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Synopsis

PART I: TURNING PRETTY

New Pretty Town

The novel is set in the post-apocalyptic future where nearly everyone becomes beautiful through an operation they have at age sixteen. Before the operation they are known as “uglies”; after, as “pretties.” When the novel opens, Tally Youngblood decides to visit her friend Peris, who has just had the operation. Since Tally is still an ugly, she lives in Uglyville, while Peris lives in New Pretty Town. Tally must sneak into New Pretty Town, since the uglies and new pretties do not mix. The new pretties live a life of hedonistic pleasure, while the uglies are educated and live in rigidly watched dormitories.

Best Friends Forever

Tally grabs a pig mask from a group of passing revelers and sneaks into Garbo Mansion. The new pretties mock the pig mask, but Tally is able to find Peris. He is polite, but clearly not very happy to see her. Further, it seems that his entire personality has changed: he has become placid and concerned only with diversion and pleasure. To escape from Garbo Mansion, Tally dons a bungee jacket, pushes the fire alarm as a diversion, and jumps off the roof.

Shay

Tally escapes, and along the way meets another ugly girl named Shay.

Wipe Out

Shay teaches Tally to use a hoverboard, a flying device similar to a skateboard. The girls discover they share the same birthday, September 9, which means they will

have the operation on the same day.

Facing the Future

The girls use their computer software to experiment with different faces. To Tally’s astonishment, Shay already thinks that she looks fine and does not want the operation. Shay believes the entire surgical procedure is designed to make people hate themselves. Tally, meanwhile, believes that she is hideously ugly and very much desires the operation.

Pretty Boring

Shay makes plans to take Tally somewhere mysterious, out of town.

Rapids

The mysterious place is the Rusty Ruins. On the way there, the girls shoot the white water rapids on their hoverboards.

The Rusty Ruins

The Rusty Ruins are the wreckage of our modern world. There, the girls use their hoverboards to ride the rollercoaster.

Waiting for David

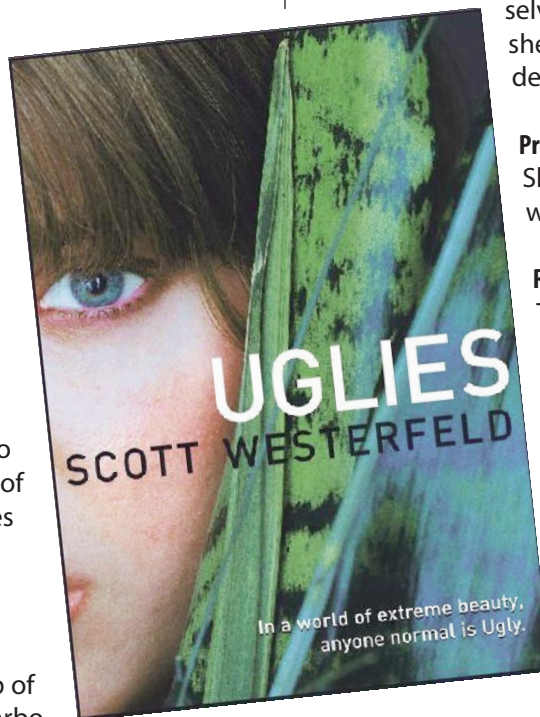
Shay lights a flare to attract her mysterious friend David, but he does not show up.

Fight

Shay and Tally play a joke on the new students, bungee jumping into their midst. Meanwhile, Shay is astonished that Tally really believes that she is ugly and that she must have the surgery to be attractive and accepted. The girls argue over this issue.

Last Trick

It is six days before the operation. The girls make up after their argument, and Shay invites Tally to come with her to a place where no one has the operation and people can live as they wish. It is where David lives, “the Smoke.” Shay has packed survival gear and enough dehydrated food for the two of them. Tally does not go, but promises to keep Shay’s secret. Shay leaves her



coded directions to the Smoke.

Operation

It is the day of Tally's operation. A car picks her up and brings her to the hospital. There, however, a strange-looking man announces that there is a problem with her operation.

Special Circumstances

The strange-looking man takes Tally via hovercraft to a different building, the headquarters of Special Circumstances. Tally is confronted by a room filled with strange-looking people: they are beautiful, but in a cruel way. The head of Special Circumstances, Dr. Cable, threatens Tally: either Tally finds Shay and her friends, or Tally will never have her operation.

Ugly for Life

Tally is brought home and rereads Shay's cryptic note. Her parents, Sol and Ellie, come to comfort her, but really to pressure her subtly to give Dr. Cable and Special Circumstances the information they want about Shay and the other rebels. Her parents are oddly like Peris, placid and easy-going, even somewhat disconnected from the world.

Peris

Tally is shocked when Peris visits her. He cleverly pressures her to give Dr. Cable the information she wants.

Infiltrator

Tally returns to Special Circumstances to tell Dr. Cable that she has decided to betray Shay and her friends. Dr. Cable gives Tally a locket that she can activate as a homing device. Then Special Circumstances can locate the rebels and presumably destroy them.

PART II THE SMOKE

Leaving

Tally begins her journey at midnight. She solves the first part of the puzzle, realizing that Shay intends her to ride the roller coaster in the Rusty Ruins.

Spagbol

When Tally nearly has a serious accident on the roller coaster, she (and readers) realize how perilous her journey is. That night, she eats her first meal, reconstituting "Spagbol," which turns out to be Spaghetti Bolognese. She finds the food delicious, until she later realizes that all Shay has packed is Spagbol—41 more packets.

The Worst Mistake

Here, the clue is, "At the second make the worst mistake." Tally nearly plunges into the dangerous rapids until her hoverboard pulls her up. "Four days later take the side you despise," the next clue reads. Soon, Tally senses something big arriving.

