

Main events in the book thief novel



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Markus Zusak's *The Book Thief* is a story about family. Liesel Meminger loses her first family, her brother dying and her parents giving her away. Her second family is the Hubermanns, Hans and Rosa. Partway through the story, Max Vandenburg also joins the family. Throughout the story, Liesel trusts her family more and more, and learns to read with Hans. She writes books with Max, and even understands Rosa a bit more.

In the first chapter, Liesel steals her first book, *The Grave-Digger's Handbook*. She doesn't know how to read it at first, but eventually opens up to Hans and they read it together. Together they read, play accordion, and roll cigarettes for Hans to smoke. And even when Liesel goes to school, she still reads at night with Hans. When Hans gets tired of re-reading *The Grave-Digger's Handbook*, he trades some of the cigarettes that he and Liesel rolled for more books to read. Hans is the one who picks Liesel up from her mandatory Hitler Youth programs, walking home with her in the silence that he knows she needs. Hans is always there for Liesel, as a father and a friend.

Max Vandenburg is the Jewish man who lives in the basement. When Liesel first meets him, she says that his hair looks like feathers. Repeating her words as he works, Max takes pages from *Mein Kampf* and paints them over with white paint before creating his own story to give to Liesel. He writes *The Standover Man*, talking about how his father was the first one who watched him as he slept and now it was a girl. On the last few pages, he writes about how Liesel said his hair looked like feathers, and how he hopes that they can be friends. He presents the book to Liesel for a birthday present, and begins a friendship.

Even Rosa Hubermann, who at first seems mean, becomes like family to Liesel. When Max falls ill, Liesel wants to sit and watch him as he sleeps to know when he will wake up. Rosa reminds Liesel that staying home from school would draw suspicion, and Liesel reluctantly goes to school after Rosa promises to get her when Max wakes up. When Max does wake up, Rosa honors her promise to Liesel and pulls her out of school by pretending to yell at her so that it wouldn't be suspicious. At the end of the book, Death says about Rosa “ Make no mistake, the woman had a heart. She had a bigger heart than people would think. There was a lot in it, stored up, high in miles of hidden shelving... She was a Jew feeder without a question in the world on a man's first night in Molching. And she was an arm reacher, deep into a mattress, to deliver a sketchbook to a teenage girl.” (Zusak 532)

At the end of the book, a bomb is dropped on Himmel Street and the Hubermanns along with many of Liesel's friends are killed. Liesel survives, along with Max, and now must face being without her family. This book tells the story of a girl who found her true family, before having them ripped away from her. Even Death, the narrator of the story, seems to regret that he is taking Hans and Rosa away from Liesel.