

Building Bridges: Using Robert Cormier's Young Adult Novel In the Middle of the Night to
Enhance Student Understanding of Hamlet

An Honors Thesis (Honrs 499)

by

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Abstract

This thesis pairs Shakespeare's Hamlet, part of the literary canon, with the young adult novel, In the Middle of the Night by Robert Cormier. Brief summaries explain the basic plots of the two works, and connections are made between themes, characters, and actions. Pairing the two works makes Hamlet more readable and enjoyable for students. Arguments are presented for why young adult literature should be used in the classroom. Adolescent literature engages all students in exploration of the text. Reluctant readers, in particular, can benefit from the use of young adult literature in the classroom because unlike more complicated works, such as Hamlet, young adult literature is written in a reader-friendly style. This allows all students to make meaning and draw personal connections between the text and life experiences. A variety of suggested classroom exercises that incorporate all facets of language arts (reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing) are presented for class use. Project examples, as well as guidelines for evaluation, are included.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

Young adult literature should be used as a teaching tool at all levels. The content of the literature encourages students to make their own meaning and create ownership, resulting in a deeper understanding of the material. Students are thus able to draw connections between what they read and what they live. Young adult literature encourages students to become readers by focusing on subjects that are important to young readers.

Joan Kaywell (1993) argues that classic literature, which comprises the canon of literature that is usually taught in schools, is often too distant from students' experiences or written at a reading level above that of the students. Because of this, students often do not read. Young adult literature, however, is usually written in a friendlier style since it is using contemporary or familiar language, Kaywell says. The subject of young adult literature is also that which the students can relate to and know about. By teaching through adolescent literature, real teen issues are confronted. The themes and ideas presented in the literature can be tapped to spark greater discussions. The adolescent literature can then also be paired with the classic literature to challenge students and enhance comprehension of the themes, making the reading take on personal meaning.

In her book Responding to Young Adult Literature, Virginia R. Monseau (1996) addresses the value of young adult literature at both ends of the academic spectrum. Monseau writes that the effectiveness of young adult literature has been proven several times. For reluctant readers, young adult literature should be used to engage and challenge the students. They should then be rewarded for their insights. For more advanced readers, young adult literature can coexist with the traditional literary canon, allowing students to study "universal themes, modes of discourse, and rhetorical strategies."

Kaywell (personal communication, November 10, 1997) agrees with the use of young adult literature at all ability levels, stating her college seniors love it and learn from it, and at-risk students can also benefit because it addresses issues that concern them.

THEORY INTO PRACTICE

Most students, somewhere in their educational journeys, are required to read Hamlet, one of Shakespeare's most popular tragedies. It is included in the curriculum for most advanced placement English courses, as well as in many general and lower-level classes. It holds a place of high regard in the literary canon. Due to its complexity, Hamlet can be a difficult Shakespearean play to understand for high school students, particularly lower-achieving students. The language and structure often present a barrier many students do not attempt to cross. The themes in Hamlet, however, are universal. If students are able to see past the differences in language and structure, most find a story line they never knew existed and find compelling.

In an effort to teach Hamlet at a level to which all students can relate, I am pairing the Shakespearean play with Robert Cormier's young adult novel In the Middle of the Night. Both works center around the theme of revenge, and strong arguments can be made to parallel several of the main characters. In the Middle of the Night presents quick, easy reading that most high school students will find enjoyable. Comprehension of the feelings, motivation, and actions in this young adult novel will lead all students to a more thorough understanding of Hamlet.

In the Middle of the Night is just one of many young adult novels written by Robert Cormier, a leading figure in adolescent literature. Author of The Chocolate War, I Am The Cheese, We All Fall Down, and After the First Death, Cormier writes about subjects relevant to students' lives. Coming of age, identity struggles, vandalism, family expectations, and feelings of revenge are just a few of the areas he addresses in his novels. Ted Hipple, Executive Director of the Adolescent Literature Assembly of the National Council of Teachers of English (ALAN) argues that the use of young adult literature in the English classroom will create students who want to read because the themes are those with which students are able to relate. "All anyone, censors included, has to do is to listen to adolescents talk to each other to discover that the problems and language of the literature often mirror the problems and language of life," Hipple wrote in a March 1997 article in English Journal. In the Middle of the Night mirrors Hamlet by emphasizing the feeling of

revenge.

