

Olentangy Local School District Literature Selection Review

Teacher: Melissa Byard

School: OHMS

Book Title: Life as We Knew it

Genre: Science Fiction

Author: Susan Beth Pfeffer

Pages: 352 pages

Publisher: HMH books for Young Readers

Copyright: May 1, 2008

In a brief rationale, please provide the following information relative to the book you would like added to the school's book collection for classroom use. You may attach additional pages as needed.

Book Summary and Summary Citation:

I guess I always felt even if the world came to an end, McDonald's still would be open.

High school sophomore Miranda's disbelief turns to fear in a split second when an asteroid knocks the moon closer to Earth, like "one marble hits another." The result is catastrophic. How can her family prepare for the future when worldwide tsunamis are wiping out the coasts, earthquakes are rocking the continents, and volcanic ash is blocking out the sun? As August turns dark and wintry in northeastern Pennsylvania, Miranda, her two brothers, and their mother retreat to the unexpected safe haven of their sunroom, where they subsist on stockpiled food and limited water in the warmth of a wood-burning stove.

Told in a year's worth of journal entries, this heart-pounding story chronicles Miranda's struggle to hold on to the most important resource of all—hope—in an increasingly desperate and unfamiliar world. An extraordinary series debut!

Susan Beth Pfeffer has written three companion novels to *Life As We Knew It*, including *The Dead and the Gone*, *This World We Live In*, and *The Shade of the Moon*.

Provide an instructional rationale for the use of this title, including specific reference to the OLSD curriculum blueprints and/or State standards.

RL.7.2 Analyze literary text development. a. Determine a theme of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text. b. Incorporate the development of a theme and other story details into an objective summary of the text.

RL.7.3 Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot).

RL.7.6 Analyze how an author uses the point of view to develop and contrast the perspectives of different characters or narrators in a text.

RL.7.10 By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 6–8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. Build background knowledge and activate prior knowledge in order to make text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-world connections that deepen understanding of the text.

Include two professional review of this title: (a suggested list of resources for identifying professional reviews is shown below. Reviews may be “cut and pasted” (with citation) into the form or printed reviews may be attached to the form). Reviews should suggest an appropriate grade-level or grade-band.

Review #1

From School Library Journal

Grade 6-8—Pfeffer tones down the terror, but otherwise crafts a frighteningly plausible account of the local effects of a near-future worldwide catastrophe. The prospect of an asteroid hitting the Moon is just a mildly interesting news item to Pennsylvania teenager Miranda, for whom a date for the prom and the personality changes in her born-again friend, Megan, are more immediate concerns. Her priorities undergo a radical change, however, when that collision shifts the Moon into a closer orbit, causing violent earthquakes, massive tsunamis, millions of deaths, and an upsurge in volcanism. Thanks to frantic preparations by her quick-thinking mother, Miranda's family is in better shape than many as utilities and public services break down in stages, wild storms bring extremes of temperature, and outbreaks of disease turn the hospital into a dead zone. In Miranda's day-by-day journal entries, however, Pfeffer keeps nearly all of the death and explicit violence offstage, focusing instead on the stresses of spending months huddled in increasingly confined quarters, watching supplies dwindle, and wondering whether there will be any future to make the effort worthwhile. The author provides a glimmer of hope at the end, but readers will still be left stunned and thoughtful.—*John Peters, New York Public Library*

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Review #2

From Booklist

Starred Review A meteor is going to hit the moon, and 16-year-old Miranda, like the rest of her family and neighbors in rural Pennsylvania, intends to watch it from the comfort of a lawn chair in her yard. But the event is not the benign impact predicted. The moon is knocked closer to Earth, setting off a chain of horrific occurrences: tsunamis, earthquakes, and, later, volcanic eruptions that disrupt life across the planet. Written in the form of Miranda's diary, this disquieting and involving story depicts one family's struggle to survive in a world where food, warmth, and well-being disappear in the blink of an eye. As life goes from bad to worse, Miranda struggles to find a way to survive both mentally and physically, discovering strength in her family members and herself. This novel will inevitably be compared to Meg Rosoff's Printz Award Book, *How I Live Now* (2004). Pfeffer doesn't write with Rosoff's startling eloquence, and her setup is not as smooth (Why don't scientists predict the possibility of this outcome?). But Miranda and her family are much more familiar than Rosoff's characters, and readers will respond to the authenticity and immediacy of their plight. Each page is filled with events both wearying and terrifying and infused with honest emotions. Pfeffer brings cataclysmic tragedy very close. *Ilene Cooper*

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An ALA Best Book for Young Adults
A 2011 ALA Popular Paperbacks Title
A CCBC Choice
A Junior Library Guild Premier Selection
A Listening Library Selection
An Amazon.com Best Book of the Year
* "Absorbing from first page to last."—***Publishers Weekly***, starred review

"Riveting and deeply frightening."—*The Bulletin*
"You will read it in one sitting, fighting back tears as you bite your nails."—*Teenreads.com*

What alternate text(s) could also fulfill the instructional requirements?

Title: The Supernaturalist Author: Eoin Colfer
Title: Artemis Fowl Author: Eoin Colfer
Title: Enders Game Author: Orson Scott Card

Document any potentially controversial content:

A parent commits suicide after her daughter dies
A discussion of when to have sex

Keeping in mind the age, academic level, and maturity of the intended reader, what is the suggested classroom use: (check all that apply)

Gifted/Accelerated Regular At Risk

GRADE LEVEL(S): 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Reading Level of this Title (if applicable):

Suggested Professional Literacy Review Sources:

School Library Journal
Horn Book
Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books
VOYA (Voice of Youth Advocates)
Library Journal
Book Links
Publisher's Weekly
Booklist
Kirkus Review
Wilson Library Catalog
English Journal (and other resources of the National Council of Teachers of English)
The Reading Teacher (International Reading Association)

Literature for Today's Young Adults

Signatures:

Teacher: _____ **Date:** _____

Department Head: _____ **Date:** _____

Building Administrator: _____ **Date:** _____

Curriculum Supervisor: _____ **Date:** _____