Dear Liesel,

Before you came along, I was the weird kid who painted myself black and ran the 100 meter dash like Jesse Owens -- the greatest athlete of all time. As far as anyone was concerned -- in this small town of Himmel -- I was batshit crazy. Now, I am the insane kid who at least has you.

I remember the day I met you. We were all playing soccer in the street and in walked the new kid. You. I’m not sorry we stuck you in the goalie position; however, I am sorry that Tommy got set free. He’s a rotten, useless soccer player. Although, I still thank him to this day for getting a foul and giving me a penalty kick against you. I know I’m dumb, cocky, and it was my decision to let you stay as goalie, but damn Liesel. I hadn’t missed a penalty shot in 18 shots, till you came along. That was the minute I knew I loved you; hence, the snowball I threw at your face. That day, I could feel that you had changed my life forever. We were destined to be best friends.

Thank God for the snowball I threw at you, otherwise I would have never promised my mother that I’d walk you to school as a way of apologizing. Furthermore, telling my siblings to shut up so that I could show you town was even better. I know I was the best tour guide ever. At school, I know the other kids found you stupid, but to hell with them. I’ll have your back forever...as long as I get a reward. A kiss.

When we raced, I should have still gotten a kiss -- even though the race was a draw. “One day, Liesel...you’ll be dying to kiss me” (Zusak 55) .I’m quite fancied by the ladies -- just so you know And, I’m not sorry you fell into some mud and your clothes became filthy. That meant that your Mama was going to kill you. Serves you right for not giving me a kiss. One day though. Just you wait.

Yours truly,

Rudy

**Reflection:**

During the first several pages of The Book Thief, I realized that there was one character that really stole my heart. Rudy. He reminded me so much of the boys I grew up with -- the ones who had crushes on me. Rudy was “one of those audacious little bastards who actually *fancied* himself with the ladies” (Zusak, 48-49), so I tried to make him sound like a flirt with a juvenile flair . Juveniles tend to act out or throw snowballs at someone’s face when they like them -- that’s why I added that scene to the letter and made him swear occasionally. Also, I added that Rudy was seen as “a little crazy”(Zusak, 48) because “insane or not, Rudy was always destined to be Liesel’s best friend” (Zusak, 48). I think the minute Rudy met Liesel, was the minute he *really* began living. Finally, I included only one quote in my letter because -- in my eyes -- that was one of the most important quotes of the book. It had so much foreshadowing surrounding it; it was hinting at something huge happening between Rudy and Liesel. And, Rudy never gave up on getting a kiss from Liesel, therefore, it was imperative that I include that quote. He loved her and that, right there, was the most important point to include in the letter.

Dear *Saumensch*,

While you’ve been doing whatever girls do, I’ve been getting my ass kicked daily by Deutscher at Hitler Youth Camp. I tell my family that everyone gets extra drills at camp, but really its just me. Today, Deutscher made me do some drills on the field -- the freshly manured field. I’m tough Liesel, but today I had enough. Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. I had enough. After losing to Viktor Chemmel and enduring the wrath of Deutscher, I just needed a victory. I stunk like cow shit, and I just needed to steal. Thank Jesus, Mary, and Joseph for you.

The second you said you knew a place, I think my day got a thousand times better. I didn’t know how in God’s name we were going to get into the Mayor’s house, but you knew the answer to that. Lucky *Saumensch*.

When we ran from the house, after hearing the footsteps, I knew that you had lied to me. You had only stolen a book because that’s all you went in for. No food. No cigarettes. I don’t even regret leaving your shoes at the Mayor’s house because you deserved that. Karma's a bitch. Out of everyone, I should be one of the last people you would lie to. You can tell me anything.

However, I’m glad that I ran back for your shoes -- it meant you owed me. I knew before I even asked for a kiss, that the answer would be no. But, I made you smile by asking that question -- which was almost as wonderful as an actually kiss.

In the end, it was a shame that you only stole a book. You can’t eat books. Liesel, you know I’m always starving -- especially in times like these. Also, there wasn’t any good food at my house or yours, so we were screwed.

While we were walking home from stealing the book, reminiscing about the good old days, I realized that my perception of you had changed. You were no longer Liesel or *Saumensch*. You were the book thief.