In Hamlet, the ghost of Old Hamlet appears and speaks with Hamlet, Prince of Denmark. Old Hamlet reveals to Hamlet that he was murdered by Claudius, the Queen's new husband and the uncle of Hamlet. Hamlet, who is already disturbed by his mother's hasty marriage to his uncle, vows to seek revenge on Claudius. Meanwhile, Laertes and Polonius give Ophelia advice about falling in love with Hamlet. Ophelia later tells her father that Hamlet has visited her in a disturbed state.

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are sent by Claudius to spy on Hamlet. Hamlet arranges a staged play to set up a situation that will prove Claudius' guilt. Claudius leaves at a point in the play which does just that. Hamlet spares Claudius' life at one point, but later mistakenly kills Polonius, believing him to be Claudius. Claudius then plans to have Hamlet sent to England and killed. Ophelia loses her mind and dies under suspicious circumstances.

Old Hamlet's demand for justice is carried out through the tragic ending of the play when Hamlet's mother, Gertrude, mistakenly drinks the poisoned wine intended for Hamlet. Hamlet and Laertes duel, and they are both cut with the poisoned sword. Laertes reveals to Hamlet that it was Claudius who plotted Hamlet's murder. Hamlet kills Claudius and then dies. Horatio plans to live to tell the story of the great tragedy.

Similar situations are present in In the Middle of the Night. Ever since an accident 25 years earlier that killed 22 children, John Paul Colbert has been the victim of harassing phone calls. John Paul's 16-year-old son, Denny, has been instructed never to answer the telephone. Eventually, however, Denny becomes frustrated with the harassing phone calls and his orders to not answer the telephone. "The opposite of peace was war. Maybe that's what he wanted--a battle against whatever or whoever had thrown a shadow over his family. But he wondered, how do you start a war? (p. 32)". Denny then begins the war by defying his parents and answering the telephone. It is Lulu, a woman who was involved in the fatal accident who feels as though John Paul 'killed' her.

Lulu seeks revenge on John Paul in a manner she feels will hurt him the most--attempting to kill his son, Denny. "I don't want you to feel pain. I want your father to feel the pain, the worst pain of all. The pain of losing his son and knowing he was to blame (p. 171)." Lulu befriends Denny and the two develop a relationship over the telephone. Lulu even involves her brother, Dave, in her plot for revenge. Denny, unknowing of the malice behind the smoky-voiced woman on the other end of the line, develops a sincere interest in Lulu. He is unaware of the harm his defiance may bring.

Lulu lures Denny to her home and attempts to kill him. It is only because of a change of heart in Dave that Denny narrowly flees death and is able to escape Lulu's revenge. Lulu dies at the hands of her loving brother, who also takes his own life.

THEMATIC CONNECTIONS

The search for revenge is the main theme in both Hamlet and In the Middle of the Night. Pairing the two works will make the reading more meaningful for the students by putting it on a level they understand more clearly. Throughout the teaching of Hamlet, several references can be made to the young adult novel. In the Middle of the Night will serve as a springboard for delving into the more complicated play of Hamlet.

Denny, in the young adult novel, seeks revenge on the person who makes phone calls to his family in the middle of the night. He does this by answering the telephone he has been forbidden from answering. Hamlet looks for revenge on Claudius, whom he has been told killed the King. After a visit from his father's ghost, Hamlet attempts to prove Claudius' guilt. The theme of revenge also surfaces in the young adult novel when Lulu seeks revenge on John Paul for ruining her life. Lulu does this by attempting to kill Denny.

Most young adults will have had experience with feelings of revenge, thus enhancing the personal connections they can make with the works. Through journal writing, students can tie the theme of revenge to personal experiences, thus making the assigned readings take on personal significance and meaning. Through brainstorming and class discussions, students also can

develop other themes and ideas that are paralleled between the two works. One area students may enjoy exploring is the connections between characters.

Character Connection Activities

To enhance student understanding of the connections between characters, several activities can be used. Following is a summary of a few activities which allow students to explore the existing relationships.

