Part Five

1. Why does Rudy think he deserves a kiss at this point?
2. What is foreshadowed? How is the cause of his death described?
3. What does Death use this information to show about himself?
4. Why do you think Death spoils the end?
5. Why does Death use the metaphor of the seven sided die to discuss the events leading up to the floating book?
6. Why is the haircut significant?
7. Why does Liesel have moments where she contemplates telling Ilsa Herrman that her family is hiding a Jew?
8. Why does Liesel repeatedly refuse to take the Whistler when Ilsa offers it?
9. How does Liesel judge her days now?
10. According to Death, what joins Liesel and Max together?
11. What is significant of Liesel’s “weather report”?
12. Why does Max take to “shadow boxing”? What is significant about Hitler’s actions during the match?
13. What is happening in the section of the sixth side of the die, “The Painters”?
14. In Liesel’s opinion, why does the mayor’s wife give Liesel *The Whistler*? What do you think is the real reason?
15. How does Liesel treat Frau Hermann when she returns to the mayor’s house?
16. Why does her brother “appear”?
17. What does Liesel hope for when she returns home? Why?
18. What are the three elements to Rudy’s trouble? Summarize what happens to Tommy and Rudy.
19. How does Rudy use this experience to his advantage with Liesel?
20. Who is the “new Arthur Berg”?
21. In what ways do Viktor Chemmel and Franz Deutscher represent the qualities for which Adolf Hitler stands?
22. What threat does Viktor Chemmel make to Rudy?
23. Explain the meaning of Max’s sketches. What double meaning might there be in Liesel’s comment, “You scared me, Max,” at the end of the chapter?
24. What humiliation does Rudy suffer at the beginning of “The Whistler and the Shoes”? What solution do he and Liesel come up with to make him feel better?
25. Describe the internal conflict Liesel has over stealing the book back from the mayor’s house.
26. What mistake does Rudy make? How does he again use the situation to his advantage?
27. What universal truth does Death reveal when Rudy is suggesting that Liesel’s Mama will be mad at her?
28. What is significant about the end of the chapter?
29. Briefly describe Rudy’s three “acts of stupidity” and explain their significance.
30. How does Rudy “save the day” in “The Floating Book (Part II)”? Why?
31. What does Death believe to be true about Rudy? What piece of foreshadowing does he give at the end of the chapter?

Part Six

1. How does Death describe his own appearance?

2. Examine the paragraph in “Death’s Diary: 1942” beginning with “They say that war is death’s best friend…” What literary devices is Death using in this paragraph? How does this paragraph reiterate Death’s sentiments about his job?

3. What might the snowman Max and the Hubermanns build symbolize?

4. Based on the title of the chapter, “Fresh Air, an Old Nightmare, and What to Do with a Jewish Corpse,” what might the reader assume the chapter is about? What do these ideas actually reference?

5. What is the significance of the book Liesel steals in this chapter?

6. What does Death suggest about Ilsa Herrmann’s open window?

7. Why are the Hubermanns so concerned about the prospect of Max dying?

8. How is Liesel’s recurring dream of her brother altered? How does she attempt to interpret this change?

9. Describe the scene when Rosa comes to Liesel’s school. Why is Rosa behaving this way?

10. How is the metaphor of “the boss” reiterated at the end of the chapter? What events does Death foreshadow?

11. Who is “The Visitor”? How does Liesel help to defuse the situation in this chapter? What is Max’s reaction to this situation?

12. Discuss Death’s description of death in the gas chambers in “Death’s Diary: The Parisians.”

13. What is one of the primary functions of both the first and last chapters of Part Six? Why are the two chapter titles significant?

Part Seven

1. How are the motifs of painting and colors represented in “Champagne and Accordions”? And how do these motif serve to characterize Hans Hubermann?

2. Identify one small detail Hans reveals about when he first knew Rosa.

3. Note the three Duden Dictionary definitions in this section and each word’s relevance within the context in which it occurs.

4. Describe the events in the chapter “The Trilogy.” What is peculiar about Rudy’s behavior? What does Liesel speculate as to the reasons for his behavior?

5. Note Death’s “point for later reference” with regards to Rudy.

6. Describe the content and tone of Ilsa Hermann’s note to Liesel. In what ways might this note change the reader’s opinion about Ilsa?

7. Where do the Hubermanns go for the first air raid? Describe the action and mood in this scene.

8. What important distinction does Death make between the Germans in the air raid shelters and the Jews? What is his attitude towards each as a result?

9. What does Max admit to doing while the Hubermanns and Liesel were at the Fiedlers’ house? What might surprise the reader about his admission? What is Papa’s reaction?

10. How does the chapter “The Sky Stealer” emphasize the theme of the power of words?

11. Explain the significance of Death’s comment: “A voice played the notes inside her. This, it said, is your accordion.”

12. Given the information known about Frau Holtzapfel’s character, how might her curious offer to Rosa and Liesel be explained?

13. Describe the tone created in “The Long Walk to Dachau.”

14. Explain the role reversal between Hans and Liesel in this section. What advice did Hans give to Liesel earlier that he is now himself ignoring?

15. Why does Death insist that the Duden Dictionary “was completely and utterly mistaken, especially with its related words”?

16. Identify the greatest source of tension in “The Idiot and the Coat Men.” What is the result?

17. What are the five Duden Dictionary definitions in this section and each word’s relevance within the context in which it occurs?

