The Importance Of Books In A Society In A Long Way Gone, The Book Thief, And Night

Books; a source of education and entertainment. Throughout the ages, books have held a special place in society. Whether they are used to learn, or just for pure enjoyment, they touch the hearts and souls of many. In literature, books are found in many ways. They could be a meager object, or the theme of a story. In A Long Way Gone, The Book Theif, and Night, the authors show the importance of books in a society.

A Long Way Gone is a book about Ishmael Beah, a boy soldier in Africa. Instead of showing the benefits of books, this story shows the result of no books. Without books, children are not educated properly, and cannot get a job to support themselves. They cannot read or write, so the only way of communication is verbally. Ishmael grows up in a village where he is the only one who can read. It says, “There was no one around to tell us stories and make us laugh at times when we needed it” (Beah 34). So, the village relies on him to read them stories. Later in the story, after he becomes a soldier, he and some of the other boys get rescued by UNICEF. At the rehabilitation camp, the teachers try to give them books, but they rip them up. After witnessing the terror of war, many of them were scarred. So, it took time, but eventuallly he learns how to read and write. Because of this, he is selected to go to New York for a seminar. He gets to meet other kids from around the world. With the help of books, Ishmael got to experience the world.

The Book Thief is about Leisel Hubermann and her family. In this story, the Nazis take over the small village of Molching. Books play a very important part in this story. When Leisel’s brother died, her and her mother went to bury him. But, she sees this book, left behind by the gravedigger. So, she steals it and takes it with her to her new home, even though she can’t read. When her foster father Hans finds this out, he makes it his mission to teach Leisel how to read. After many lessons, she can read the gravedigger’s book. Later on in the book, they are celebrating Hitler’s birthday by having a book-burning. In the flames, she sees a book that is untouched, so she takes it home and learns to read that book. Although, this time someone saw her steal a book. It was the mayor’s wife. When Leisel begins to deliver and pick up laundry for her foster mother Rose, one of her clients is Ilsa Hermann, the mayor’s wife. One day, Isla invited Leisel into her study. Leisel is amazed by the walls and walls of books. She thinks, “That such a room existed!” (Zusak 212). Ilsa allows Leisel to read books in there every day. Later on, a man named Max arrives at the Hubermann’s doorstep. Hans takes him down to the basement and hides him there. We find out that Max is a Jewish man, running from the Nazis. At this time, Leisel is slowly losing customers. Because of the Nazis, the economy of Germany was falling. When Ilsa tells Leisel that she cannot afford laundry anymore, she becomes angry. She thinks it is not fair that they have a lot and the Hubermanns can barely survive. She then comes up with a plan to steal books from the study. With the help of her friend Rudy, she begins to take books. Later on in the war, Molchings begins getting bombed. During these raids, Leisel read to the people in the shelter. Eventually, Rose gives Leisel a book called “The Word Shaker,” which Max wrote about his friendship with Leisel. This helped her through the heartbreak of losing her friend and her dad. These books that Leisel read let her escape from the terror of Nazi Germany. It also helped people through the bombings, and kept them calm. When Leisel started reading, she became her true self. She was not scared to stand up for what

was true. It also helped her realize the struggles that the Jewish people were facing.

Night tells the story of Elie, a Jewish boy in a concentration camp. He is forced to work in many different factories, and witness people's death and suffering. Elie is a devout Jew and always wants to learn, which leads to the importance of books in this story. With the help of Moishe the Beadle, he learns about mysticism. Moishe teaches him through many books and his wise ways. Also, being a good Jewish boy, Elie read the Torah. This helped him learn more about his faith, and about God. It also shows what happens with the lack of books. When Moishe gets taken from Sighet because he is a foreign Jew, all of his belongings are taken, including books. When he finally came back, you could see the effects of not having books had on him. When Elie is describing what Moishe is now like, he says, "The joy in his eyes are gone," and "He no longer mentioned either God or Kabbalah" (Weisel 7). This shows the effect of not having his books, to learn and pray to God with.

Books have a major effect on the characters in Night, The Book Thief, and A Long Way Gone. Leisel uses books as an escape from the terror of Nazi Germany. Ishmael uses books to enhance his education. Elie uses books for worship and education. All of these characters show appreciation for books in their own ways. In conclusion, books help characters grow to become their true selves.ya