

Taylor Antes

Mrs. Rutan

AP Literature and Composition

July 27th, 2015

Dear Liesel,

January, 1939

You may wonder why I have suddenly turned your world upside down. It is not personal, I promise, it is something I have to do many times to many different children just like you. I did not chose this job- believe it or not, I would rather not do it- but I am the only one who can do it efficiently. Your brother was just another stop of mine as I took the light, graceful souls of many others that day. However, as your brother ascended into my arms, something special happened that is very unusual in my line of business; I developed a distinctive distraction to you and your life. On that frozen, snowy day in January, a new hobby became present in my life. I felt the compelling need to check up on you and your family regularly, almost like it was a second job of mine. I was not always there to take a live soul from a dead body, or to cause more havoc into your life, but just to fulfill my wonders about how you were doing. I knew bad things were coming in your future, but I also knew some great things were coming as well.

Sincerely,

Death

Dear Liesel,

December, 1941

I haven't been around Himmel Street as much as I would've liked to have been lately. With the war, my job developed into sheer chaos. If I ever have the pleasure of meeting Adolf Hitler, he better give me an immaculate thank you card. However, with the little time that I have been around, I am so glad to have seen that you were doing so well! Papa is doing a fantastic job of turning you into a brilliant young woman, teaching you so many things like reading and writing in such a short amount of time. I have also noticed that you found a reckless new friend by the name of Rudy, and he is quite the character; and you two love to steal together. I have always wondered, why do you find it so fun to steal? What makes you want to be "the Book Thief?" And also, what makes reading so fun? Or the accordion? To me, they are such weird things that most children would never be attracted to, I have never understood why most of your life has been spent with these few possessions. I often believe that it is because it's what your family and friends love to do, which makes you love to do it, but, I could be wrong. You don't know yet, however, that Mrs. Hermann is onto your addiction, so be careful. Lastly, Max Vandenburg. I have met Max's father, once- he was an incredible man as well as a great friend of Hans Hubermann's. You and Max are establishing a very strong bond, which I am glad and disturbed to see. Max is just like his father in many ways- most of them being good- yet, he is a Jewish German, just like his father. One day,

soon, the sky will turn a dark charcoal color, the clouds will align in perfect sequence, and the sky will rain ashes.

Sincerely,

Death

Dear Liesel

July, 1943

I really wasn't planning on writing you another letter because my job got busier and busier, but with the recent events, I felt an obligation to write you. Now, before we get started, like I said before, Liesel- none of this was ever personal. I was extremely distracted by you, but that didn't make me want to harm you or your family. While the bombing of Himmel Street happened, I wasn't intending on taking any more lives. The poor people didn't see it coming, nor did they have any time to react, which gave me no choice. As I roamed from house to house, gathering the souls of Rudy Steiner, with his lemon-yellow hair and dirty body, and Frau Holtzapfel- who practically asked me what had taken me so long to show up- along with many others, I approached 33 Himmel Street. I knocked out of respect, but with no answer, I drifted in and to the room of Hans and Rosa. Once again I saw the accordion, and again wondered what you and Papa saw in it. The human race never fails to let me down in ways to entertain themselves, most of them being things that I would never

do, like play the accordion. Humans astonish me in other ways as well, like how they fall in love. I never understood the meaning of putting another person's well being in front of your own, especially in a world like we live in today that will most likely never change from its harsh ways. Why does the feeling of love make you want to throw yourself into bad situations? For instance, when Max was being dragged down the street going to the concentration camp, why did you freely run into the street to meet him? This thought overwhelms me, and makes me even more curious to experience what it feels like to be in love. Anyways, after I obtained the uneasy spirits of Rosa and Hans, I went looking for you. As I went down to the former homeroom of Max Vandenburg, I found you asleep on your novel The Book Thief. All the walls that were full of drawings, words, and memories were caving in on your young body as the LSE members were trying to pull you out. I hung around for a moment to see if you were going to come with me too, but to my amazement, you didn't. Under a gloomy red sky, you laid in disbelief of the events that just occurred. I wanted to tell you that everything was okay, and you still had a lot of life in front of you, but I am not that nice. The colors will always change for you, Liesel, but you will get through it, always keeping me curious about your eventful life.

Sincerely,

Death

After reading the rest of *The Book Thief*, the best way to show Liesel and Death's perspectives was to write letters; and in my case, I chose writing from Death to Liesel. Throughout my letters, I included some key literary elements and character perspectives that were also used throughout the story. For example, towards the end of *The Book Thief* when Death and Liesel were talking, shortly after he picked her up in Sydney, Death says that he wishes he could tell her many things about "beauty and brutality" (550). This leaves the reader wanting more, and wondering what will happen next. Trying incorporate that into my first letter, I used alliteration when I wrote "developed a distinctive distraction" describing Death's sense of curiosity. Also, I used foreshadowing when I ended the first letter, explaining to Liesel that "I knew bad things were coming in your future, but I also knew some great things were coming as well." These were two of his favorite tools to use and he used them very frequently. When they were used, the overall mood of the story was changed from time to time depending on what device he used.

Along with using key literary devices to set the tone, Death had a very peculiar way of integrating colors into his narration. For instance, when Liesel was talking to Alex Steiner on the steps, Death says that in Liesel's vision, the sky was "gray and glossy" (547). When Death said that, the reader could practically see what Liesel messenger was seeing, and feel what she felt. Not only would it help the reader imagine a setting of the paper, this also correlated with the literary devices to set the tone. The colors normally would resemble the color of the sky, so in my letters I used similar techniques to correctly use Death's voice.

Lastly, and one of my more important devices used throughout my letters was Death's sense of curiosity for Liesel Meminger. To be precise, Death told us at the beginning that his "one saving grace is distraction" (4), and that it keeps him "sane" (4). Throughout the entire story, from the very beginning, Death was very much distracted by Liesel and her life. It was very interesting to read because he wasn't following anyone else this way, well at least we don't know of anyone else he was following. The weird attraction to Liesel made Death's perspective even more interesting because the reader wouldn't know if he was doing it towards Liesel's family, or maybe he was haunting them? So, I tried to integrate this type of style into the letters I wrote.