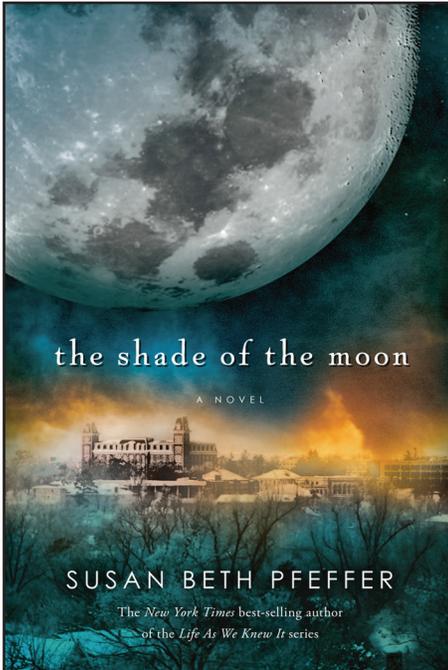


The Shade of the Moon

by SUSAN BETH PFEFFER



About the Book

In this companion to the novels *Life As We Knew It*, *The Dead & The Gone*, and *This World We Live In*, it's been more than two years since Jon Evans and his family left Pennsylvania, hoping to find a safe place to live, yet Jon remains haunted by the deaths of those he loved. His prowess on the soccer field has guaranteed him a home in a well-protected enclave. But Jon is painfully aware that a missed goal, a careless word, even falling in love, can put his life and the lives of his mother, his sister, Miranda, and her husband, Alex, in jeopardy. Can Jon risk doing what is right in a world gone so terribly wrong?

About the Author

Susan Beth Pfeffer's first three apocalyptic novels, the *New York Times* best-selling *Life As We Knew It*, *The Dead & The Gone*, and *This World We Live In* were widely praised by reviewers as action-packed, thrilling, and utterly terrifying. *Life As We Knew It* received numerous starred reviews and honors and was nominated for many state awards, winning six. Ms. Pfeffer lives in Wallkill, New York.

About the Guide

The Shade of the Moon is a novel most appropriate for readers in grades 7–12 or ages 12–18. This guide was created to be used for the classroom or smaller reading groups. There are a variety of questions, some addressing comprehension of the story and others prompting readers to draw conclusions, speculate, and “dig deeper” into the story. The questions can be adapted as writing prompts. The questions and many of the activities are aligned with the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts. The page numbers in the guide refer to the hardcover edition.

Pre-Reading Activities

For readers who have not read the previous novels in the series or have not recently read them, provide a synopsis of the stories to put this one in context. See www.lifeasweknewit.com for synopses of the novels.

Discuss with students the issues of discrimination and segregation. Ask them to share examples of both in United States history.

Questions for Discussion

These discussion questions align with Standards 1 and 2 of the Common Core Reading Standards for Literature K–12 (RL).

How does Jon end up in Sexton, Tennessee?

What is the significance of the words *claver* and *grub*?

Why is Jon haunted by Julie's death?



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Why is it important that Jon plays soccer?

What grudge does Zachary have against Sarah?

Why do Zachary and Tyler want to burn down the high school?

Dr. Goldman says, "Sometimes I feel like we've gone from the twenty-first century back to the nineteenth." (74) What are some examples of how life in this society supports that statement? How do Alex and Miranda react to what he says?

Why does Jon consider himself a coward responsible for Julie's death? Do you agree he is a coward?

Why does Jon consider Dr. Carlyle's civics class a waste of time? What are some ideologies, past or present, that resemble what Dr. Carlyle lectures about grubs?

Jon's school does not teach history. Why has history been deemed impractical in this society? What do you think about this conclusion?

Jon does not believe that what he did to Julie was rape. He "hadn't raped Julie, but he'd killed her." (109) What do you think?

What does Carlos reveal to Jon about Julie's death?

Why does Sarah feel responsible for her mother's death?

How does the soccer game in White Birch degenerate into a full-scale riot? What are some of the ways Sexton "punishes" White Birch for the riot?

Why is Jon's mother killed by the guards?

What is it like for Jon to have to speak to one of the guards who killed his mother? What would you have done in his situation?

When Jon talks to Alex, why does he choose not to confront Alex and force him to admit the truth about Julie and Miranda? Why do you think Jon confides in Alex his feelings about speaking to the guard involved in killing his mother?

What does Ruby tell Jon about his mother? What does Jon do that surprises her?

Why would Jon's desire to teach grubber children sports be considered a dangerous idea?

What makes Sarah and Jon believe that Miranda's baby is still alive?

How do Jon and Sarah get Miranda's baby away from the Stocktons? What is Mr. Stockton's attitude toward the baby?

Why does Lisa commit suicide?

Why won't the police release Ruby to Jon? Why are the police shocked at Jon's willingness to marry Ruby? What will the consequences be for Jon?

What reason does Jon give to Ruby for marrying her? What are Jon's actual motives for marrying Ruby?

How does Jon discover that the woman he married is not Ruby? Why did Opal change places with her?

What is supposed to be different about the community of New Harmony?

What gives Jon hope for the future?



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Follow-up Activities

The narrative in *Shade of the Moon* is in the third person, told from Jon's perspective. In *Life As We Knew It* and *The Dead & The Gone*, an epistolary style narrated by Miranda and Alex is used.

Discuss with students the effectiveness of the third person narrative in *Shade of the Moon*.

Why might the author have chosen not to use the epistolary style in this novel? Would it have worked as well for this story? How would that narrative style change the impact of the story? RL 6.4[5]

The society Pfeffer depicts in the novel is plagued by a rigidly cruel class stratification, in which a person is either a respected claver or a disdained grub. Ask students to share examples from history when similar social structures have existed and to what extent they continue to exist. RL 9.7

Discuss examples of how Pfeffer explores the "person-as-monster" theme in this story. RI 3.6

Discuss the common characteristics of dystopian fiction and how *Shade of the Moon* and the other novels in the series do or do not embody those characteristics. For a list of characteristics of dystopian fiction, see www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson926/DefinitionCharacteristics.pdf. RL 9.5[6]

Ask readers to compare and contrast the literary merits of this novel with its three predecessors. Consider such elements as characterization, conflict, mood, setting, and theme. RL 9.5[6]

Create a list of the unwritten rules for grubs in this society.

Discuss how Jon's classification as a "slip" influences the choices he makes.

Sexton is located on the New Madrid fault line in Tennessee. Using electronic and print resources, have students research the region of Tennessee in which the area lies, in what other states it is located, and how it has shaped the geography of the region over the centuries. W 7.6

This guide was written by Edward T. Sullivan, a librarian, book reviewer, and freelance writer.