Students are given the character connections chart. See Figure 1. Students must find specific examples and details from the text to support the ideas in the chart. Evidence should be presented by citing the act, scene and line in Hamlet, or by citing the page number and key words of the section in In the Middle of the Night. Space is provided on the handout. As a variation of this activity, rather than giving students the already made chart, students can be assigned to develop a chart on their own. Charts could be displayed as poster board presentations or on a class bulletin board. After completion of these visual representation activities, students can assume the role of one of the characters. Have parallel characters (ex: Hamlet and Denny) pair up and discuss the similarities and differences in their lives.

COMPREHENSION ACTIVITIES

In the Middle of the Night will be used as an introduction to Hamlet. The entire novel should not take students more than three to four hours to read, and I would, therefore, assign it to be read outside of class the week before the study of Hamlet. The students and I would spend some class time discussing the themes and reviewing the plot in preparation for Hamlet. Students will journal their reactions to the young adult novel throughout their reading. In this reaction journal, students will respond to various prompts addressed in class. Students will also be required to make entries in their journals reacting to the reading assignment. Journals will serve as a means of student exploration of the text. Included as a portion of the journal, students will also keep a character log with detailed descriptions of each character. As characters are introduced throughout the novel, students will write down each character's name along with thorough notes,

Character Connections

Find the specific examples and situations from the texts to support the ideas presented in the chart below. Cite on the line provided. For Hamlet citations, include act, scene and line reference. For citations from In the Middle of the Night include page numbers and key words. Include in the chart any other character connections you make.

<p style="text-align: center;">Hamlet</p> <p>Seeks revenge on Claudius. _____</p> <p>Defies Horatio and Marcellus. _____</p> <p>Loves (?) Ophelia; loses her. _____</p> <p>Must accept father's death. _____</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Denny</p> <p>Seeks revenge on caller. _____</p> <p>Defies parents. _____</p> <p>Loves Chloe; loses her. _____</p> <p>Must accept Lulu's death. _____</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">King/Ghost</p> <p>Dies. _____</p> <p>Comes back; wants revenge. _____</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Lulu</p> <p>'Dies.' _____</p> <p>Comes back; wants revenge. _____</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Claudius</p> <p>Kills the King. _____</p> <p>Is free. _____</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">John Paul</p> <p>Kills (?) Lulu. _____</p> <p>Is free. _____</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Ophelia</p> <p>Commits suicide. (?) _____</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Mr. Zarbor</p> <p>Commits suicide. _____</p>

Figure 1. Character connections

including words to describe each character's physical and emotional attributes and quotations from the text that help describe each character. Students should also include their personal opinions about the characters. As more information is learned, the character descriptions should be expanded. This log will be used for a later activity relating the two works.

Throughout the reading of Hamlet, students will keep a reaction journal and character log in the same notebook used for the In the Middle of the Night journal and log. Keeping these activities in the same notebook will provide students easy access to their notes and responses to the young adult novel. The reaction journals and character logs will be assessed throughout the unit.

Keeping in mind that students learn best through a variety of strategies, different activities have been designed to use with each act of Hamlet. The activities are designed to enhance all areas of language arts: reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing.

Act 1 Activity

In act one the ghost talks to Hamlet, telling Hamlet that he was murdered by Claudius. Hamlet feels despair about his mother's hasty marriage to Claudius, and after hearing of the murder, vows to get revenge. Meanwhile, Laertes and Polonius give Ophelia advice about falling in love with Hamlet.

To begin the study of Hamlet the students will perform the first act of the play. The play will be introduced with an acting segment to spark interest among all students. The hands-on learning will allow all students to begin the study of Hamlet with a firm grasp of the characters, plot, and action. Students will alternate character roles, as well as the roles of director, critics, and audience members.

A play is not written to be merely read, and therefore cannot be truly understood and appreciated until it is performed. The class performance will allow students the opportunity to transfer their interpretations of the text to actions. The class will use a variety of props for the performance and will experiment with various student interpretations of the same scene, altering stage directions, set, costumes and props.

Those students assuming the roles of Shakespeare's characters will perform under the guidance of the directors, who will be given the liberty to use the actors in the manner they see best fit. Students in the roles of critics will critique the various presentations, keeping in mind there is no right or wrong way to interpret Shakespeare. Audience members will sit back and enjoy the performance. The class can even bring popcorn to add to the excitement of the show. The students and I will discuss the characters, actions, and plot throughout the reading and performances of the act. After completion of act one student performances, the class will watch a video version of the act to see how professional directors and producers chose to interpret the act.

