

the book thief



DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. What do you think drives Liesel's hunger to read? How is that connected to the book, *The Gravedigger's Handbook*, which serves as a kind of guide for her?

•••

2. How does Liesel's new "Papa," Hans, encourage her to read? What role does his unusual "dictionary" play in Liesel's quest to learn to read?

•••

3. Liesel's new mother, Rosa, is initially quite stern with her. How does their relationship evolve through the course of the story?

•••

4. How does Liesel's friendship with her neighbor Rudy become a transformative relationship for her?

•••

5. Even after Liesel learns how to read, her new housemate Max tells her she has much to learn about really observing the things around her. What's the difference between reading and observing (or understanding)?

•••

6. Death is the film's (and book's) omniscient narrator. Why is Death a central figure in this story?



7. Death says he rarely gets involved in the lives of those he ultimately takes, but he does take an interest in Liesel and her circumstances. Why does he find Liesel so exceptional?

...

8. How is *THE BOOK THIEF* a testament to endurance? What besides Liesel's love of reading helps her endure the difficult conditions around her?

...

9. Liesel comes to realize that words can be used for good as well as for evil. How have words been used these opposite ways?

...

10. There were many instances of unheralded courage amidst daunting if not impossible circumstances during World War II, including Germans risking their lives to hide Jews and others being hunted by the Nazis. In *THE BOOK THIEF*, why do Hans and Rosa agree to hide Max in their basement? How does that act of courage affect them and Liesel?



11. Liesel's love of books transforms her life and even the lives of those around her. What books have inspired you – or at least impacted your life in a significant way?

...

12. *THE BOOK THIEF* is now a movie, and cinema has its own kind of power, which can also be life-changing or at least inspiring. What movies have inspired you?

...

13. Film adaptations of books must often by necessity condense or change specific plot points or characters. Now that you've seen the movie, what are the key differences between it and the book?

...

14. Having seen the movie, you know that the book burning rally is one of the film's key sequences. How does this display affect Liesel and her growing love of reading?



COURAGE BEYOND WORDS.



the book thief