The Side You Despise

The odd machine (which readers later discover is a helicopter) stirs up the air like a tornado.

Firestorm

The helicopter returns, and Tally realizes that it is setting the land all around her on fire. She is thrown in the rapids and nearly drowns, but the people in the helicopter rescue her.

Bug Eyes

The people resuscitate her, identify themselves as rangers, explain their device is a helicopter left over from the Rusty Ruins, and describe how they deliberately set fires to control an overgrowth of an invasive flower that is wreaking havoc on the ecosystem. They also take her further on her journey, explaining that they help the Smokies (the people who live in the Smoke), and the Smokies help them.

Lies

A few hours later, the Smokies come to get her: Shay, Croy, David, and several others. Tally realizes that Shay is attracted to David romantically. They all hike to the Smoke.

The Model

The Smoke is a campground. Tally meets The Boss, who is not really in charge but acts as if he were. Tally is shocked at his appearance, as she has never seen an aged person in his natural state—he is forty years old! Tally is equally shocked at pictures of emaciated models that Shay shows her in fashion magazines from the era of the Rusty Ruins, our own age, about 300+ years before the novel is set.

Work

Tally exaggerates the danger she faced on her journey, but no one can deny her bravery; indeed, she is the only one who has ever managed to make it to the Smoke alone. She learns to do heavy manual labor.

David

Tally is shocked when David reveals that he was born in

the Smoke; his parents had run away from society. Further, his parents, both physicians, have found a way to reverse the operation and so they look like they would really have looked had they not had the surgery at all.

Heartthrob

Tally learns that she can trade her leftover goods and foods from back home to great advantage in the Smoke, and does so, acquiring a hand-knit sweater and another sleeping bag. Tally is very upset over having betrayed Shay.

Suspicion

David gives Tally a present: a pair of leather gloves that he made and has worn. Tally realizes the importance of the gift and finds herself falling in love with David, as he has with her. Shay is very jealous.

Bravery

David and Tally share their feelings. David wants Tally to meet his parents, Maddy and Az.

The Secret

Tally is impressed with the family's warmth and their comfortable home. She is shocked to learn that she is the first girl whom David has ever brought to meet his parents.

Pretty Minds

David and his parents tell Tally the truth about the operation: while it makes people pretty, it also creates brain lesions that make people calm and agreeable. People become happy, shallow, and superficial followers.

Burning Bridges

Maddy and Az have discovered that some people—the leaders, rangers, and others who need initiative and intelligence—have their lesions cured by the people who run Special Circumstances. Maddy and Az have been trying to figure out the method for many years. David explains to Tally how nearly all the people have been brainwashed into believing they are ugly and thus they must have the operation. He also shares his philosophy that people's beauty is determined by what they think and do, not how they look. Tally and David seal their love with a kiss. Deciding to stay with David in the Smoke, Tally throws the necklace, the homing device, into the fire. She does not realize that in so doing, she is activating it.

PART III: INTO THE FIRE

Invasion

The next day, Tally awakes to find that Special Circumstances has arrived and captured everyone from the Smoke. Tally manages to escape, even though she does not have shoes.

The Rabbit Pen

Special Circumstances imprison Tally in the rabbit pen. Shay thinks Tally is a traitor, but the others cannot believe that she would betray them.

In Case of Damage

Special Circumstances takes Tally to the library, where Dr. Cable confronts her and asks her to retrieve the pendant to tie up all the loose ends. Tally gets the guard on the roof and tricks him into falling off. In the turmoil, she jumps on Croy's hoverboard and escapes.

Run

Tally flies out of the compound.

Amazing

She meets David and tells him a few lies to explain her role in the disaster. To expiate her crimes against the people in the Smoke, Tally decides to rescue David's parents and Shay.

Ruin

David and Tally return to the Smoke the next day. They find that people from Special Circumstances have killed The Boss.

Maddy and Az

David's parents are gone, but they have left a wealth of supplies for just this emergency so Tally and David are able to equip themselves.

The Oil Plague

Tally and David return to the Rusty Ruins and make plans to rescue Shay, Croy, Maddy, and Az. David explains how our civilization died: a virus infected all the oil in the world.

Familiar Sights

After traveling for days, Tally and David eventually arrive at New Pretty Town.

Accomplices

They befriend some uglies—Sussy, An, and Dex—and have them set off flares to spell "The Smoke Lives" to distract the Specials, the people from Special Circumstances.

Over the Edge

Tally and David bungee jump to the roof of the Special Circumstances building.

Inside

They break into the building, knock out Dr. Cable, and discover that Shay has already had the operation. She is pretty.

Rescue

Shay is charming and shallow like all the pretties. Tally and David rescue Maddy, but Maddy tells them that Az is dead.

Getaway

They escape. Shay forgives Tally, but Tally knows that the lesions on her brain have made Shay forgiving. Shay is delighted to be pretty, even though she had previously vowed to avoid the operation at all cost.

Night Alone

Maddy finds the cure for the lesions but she needs a subject to try them on.

Hippocratic Oath

Legends fly around about the Smoke and the formation of the New Smoke. The uglies also spread rumors about the lesions and their effect: your personality, your real you, is changed during the surgery. Shay refuses to take the cure for the lesions because she is so happy being the way she is.

Confessions

Tally volunteers to get the operation and to be the test subject for the pills to cure the lesions. Tally tells David the truth about her betrayal and he runs off.

Down the River

Tally writes a letter to herself to document her decision to get the operation and then take the pills. Shay and Tally return to New Pretty Town, where Tally turns herself in and asks for the operation.

