The Book Thief: Jews In World War II

“It’s harder to find a Jew in the dark”

Can you imagine how perilous it is to keep a jew in your basement at the time of WWII? What would it cost you and your family if anyone were to find out? The Book Thief is a historical fiction novel written by Markus Zusak in 2005. This novel takes place during World War II where Jewish citizens weren’t treated as their own and experienced immense amounts of discrimination. In spite of the novel being fictional, the themes and ideas portrayed throughout this novel are still relatable to everyone and that is what connects us to the book emotionally and personally. The ideas and themes I’m about to discuss will convince you on why this novel should be continued to be studied by year 9 students in the future.

“The only worse thing than a boy who hates you: a boy that loves you” Do you find it hard to believe that, that’s been said by death himself? You might think of him as a mysterious and dreadful shadow, but he’s portrayed quite the opposite in The Book Thief. With the use of the literary technique, symbol, we’re told that there’s much more beyond just those words and that death is really trying to convey a central theme to us. Death’s dark humour and sarcasm throughout the book keeps us engaged and makes the book even more worthy to read. The way Death narrates us through the book with his opinions and thoughts is pretty straightforward and sarcastic. Further, along with the book, we’re convinced that death is so much more than a dreadful and mysterious shadow but actually humorous, wise and still somehow linked to humanity. “The words. Why did they have to exist? Without them, there wouldn’t be any of this.”, shows us that there’s more to him than just a shadow. Hitler’s main source of power was his words and by saying “without them, there wouldn’t be any of this” death’s conveying that if words weren’t to exist, the holocaust would have never happened.

'Still in disbelief, she started to dig. He couldn't be dead. He couldn't be dead. He couldn't ....” The use of repetition here dictates that the central mood here is empty hope and that she has none of that left. “He couldn’t be dead. He couldn’t be dead. He couldn’t....” Using repetition here gives off a bunch of emotions such as overwhelmingness as Liesel was placed in that situation. At the beginning of the book, Liesel’s brother dies on the train while they were on their way to her new foster parents’ house. As the situation unfolds, it urges us to continue reading the book because all the sadness Liesel had been through creeps upon us and we then realize how serious it was and still is. Imagine losing your brother at the age of 9 and not knowing when you will see your mother next? Or not knowing if she’s alive or not? The grief and feeling of loss is something we all have experience of and we’ve all been there before. “She was saying goodbye, and she didn’t even know it.” Even though he never claimed to be, Death was bothered by death and with the use of indirect foreshadowing in this quote, it was his way to avoid being simple and going into detail. As he says that, it is also used to keep the reader focused on how the characters meet their ends, one example being when Death alludes to the death of Rudy, Liesel’s best friend

In conclusion, the ideas and themes I’ve discussed above should be why we should continue studying The Book Thief in Year 9 as it teaches about the hardships many kids, Liesel, for example, has gone through and still are at such a young age. The book, unlike most books, is

written in a different perspective which captures our attention to it even more. Regardless of the book being fiction, the author has made it seem so real with the use of many literary devices such as metaphors, foreshadowing, and so on. By studying this novel, it allows us to become aware of the injustice that the Jewish citizens had to experience in WWII and to be grateful for the freedom we currently receive. The knowledge and morals we learn from this book are beneficial and therefore should be continued to be studied in the future.