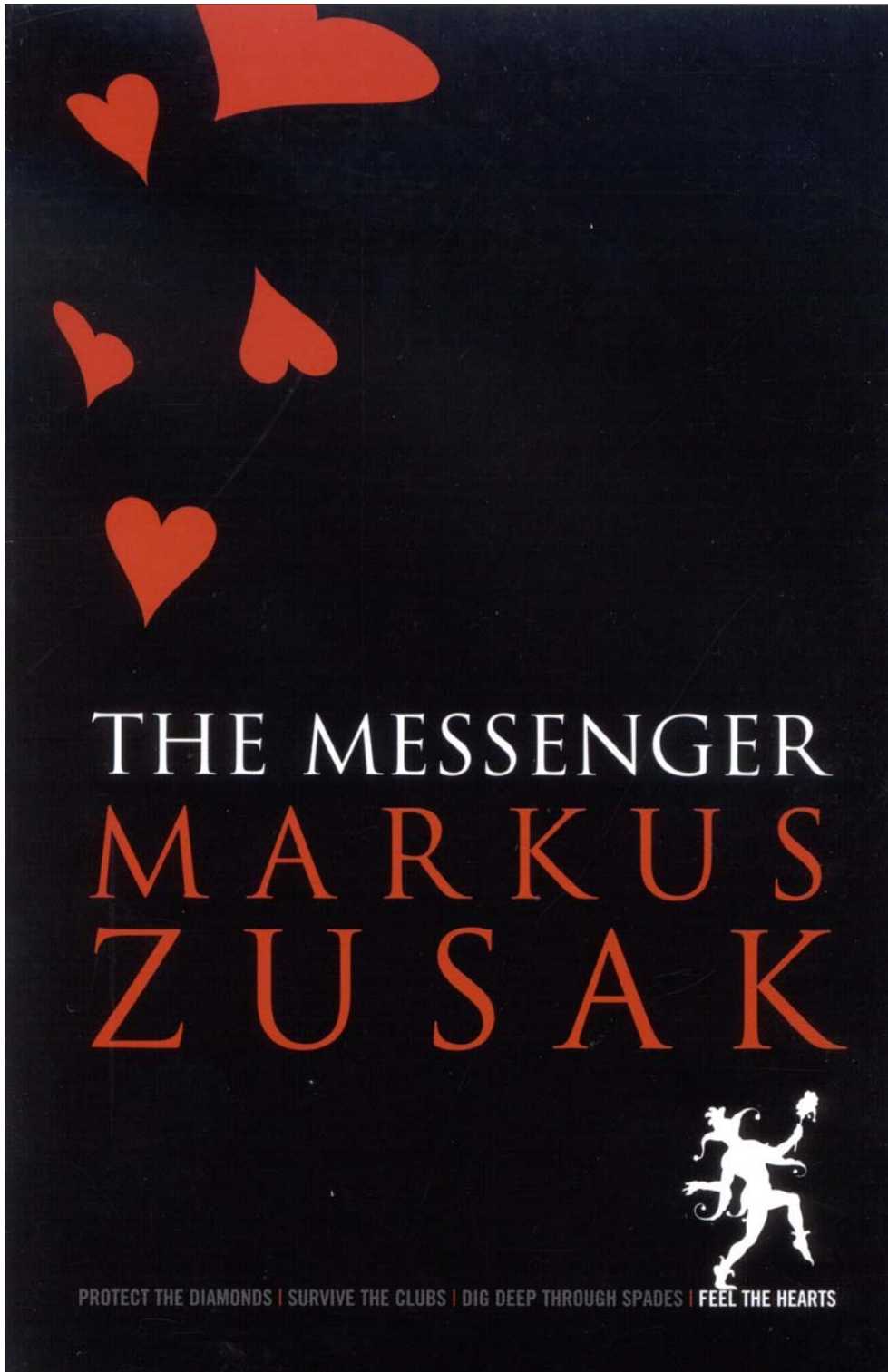




# the messenger





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## *Messenger Teachers Notes written by Markus Zusak*

These teachers notes are separated into three sections to cater for the following:

### **Section One**

– General Questions

Also includes four extended writing tasks suitable for all students.

### **Section Two**

– Advanced Students

Designed for high ability students in order to challenge individuals in your class.

### **Section Three**

– Alternatives to writing activities.

A Small section of Drama activities





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## Section One



## PART ONE: The First Message

**QUESTION ONE:** List five facts about Ed Kennedy.

**QUESTION TWO:** Who is the Doorman? Describe his appearance, his personality, his smell.

**QUESTION THREE:** Choose one of the addresses on the ace of diamonds.

Explain the following:

- Who lives at that address?
- How Ed feels about the message he needs to deliver.
- What Ed achieves in this particular message.