Timeline of Modern Events that Impact Science Fiction

- 1970 Liquid crystal watches go on market
- 1971 CAT scan becomes available
- 1972 Pocket calculator hits market
- 1973 Car airbags introduced
- 1974 Barcodes added on supermarket products

- 1975 Home computers become available
- 1976 VHS and Betamax introduced
- 1977 First complete genetic structure of an organism found (Great Britain)
First flight of the Space Shuttle first commercial flight of supersonic *Concorde* between New York, Paris, London
United States admits testing neutron bomb
Trans-Alaska Pipeline starts oil flowing from Prudhoe Bay to Valdez
- 1978 Louise Brown, first baby conceived through vitro fertilization, is born
- 1979 Graphical user interface developed
- 1980 Sony Walkman introduced
- 1981 Compact disks hit the market
- 1982 Video keyhole surgery first accomplished
- 1983 Synthetic human insulin approved for sale
- 1984 DNA fingerprinting introduced
- 1985 First dotcom registered
- 1986 Laptop computer for sale to consumers
- 1987 Prozac hits the market
- 1988 First Internet virus attack; 10% of online computers disabled
- 1989 Toaster becomes first appliance controlled over the Internet
- 1990 First gene therapy accomplished (four-year-old girl with an immune disorder)
- 1991 Internet browser developed (spawns World Wide Web)
- 1992 Text messaging introduced
- 1993 Global Positioning Satellite introduced
- 1994 Genetically modified tomatoes hit market
- 1995 Toy Story, the first entirely computer-generated feature film, is released
- 1996 The Hubble Ultra Deep Field photograph reveals some 10,000 galaxies at a distance between 2.5 billion and 10.5 billion light years from earth
- 1997 Dolly the sheep, first mammal cloned from an adult cell, is born
- 1998 First segment of the International Space Station launched
- 1999 Electronic reusable paper invented
- 2000 Y2K panic sweeps the world
- 2001 Implanted microchips give sight to three blind men
- 2002 Iris (eye) scanners first used for airport security
cosmic background radiation revealed to be polarized
- 2003 Human Genome Project publishes the complete human genetic sequence in the journal *Nature*

- 2004 Sedna, a large orbiting body, is discovered and revealed to be just one of many new planetoids
- 2005 NASA launches Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter
- 2006 Scientists decide that Pluto is not a true planet
Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter lands
- 2007 NASA's Dawn Mission begins eight-year, 3.2 billion-mile journey to the beginning of the solar system
Apple releases the iPhone, a multimedia and Internet-enabled cell phone that includes a camera, portable media player, text messaging, and visual voicemail

Author Sketch

Scott Westerfeld, born in 1963 in Texas, has published children's books, young adult novels, short stories, science fiction novels, and adult novels.

In addition to being a best-selling author, Westerfeld is a composer and media designer whose music has been featured in dance productions and whose educational software has proven popular with children.

Nonetheless, Westerfeld came up the hard way: his previous jobs include factory worker, substitute teacher, ghostwriter, and textbook editor.



Westerfeld published his initial science-fiction novel, *Polymorph*, in 1997. It focuses on sexual issues and identity: the main character can change appearance and gender. Critic John Mort, writing in *Booklist*, called the author out for special attention, deeming him "a writer to watch."

Evolution's Darling, published three years later, earned Westerfeld a raft of awards, including a Philip K. Dick Award special citation and Notable Book status from the *New York Times*. This novel recalls the classic story of Pinocchio: here, a machine becomes living through a relationship with a human.

Westerfeld is married to researcher and writer Justine Larbalestier. The couple currently divide their time between homes in Sydney, Australia, and New York City.

Critic's Corner

In 2006, the American Library Association named *Uglies* a Best Book for Young Adults. Twentieth-Century Fox

has optioned the novel for a possible film series. Not surprisingly, reviews have been laudatory. For instance, reviewing the novel for amazon.com, Patty Campbell noted: "The fast-moving story is enlivened by many action sequences in the style of videogames, using intriguing inventions like hoverboards that use the rider's skateboard skills to skim through the air, and bungee jackets that make wild downward plunges survivable—and fun. Behind all the commotion is the disturbing vision of our own society—the Rusties—visible only in rusting ruins after a virus destroyed all petroleum. Teens will be entranced, and the cliffhanger ending will leave them gasping for the sequel."

School Library Journal was equally positive, giving the novel a starred review. Critic Susan W. Hunter concluded: "Ethical concerns will provide a good source of discussion as honesty, justice, and free will are all oppressed in this well-conceived dystopia."

"Characterization, which flirts so openly with the importance of teen self-concept, is strong, and although lengthy, the novel is highly readable with a convincing plot that incorporates futuristic technologies and a disturbing commentary on our current public policies. Fortunately, the cliff-hanger ending promises a sequel."

Booklist, also a starred review, noted: "Although the narrative's brisk pace is more successful in scenes of hoverboarding action than in convincingly developing Tally's key relationships, teens will sink their teeth into the provocative questions about invasive technology, image-obsessed society, and the ethical quandaries of a mole-turned-ally."

Other Works by Scott Westerfeld

- The Devil Rock*, 1985
- The Berlin Airlift*, 1989
- Watergate*, 1991
- Polymorph*, 1997
- Fine Prey*, 1998
- Evolution's Darling*, 1998
- Blossom vs. the Blasteroid*, 2002
- Rainy Day Professor*, 2002
- Diamonds Are for Princess*, 2002
- The Risen Empire*, 2003
- The Killing of Worlds*, 2003
- So Yesterday*, 2004
- Midnighters #1: The Secret Hour*, 2004

The Killing of Worlds, 2005
Midnighters #2: Touching Darkness, 2005
Peeps, 2005
Pretties, 2005
The Last Days, 2006
Specials, 2006
The Last Days, 2006
Midnighters #3: Blue Noon, 2006
Extras, 2007
Leviathan, 2007

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Baltimore City Paper Online, <http://www.citypaper.com/> (July 12, 2000), Adrienne Martini, review of *Evolution's Darling*.
Penguin Web site, <http://Penguin.com/> (1998), interview with Westerfeld.
Sci-Fi.com, <http://www.scifi.com/> (July 6, 2003), Thomas Myer, review of *Polymorph*; (January 1, 2002) Paul Witcover, review of *Evolution's Darling*; (2002) Steven Sawicki, review of short story "Non-Disclosure Agreement"; (2003) Donna McMahon, review of *Fine Prey*; Paul Witcover, review of *The Risen Empire*.

