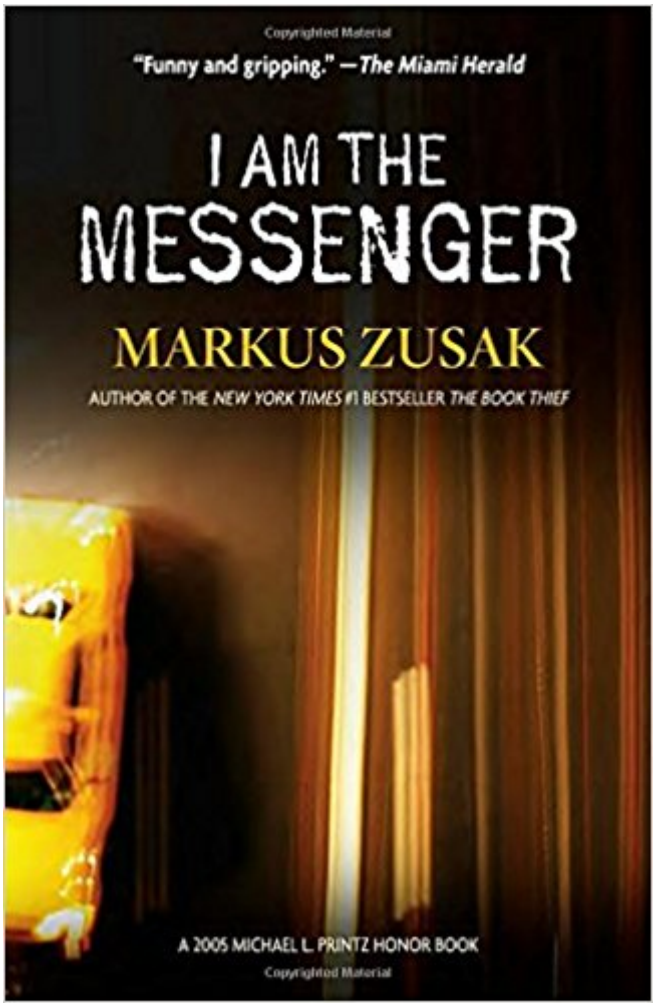
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I Am The Messenger



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Synopsis

Ã Â Ã Â By the author of the #1 New York Times bestsellerÃ Â 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.Ã Â 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?Ã Â This book is a 2005 Michael L. Printz Honor Book and recipient of five starred reviews.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 640L (What's this?)

Paperback: 357 pages

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Product Dimensions: 5.1 x 0.8 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 10.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 1,095 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #10,196 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #24 inÃ Â Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Self Esteem & Reliance #28 inÃ Â Books > Teens > Mysteries & Thrillers > Romantic #31 inÃ Â Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Action & Adventure > Mystery & Thriller

Age Range: 12 - 17 years

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

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 heartwarmingly 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 Copyright Ã Â© Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

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 CooperCopyright Ã Â© American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I was inspired by the main character EdÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s very normal life. Maybe normal is too nice a word. His life is more mediocre. He doesnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t have any ambitions or achievements or direction really. The story is about him receiving anonymous cards in the mail that challenge him to help people. He changes their lives in small and big ways just by being observant.