## EXTENDED WRITING TASK

After stopping the bank robbery, a reporter comes to Ed's place to interview him (page 26). Write either a newspaper article about Ed's heroics in the bank or an interview with Ed about it.

## OR

Imagine you are Sophie. Describe your relationship with Ed Kennedy.

Describe:

- how you met
- what he gave you
- your opinion of him when you first met him
- your opinion of him after your fateful race



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## PART TWO: The Stones of Home

**QUESTION ONE:** What does the title of this part of the book refer to? Think about Ed's mission and his past.

**QUESTION TWO:** Describe one of these characters: Alice, Angie Carusso, Tony O'Reilly, Father O'Reilly.

**QUESTION THREE:** What is ironic about the way Ed *helps* the Rose boys?

### EXTENDED WRITING TASK

Write a report for the St. Michael's Church Chronicle detailing the events of the infamous 'Meet a Priest Day'.

### OR

Put together a brief, confidential report by Daryl and Keith about the job you did at Ed's place. You might divide the report into these categories:

- general comment
- disposition/attitude of victim
- measures taken to intimidate the victim
- description of premises
- other individuals present
- goals achieved





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## PART THREE: Trying Times for Ed Kennedy

**QUESTION ONE:** What happens at the Sledge Game? Describe the events of the game and how the next card is delivered.

**QUESTION TWO:** Give details of Ed's message for the Tatupu family.

**QUESTION THREE:** What does the title 'Front Porch Cyclone' refer to?

### EXTENDED WRITING TASK

Imagine that you Bev Kennedy.

State your opinion of:

- your late husband
- Ed





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## PART FOUR: The Music of Hearts

**QUESTION ONE:** List what Ed needs to do for Ritchie, Marv and Audrey.

**QUESTION TWO:** Briefly describe three events that occur at Christmas. Things to consider might be the Doorman kiss, Tommy and Ingrid, Ed's conversations with Mia and Tommy, Milla and Ed, the taxi ride with Simon, the bonfire, or Ed visiting his father's grave.

**QUESTION THREE:** Twelve messages have been delivered. Which one is most memorable to you? Why?

## EXTENDED WRITING TASK

Imagine that you are Marv.

Write a speech about your friend, Ed Kennedy.

Include:

- the nature of your relationship with him
- his good traits
- his bad traits
- what he's done for you



## PART FIVE: The Joker

**QUESTION ONE:** Who is the person at the end of the novel?

**QUESTION TWO:** What does Ed mean when he says, "I am the message"?



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## Section Two

### IN-DEPTH QUESTIONS

**QUESTION ONE:** For each part of the novel, the suit of card is symbolic of Ed's messages. Describe how diamonds, clubs, spades and hearts relate to Ed's mission.

**QUESTION TWO:** What comment does *The Messenger* make about stories and the power of writing?

**QUESTION THREE: Research Project**  
(NB – may be a good activity for all or groups of students.)

Gather information and write a short biography for any three of these people:

- Bob Dylan
- Salvador Dali
- Joan of Arc
- Jimi Hendrix
- Richard Pryor
- The Proclaimers
- Paul Newman
- Sylvia Plath
- Graham Green
- Morris West
- Audrey Hepburn
- Lee Marvin
- William Wyler

Also describe how each one of these people is important in *The Messenger*.

**QUESTION FOUR:** Also look up Pablo Sanchez and see if such a man ever directed a movie titled 'The Suitcase'. What does your discovery add to your knowledge of the power of the author in any piece of writing?

**QUESTION FIVE:** Take one scene from *The Messenger* and write it as if you would be producing it as a film script.



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## Section Three

### DRAMA ACTIVITIES

**ACTIVITY ONE:** In pairs or groups, act out one small scene from *The Messenger*. Scenes to consider might be the hold-up, Marv visiting Suzanne Boyd, Ed and Ma on the front porch, Ed and Marv at the café, Ed in the cab with Alice etc. You might even like to remain alone and do a monologue of Ed's thoughts.

**ACTIVITY TWO:** In pairs, do an interview with one character from *The Messenger*. Discuss what happened to you in the story.

**ACTIVITY THREE:** In a group of three, choose three characters from the book, excluding Ed himself. Write and perform a conversation in which each person tells his or her story and gives his or her opinion of Ed. It could even be Margaret the waitress, Daryl or Keith...



PROTECT THE DIAMONDS  SURVIVE THE CLUBS  DIG DEEP THROUGH SPADES  FEEL THE HEARTS 