

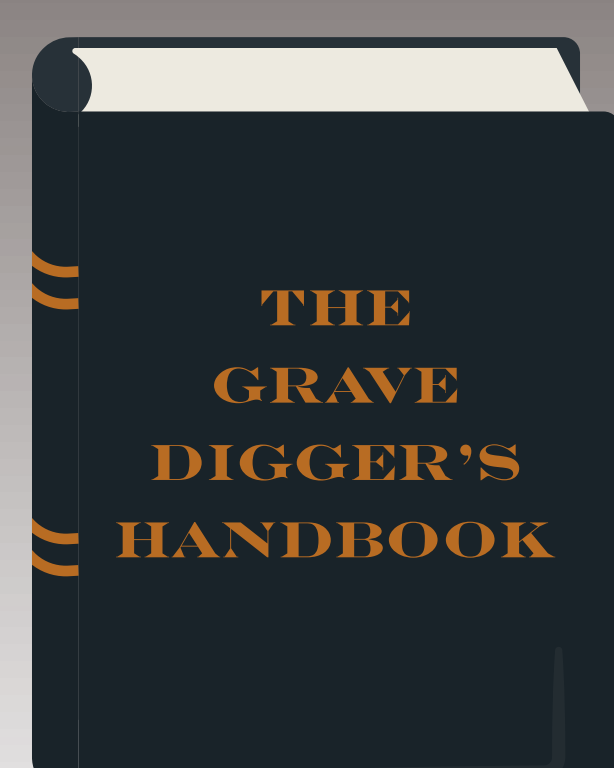
Author



MARKUS ZUSAK
BORN 1975

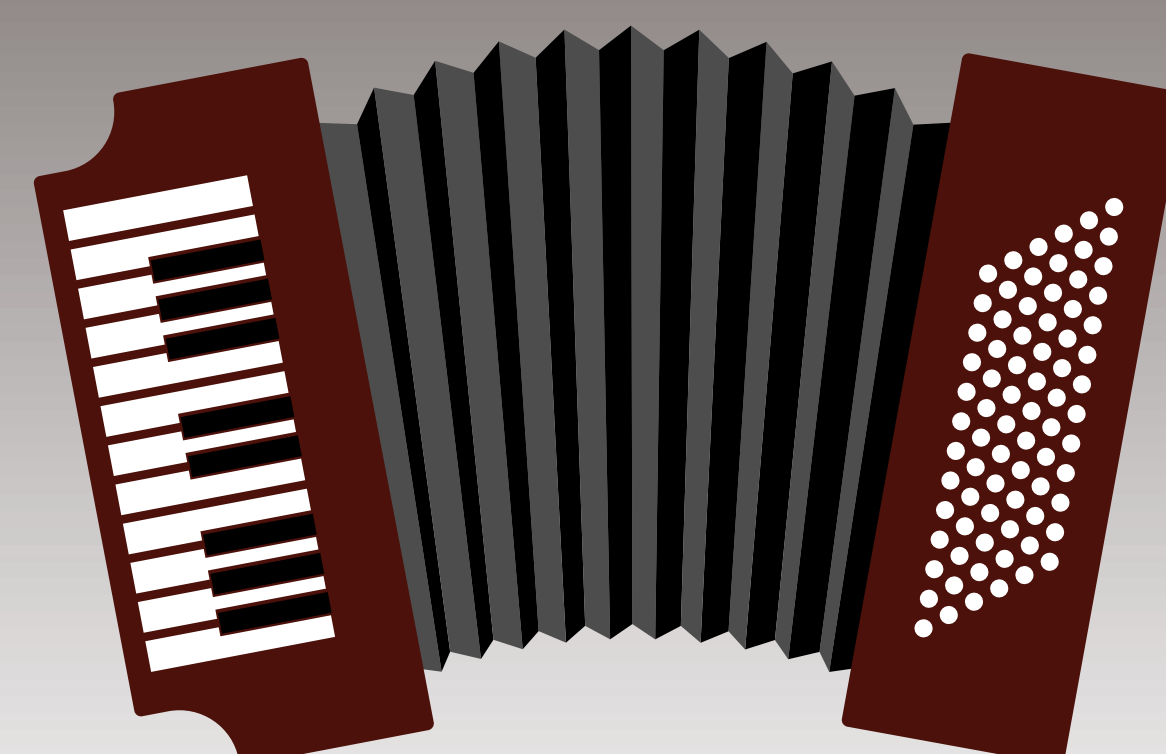
Born in Sydney, Australia, Zusak worked as a teacher and house painter before publishing several novels, of which *The Book Thief* is the best known. Zusak's parents' experiences during World War II in Germany and Austria influenced this book, which became a feature film in 2013.

Main Characters



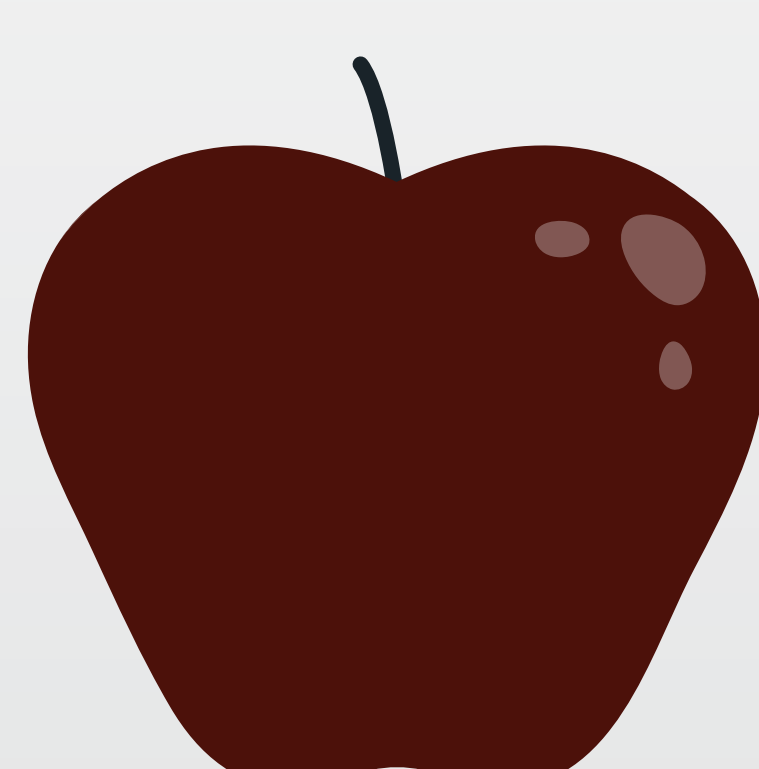
Liesel Meminger

Brave, clever, determined young girl growing up in Nazi Germany; loves reading and writing



Hans Hubermann

Tall, quiet, compassionate, anti-Nazi; plays accordion and comforts Liesel



Rudy Steiner

Athletic, smart, kind boy with lemon-yellow hair; looks like ideal Nazi but is not



Max Vandenburg

Young Jewish amateur boxer hiding from Nazis in Hans's cellar; helps Liesel learn to read

Themes



Power of Words

Words can change the world for better or worse.



Burden of Guilt

Survivors of trauma may feel guilt for living when others died.



Unanswered Questions

Questions about the capacity for human destruction defy answers.

I *am haunted by humans.*

Death, Epilogue