

LIFE AS WE KNEW IT – Study Guide

Book Information:

Susan Beth Pfeffer
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Fiction
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About the Author

<http://content.scholastic.com/browse/contributor.jsp?id=1857&print=1>



Born:1948
New York, New York,
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Current Home:
Middletown, New York,
United States Of America

Biography:

Award-winning author Susan Beth Pfeffer knows she's lucky — she found what she wanted to do at an early age, and she's never done anything else. Born in New York City in 1948, Pfeffer grew up in the city and its nearby suburbs and spent summers in the Catskill Mountains. At the age of six, when her father wrote and published a book on constitutional law, Pfeffer decided she, too, wanted to be a writer; that year, she wrote her first story about the love between an Oreo cookie and a pair of scissors. Her first published work took a little bit longer: she wrote the young adult novel *Just Morgan* during her final semester at New York University, and published it the following year.

Since then, Susan Beth Pfeffer has been a full-time writer for young people. She has won numerous awards and citations for her work, which ranges from picture books to middle-grade and young-adult novels and includes both contemporary and historical fiction. Pfeffer has also written a book for adults on writing for children. When she is not working, she enjoys watching movies, both new and old, and collecting movie memorabilia, reading biographies and histories, and eating foods that are bad for her. She lives in Middletown, New York, with her two cats, Alexander and Emily.

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About the Story:

Setting: Northeastern Pennsylvania, during George Bush's presidency.

Summary :

<http://www.teenreads.com/reviews/0152058265.asp>

Everything was normal until the moon was knocked out of orbit.

Asteroids hit the moon all the time, but the one scheduled to hit at 9:30 p.m. on Wednesday, May 18 is one of the largest ones yet. To Miranda, the impending asteroid can only mean one thing: more homework. More homework on top of her best friends fighting, her dad's newly pregnant wife, and the fight with her mother over whether or not she can return to ice skating after a serious injury. With all of this on her mind, Miranda goes outside with her family to watch the asteroid hit the moon.

This asteroid however creates worldwide disasters. The moon is responsible for many of Earth's environmental controls, and when the orbit of the moon changes, so does the environment. Tidal waves destroy coastal cities, killing millions of people. Thunderstorms knock out the electricity in Miranda's school. None of it seems quite real to Miranda, even when her mother sends her and her brothers on a grocery run to buy all the canned soup, aspirin, vitamin pills and toilet paper they possibly can. Gas climbs to \$5 a gallon, then \$7, and pretty soon it's \$35 for three gallons, and you can only get three gallons at a time.

Throughout the nuclear winter caused by volcanic eruptions, Miranda tries to live life as normally as possible. She goes to the pond to ice skate for as long as she can breathe. She visits her friends, who are not the same people they were before the disaster. The question is, how long can Miranda and her family survive with minimal water, a dwindling food supply, no heat or electricity, and subzero temperatures?

When so many people are giving up hope, starving, and dying of diseases we rarely get, Miranda is still clinging to normality. She still wants to date Dan, her swimming teammate, and she fights with her mother about her father and brothers. During this time of disaster, though, Miranda's best qualities come to light. Her determination helps her family survive a bout of deadly flu. Even though she fights with her mother, Miranda never gives up on loving her. Miranda might not know how long they will survive, but she does know that by working together they stand a chance.

In the books, an asteroid has knocked the moon a little closer to Earth, causing tsunamis, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions, which in turn cause permanent power outages, famine and epidemics.