During discussion of act one, students will find similarities between the play and In the Middle of the Night. By returning to the study of In the Middle of the Night, students can develop parallels, thus better understanding Hamlet. This exercise will be particularly effective for lower skilled readers who may be having difficulties understanding Shakespeare's writing. Possible similarities between the two works are presented in Figure 2.

Assessment for act one activities will be determined on a credit/no credit basis, contingent upon participation.

Act 2 Activity

In act two Hamlet feigns (?) love madness. He also reveals his plan of action to trick Claudius into revealing his guilt about the murder of the King.

The following activity could easily be used with any of the acts in Hamlet. However, because this is the act where Hamlet develops his plan of action, I have chosen to use the activity at this point.

Students must find a literary criticism that makes reference to act two. This criticism must be one that the students understand and have a strong opinion about. Students will then be divided into small groups and will share the criticism they found with their group, presenting an argument either in favor of or opposed to the ideas presented in the criticism. After finding, presenting, and arguing the Hamlet criticism, students will assume the role of a critic and will write their own

CONNECTIONS BETWEEN HAMLET AND IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

1. Hamlet goes against what Horatio and Marcellus say and he follows his father's ghost. It is after he follows the ghost that he becomes obsessed with revenge.

Just as...

Denny defies his parents' wishes and he answers the telephone. It is after he answers the telephone that his haunting troubles begin.

2. Hamlet seeks revenge against the person who has destroyed his family.

Just as...

Denny seeks revenge against "whatever or whoever has thrown a shadow over his family."

3. The King dies, yet returns in search of finding revenge for his death.

Just as...

Lulu 'dies' and returns seeking revenge for her 'death.'

4. Claudius kills the King, yet he is free.

Just as...

John Paul starts the fire that may be linked to the fatal accident, yet he is free.

literary criticism of In the Middle of the Night. These criticisms will be used on a class bulletin board. The bulletin board will serve as a type of advertisement for the other classes, possibly sparking interest in other students to read the young adult novel. This activity will sharpen students' skills in the following areas: library research, persuasive speaking, critical thinking, and argumentative writing.

Assessment for this activity will be based on the written literary criticism of In the Middle of the Night as well as on participation in the act two Hamlet criticism.

Act 3 Activity

In act three Hamlet gives his "To be or not to be" soliloquy. He also denies loving Ophelia. The staged play begins, and Claudius leaves at a moment which reveals his guilt. Hamlet finds Claudius in prayer and does not kill him. Hamlet later kills Polonius, mistakenly believing he was killing Claudius.

One of the main actions of this act is the staged performance of the play The Murder of Gonzago. To be sure students understand the purpose and meaning behind the staged play, students will be asked to rewrite the play into a modern version. Students will be divided into groups of five and most students will assume the roles of the traveling actors. One student in each group will be designated director; a student will also be designated camera person. The groups will rework the short play from Elizabethan language to modern English. A final script including a list of characters, setting, and props, will be turned in. See Figure 3.

After the play has been rewritten, groups will videotape a performance of their new and modernized play. This translation from Elizabethan to modern should be reflected in terms of language, props, scenery, and costumes. Videotaped versions of The Murder of Gonzago will be viewed in class. After completion of this activity, students will better understand the short play within the play. Students will also gain experience with writing a script, performing a designated role and working in groups.

To ensure fair grading, all students will complete a self-evaluation and group evaluation

Modern Script Sample

The Murder of Gonzago

Characters:

Husband represents the king

Wife represents the queen

Man represents Lucianus

Costumes:

Husband: Dressed as though he's just come home from work (ex. polo shirt and khakis.)

Wife: Dressed as though she's just come home from work (ex: skirt and blouse.)

Man: Dressed in jeans and a sweat shirt, tennis shoes

Setting/Props:

Living room--Couch with blanket resting on back, table with newspaper, photo album and box of tissues

One Act Play

(Husband and wife are sitting in their living room. Husband is looking through wedding photo album; wife is reading the newspaper.)

Husband: It sure has been a long time since we were married.

Wife: Yes. But it's been long, happy years. I hope we have as much time and happiness in our future. That reminds me--you haven't seemed to be yourself lately. I'm afraid for you--call it woman's intuition.

