



Fr. Michael Goetz Library Learning Commons Teacher's Book Review



Daybreak, Brian Ralph

Reviewed by Ms. Cosgrove, May 16th, 2012.

Most graphic books in the Zombie genre are extremely explicit in the area of illustration, with a great deal of emphasis placed on blood and gore. Today's book breaks with this tradition and yet it is more terrifying than the conventional Zombie tale. I read this book very quickly, in one sitting. I simply could not put it down.

The story opens with the protagonist speaking to the reader, inviting the person to step into his shelter for some food and protection against the wondering zombies in the area. From this point on the reader becomes a part of the action right up to the grisly ending of the book, as a silent witness to all that occurs. The reader is present at all times but never given a voice in the narration – a kind of second person point of view. The narrator's response to the reader indicates what has been said or done. It is this feature of the book that makes it so original. The implications are interesting. First, the reader can't get too close to the zombies because such an up close and personal viewing would be too dangerous. To do so would mean that he or she would likely be killed and eaten. Therefore, the zombies are always viewed from a distance as menacing dark shadows. Secondly, everything is seen from the reader's perspective. While the reader is not drawn in the actual frames, the action of the reader running away from danger is implied by objects getting smaller and smaller in successive frames. The effect is very dramatic.

Finally, the illustrations in the book are black and white, yet it is a testament to the illustrator's skill that the frames capture so well the gloom and despair of a post apocalyptic world. The dialogue is brief and, in fact, many frames are without dialogue. The impact is one of suspense. I like to be more than scared when I read a book. I like to be intrigued and this book also evoked that response. I must admit that I have never been a huge fan of Zombie books, yet if all Zombie books were like this one, I'd fast become a fan of the genre.