

The book thief

Literature



In the first chapters of Markus Zusak's *The Book Thief*, the protagonist Liesel Meminger experiences conflicts which drive her actions, actions which represent clutching to the memories of what once was. Liesel experiences shock and suffering at the traumatic death of her brother, Werner. "... With [w]ith one eye open, one still in a dream..." (p. 29) describes Liesel's reaction, a state of shock, at the moment she realizes her brother is dead and the image of "... His blue eyes stared at the floor. Seeing nothing" (p. 29) is a haunting imprint (p. 29). Liesel's reaction to this event is also played out in her unconscious state since " Every [e]very night, Liesel would nightmare" (p. 57). The use of nightmare as a verb indicates the strength of action, Liesel's suffering.

Liesel's initial state of shock and reaction of suffering due to the death of her brother is shortly followed by her reaction of hopelessness at being abandoned by her mother. At the point when Liesel is separated from her mother " There was a chaos of goodbye", (p. 39) a statement expressing wrenching emotional pain. Liesel "... Had never felt so completely alone" (p. 62) and " nothing changed the fact that she was a lost..." child ... " alone" (p. 50). Alone, used repeatedly, signifies Liesel's reaction of hopelessness, an emotional result of separation from her mother.

War had taken Liesel's father for being a " Communist[c]ommunist" (p. 48). War had restricted access to medicine and medical treatment, the effects of which killed her brother. War brought poverty, forcing abandonment by her mother due to her mother's inability to feed and care for her. In light of these events, and all that had been taken from Liesel, " T[t]he book thief had struck for the first time..." (p. 45). Liesel's reaction to her brother's death

drives her to steal books, the first being *The Gravedigger's Handbook*. This book represents the only tangible item of her brother and mother, the last time they were all together. Liesel's act of stealing, a repeating action, is symbolic of her trying to hold onto all that war has taken away, clutching to the memories of what once was.

1. Ellipsis are not necessary for every end of every quote. They are primarily used when you need to break up a quote and then continue it a short while later (as in, within the same sentence). 2. You also seem to be putting spaces between quotation marks and the beginning of the text of the quotes. Stop it. 3. All parenthetical citations belong at the end of the sentence, but within the punctuation. If there are two citations in a sentence, you reference it as (p. X, Y). 4. I do not like the way the quotes are worked in, but that is more a stylistic choice than anything. However, my grades are a testament to how close my writing style is to Mr. Coats' ideals. 5. If, within the quote, there is a capitalization that would look unnatural within a sentence, you do as such: War had taken Liesel's father for being a "[c]ommunist" (p. 48 6. Your thesis is too vague. You need to be more specific.