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Dear Marcus Zusak,

July 30, 2009: The beautiful night sky is suddenly ablaze with fire, and an unmistakable crackling breaks out. Thirty people file out of the synagogue, unaware of the destruction taking place on their property. Then, as one turns around, he lets out a horrified scream. His Jewish friends quickly turn their heads and catch sight of their beloved children's playground slowly burning to the ground. With terrified looks, they quickly summon the fire department, but the playground cannot be salvaged. A pile of ashes is left in its place as the Jews walk miserably home. This unfortunate event took place in my neighborhood, in Omaha, Nebraska on Tisha B'Av, the anniversary of the day the Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed.

Most people would think of Nebraska as nothing but farmland and cows, but Nebraska is not just a fly-over state. Many people would be surprised to find that we have a modern civilization, which encompasses both good and bad aspects. We even suffer from some of our citizens who are still prejudiced against Jews. This is why books like yours, *The Book Thief*, are so important to the world. They not only teach the history of Germany and its people, but they also teach a lesson of acceptance that cannot be ignored.

After reading your book I became very interested in the perilous journey of the Jews during World War II. I started to read more books about the time period such as: *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, and *I Have Lived A Thousand Years*. I have gone to see the Holocaust survivor, Livia Bitton-Jackson, and I have gone to see the plays "Hana's Suitcase" and "Brundibar." I am still interested in the subject and plan to spread my knowledge to others through your book.

There are many books on the market about Nazi Germany and yours, *The Book Thief*, could easily get lost in the crowd. When looking through the sea of books on a shelf, the significance of your book may not be apparent. It is simply another book about the horrible mess that Hitler caused. It is not until I started to read your book that I started to appreciate the unique story that it holds.

Your book is unlike any other book I have read. With Death narrating and painting the picture of each death that takes place, I realized the depth of the story and how devastating it must have been to live through those events. Though this is an unusual twist, the most shocking part of your book is the fact that Liesel was an ordinary loving German girl who was willing to risk her life to save a Jew. Your book showed me that no matter who you are, you can always choose to do the right thing, even if everyone around you is not. The faith and strength of the Jewish people is represented by Max's drawings. This taught me to never give up hope when faced with challenges that seem impossible to overcome.

Books like yours are capable of changing the world if they are only taken seriously. If the world would just stop and contemplate the horrors that occurred, and how they could easily end, then maybe our lives would be filled with more understanding. Your book has revealed to me the depth of the hate that still lingers in some people. But it has also given me hope that someday the world will be free of judgment, and differences will be accepted and tolerated by all.

Sincerely,

Megan D. Brookhouser