**The End of the World—Why Now?**

In The Book Thief, by Markus Zusak, there is an interesting detail played upon throughout the entirety of the novel—death is telling us the story of Liesel Meminger, he is the narrator. Not only did Zusak choose to use this out casted narrator, but he has death telling what’s going to happen, before it even happens. Like a book ruiner. A piece of the novel where you find yourself to be the most astonished, and even upset that he chose to do this is in the chapter, “The End of the World”.

Death starts off the chapter with being point blank, “Again, I offer you a glimpse of the end” (Zusak, 497). Beginning this passage with this single statement basically is telling the reader what this section is going to be about. I totally, one-hundred percent, hated that he did this—why? It drew me in. I couldn’t not keep reading. I wanted to know so badly what was going to happen. That’s why I believed he did it, but death himself clarifies that he did so because, “Perhaps it’s to soften the blow for later, or to better prepare myself for the telling” (Zusak, 497). I tell myself Zusak jumped to the end for one reason, but maybe it was just to really, “Soften the blow for later” (Zusak, 497).

Within this chapter, Markus Zusak also continued to add death’s small excerpts into the writing which were bolded into the middle of the page. Almost like mental notes if you will. In one of death’s “mental notes” he mentions the fact that Himmel Street was named after heaven. Coincidence? Probably not. I really like that this factor was mentioned into the writing—it’s something I would have never known, but if I had it would have been a ***huge*** symbol for the death of everyone on Himmel Street minus one character. I really enjoyed all of Zusak’s side bars within the entire story, but, “No one wanted to bomb Himmel Street. No one would want to bomb a place named after heaven, would they? Would they?” (Zusak, 497). These two sentences were extremely powerful, and I’m not one bit surprised that he chose to share this information.

Ending this chapter would really set the tone on how one would see the way things ended on Himmel Street. No, Zusak didn’t chose to say anything about death in the last couple sentences—he mentions the book, the book, “Who had saved her life” (Zusak, 499). This chapter wounds up Liesel’s life on Himmel Street, ending the lives on everyone she had grown to be with. And Zusak chooses to end it with a sentence about the damn book. In a few ways this really irked me. People who were dying, already dead weren’t even thought of in the last sentence; these people had built her into the girl she was at that very moment. Why not especially mention Papa, or Rudy, or even Rosa Hubermann? It all made sense however. Being a book thief was who Liesel Meminger was because of Himmel Street. Words and books were everything to Liesel, they were like her family. Leaving this small detail out wouldn’t have changed the book, but it really impacted the fact that Liesel Meminger indeed was a book thief.

The passage, “The End of the World” from The Book Thief was a strong piece of the story. There were many different things Zusak did with this chapter that I really enjoyed; however, I couldn’t help but still question Markus Zusak’s choices even though they were genius.