Lauren Carr

Mrs. Rutan

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**Unique**

In the first half of the book, The Book Thief, the author— Markus Zusaku—used a variety of different techniques that pulled the reader in. Zusaku created a unique relationship between two characters—Liesel Meminger and Hans Hubermann—that had the reader wanting more from the first time the two met. The way the relationship between the two characters began was when Liesel Meminger couldn’t bring herself to get out of the car to meet her new foster parents. After almost fifteen minutes, she was persuaded to get out of the car by Hans Hubermann—her new foster father (Zusaku, 28). From that point on Markus Zusaku built onto the relationship by the post-nightmare comforting to the hours of playing the accordion along with the lessons of reading books in German. Liesel and Han’s relationship stands out from most of the other character relationships because the two connect in ways that a reader wouldn’t think a foster father and daughter would. The relationship has a stamp of being unique because Liesel Meminger never knew her biological father and was just abandoned by the one person who loved her the most—her mother—and yet she welcomed a the idea of having a new parental figure without excluding herself from the everyone.

Out of the many techniques that The Book Thief contained, the mixture of German and English vocabulary stood out. Zusaku used German vocabulary in majority of the dialogue between the characters. Throughout the first half of the book “Saumensch or Saukerl or Arschloch” (Zusaku, 32) were the most used German words; especially when Rosa Hubermann, Liesel’s foster mother, was talking. After a German word was used, Markus Zusaku in some way translated it to where the reader could understand was going on. For example, “‘Saumensch, du dreckiges’ Liesel’s foster mother shouted… ‘You filthy pig! Why won’t you get undressed?’” (Zusaku, 32). The use of the German vocabulary with the English vocabulary helped establish where the book takes place and helps the reader create a better picture of what is going on throughout the book.

Descriptive words. Descriptive words are a small, but important technique that the other used throughout the first half of the book. One set of descriptive words that are out there are the uses of colors. Colors are important when the narrator—death—talks about the day it takes someone away or when it crosses pathes with Liesel. An example of the importance of color was the day when the sky was red and Liesel was kneeling in a man-made mess; that just so happened to be the last time death crossed paths with Liesel (Zusaku, 19). Markus Zusaku not only uses colors to help describe what is going on, but uses a large amount of words to help create images of each character in the reader’s head. He described Hans Hubermann as a tall man and Rosa Hubermann as a squat shape with a distinct walk and a creased-up cardboard face (Zusaku, 27). In any book the author always uses descriptive words, but in The Book Thief each word contributes to create a vivid picture in the reader’s mind.

The style and structure of The Book Thief is another technique of Markus Zusaku’s writing. The way the book is written stands out the most; the view point of the story is from death view which gives a whole new way of looking at the lives of each character. Then there’s the structure of the book where little notes are added in between paragraphs to help the reader understand what is happening. The notes range from giving facts about new characters that come in to the story to explaining what a character was thinking and what they have been through like Hans Hubermann’s thought process of whether to join the Nazi party or not to. Zusaku also uses the notes in the first half of the book to translate German vocabulary in to English vocabulary. Each note is bolded because it has some importance in the moment or later on in the book. For example the word Himmel translates to heaven and the farther you go in the book the more Liesel’s life gets a little better for her than the life she had with her biological mother; even though things around her aren’t good. The structure and style of The Book Thief makes the book unique and more intriguing.

From reading the first four parts of The Book Thief, any reader can see the variety of techniques used by Markus Zusaku. Whether it was from the words used to describe a character or a moment or it was the enjoyment of trying to say the German words out loud and finding out you can’t speak German at all, those techniques made the book unique and made the book even harder to put down.