Periodicals

Booklist, December 1, 1997, John Mort, review of *Polymorph*, p. 612; February 15, 2003, Regina Schroeder, review of *The Risen Empire*, p. 1060.
Fantasy and Science Fiction, review of *Polymorph*, p. 46.
Kirkus Reviews, January 15, 2003, review of *The Risen Empire*, p. 118.
Library Journal, April 15, 2000, review of *Evolution's Darling*, p. 128.
New York Times, June 18, 2000, Gerald Jones, review of *Evolution's Darling*, p. 22; April 27, 2003, Gerald Jones, review of *The Risen Empire*, p. 23.
Publishers Weekly, April 17, 2000, review of *Evolution's Darling*, p. 57; January 20, 2003, review of *The Risen Empire*, p. 61.
Review of Contemporary Fiction, Fall 2000, Trevor Dodge, review of *Evolution's Darling*, p. 151.
School Library Journal, December 1989, Ann Welton, review of *The Berlin Airlift*, p. 127.
Science Fiction Chronicle, February-March 2003, Don D'Amassa, review of *The Risen Empire*, p. 54.

General Objectives

1. To analyze an imaginary future world
2. To assess each character's personality
3. To trace the novel's sequence of events
4. To appreciate the novel's suspense
5. To probe the author's social commentary
6. To find examples of cruelty
7. To find examples of compassion
8. To evaluate the novel's ending
9. To recognize the significance of setting
10. To describe the author's theme or message

Specific Objectives

1. To understand the difference between the uglies and pretties and determine how the pretties are created
2. To explore the relationship between Tally and Shay
3. To analyze why Shay wants to forgo the operation and live in the Smoke
4. To understand the novel's image-obsessed society and how the author is using his make-believe world to comment on contemporary society
5. To debate the definition of "beauty"
6. To understand why Tally betrays the people of the Smoke
7. To appreciate Tally's bravery
8. To debate the morality of creating an artificial but unified standard of beauty to reduce competition
9. To analyze why the author leaves the ending open-ended
10. To appreciate the importance of a strong self-image

Literary Terms and Applications

For a better understanding of Scott Westerfeld's style, present the following terms and applications to the novel:

Fantasy and science fiction: writing that incorporates elements of magic, illusion, and unrealistic events. Often, science fiction will include science or technology. Science fiction novels are usually set in the future, on distant planets, or among alien races. *Uglies* is set in the distant future on earth. In this post-apocalyptic world, we see that our reliance on petroleum has destroyed

our world. At age sixteen, the inhabitants of this future world have access to an operation that makes them gorgeous, happy, and compliant.

Figures of speech: words and expressions not meant to be taken literally. Figures of speech (also called “figurative language”) use words in fresh, new ways to appeal to the imagination. Figures of speech include *similes*, *metaphors*, *extended metaphors*, *hyperbole*, and *personification*. What is impossible or difficult to convey to a reader through the literal use of language may be highly possible through the use of figures of speech. When taken literally, “my love is a rose” is ridiculous, for few people love a plant with a prickly, thorny stem. But “rose” suggests many other possible interpretations—delicate beauty, soft, rare, costly, etc.—and so it can be implied in a figurative sense to mean “love” or “loved one.” Westerfeld uses a great many figures of speech to convey the mood and texture of his future world and its inhabitants. This is evident from the personification on page 11—“Garbo Mansion was fat, bright, and loud”—for instance. This personification conveys the impression that Garbo Mansion is like a pushy person taking over a room, which indeed it is.

Theme: the main idea of a literary work, it is a general statement about life. The theme can be stated outright in the work, or readers may have to infer it from details about plot, characters, and setting. Westerfeld states the theme of *Uglies* outright on page 279 when David says to Tally, “Yes. What you do, the way you think, makes you beautiful.” He explains that people’s attractiveness flows from their character, not their appearance. This is the author’s message.

The Importance of Setting

The setting is very important in *Uglies* because it determines much of the action. In this post-apocalyptic world, people are judged solely by their appearance. Nearly everyone has been acculturated to believe that beauty is the only desirable trait: indeed, it determines a person’s entire quality of life and their only chance at happiness. In an interview, Westerfeld explained how he got the idea for a futuristic society where everyone is made pretty. He said, in part: “We are definitely heading toward a world in which lots of people will get to decide how they look. That will change what we think of as beautiful, and what beauty means to us. So some people stay the way they look, because that’s cool or radical. Some won’t change because they’re rich and

powerful—like when famous directors go to some fancy Hollywood restaurant in an old T-shirt and baseball cap; it shows they can get away with it. Other people will try to outdo each other, and manipulate themselves in ways that we don’t consider remotely pretty right now. So thinking these thoughts, I wanted to write a future in which these technologies were fairly common. And in my future, the local government forces you to have an acceptable face—that is, a certain kind of pretty face. Sort of like now, when adults try to control how teenagers dress, cut their hair, use make-up, and get tattoos or piercings. This is the stuff of rebellion.”

The novel’s practice of making everyone beautiful had a noble origin: it was intended to eliminate the competition, prejudice, and outright hatred that sprang from differences in appearance, especially perceived notions of beauty. Tally explains that the importance of beauty comes from genetic origins: in this society, people have been taught that symmetrical features indicate a healthy person, a fertile person, and thus a better mate and friend. While some scientists have advanced this theory, it remains a theory, not a fact as it is taken in the novel.