Part Eight

1. Explain the chronology in plot for the first two chapters of Part Eight. Why are they ordered in this way?

2. Explain the significance of Death’s comment, “Again, the human child. So much cannier” in “Dominoes and Darkness.”

3. Identify the symbolism present in “Dominoes and Darkness” and explain the meaning.

4. What does Death say might have happened if Rudy had intervened and let the coat men take him?

5. Cite two examples from Part Eight that indicate a change in Liesel’s feelings towards Rudy.

6. To what is Death alluding when he says, “For others it was poverty and guilt when the war was over, when six million discoveries were made throughout Europe.”

7. What news does Hans Hubermann initially receive in “Punishment”? Why does the news appear to be good only “on the surface”?

8. What does the reader learn about the Steiners at the end of “Punishment”?

9. Why does Papa go to the basement when he returns from his night out drinking with Alex Steiner? What is the result?

10. What three things does Hans request of Liesel before he leaves for the army? What are the effects of his departure on Rosa and Liesel?

11. What comparison can be drawn between Rudy and Max?

12. Describe the “painted image” Liesel witnesses in “The Promise Keeper’s Wife” and explain how the image serves to further characterize Rosa Hubermann.

13. Explain Hans’s job in the army. How might the reader then draw a parallel between Hans and Death? And why does Hans struggle so much to write a letter to Liesel and Rosa?

14. In “The Bread Eaters,” why does Liesel feel conflicted about potentially seeing Max in the “parade of Jews”?

15. Describe the contents of Max’s “Hidden Sketchbook,” particularly the “Word Shaker” section.

16. How does the metaphor presented in The Word Shaker help to explain Hitler’s rise to power?

Part Nine

1. What clues in the first full paragraph of “The Next Temptation” alert the reader as to Liesel’s location? What additional information does the reader learn about Ilsa Hermann from the first page of this chapter?

2. On this particular visit, which book does Liesel decide to “steal”?

3. What important realization does Liesel make about the library in this chapter? How does this knowledge make her feel and why?

4. Note two humorous references to the Nazi’s influence in the Hermann household.

5. What is the function of the chapter, “The Cardplayer”? What theme does the chapter emphasize?

6. What new information does Rosa learn about her son, and what is her reaction?

7. Briefly relate the details of Robert Holtzapfel’s death. What comment does Death make about “taking” Robert?

8. Explain the significance of the following quotation: “Three languages interwove. The Russian, the bullets, the German.”

9. What does the closing paragraph of “The Snows of Stalingrad” indicate about Liesel?

10. Explain the significance of the chapter title “The Ageless Brother.”

11. Who are the members of the “cast” of characters who appear to Liesel at night in her room, and what is each person doing?

12. How does the quotation Liesel remembers from The Last Human Stranger parallel her own feelings?

13. Describe the details of “The Accident.”

14. Why does Sergeant Schipper intend to tell his superiors that Hans is “not fit for the LSE”? What does this say about his character?

15. Describe the contents of “Rudy’s Toolbox.” Which item is odd? How does Rudy later explain the inclusion of this item to Liesel?

16. Why does Rudy tell Liesel, “You’re not a thief at all”? What important distinction does he make about the nature of stealing? And what does he realize about himself?

17. How do various people try to coax Frau Holtzapfel out of her home for the air raid? What ultimately persuades her to leave?

18. What comparison can be drawn between Michael Holtzapfel and Max in terms of their attitude towards survival?

19. How does the teddy bear function as a symbol in “One Toolbox, One Bleeder, One Bear”?

20. Describe the narrator’s attitude towards both humans and himself as presented at the end of this chapter.

21. What is the foreshadowing at the end of “Homecoming”?

Part Ten

1. What is the primary function of the first chapter in Part Ten?

2. Explain the significance of the chapter title “The Ninety-Eighth Day.”

3. How and why does Michael Holtzapfel kill himself?

4. Characterize Hans Hubermann’s actions in this chapter.

5. What information does the reader learn about the progress of the war and Death’s attitude toward Hitler in “The War Maker”?

6. What pivotal piece of hopeful information does the reader learn at the end of this chapter?

7. Describe the details of the scene on Munich Street in “Way of the Words.”

8. Explain the significance of the quotation regarding Liesel and Max: “She had seen him afraid, but never like this.”

9. Why does Liesel choose to quote words from Max’s own writings? What is Max’s reaction to those words?

10. Why does Liesel seem to welcome the soldier’s whip?

11. How does the chapter “Confessions” serve as a turning point in Liesel and Rudy’s relationship?

12. Explain Liesel’s conflicted feelings about words as seen in “Ilsa Hermann’s Little Black Book.”

13. Describe the content of Liesel’s letter to Ilsa Hermann. What is Ilsa’s reaction to the letter, and how does it further characterize her?

14. What do Death’s descriptions and feelings as he takes each soul on Himmel Street reveal about him?

15. When the men from the LSE pull Liesel out of the basement, what is her immediate reaction? How does the reader know that Liesel is in shock?

16. At what moment does Liesel know that the body the men are carrying is Rudy’s? What “amazes” Death about Liesel in this scene?

17. How does Death come to have possession of Liesel’s black book?

Epilogue

1. What does the reader learn about the course of Liesel’s life in “Death and Liesel”? What does Death say about her soul when he comes to take her?

2. Explain the details of the flashback with regards to the Hermann’s role in “Wood in the Afternoon.” What can the reader assume about Liesel’s future?

3. What is Alex Steiner’s main regret?

4. What does Liesel tell Alex Steiner when he comes to find her? Why does she feel the need to tell him this and what is his reaction?

5. Explain the significance of the last sentence of “Wood in the Afternoon.”

6. What happens in October of 1945? Why is this event particularly miraculous?

7. When Death goes to collect Liesel’s soul, what is he able to do that he has been wanting to do for a long time? What is Liesel’s reaction?

8. Explain the significance of Liesel’s question and Death’s answer in this final scene.