

***If I Should Die Before I Wake* by Han Nolan**

(Published by Harcourt, Brace, and Company)

Approved for use in Communication Arts, Grade 8

Summary

A 16-year-old-girl, a Neo-Nazi, is wounded and in a hospital. She slips into a coma and begins to relive the memories of a Jewish girl, Chana, during the Holocaust. Chana and her family have been brutalized in ghettos and concentration camps in Poland. Hilary's own personal memories alternate with Chana's, and when she wakes, she has been transformed from a raging, angry girl into a humane and decent young woman.

Connection to the Curriculum

This novel combines fiction with history and requires application of reading comprehension skills. Character development and setting elements as they relate to the story can be examined. Due to the complex nature of the issues and novel structure, students will be challenged to understand character motivation, character traits, conflict, and theme. They may also study the history of the setting and vocabulary related to historical events (i.e., ghetto, persecution, prejudice).

Standards

Course Objectives (Benchmarks)

Reading: 1.2- The students read fluently. 1.4- The students comprehend a variety of texts.

Literature: 2.1- The students use literary concepts to interpret and respond to text.

Possible Skills Taught (Indicators)

Reading:

1.4.15- The student uses information from the text to make inferences and draw conclusions.

1.4.16- The student analyzes how text structure (sequence, problem-solution, comparison-contrast, description, cause-effect) helps support comprehension of text.

1.4.17- The student compares and contrasts varying aspects (characters' traits and motives, themes, problem-solution, cause-effect relationships, ideas and concepts, procedures, viewpoints) in one or more appropriate-level texts.

1.4.18- The student explains cause-effect relationships in appropriate-level narrative, expository, technical, and persuasive texts.

Literature:

2.1.1- The student describes different aspects of characters (e.g., their physical traits, personality traits, feelings, actions, motives) and analyzes how major characters are developed (through their thoughts, words, speech patterns, actions) and how they change over time.

2.1.2- The student identifies and describes the setting (e.g., environment, time of day or year, historical period, situation, place) and analyzes connections between the setting and other story elements (e.g., character, plot).

2.1.3- The student identifies major and minor elements of the plot (e.g., conflict, crisis/turning moment, climax, resolution, rising action, falling action, subplots, parallel episodes) and explains how these elements relate to another.

2.1.4- The student understands aspects of theme (e.g. moral, lesson, meaning, message, author's ideas about the subject) and supports with implicit/explicit information from the text.

A Note on the Text

(The best way to evaluate and understand a novel is to personally read the book in its entirety.)

Issues of anger and racism are tempered by the main character, Hilary, learning important life lessons. The text includes honest descriptions (including realistic language, violence, bigotry, and unsavory characters) of the Holocaust.

Additional Unit Design Connections

Coming soon:

To be completed during future curriculum development activities