Tally, Shay, David, and others in the Smoke rebel against their time and place to recreate a society in which beauty is created through deeds and beliefs, not appearance.

Cross-Curricular Sources

Novels

M.T. Anderson, *Feed*
 Ray Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*
 Nancy Farmer, *The House of the Scorpion*
 Ann Halam, *Taylor Five*
 Marilyn Kaye, *Like Father, Like Son*
 Charlotte Kerner, *Blueprint*
 Steven Layne, *This Side of Paradise*
 Kathryn Lasky, *Star Split*
 Lois Lowry, *The Giver*
 George Orwell, *1984*
 L.J. Singleton, *Regeneration: The Search*
 Gloria Skurzynski, *The Clones: The Virtual War Chronologs*

DVDs and Videos

The Alien Series
Blade Runner
Biotechnology on Earth
League of Extraordinary Gentlemen
The Matrix Series

The Mighty
Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow
War of the Worlds
Waterworld

Audio

So Yesterday

Internet

Scott Westerfeld Homepage
<scottwesterfeld.com/>
Scott Westerfeld blog
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Scott Westerfeld biography
<en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scott_Westerfeld>
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<www.sffworld.com/interview/203p0.html>
Scott Westerfeld interview
<www.locusmag.com/2006/Issues/05Westerfeld.html>

Themes and Motifs

A study of the central issues and situations in Scott Westerfeld's *Uglies* include these aspects:

Themes

- appearance
- courage
- free will
- honesty
- jealousy
- justice
- love
- peer pressure
- self-concept
- violence

Motifs

- living in a dystopia
- dealing with betrayal
- being willing to take risks
- exploring a completely new way of life
- understanding the affects of technology
- probing beauty and ugliness
- having fun
- changing the way you look completely
- being a leader
- bucking the tide of social convention

Meaning Study

Below are words, phrases, sentences, or thought units that have particular meaning in the book. Explain the meaning of each. Page numbers indicate the context from which the item is taken.

1. The early summer sky was the color of cat vomit. (p. 1)
(This striking image opens the novel and captures the mood of disgust and horror that hangs over this hedonistic futuristic society. Westerfeld carries the imagery of cats throughout the novel, as when Tally and Shay use software to manipulate their features and explore what kinds of faces they want to have when they become pretty through the operation. One of the faces is cat-like. In addition, cats are attractive, yet can also be fierce and feral, as we see in the cruel beauty of the people from Special Circumstances. Thus, from the first page we see hints that this post-apocalyptic world is both attractive and horrific in its amorality and hedonism.)
2. There was a certain kind of beauty, a prettiness that everyone could see. (p. 16)
(Westerfeld claims that people have always agreed on certain standards of beauty: big eyes, full lips, smooth and clear skin, symmetrical features, and so on. He argues that these markers are part of human evolution, conveying the impression that the beautiful person is young, vulnerable, and healthy. Beauty further suggests that the person would be a great mate because they would produce healthy children. It is an intriguing hypothesis, but far from accepted as a scientifically proven fact.)
3. "What do you mean 'get it right,' Tally? Maybe I think my face is already right!" (p. 44)
(Shay is happy with her appearance and does not want the surgery. Tally, in contrast, goes along with the mores of her culture and believes that she is hideous, that she can only have a happy life if her appearance is surgically altered to conform to society's standards. This passage suggests that far too many people in contemporary society feel as Tally does.)
4. "But it's a trick, Tally."
(Shay believes the emphasis on beauty and the operation to create it are designed to make people hate

themselves; Tally, in contrast, fully buys into the system. Ironically, by the end of the novel, their positions have reversed: Shay has the surgery and is delighted with her new appearance but Tally does not want the operation. She agrees to have the surgery only so she can be the test subject for Matty's pills to remove the lesions.)

5. "Maybe just being ugly is why uglies always fight and pick on one another, because they aren't happy with who they are." (p. 84)
(The uglies, kids under the age of sixteen who have not yet had the operation, are always playing tricks on each other. Some of the tricks are harmless, while others are cruel and hurtful. Shay suggests that the uglies let out their aggression through mean tricks because they have been programmed to hate each other. The novel bears out her sage conclusion.)
6. "Which means no one's ugly." (p. 92)
(Tally believes that all the "Rusties," people from the ancient civilization that destroyed itself, were unattractive. Shay's wise observation is that if everyone was "ugly," no one could be ugly. Her point, of course, is that the perception of physical beauty is culturally based, which we see in this novel as well as in our own civilization.)
7. "No," David said. "It changes the way you think." (p. 268)
(Tally, Shay, and the others believed that the operation made the subject beautiful and only that. David's parents, both physicians, have realized that the operation causes brain lesions that change the way you think: they make people pliant and easy to handle. People become disconnected from real-life problems and easily manipulated.)
8. "That's why you're beautiful, Tally." (p. 276)
(Tally is normal looking, but to David, she is beautiful because he loves her. Tally has never seen her appearance refracted and transformed through someone else's eyes, so she has never experienced the transformative power of love. David's admiration changes her mind about the operation and her society's emphasis on physical perfection.)
9. "Yes. What you do, the way you think, makes you beautiful." (p. 279)
(Here, David states the book's theme: true beauty is determined by your beliefs, actions, and accomplishments, not your appearance. At this, Tally begins to

realize that beauty is indeed in the eye of the beholder. She is shedding her superficiality, instilled by society, and beginning to mature.)

10. "I'm Tally Youngblood," she said. "Make me pretty." (p. 425)
(The book ends with this line. It suggests that Tally will expiate her sins of betraying Shay, David, and all the residents of the Smoke by having the surgery and then becoming the test subject for Matty's pills to cure the lesions. However, the ending leaves the book open for a sequel. Tally might change her mind, or the operation might not be a success, for instance.)

