

PROLOGUE, PART ONE

Vocabulary: Draw a line from each word on the left to its definition on the right. Then use the numbered words to fill in the blanks in the sentences below.

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| 1. affable | a. showing intensity of feeling |
| 2. lethal | b. promising; favorable |
| 3. vehement | c. harsh; grating; disorderly |
| 4. auspicious | d. scold |
| 5. raucous | e. state of disease, death, or unwholesomeness |
| 6. catalyst | f. fatal; deadly |
| 7. abducted | g. without warmth of feeling |
| 8. morbidity | h. carried off unlawfully |
| 9. berate | i. agent that stirs a person or thing to action |
| 10. frigid | j. easy to approach; pleasant |

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- After working as the congresswoman's aide, I was a(n) _____ supporter of her candidacy for governor.
 - Most people consider a wedding to be a(n) _____ occasion.
 - The _____ of the movie makes it unsuitable for children to view.
 - Uncontrolled by their government or military officers, ordinary soldiers _____ enemy foot soldiers and officers.
 - Thrusting out her hand stiffly, my new neighbor offered me a(n) _____ but polite welcome.
 - This _____ flock of crows frightened away all of the smaller birds in the area.
 - The bite of a scorpion is not always _____, but it is certainly harmful.
 - I waited for my teacher to _____ me when I failed to turn in my report on time.
 - A persuasive leader can be a(n) _____ for positive or negative change.
 - My uncle's _____ manner makes him a favorite with children and adults.

Prologue, Part One (cont.)

Questions:

1. What did Death find painful about his duties?
2. What mistake did Death make at the train line?
3. What tragedy struck Liesel's family while aboard the train?
4. Why were Liesel and her brother Werner supposed to be placed in foster care in January 1939?
5. Why did Death think it was foolish for the poor to travel to escape poverty?
6. Why was the book about grave digging significant to Liesel?
7. What helped Liesel adjust to her foster home?
8. Why was school a failure for Liesel?
9. What was Rudy's father trying to teach his son on the night of the Jesse Owens incident?
10. Why did Liesel insist on participating in the reading examination? Why did it end in disaster?
11. Why did the narrator's workload increase in the beginning of September 1939?

Questions for Discussion:

1. Why do you suppose that Death saw life in terms of color and referred to color in terms of taste? What tastes would you assign to colors such as red, blue, green, yellow, and purple?
2. Why do you think the Hubermanns insisted that Liesel call them "Mama" and "Papa"?
3. Do you think German citizens, such as Alex Steiner or Hans Hubermann, were justified in showing passive acceptance to the Nazi regime? What else might they have done?
4. Do you think Liesel's hostility toward Ludwig Schmeikl was justified? In your opinion, what was the primary cause of her attack?

Literary Devices:

1. *Point of View*—Point of view in literature refers to the person telling the story. This person is called the narrator. The story may be told by the author (first-person narrative) or by a character in the story (third-person narrative). From what point of view is this story told?

Why do you think the author chose this point of view? Is the narrator objective or opinionated? Are the narrator's frequent comments thought-provoking or intrusive?

Prologue, Part One (cont.)

- II. *Personification*—Personification is a device in which an author grants human qualities to nonhuman objects or concepts. For example, in this novel, death is personified and given the attributes of thoughts and emotions:

I buckled—I became interested. In the girl. Curiosity got the better of me, and I resigned myself to stay as long as my schedule allowed, and I watched.

How does the use of personification shape the reader's reactions to Death? What is surprising or unexpected about the author's personification of this universal condition?

- III. *Metaphor*—A metaphor is a suggested or implied comparison between two unlike objects. For example:

On the footpath, Liesel stood with her papa and Rudy. Hans Hubermann wore a face with the shades pulled down.

What is being compared?

What does this reveal about Hans Hubermann's reaction to the Nazi rally?

- IV. *Irony*—Irony refers to the difference between the way things seem to be and the way things are. What was ironic about the first book that Liesel "stole"?

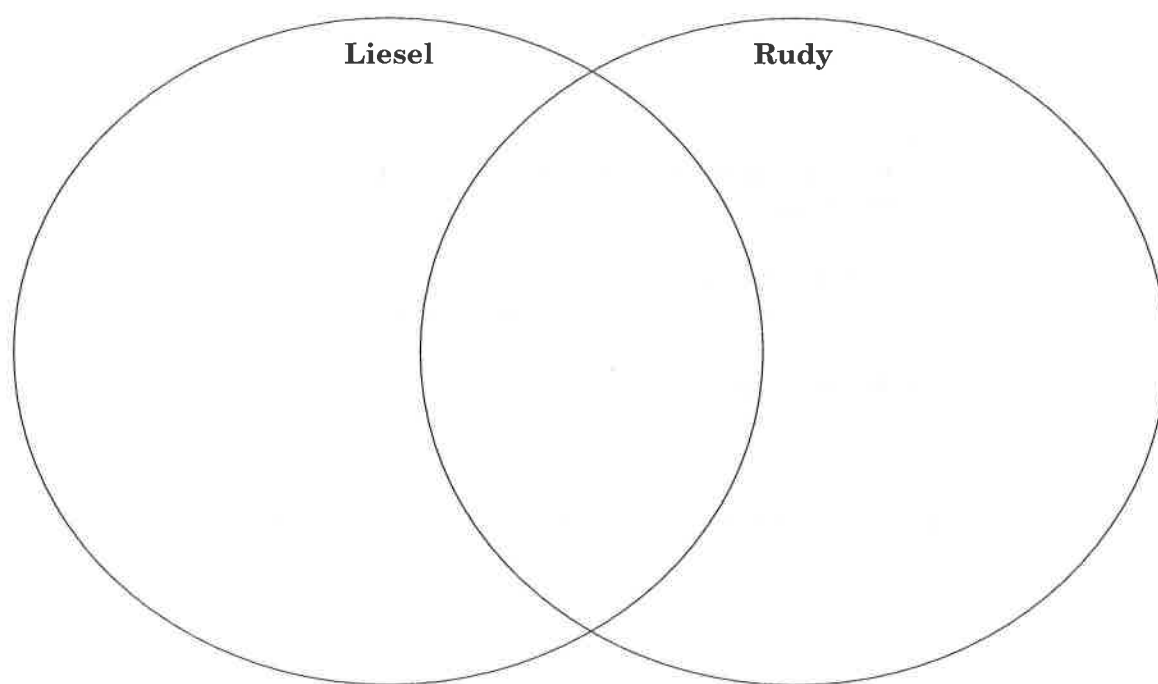
Prologue, Part One (cont.)

Literary Elements:

- I. *Setting*—Setting refers to the time and place where the events of a novel occur. What is the setting of *The Book Thief*?

How does the setting shape the events in the novel?

- II. *Characterization*—Compare the characters of Liesel and Rudy in the Venn diagram below. Record the ways they are alike in the overlapping part of the circles. Add information as you continue to read the book.



Writing Activity:

Write about a real or imagined day in your life in which you use color imagery to describe the setting and the events that happen, as the author did in the Prologue.