

## **Olentangy Local School District Literature Selection Review**

Teacher: Melissa Byard

School: OHMS

Book Title: The Dead and the Gone

Genre: Science Fiction

Author: Susan Beth Pfeffer

Pages: 336 pages

Publisher: Graphia Books; 1 edition

Copyright: January 18, 2010

*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:** Susan Beth Pfeffer's *Life as We Knew It* enthralled and devastated readers with its brutal but hopeful look at an apocalyptic event—an asteroid hitting the moon, setting off a tailspin of horrific climate changes. Now this harrowing companion novel examines the same events as they unfold in New York City, revealed through the eyes of seventeen-year-old Puerto Rican Alex Morales. When Alex's parents disappear in the aftermath of tidal waves, he must care for his two younger sisters, even as Manhattan becomes a deadly wasteland, and food and aid dwindle.

With haunting themes of family, faith, personal change, and courage, this powerful novel explores how a young man takes on unimaginable responsibilities.

**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 7 Up—An asteroid knocks the moon closer to Earth, and every conceivable natural disaster occurs. Seventeen-year-old Alex Morales's parents are missing and presumed drowned by tsunamis. Left alone, he struggles to care for his sisters Bri, 14, and Julie, 12. Things look up as Central Park is turned into farmland and food begins to grow. Then worldwide volcanic eruptions coat the sky with ash and the land freezes permanently. People starve, freeze, or die of the flu. Only the poor are left in New York—a doomed island—while the rich light out for safe towns inland and south. The wooden, expository dialogue and obvious setup of the first pages quickly give way to the well-wrought action of the snowballing tragedy. The mood of the narrative is appropriately frenetic, somber, and hopeful by turns. Pfeffer's writing grows legs as the terrifying plot picks up speed, and conversations among the siblings are realistically fluid and sharp-edged. The Moraleses are devout Catholics, and though the church represents the moral center of the novel, Pfeffer doesn't proselytize. The characters evolve as the city decomposes, and the author succeeds in showing their heroism without making them caricatures of virtue. She accurately and knowingly depicts New York City from bodegas to boardrooms, and even the far-fetched science upon which the novel hinges seems well researched. This fast-paced, thoughtful story is a good pick for melodrama fiends and reluctant readers alike.—*Johanna Lewis, New York Public Library*

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Review #2From Booklist

\*Starred Review\* In *Life as We Knew It* (2005), veteran writer Pfeffer painted a terrifying picture of what happened in a rural Pennsylvania town after an asteroid hit the moon and cataclysmic changes on land and sea caused familiar life to grind to a halt. For readers who wondered if things were any better in a bustling city, here is the horrifying answer. On the night the moon tilts, 17-year-old Alex and his younger sisters are alone; their mother is at work, and their father is visiting Puerto Rico. No matter how the kids wish, hope, and pray, their parents don't return. It's up to Alex to do what's best. At first that means bartering for food and batteries and avoiding fighting with the rambunctious Julie—especially after sickly Bri is sent to live at a rural convent. Later it means rescuing Julie from rapists and steering her away from the corpses that litter the street, providing food for rats. Religion is one of the strong threads running through the novel. It would have been interesting to see Alex wrestle more with his staunch Catholicism, but in many ways, the Church anchors the plot. The story's power, as in the companion book, comes from readers' ability to picture themselves in a similar situation; everything Pfeffer writes about seems wrenchingly plausible. Grades 8-12. --Ilene Cooper --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

**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:**

Some deaths, including main characters. Bodies are left to decompose and be eaten by rats. Main characters strip the bodies for goods to barter. A character goes to a stadium filled with nude, dead, decomposing bodies to look for his mother. Characters are trampled in a food riot. A man leaps to his death from a high window. A young girl is grabbed by a man and almost dragged into the woods, but she is rescued.

Mild sexual references

**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:** \_\_\_\_\_