Comprehension Study

Answer the following questions in your own words. There is not always a right answer. Your judgment is important and you should be ready to defend your answers by referring to passages in the book.

Questions 1-5 (Literal Level)

1. What is life like in New Pretty Town?
(The inhabitants, the teenagers who have just been transformed from uglies into pretties as a result of the surgery, spend their time in mindless pleasure. They have parties, drink to excess, and generally cavort with abandon.)
2. How does the operation change people?
(The operation has two effects: outward and inward. Outwardly, the operation makes people beautiful by changing their bone structure as well as their skin, eyes, lips, hair, and so on. Their teeth are straightened and whitened; their vision becomes perfect. Inwardly, the operation creates lesions that make people compliant and easy to lead.)
3. How do the people in this future society define beauty?
(Beauty is defined entirely by conventional outward appearance: big, round eyes; full, pouty lips; symmetrical features; and so on. Beauty has nothing to do with behavior, beliefs, or values.)
4. What is the Smoke?
(It is a society of people who have rejected the operation and the values of their society. Instead of seeking a life of outward physical beauty and the pursuit

of mindless pleasure, the people of the Smoke create a society based on work, nature, and free social exchange of ideas.)

5. How do Special Circumstances find Tally once she has left Uglyville and gone to live with David and the others?
(When she tosses the pendant into the fire, believing that she is destroying it, she is really activating it. The people from Special Circumstances track Tally and the others via the pendant.)

Questions 6-8 (Interpretative Level)

6. What comments about contemporary life is Westerfeld making in this novel?
(Westerfeld is commenting on our obsession with physical beauty and physical perfection, as shown through our heavy use of plastic surgery, cosmetics, hair dye, and so on. He is also commenting on our reliance on petroleum, which he suggests will be our downfall.)
7. What is the author's message about beauty?
(The author suggests that true beauty is inward, not outward. We should look to developing our character rather than our bodies, he suggests through David's comments and Tally's change in thinking.)
8. How does Tally change as a result of her experiences?
(Tally comes to understand that she needs to develop her self-image rather than relying on what society dictates to her. She cannot accept what she is told on face value; rather, she must carefully weigh all ideas to sift the truth from the lies.)

Questions 9 and 10 (Critical Level)

9. Did you find it plausible that Tally would betray Shay? Why or why not?
(Students are likely to say yes because her betrayal comes before she has met David, lived in the Smoke, and seen how her society has lied to her.)
10. Which parts of the story did you find especially realistic?
(The growing love between David and Tally seems realistic, as does the love that David and his parents share. It also seems realistic that life in the wild, the Smoke, would be arduous but enjoyable.)

Questions 11-12 (Creative Level)

11. *Uglies* is the first book in a trilogy. Plot another book in the series. In an essay or speech, explain what happens to the characters whom you met in *Uglies*.
12. Working with some classmates, act out the scene in which Tally reveals that she has betrayed the people of the Smoke.

Across the Curriculum

Art/Music

1. Imagine that you were about to have the operation that would turn you into a pretty. Sketch how you would like to look.
2. Make a diorama of the Smoke. Include all the landmarks mentioned in the novel.
3. Divide a piece of paper in half vertically. On the left, draw Shay before the operation. On the right, draw her after the operation.
4. Make a model of the Rusty Ruins. Include a scale, so everything is in proportion.
5. Westerfeld claims that there is a certain kind of beauty that everyone can see and appreciate. Is he correct? Research the ideals of beauty throughout the ages, including at least five examples from the days of ancient Greece and Rome to the present. Include pictures to show how beauty has changed or how it has remained constant. What conclusions can you draw from your research?

Language Arts

1. In an essay, explain the meaning of the quote that opens the first section of novel: "Is it not good to make society full of beautiful people?"
2. In an interview, Westerfeld defined science fiction as "a way of writing (and of reading) which utilizes the power of extrapolation. It expands both the real world ... and the literary. In regular fiction, you might be alienated. In [science fiction], you're an alien." In an essay, explain how his definition is shown in *Uglies*.
3. Write a ballad about Tally's exploits. Include strong

rhyme and a refrain.

4. Tally takes many different things with her when she leaves Uglyville and again when she leaves the Smoke. Decide what you would take, if you were in Tally's place. Include at least ten items and a reason for the inclusion of each one.
5. Westerfeld says that he was inspired to write *Uglies* by Ted Chiang's story, "Liking What You See: A Documentary," about a technology that allows people to switch off their ability to see human beauty, so they can concentrate on the more important aspects of who people are. Read Chiang's story and explain how it inspired *Uglies*. Include at least three specific parallels between the novel and the story.

History/Culture

1. The girls initially find the name "David" very silly because it is so unfamiliar to them. Indeed, the names in the novel are very different from contemporary names. Research to find the top ten names for boys and girls in 1900, 1950, and today. How have the names changed? What conclusions about each era, especially our own, can you draw from the names people give their children?
2. Explain the following historical and cultural allusions from the novel: Greta Garbo, Cleopatra, and David.
3. The characters allude to people looking like Barbie dolls after the operation. Write the history of these cultural icons.
4. Who was Frankenstein's monster? Read Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein* and then report on what you discovered. How does the reference fit the characters in the novel?
5. Read another dystopian novel, such as George Orwell's *1984*. Then share your own vision of the future. Is it as bleak as the predictions in these novels? Why or why not?

Speech/Debate

1. Debate this saying: "Pretty is as pretty does." Is it true or false?
2. Some scenes are never described in the novel,

such as the scene in which Shay first arrives at the Smoke. Enact this scene or a similar one. Then determine what—if anything—the scene adds to your understanding of the novel and whether the author should have included it.

