

Ilse hermann – the book thief character



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Firstly, alls remains quiet most of the time, which makes her an engaging character because it gives the impression that he may be secretive.

Throughout Lisle's visits to the library and the usual washing pick up, alls barely says a word. The first time alls shows Lies the library, it is communicated through actions -? such as nods and gestures- rather than alls speaking her suggestion. The book depicts her sitting, watching the books and only after a few pages of describing the thrill of the library does alls stutter a full sentence -? " He is nothing now in this world. (peg.

157) However, her first uttered dialogue appears 100 pages after her first appearance. The author's reasoning for alga's silence is not quite clear, but it is possible for readers to believe it may be because of her determination to suffer for her son's death. alls is an interesting character because she decides to make suffering her triumph - to make grief her victory. She is a character who instead of taking her life, elects to triumph over death; she may be lifeless in spirit but she will not let herself slip under death's robe.

In this case, the author has given the reader an insight to the after effects of dealing with death - " She could have shot herself, scratched herself or indulged in other forms of self-mutilation, but she chose what she probably felt was the weakest option -? to at least endure the discomfort of the weather. "(peg. 1 58) This also brings the reader to wonder whether alls may have been different in personality and appearance had her son not died. The written appearance of Lisa is interesting because it contradicts her personality.

La's written appearance presents us a grand, snobbish manner. From her appearance, one may assume alls is cold hearted and harsh, even cruel; but after ' Sis peaks for the first time, the meaning of her appearance seems to change. Before, alga's bathrobe and fluff of hair represented signs of perceived superiority, now they symbolism frailty and suffering. The reader finds that her personality is delicate and reserved, she is kind but she has a bleeding heart.

Alias's spoken and written words reveal a lot about her character.

When alls says " He was my...

" (peg. 157) it displays her pain and when she says " He froze to death, I'm sure of it" (peg. 1 58) it displays her need to be certain. Similarly, Alias's writing style (found in her letter – peg. 95) reveals that she is well-spoken, and may have once been keen to learn.

Yet she also owns a library which portrays her as someone who appreciates literature and education. alga's character challenges the stereotypical vision of a mayor's wife.

Being the mayor's wife you would expect alls to be reasonably sociable a community figure, a role model for the women and girls – additionally, being Nazi Germany, you would expect someone with such a role to be a Nazi. However, even though alls is said to be wearing a swastika (" On the breast pocket of the robe sat an embroidered swastika" (peg. 90)) the book does not specifically mention that she is a Nazi or agrees with Nazi beliefs – for all the reader knows, she may be another example of a ' Jew lover.

Moreover, you would expect alls to scold Lies for stealing books, yet she doesn't.

In fact, it is reverse; alls “ rewards” Lies by inviting her to the library. And when Lies steals a book for the third time, Lies finds that Lisa has left a plate of biscuits out for her. Lisa ought to be angered Lies has stolen from her, yet she is not.

In addition, that the reader finds an explanation for alga's efferent behavior a quarter way through the book makes her all the more an interesting character because the reader begins to make assumptions about her distantness. Alias's lack of relationships makes her an intriguing character.

The mayor, Johann, Rosa and Lies are her only referred to or implied relationships, though her relationship with the mayor and Johann are not really discussed in the book. There is only the slightest mention of a relationship with Johann – “ I used to read in here, with my son” (peg. 491).

There is no hint to what the mayor and alga's relationship is like -? whether it is lose or forced or friendly – yet the reader can presume that alls may still remain uncommunicative in her suffering. alga's relationship with Rosa is not too pleasant either.

The first time Lisa is introduced, Rosa describes her as ‘ too mean to light a fire” and “ Absolutely. Crazy. ” (peg. 44) which can only lead one to suppose that Rosa does not know about alga's sorrow.

Lies though, has the most written about relationship with alls. They share some quite extreme experiences – losing someone they love, the Mulching

bombings - and it seems they both have a love for books. That they have these things in common strengthens their relationship because they understand each others feelings and thoughts.

Since alls has had a similar experience and succumbed to the suffering, she may be seen as a representation of what Lies does not want to become. Additionally, when Lies yells at Lisa after she ends Rojas's employment, Lies may be yelling at herself as well as alls.

After she says " You think you're the only one? " (peg. 284) her brother appears next to her and this illusion could be an indication that she was scolding herself just as much s alls -? meaning she is scolding herself for feeling like she is the only one who has lost someone.

The text also says " But he too was dead" (peg. 284) which could add to the indications. Yet that Lisle's brother often appears when Lies is at alga's house could be a suggestion that alls is helping Lies deal with the grief.

The act of taking Lies into her care makes alls an interesting character. alls cares about Lies enough that she puts aside her troubles to look after her. Surely, treating Lies as a daughter would resurface old memories of her son.