Although you lied to me and I got covered in shit, it was nice to have a friend to cheer me up. I’ll never stop asking for a kiss, because one day you’ll realize you love me too. I know you’ve always got my back. Thanks for that, book thief.

Love,

Rudy

**Reflection:**

As you read further into The Book Thief, you start to learn more about Rudy and what he goes through. Mainly, I wrote this letter to show the tight bond between Rudy and Liesel. When he needs her, she’s there. He appreciates her, loves her, and she’s the only one who can make him feel better. Furthermore, I included that Rudy is an idiot sometimes, especially when he forgot Liesel’s shoes at the Mayor’s house; hence, the “saukerl...where are my shoes?...they’re back at the house... aren’t they?”(Zusak, 289-290). I did this because although he forgot her shoes, he ran back for them. He cares about her and he made her smile -- as noted by the statement “she hoped he couldn’t see the escaped beginning of a smile” (Zusak, 291). Also, I wrote that Rudy said “Jesus, Mary, and Joseph” (Zusak, 283) a lot to show that he was upset and to make the letter sound more like him. In addition, I included that Rudy labeled Liesel the “book thief” (Zusak, 292), because that's what the book is all about. It was a gigantic moment for Liesel because it was the moment when she “truly became the book thief” (Zusak, 292). Finally, I included that Rudy said Liesel could tell him anything because she housed a Jew that her papa said "if you tell anyone about that man up there, we will all be in big trouble" (Zusak, 203). Liesel kept things from Rudy, but there was one thing she really needed to know. He always had her back. That's the reason I wrote this letter the way I did.

Dear *Saumensch*,

Just so you know, I’ve had the worst couple of days. So many acts of stupidity. I tried to steal a potato from Mamer’s, but I failed. When Deutscher asked me when the Fuhrer’s birthday was, I saw a golden opportunity to be a smartass; thus, he beat me to a pulp and gave me a haircut like a Jew. Finally, I stopped attending the Hitler Youth. My parents begged and threatened me to go. I won’t. I’m not afraid of Deutscher -- he can kiss my ass. However, I joined another division. There, I can be an idiot and still succeed. At least I have one success story for the books; helping you.

It was just our luck to avoid one tormentor and run into another. Viktor Chemmel. I loath him. I’d like to wipe that smile right off his face. The way he calls you a “whore” (Zusak, 301) just makes me cringe. I’m sorry that he involved you in the fight between him and I -- I’m sorry that I started it. I don’t like when bad things happen to you.

Viktor has no boundaries. He’s a bastard that likes to throw books. Thank God books float, because if not, your book would have been at the bottom of that river. And also give thanks that Jesse Owens inspired my amazing running ability, otherwise you wouldn’t have your book. That river was freezing -- by the way -- but at least I did something that deserved a reward.

"How about a kiss, *Saumensch*” (Zusak, 303). Just give in Liesel! You know you want to. By the way, I’m not afraid of your kiss. Or am I? I guess you’ll never know, unless you kiss me. I’m a good kisser. Don’t let me go to my grave without a kiss from the book thief! Oh Liesel, what you do to me; you’ll never know. Whatever. I’ll love you for eternity.

Forever,

Rudy

**Reflection:**

The last scene I decided to write about was the very last time Rudy asked Liesel for a kiss. I know that wasn't the only scene I wrote about; however, the "three acts of stupidity by Rudy Steiner" (Zusak, 293) were necessary background information in order to show the effect Liesel has on him. Basically, anything having to do with Liesel is the highlight of Rudy's life. Also, Rudy had been having a really hard time, so I included his one small victory; retrieving Liesel's book. This scene was very important because "after months of failure, this moment was his only chance to revel in some victory" (Zusak, 303). The victory allowed Rudy to ask for a kiss; thus, one of the most important points of the book happened. Not only were his feelings and motives behind his desire for a kiss explained, but "he would never ask for her lips again and would go to his grave without them" (Zusak, 303). That's why I chose that scene. It was so important to me to make his last letter to Liesel sound a little more desperate, a little nicer, and a little more lovey dovey, because it would be his *last* letter. All in all, this letter was about giving Liesel a hard copy to look back on, so she would know how much Rudy loved her. And how much she loved him.