3. Imagine that you are Matty. Give Tally some advice for surviving once she becomes pretty.
4. Working with two classmates, create a scene in which Tally returns to the Smoke and has her operation reversed through Matty's pills.
5. The original idea of being a pretty is that no one is different than anyone else. This would reduce competition and outright wars, people believed. In a roundtable, discuss the advantages and disadvantages of this plan.

Science/Math

1. Matty and Az are doctors. Find out the requirements to become a doctor. Then calculate how much it costs to become a physician.
2. The characters eat some dehydrated foods. Find out how to make dehydrated foods on your own, with only the equipment in an average home. Which foods would be the easiest to make and why? Which foods would keep the best and why?
3. Shay leaves Tally a cryptic note, directions to the Smoke. Create a coded set of directions to a special place. Trade papers with a friend and see if you can solve each other's codes. If you do, make a map to show the directions.
4. The hoverboards in the novel appear to work the same as Maglev trains. Research these trains to determine how similar they are to the hoverboards that Westerfeld created for use in his novel.
5. The rangers set fires to control the ecosystem. Access the National Park Service at <www.NPS.gov> to find how the government uses carefully controlled fires to help preserve the National Parks.

Alternative Assessment

1. Write a character sketch for Tally.

2. Tally and Shay share the same birthday. Make a chart listing the birthdays of all the people in your class. How many people share the same birth date? Calculate the odds of this happening.
3. The uglies play a lot of tricks on each other. Imagine that you lived in a dorm, such as the one that Tally lives in. Create a series of rules for the dorm. You might wish to base these guidelines on classroom rules.
4. Tally fakes a fire drill. Stage a real fire drill in your own home.

Vocabulary

Match each word from *Uglies* with its definition. Place the letter of the definition in the appropriate blank.

- | | | |
|-------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| _____ | 1. cacophony | A. awkward |
| _____ | 2. revelers | B. fake |
| _____ | 3. impervious | C. all together |
| _____ | 4. vulnerable | D. gap, crack, fissure |
| _____ | 5. asymmetrical | E. dissonance |
| _____ | 6. maelstrom | F. unbalanced |
| _____ | 7. unison | G. catching, infectious |
| _____ | 8. flippant | H. doubtful |
| _____ | 9. despise | I. party-goers |
| _____ | 10. crevice | J. fierce storm |
| _____ | 11. bogus | K. susceptible |
| _____ | 12. dubious | L. hate |
| _____ | 13. reverie | M. cannot be harmed |
| _____ | 14. gawky | N. dream |
| _____ | 15. contagious | O. glib |

Comprehension Test A

Part I: Matching (20 points)

Match each description with a name or word from the list. Place the letter of your answer in the blank provided at left.

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| A. Tally Youngblood | F. David |
| B. Croy | G. Dr. Cable |
| C. Tonk | H. Shay |
| D. the Boss | I. Peris |
| E. the Garbo Mansion | J. Maddy and Az |

- _____ 1. a park ranger
- _____ 2. an ugly who has the same birth date as Tally
- _____ 3. one of Shay's old friends; lives in the Smoke
- _____ 4. an ugly, born in the Smoke, who falls in love with Tally
- _____ 5. the librarian at the Smoke
- _____ 6. an ugly who is fifteen years old when the book opens
- _____ 7. Tally's best friend before he became pretty
- _____ 8. where Peris lives after the operation
- _____ 9. the head of Special Circumstances
- _____ 10. Doctors who once performed the operation of changing uglies into pretties

Part II: Sentence Completion (20 points)

Circle the term that best completes each of the following statements.

1. Tally's nickname is (**Squint, Squeak**).
2. The novel is set in the post-apocalyptic future where nearly everyone becomes beautiful through an operation at the age of (**twelve, sixteen**).
3. When the novel opens, Tally lives in (**Uglyville, New Pretty Town**) in a dormitory.
4. A (**scooterdisk, hoverboard**) is a flying device similar to a skateboard the author creates for use in the novel.
5. Tally has a (**locket, watch**) that she can activate as a homing device.
6. "Spagbol" is a (**weapon, food**).
7. The Boss is (**40, 80**) years old.
8. Tally trades her leftover goods and food from back home to acquire a (**sweater, heater**) and another sleeping bag.
9. Tally manages to escape from (the **Thought Police, Special Circumstances**), even though she does not have shoes.
10. (**Shay, Tally**) volunteers to get the operation and to be the test subject for the pills to cure the lesions.

Part III: Quote Analysis (20 points)

Explain the significance of each of the following quotes in the novel.

1. Shay said, "But you weren't born expecting that kind of beauty in everyone, all the time. You just got programmed into thinking that anything else is ugly."

2. "Maybe just being ugly is why uglies always fight and pick on one another, because they aren't happy with who they are."

3. "No," David said. "It changes the way you think."

4. The words choked off. "You really think I'm beautiful?"

5. "I didn't mean to ...betray you," she said softly.

Part IV: Essay (40 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Which character in the book did you admire the most? Why?
2. Analyze the satire in the novel. What elements of our society is Westerfeld highlighting and holding up for examination in *Uglies*?
3. Compare and contrast Matty and Dr. Cable. How are they similar and different?
4. Create the backstory, explaining how the Rusty Ruins came to be. Use details from the novel in your narrative.

Comprehension Test B

Part I: True/False (20 points)

Mark the following statements either **T** for true or **F** if a part is false.

