Hello! My name is Pepperbird, and this is a review about the book, “When Life Gives You O.J.” by Erica S. Perl. I really enjoyed it and think you will, too.

Ten-year-old Zelly Fried has always wanted a dog, or at least that’s what it feels like. In her mind, almost everyone has a dog, and if she had one it might help her fit in after moving to Vermont from Brooklyn, New York. Her grandfather, Ace, hatches a plot to get her a dog. He gives her an empty orange juice container and tells her to treat it like a dog. She must feed it, take it for walks, and collect its waste (don’t ask), just like a real dog. Zelly gives up, until suddenly Ace gets a heart attack. In this funny, energetic book, Zelly must wonder... will this plan really work?

I think the themes and values in this book are family, responsibility, and friendship. Family is important to the story because without Zelly’s family, the story wouldn’t exist. Zelly must convince her mother and father to let her have a dog, and must team up with her grandfather to let her have one. Responsibility is also important because Zelly has to prove herself responsible enough to get a dog. Friendship is key also. Jeremy, a boy who Zelly befriends, makes many good suggestions to help Zelly get a dog. In the book Zelly is Jewish. She attends a synagogue. Her friend Jeremy also goes to synagogue, though not the same one. Her grandfather, Ace, sometimes speaks Yiddish. Though the words are sometimes defined by Zelly, there is also a dictionary of Yiddish words Ace uses at the back of the book.

I can relate to this book because even though I do not want or have a dog, I’ve moved to a different state, like Zelly. In the book, Zelly moves from New York to Vermont. I moved from New York to Washington (not Washington, D.C., Washington state.) I’ve also met new people in the new state, like how Zelly befriends Jeremy.

In conclusion, this book is a good read. I found it easy to relate to the main character, and found the book humorous and witty as well.