It made me want to observe and serve others more. If an ordinary guy can help in small ways, then so can I.After reading I Am The Messenger, I got that chance.I saw a guy shopping for baby formula at the grocery store. He would look at a can of baby formula for a minute and put it back. Then heÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢d look at another can. Then heÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢d put it back. I found this strange and fascinating. Most people quickly dump 8 cans of the exact same formula in their shopping cart and hurry off. I have never seen someone compare types of baby formula so carefully.This guy was taking his time for some reason. I continued to watch him (he didnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t notice because he was now scrutinizing a fifth can of formula) and tried to figure out what situtation would make someone shop for formula like that. He must never have bought it before. Maybe he has a wife at home with a screaming newborn baby and was instructed to ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“get formulaÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• only to find the grocery store has 473829 kinds. And now he doesnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t know what kind to get. So I went up to him and helped explain the difference between the 439280 kinds of formula and gave him a coupon. He seemed grateful. I imagined him going home to his wife victorious because heÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢d gotten the right formula AND used a coupon.ItÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s not life changing or anything. That being said, Ed didnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t feel like he was doing anything life changing either.ItÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s not a big thing, but I guess itÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s trueÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â • big things are often just small things that are noticed.-Markus Zusak, I Am the Messenger (p. 221).But it reminded me that kindness, true kindness, comes from listening and observing others to see what they really need. Small acts of kindness are big in their own way.The reason this story works is because itÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s crude, crass, biting, sarcastic, and full of swearing. Let me explain. The writing hides the preachiness of the story so well that I really enjoyed reading it and it wasnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t until the end that I realized I learned something. IÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢m not saying something has to be crude for you to learn something. But hiding a story about serving others in a crude story might accidentally teach someone something when all they had really intended was to pick up an entertaining book. Making it a little crude can also make the story relatable so you close the book feeling like the character did things that you are more than capable of doing, too.There were some parts of the writing that I found so beautiful. HereÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s one of my favorite quotes. I just love how Markus Zusak takes a cliche saying and switches the words around to paint a lovely picture:Quietly, Marv cries.His hands appear to be dripping on the wheel. The tears grip his face. They hold on and slide reluctantly for his throat.-Markus Zusak, I Am the Messenger (p. 316).I like that the tears grip his face instead of his hands gripping the wheel. But I can still imagine the image of tears gripping his face like heÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s trying so hard not to cry but he

canÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t help it. I find it so beautiful for some reason.

First off, I have to give props to Markus Zusak. I have read The Book Thief and just finished I Am the Messenger and I love his writing style.As for this book, I fell into it. It grabbed hold of me and I loved every minute of it until the very end. The ending was a little too cliche and easy for me. After all that Ed went through, I felt he deserved a better ending, something more deep and meaningful.This story is about a 19 year old Australian taxi driver named Ed Kennedy who stops a bank robber. His life is very average and kind of boring up until this point. He lives in what he describes as a shack with a 17 year old dog named the Doorman (love that name!) and the highlight of his life is playing cards with his three friends; Audrey, Marv and Ritchie. Not long after stopping the robber, Ed receives a playing card (an Ace) in the mail with three addresses and times written on it. Of course Ed visits the addresses at the specified times and learns that there is something important he needs to do at each address.The story follows Ed on his journey through completing the tasks at each address. He then gets 3 other Aces with odd clues on each. At the end, he receives one other card but I'll let you read the book to find out which it is. Ed's life takes on much more meaning and the story really evolves his character so far that I really felt like I knew him. This story moved me to tears a few times and made my heart full at others. Like I said before, I love Markus Zusak's writing. His words get inside of me and play with my emotions.I really did like this book and thought I would love it but the ending did make me drop one star from my rating. I understand why it was written the way it was but I wish it would have been a little more unpredictable. Overall though, this is a wonderful, moving story that I would suggest to anyone.

Review also found on Books N' CalmThis book was great. I didnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t go into expecting much. I thought it would be a heavy/dark book like The Book Thief. But it wasnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t as dark/heavy. It was mostly light but towards the end it got a bit heavy. The book was funny and touching. It was light and at the same time kind of philosophical.I was a bit confused about the setting of the book. The swearing and some of the words made it seem like it was set in England (and the audiobook said rugby while the book said soccer). And IÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢m pretty sure the book said it was set in New York. Maybe I made that up. IDK.On a bit of a side note, the audio book reader is kinda boring (I used the audio book along with reading because sometimes I had a song stuck in my head which distracted me from reading and the audio book helped me focus on the story). So my suggestion would be just read the book.The ending was kind of confusing. I liked it but I was left wondering who was leaving the messages. I

found the answer in the Goodreads FAQ part of the book though.The book really reminds me of a book/movie called The Gift. I donÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t remember the author. In the book, the main characterÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s great uncle dies. In the great uncleÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s will, all his family members get small portions of his wealth but he leaves all his money to the main character, a spoiled young man. But thereÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s a condition, the main character has to go through all these challenges with a bunch of limitations (like he has a really small monthly allowance and can only live off of that allowance money). The main character does all the challenges and ends up a better man. Ed kind of does the same sort of thing with the cards.

This is nothing like The Book Thief. Of course, this book is about growing, learning, surviving, but not a story of war or cruelty. The main character, Ed, is an E everyman, with a huge dose of loser until he receives a moment of fame. Then come the cards, each an ace of the four suits, and he finds transformation. You will too. You will see life and purpose. Read it and see.

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