Husband: Well sweetheart, actually there's something I've been wanting to talk to you about. I'm not doing really well. You're right. *(Puts album down.)* The doctor says my time is limited. You will soon be left to face this world alone. Unless, of course, you marry again.

Wife: *(Appears shocked.)* What? Are you crazy? How could I? I would never betray our love that way. Second marriages are not based upon love but upon need. My love is with you. *(Wife begins to cry.)*

(Husband moves to seat next to wife to comfort her. He puts his arm around her and wipes her tears. She continues to cry.)

Husband: I know that's what you believe now, but just wait. You'll change your mind and forget that you ever felt this way. The sorrow will soon leave, and you will love again. Life doesn't last forever, so make the most of the time you have. Fate will take its course-- there is nothing you can do to stop it. Right now you think I am irreplaceable, but once I'm gone and you're all alone, you'll change your mind.

Wife: I can't imagine life without you. When you die I will forever be your faithful wife. *(Wife plays with wedding ring on her finger.)*

Husband: That's very sweet, dear. For now, though, I need to get some rest. I'm beat. We can talk more later.

(Husband curls up on couch; wife covers him with a blanket.)

Wife: Sweet dreams, honey, and remember...nothing will ever come between us.

(Wife leaves the room. She takes the box of tissue with her.)

(Man comes into living room through unlocked door. He approaches the sleeping husband.)

Man: *(whispering)* The time has come. No one is around. I'll take this heroine and kill him with an overdose. *(Injects heroine into husband.)*

(Husband dies.)

after completion of the project. See Figure 4. Assessment will be based on group cooperation, script, video and evaluations.

Act 4 Activity

In act four Claudius and Laertes develop a plan to kill Hamlet by using a poisoned sword. As a back-up plan poisonous wine will be used. Ophelia loses her mind and later is found dead in the river.

After students have read act four and the students and I have discussed it as a class, students will write a character sketch poem. By this point in the play students should be fairly familiar with the various characters. Students will choose a character from Hamlet and parallel this character with a character from In the Middle of the Night. Students should refer to the character logs they kept while reading both works to remind themselves of details they may have forgotten. The poem must include references to both characters, yet the names of the characters must not be included in the poem. See Figure 5.

Students should be encouraged to be as creative as possible. They do not have to follow the same rhyming pattern or stanza set up as the model poem. After all students have written their poems, each student will read his/her poem aloud to the class and the rest of the class will attempt to figure out who the subjects of the poem are. This activity will force students to become familiar with the individual characters they chose to study, as well as with the characters their classmates chose. Hearing the poetry of classmates will allow students to hear various interpretations of the characters.

Assessment for this activity will be based on the thoroughness and quality of the poem and participation in the activity.

Act 5 Activity

In act five Laertes and Hamlet argue about their guilt over Ophelia's death. They later duel, and both are cut with the poisonous sword. Gertrude unknowingly drinks the poisoned wine and dies. Before Laertes dies, he reveals to Hamlet that Claudius had devised the plan to kill Hamlet.

Self Evaluation

Name: _____

I worked well with my group. Yes No

Comments: _____

All members of my group should receive the same grade. Yes No

Comments: _____

My contributions to the project were:

Based on my group's effort and final product, I feel a fair grade is: _____

Other comments: _____

Group Evaluation

Members in group and job assigned to each: _____

Group Topic: _____

Our group worked well together. Yes No

Comments: _____

We enjoyed this group project. Yes No

We feel a fair grade for our group is: _____

Justification for grade: _____

Character Sketch Poem

Following is an example of a poem illustrating commonalities between Lulu and the King. The first two stanzas make reference to Lulu; the last two refer to the King. In the space provided at the bottom of the page, write your own character sketch poem choosing any parallel characters. You must include references to both characters, yet the names of the characters may not be included in the poem. Refer to your character logs for ideas. You do not need to follow the same rhyming pattern and stanza set up.

My mind still works,
though my body does ache.
I'll get back at that man
for his careless mistake.

An eye for an eye,
that's what I do say.
He took my happiness,
and now he must pay.

I send out my son,
to avenge my lost life.
That man took my dreams
and now has my wife.

Evil for evil,
vengeance for all.
Away with the murderer
or the kingdom will fall.