- ___ 1. After the surgery, people undergo drastic changes in their personality; they become placid and easily led.
- ___ 2. The Rusty Ruins are the wreckage of the ancient Greek civilization. There, the girls ride the rollercoasters.
- ___ 3. Shay and Tally play a joke on the new students, bungee jumping into their midst.
- ___ 4. The head of Special Circumstances threatens Tally: either Tally finds her birth parents, or Tally will never have her operation.
- ___ 5. The Smokies accidentally set fires and burn invasive trees that are wrecking havoc on the ecosystem.
- ___ 6. David brings all the girls he liked to meet his mother and father because he is very close to his parents.
- ___ 7. Everyone has lesions on their brain; once someone has the operation, the lesions are permanent.
- ___ 8. David explains how our civilization dies: a virus infected all the oil in the world.
- ___ 9. The kids rescue Maddy, but Maddy tells them that Az is dead.
- ___ 10. Tally writes a letter at the end of the novel, to explain the action she intends to take.

Part II: Identification (20 points)

Briefly describe each person, place, or thing and explain why it is important in the story.

1. Pretty New Town

2. the Smoke

3. Uglyville

4. Rusty Ruins

5. Special Circumstances

Part III: Matching (20 points)

Complete each of the following descriptions with a name from the list that follows. Place the letter of your answer in the blank provided at left. Use each name only once.

- | | |
|--|---------------------|
| ___ 1. The character who is nicknamed "Squint" | A. Peris |
| ___ 2. The character who is nicknamed "Skinny" | B. David |
| ___ 3. The boy whom Tally visits at Garbo Mansion | C. Sol and Ellie |
| ___ 4. the doctor who creates a cure for the lesions | D. Shay |
| ___ 5. a park ranger | E. Tally Youngblood |
| ___ 6. Tally's parents | F. Tonk |
| ___ 7. the evil head of Special Circumstances | G. Sussy and Dex |
| ___ 8. the middle-aged librarian killed at the Smoke | H. The Boss |
| ___ 9. Maddy and Az's son | I. Dr. Cable |
| ___ 10. Uglies who help Tally create a diversion | J. Maddy |

Part IV: Essay (40 points)

1. Explain any three of the following symbols: the pig mask that Tally grabs when she visits Peris, shoes, the flowers the rangers burn, David's gloves.
2. Compare and contrast Tally and David. How are they similar and different?
3. Summarize the events in *Uglies*.
4. Write a review of *Uglies* for the school newspaper, explaining why you would or would not recommend it for other people your age.

Answer Key

VOCABULARY TEST

- | | | |
|------|-------|-------|
| 1. E | 6. J | 11. B |
| 2. I | 7. C | 12. H |
| 3. M | 8. O | 13. N |
| 4. K | 9. L | 14. A |
| 5. F | 10. D | 15. G |

COMPREHENSION TEST A

Part I: Matching (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. C | 6. A |
| 2. H | 7. I |
| 3. B | 8. E |
| 4. F | 9. G |
| 5. D | 10. J |

Part II: Sentence Completion (20 points)

- | | |
|---------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Squint | 6. food |
| 2. sixteen | 7. 40 |
| 3. Uglyville | 8. sweater |
| 4. hoverboard | 9. Special Circumstances |
| 5. locket | 10. Tally |

Part III: Quote Analysis (20 points)

- Shay is happy with her appearance and does not want the surgery. Tally, in contrast, goes along with the mores of her culture and believes that she is hideous, that she can only have a happy life if her appearance is surgically-altered to conform to society's standards. This passage suggests that far too many people in contemporary society feel as Tally does.
- The uglies, kids under the age of sixteen who have not yet had the operation, are always playing tricks on each other. Some of the tricks are harmless, while others are cruel and hurtful. Shay suggests that the uglies let out their aggression through mean tricks because they have been programmed to hate each other. The novel bears out her sage conclusion.
- Tally, Shay, and the others believed that the operation made the subject beautiful and only that. David's parents, both physicians, have realized that the operation causes brain lesions that change the way you think: they make people pliant and easy to handle. People become disconnected from real-life problems and easily manipulated.
- Tally is normal looking, but to David, she is beautiful because he loves her. Tally has never seen her appearance refracted and transformed through someone else's eyes, so she has never experienced the transformative

power of love. David's admiration change her mind about the operation and her society's emphasis on physical perfection.

5. In this scene, Tally apologizes to Shay for betraying her and the other Smokies, but it is too late: not only is Az dead, but also Shay has been transformed by the surgery so she is no longer the same person. She cannot appreciate or even fully understand Tally's apology and thus she cannot grant her forgiveness.

Part IV. Essay (40 points)

Answers will vary.

COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I: True/False (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. T | 6. F |
| 2. F | 7. F |
| 3. T | 8. T |
| 4. F | 9. T |
| 5. F | 10. T |

Part II: Identification (20 points)

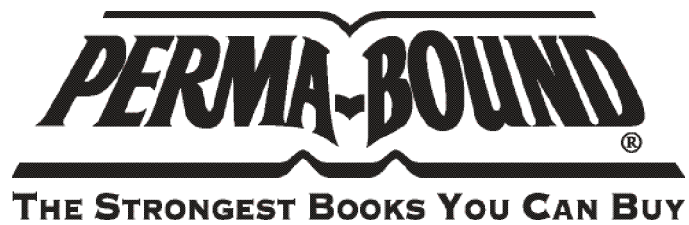
- Pretty New Town is where the newly minted pretties go after their surgery. It is a city of wild, hedonistic pleasure.
- The Smoke is where uglies go to escape the operation. Located in a forest, it is a highly successful society where people live off the land, creating the objects they need and recycling materials from Uglyville.
- Uglyville is where people aged twelve to sixteen live and are educated. The adolescents are housed in dormitories.
- Rusty Ruins is the wreckage of our current civilization.
- Special Circumstances are the secret service. They control the citizens and run the government.

Part III: Matching (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. E | 6. C |
| 2. D | 7. I |
| 3. A | 8. H |
| 4. J | 9. B |
| 5. F | 10. G |

Part IV. Essay (40 points)

Answers will vary.



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