

Is There Sunshine After a Storm?

Emily Needs (2023)

Death

How can a room be so full of life yet seemingly lifeless? The flames of light that once shot across the room now burned for the last time. I hate that I always have to be the bearer of bad news. Something about this time was different though. Long ago I made a promise to myself that I would not get involved in the lives of my victims but somehow here I am, regretting my whole life choices. Well really my whole death choices. The unnerving calm that pervaded the space could not be broken by the roar of the flat line. From first glance you would be unsure whose soul I took from that room. There was something about the life of Liesel Meminger that I could not wrap my head around. I have had many encounters with her, and everyone made an impression. From the little girl who refused to even take a shower, to sitting in this room surrounded by the people she passed her knowledge on to, the book thief continues to influence the path of others. Every inch of the room is filled with grieving love. Every lifeless breath telling stories of her past.

Liesel - an hour before chaos

The stillness of the room was accompanied by the echoing of breeze. The room held a population of ten yet the souls of zero. Regardless of the narrative I told, nothing could make this room comfortable. Not even the power of words was enough to bandage over the heartbreak suffocating this place. As I look around at all the desolate faces, I can't help but break inside. Everyone I cared for sat within this room. But in this moment, there was no one there. No tears, no bellow's. Nothing. If only I could express the urge to jump up and hug every one of them. I hope they know that. The feeling of being here but on the verge of another world is a feeling I wish upon no one. With every shutter of my eyes, the rain started to pour. What was once a deserted room had turned to a storm. Their innocent and beautiful souls. Conceiving of tragedy as being just that. If only that were clear. If only they understood what real suffering was. To possess everything, only to have it all disappear in an instant. I find it hard to believe that in this moment, a loved one's passing is our top priority

when I think back on earlier times. Memories rushed in as if their cries were enough to flood the dam of sorrow that sat within this room.

1943 – What happens now?

Today is Friday. Although nothing about it feels like a Friday. There are no kids yelling for joy, people prancing in the street, families joining together. It was more of a Monday type of day. Grim faces tattooed on people walking by. The closest thing to glee left was the squinting of people's eyes as dust filled them. Bodies upon bodies scattered on the red carpet beneath. And what was all of this for? For an ego boost? To prove who was the best ruler? Seems a bit hypocritical to me. My entire life, I have only ever witnessed the human race being diminished depending on the colour of one's hair and eyes. However, what use did it really serve when this was always going to be the outcome. Rudy, Rudy! Hope started to leak out in unison with the rich blood of those surrounding. Mamma? In this moment I couldn't resist the jealousy. Why did they get to go, why not me? Why was I left to bear the repercussions of people I had never even met? This was supposed to be my home but in this moment nothing about it feels familiar. I would trade anything to read with papa again, heck I'd even settle for mama to scream at me just one more time. I couldn't even make out where the lounge room finished and the kitchen started. The flood gates burst out at this precise moment, revealing true colours of the emotional maelstrom I had been suppressing. Sunshine was a figment of one's imagination and wasn't likely to materialise anytime soon. Wait, it can't be. A wave of relief washed over me. Of all things to be destroyed it is fate that this remains. I don't know how to explain how this one singular object withholds so much power but there in the distance lay a book. 'The Grave Diggers Handbook'.

Death – Storm is growing

Breaths were becoming shallower and fewer. Interrupted by the gasps for life. The rain grew heavier as the fight to the finish line became unreachable. It was at this moment that hope was lost. No amount of praying would delay the inevitable. The coldness of the room was like no other. Icicles forming underneath every person's eyes. Their breaths almost just as distant as Liesel's. There are no books or words that will bring her back this time. With each lifeless breath that escaped her body, her family crept closer. I hate to be nosy but look, it's

not like anyone's going to see me. Resting in the hands of someone no bigger than a lamb, is a book. This book was not new to Liesel. This is a tale told many times. 'Grave Diggers Handbook'. To them this is just a book. A plain old book with pages as white as their grandmother's skin. Hahaha, look it wasn't exactly the greatest title to read in a hospital room and don't worry the irony was not lost on anyone else in the room either. For a moment there was no more rain. A glimmer of normality. But what really constitutes normal, given that I doubt any aspect of Liesel's existence could be categorised as ordinary? These words meant so much more than they will ever understand. But is it going to be enough to save her this time? Chapter by chapter the storms intensity rose. Drafts of winds created by the flicking of the pages. Finally, the final page is reached. As the cover comes to a close, Liesel's last attempt at life leaves her mouth, although this time less desperate than those before. The room fell shallow but there was a peacefulness about it. The storm was over, but the destruction less than expected. I know the saying goes 'calm before the storm' but it was quite the opposite.

I guess the sun does still shine after all.