Figure 5. Sample poem

Hamlet kills Claudius and then dies.

Because act five is packed with action, after completion of the act students will play a quiz game in class to review the major actions. Students will be divided into teams and will compete to answer plot questions correctly. Students must rely on memory to answer the questions. All questions will be objective. See Figure 6.

After the objective questions, I will conduct a class discussion in a much more subjective fashion. Using both objective and subjective questioning on Hamlet will force students to examine the work for more than simply the story line. Questions will be paralleled to In the Middle of the Night to continue with the pairing of the two works. See Figure 7.

Final Project

As a culminating activity at the end of the unit, students will choose to complete one project on a list containing several options. Students will be given the list of final project options after reading act three of Hamlet. Handing out project options at this point will allow students to read the final acts of the play with an eye for details that may be of special importance to their project. Handing out options prior to the completion of the play will also allow for ample time to complete a well-developed, thorough project. See Figure 8.

CONCLUSION

The most important part of teaching is making knowledge real and practical for the students. Young adult literature does just this. Young adult literature reaches out to all readers, particularly the reluctant readers, to make the complicated text more understandable. By combining the study of Hamlet with Robert Cormier's In the Middle of the Night, students are able to draw connections and make meaning out of material they otherwise may have found confusing and frustrating.

My hopes for my students are that they take away from the reading and activities not just knowledge of the works read, but knowledge about themselves and their own thoughts and beliefs

Possible Objective Questions

1. Whose funeral procession does Hamlet stumble upon? (Ophelia)
2. Who is Yorick? (the King's jester)
3. Who does Hamlet struggle with in the grave? (Laertes)
4. How does Gertrude die? (drinks the poisonous wine)
5. Who kills Claudius? (Hamlet)
6. How does Hamlet die? (stabbed with poisonous sword)
7. Who kills Hamlet? (Laertes)
8. What does Laertes ask of Hamlet before his death? (exchange of forgiveness)
9. Who is named heir to the Danish throne? (Fortinbras)

Figure 6. Possible objective questions

Possible Discussion Questions

1. John Paul felt extreme guilt after the balcony crashed. Do you think Claudius felt any guilt for the murder of the King? Why?
2. Denny has feelings of alienation. Several times he makes references to loneliness. Do you believe Hamlet has these same feelings? Why?
3. "Malice" is used to describe Lulu and her plot for revenge on John Paul. Do you consider Hamlet to be malicious? What makes you think this?
4. Lulu considers herself dead long before her physical death. What do you believe she means by 'death.' Who would you compare her to in Hamlet?
5. Besides the theme of revenge, what ideas do you find in both Hamlet and In the Middle of the Night?
6. Who do you believe Hamlet shares more characteristics with, Lulu or Denny?
7. Put yourself in Denny's place. Would you have answered the telephone? What would you have done differently (if anything)?
8. Put yourself in Hamlet's place. Knowing how the play ends, what would you have done differently (if anything)?

Figure 7. Possible discussion questions

Final Project Options

Choose one of the following project options to complete for the end of this unit. If you have a comparable project idea not on this list please discuss it with me. A due date will be determined in class.

1. Choose a scene from In the Middle of the Night that has similarities to a scene in *Hamlet*. Rewrite the scene in drama form. Write a one page essay comparing the two scenes.
2. Either individually or in pairs, memorize a scene (or part of a scene) in Hamlet. Present your interpretation for the class either live or on video.
3. Create an illustration to accompany Hamlet. Include captions beneath the picture to help tell the story.
4. Write a three-page essay paralleling characters from the two works. (Review your character logs and journals for help.) Present evidence to support your ideas.
5. Choose a theme that occurs in both Hamlet and In the Middle of the Night. Write an essay/poem/song that incorporates the theme. Use specific examples to illustrate how the theme is carried throughout the works.
6. Create a book cover for either Hamlet or In the Middle of the Night. Develop an illustration for use on the front cover and a summary for the inside flap. Include author information on the back cover.
7. Read another young adult novel with similar themes to Hamlet and In the Middle of the Night. Write a summary of the novel, drawing connections to what has been read in class.

on the subjects. I want my students to create personal meaning through their reading, and though some students may be able to do this through reading the classics alone, most students will find far more meaning by learning the classics in conjunction with young adult literature.

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