



# I Am the Messenger

By Markus Zusak

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## I Am the Messenger By Markus Zusak

By the author of the #1 *New York Times* bestseller *The Book Thief*, this is a cryptic journey filled with laughter, fists, and love.

Ed Kennedy is an underage cabdriver without much of a future. He's pathetic at playing cards, hopelessly in love with his best friend, Audrey, and utterly devoted to his coffee-drinking dog, the Doorman. His life is one of peaceful routine and incompetence until he inadvertently stops a bank robbery.

That's when the first ace arrives in the mail. That's when Ed becomes the messenger. Chosen to care, he makes his way through town helping and hurting (when necessary) until only one question remains: Who's behind Ed's mission?

This book is a 2005 Michael L. Printz Honor Book and recipient of five starred reviews.

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## I Am the Messenger By Markus Zusak Bibliography

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### Editorial Review

#### From School Library Journal

Grade 9 Up - Nineteen-year-old cabbie Ed Kennedy has little in life to be proud of: his dad died of alcoholism, and he and his mom have few prospects for success. He has little to do except share a run-down apartment with his faithful yet smelly dog, drive his taxi, and play cards and drink with his amiable yet similarly washed-up friends. Then, after he stops a bank robbery, Ed begins receiving anonymous messages marked in code on playing cards in the mail, and almost immediately his life begins to swerve off its beaten-down path. Usually the messages instruct him to be at a certain address at a certain time. So with nothing to lose, Ed embarks on a series of missions as random as a toss of dice: sometimes daredevil, sometimes heartwarming safe. He rescues a woman from nightly rape by her husband. He brings a congregation to an abandoned parish. The ease with which he achieves results vacillates between facile and dangerous, and Ed's search for meaning drives him to complete every task. But the true driving force behind the novel itself is readers' knowledge that behind every turn looms the unknown presence - either good or evil - of the person or persons sending the messages. Zusak's characters, styling, and conversations are believably unpretentious, well conceived, and appropriately raw. Together, these key elements fuse into an enigmatically dark, almost film-noir atmosphere where unknowingly lost Ed Kennedy stumbles onto a mystery - or series of mysteries - that could very well make or break his life. - *Hillias J. Martin, New York Public Library*

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#### From Booklist

\*Starred Review\* Gr. 9-12. Ed is a 19-year-old loser only marginally connected to the world; he's the son that not even his mother loves. But his life begins to change after he acts heroically during a robbery. Perhaps it's the notoriety he receives that leads to his receiving playing cards in the mail. Ed instinctively understands that the scrawled words on the aces are clues to be followed, which lead him to people he will help (including some he'll have to hurt first). But as much as he changes those who come into his life, he changes himself more. Two particular elements will keep readers enthralled: the panoply of characters who stream in and out of the story, and the mystery of the person sending Ed on the life-altering missions. Concerning the former, Zusak succeeds brilliantly. Ed's voice is assured and unmistakeable, and other characters, although seen through Ed's eyes, are realistically and memorably evoked (readers will almost smell Ed's odoriferous dog when it ambles across the pages). As for the ending, however, Zusak is too clever by half. He offers too few nuts-and-bolts details before wrapping things up with an unexpected, somewhat unsatisfying recasting of the narrative. Happily, that doesn't diminish the life-affirming intricacies that come before. *Ilene Cooper*

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#### Review

"*The Book Thief* is unsettling and unsentimental, yet ultimately poetic. Its grimness and tragedy run through the reader's mind like a black-and-white movie, bereft of the colors of life. Zusak may not have lived under Nazi domination, but *The Book Thief* deserves a place on the same shelf with *The Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank and Elie Wiesel's *Night*. It seems poised to become a classic." -*USA Today*

"Zusak doesn't sugarcoat anything, but he makes his ostensibly gloomy subject bearable the same way Kurt Vonnegut did in *Slaughterhouse-Five*: with grim, darkly consoling humor."

- *Time Magazine*

"Elegant, philosophical and moving...Beautiful and important."

- *Kirkus Reviews*, Starred

"An extraordinary narrative."

- *School Library Journal*, Starred

"Exquisitely written and memorably populated, Zusak's poignant tribute to words, survival, and their curiously inevitable entwinement is a tour de force to be not just read but inhabited."

- *The Horn Book Magazine*, Starred

"One of the most highly anticipated young-adult books in years."

- *The Wall Street Journal*

*From the Hardcover edition.*

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