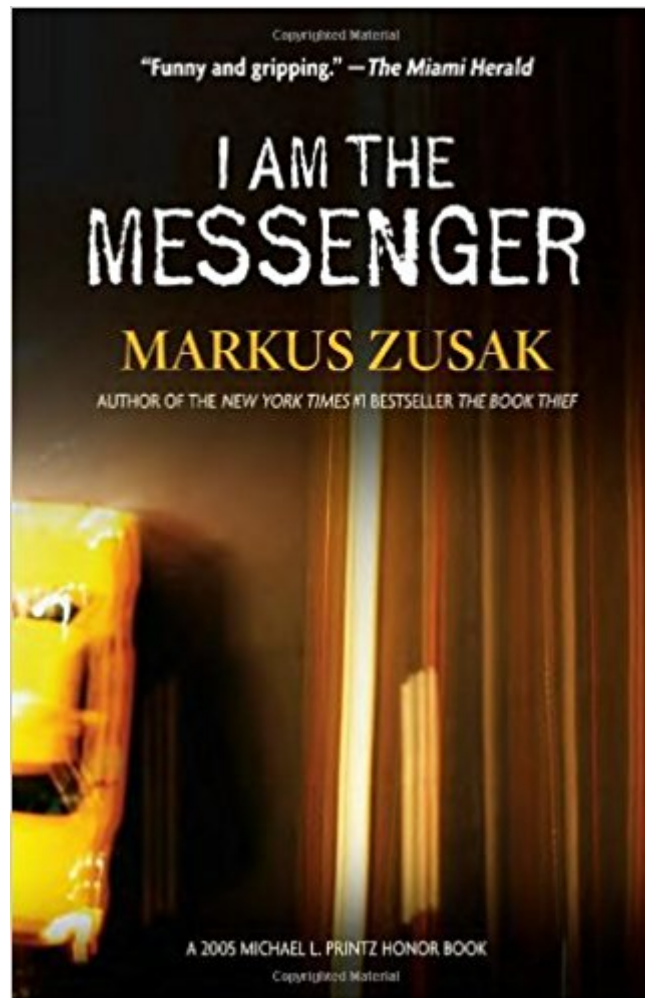


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# I Am The Messenger



## Synopsis

By the author of the #1 New York Times bestseller *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. 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? 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

Publisher: Knopf Books for Young Readers; Reprint edition (May 9, 2006)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0375836675

ISBN-13: 978-0375836671

Product Dimensions: 5.2 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 See all reviews (986 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #9,640 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #22 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Self Esteem & Reliance #29 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Action & Adventure > Mystery & Thriller #45 in Books > Teens > Mysteries & Thrillers > Mystery & Detective

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

Markus Zusak might be my favorite author now, and I've read a lot of books by a lot of authors. I have not, however, read three books of such magnitude by the same author. Upon completing *GETTING THE GIRL*, *THE BOOK THIEF*, and now *I AM THE MESSENGER*, I sit back in awe at the mastery of the writing, the power of the message, the truth of such stories. Winner of the 2003 Children's Book Council of Australia's Book of the Year Award and nominated for best young adult book at the 2006 L.A. Times Festival of Books, *I AM THE MESSENGER* (or *THE MESSENGER* in

Australia) tells the story of Ed Kennedy, nineteen-year-old taxi cab driver and all-around average guy. In fact, he's the epitome of average -- faithful friends, stinky dog, dead-end job, and girl who loves someone else. That's why it's such a big deal for Ed, Marv, and Ritchie to get trapped in a bank during a stickup. One of the thieves gets spooked, drops his gun, and somehow Ed ends up with the weapon and the town's praise. That might be a winning hand for Ed if he doesn't receive the first mysterious playing card, the Ace of Diamonds in his mailbox. It's a card with a message for him to deliver. Or else. Messages like Ed's will change a person, if he or she lets them. That's the beauty of Zusak's story. Ed discovers the changing power in simple, personalized messages of love, even if they're ones he's forced to deliver. While I could imagine a cynical reader calling Ed's 12 messages a tad forced, I would differ with them on every case. Ed's stories are simple proof that if a "guy like him can stand up and do what he did, then maybe everyone can. Maybe everyone can live beyond what they're capable of."-- Reviewed by Jonathan Stephens

I bought this book recently on a serendipitous bookstore trip during a family reunion in Colorado. It is most definitely worthy of the multiple starred reviews it has received. Ed Kennedy, a 19-year-old with no foreseeable future, is extremely likeable and readable. His life takes a sharp turn for the positive when he receives the first card in the mail--an ace with three addresses and times. It suddenly becomes clear that these people need his help, whether in large ways or small acts of kindness. Three more aces follow, and thus embarks Ed's adventure to help other people, and naturally in the end help himself. His friends are very realistic and their issues are almost as compelling as Ed's. There is a bit of romance, but it doesn't overpower the rest of the book--it's a very nice balance. Family challenges are a major theme here, as is learning your true potential. I would recommend it to teens over the age of 15 (some swearing and violence), but it is more than adult-friendly, and interesting enough to be a page turner for all ages, and the price is unbeatable as well. All I have to say thank heavens for spontaneous trips and books like this!

Markus is an immensely talented guy - I flipped over every page where he described something with such clever beauty that actually caught my breath while reading it. As result, my copy has so many bent pages it looks like it lost a fight with a rabid cat. This man is a unique author who can capture many fringe emotions (poignancy, heartburn, shame) that most authors ignore because they lack the talent to adequately describe them. Is the story particularly gripping? No. Is the pacing appropriate? No. There are many scenes that seemed irrelevant. In fact I once read that a "tight story" is one where no scene or character could be removed without the whole thing falling apart.

This is not a tight story. Is the ending satisfying? Sort of. Yes. No. Although I give him credit for balls. The ending is a ballsy cop out. I also wonder why this is classified as a young adult novel. If "young" means that most of the main characters are "young" and they are struggling to find their way in the world, then yes it is properly classified. However the reality is that this is a fairly adult book and I wonder what criteria the editor ultimately used to put it in the YA category. The heavy emphasis on alcohol and sex (even rape) seems a bit ragged for the generally softer category of YA. Does this book fit in with the Twilight series? I don't think so.... However I don't want my review to sound as negative as I fear it does. This is a fascinating work by a talented individual. Keep an eye on him, I think he has great work in him.

Ok, this was a nice book. Interesting (albeit quite unbelievable) premises and a quite readable writing style keep it moving along nicely. I thought about the book every day after I had read parts of it, and looked forward to reading more. BUT then I got to the ending... It's not a BAD ending, just a puzzling and completely improbable ending--one that made me suddenly feel like I had just wasted a bunch of time reading the book. Did the author just get to the end of the book and realize he didn't have an ending, and quickly make something up? Or maybe he actually meant to end it that way. Whatever the case, I don't want to spoil the plot for people, but I'll just say that the identity of someone in question throughout the book turns out to be someone completely out of the blue, and it just doesn't fit the facts and plotline of the book very well. Oh, well. Obviously many people have enjoyed the book, and I did as well, but the tacked-on ending just left me unsatisfied and disgruntled.

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