

**Novel Notes and Activities for**  
**WHAT MR. MATTERO DID**

By Priscilla Cummings

**Author's Note:** I wish to thank teachers Ricki Robertson and Susan Swanda of Lakeview Middle School in Yukon, Oklahoma for the suggested discussion questions, activities and quizzes on this web site for WHAT MR. MATTERO DID. The teachers created this material for use in their English novel unit at Lakeview Middle School in 2006.

The material offered includes:

- Novel Notes
- Novel Activities
- Discussion questions
- Quizzes.

**Novel Notes**

**Beginning Quote:** This above all – to thine own self be true. (Shakespeare)

**24 chapters – 12 titled “Claire”/12 titled “Melody” - - - point of view**

**Characters:**

**Mrs. Fernandez – principal**

**The “three of us” – Jenna, Suzanne, Claire (“me”)/7<sup>th</sup> graders**

**Mr. Mattero – the music teacher**

**p. 10 – Melody – 8<sup>th</sup> grader, Mr. Mattero’s daughter**

**p. 31-32 – Mr. Daniels/police detective; Miss Weatherall/welfare worker**

**Setting:**

**p. 10 – Oakdale Middle School**

**p. 59 – near Washington DC**

**p. 62 – Wallinsburg**

**Novel Activities**

**What is the Truth???** – Make predictions about what the truth is about Mr. Mattero. Base predictions on the observations/analysis of the 4 girls and Mr. Mattero. Revise predictions at prescribed intervals.

**1** – Assign students a partner.

**2** - Partners gather information about characters on the observation sheet. Prior to prediction writing, transfer observations as a class to a master list at the front of the room.

**3** – Discuss characters; make inferences; draw conclusions in order to make predictions about the truth

**4** – Make and revise predictions according to the following key points in the novel using support from chapters as indicated:

Prediction 1 – after chapter 8

Prediction 2 – Chapters 9 - 16

Prediction 3 – Chapter 17 - 18

(The truth is revealed in Chapter 19/pg 175.)

### Character Observations

#### Jenna Cartwright

P1 – the “talker” - - - could lay out the facts without getting embarrassed/the spokesperson, the leader of the 3

P1 – fearless

P1 – has 3 piercings in her ear /infer – permissive parents/open-minded parents

P3 – “intense eyes locked”/infer – persuasive/uses peer pressure

P4 – J is “demanding” & persistent

P4 – definitely in charge – “glared”

P5/7 – J’s mom is gone a lot - - - p7 – mom a stewardess & always buying J’s “stuff”  
J is blonde & has perfect skin

P6 – J borrows lip gloss – is she a moocher? Takes advantage of someone?

P8 – J misses her mom; J can be nasty; J highlights her hair – concerned about her looks

P18 – “she almost enjoyed this” – likes getting attention

P70 – doesn’t find it “creepy” to be interviewed by Officer Daniels; doesn’t take “no” for an answer; lives 2 blocks from Claire

P71 – always gets her way

P72 – J’s dad/Bob – temper, “scary” offensive language, poor grammar

P77 – J’s mom is Elaine

P77-78 – appears that J’s mom lies in order to be with Cpt. O’Brien

P90 – does J know her mother is being unfaithful to her dad?

P95 – J knows about her mom

P120 – J is a shoplifter – and she tried to get C & S to steal too

**P139 – J thinks the 3 girls need boyfriends**

**Claire Montague**

**P2 – nervous type – chews her nails/inference – is she insecure?**

**P4 – reluctant to J’s plan; is an encourager to Suzanne**

**P5 – describes herself as ordinary/inf – low self-esteem**

**P5 – Claire quotes J – relies on J’s opinion**

**P5 – C’s physical description – bangs/layers in her hair; a “Roman” nose, brown eyes & tan skin & freckles**

**P6 – worries about what her mom thinks**

**P7 – has a little brother who gets a lot of mom’s attention**

**P7 – C;s mom asks lots of questions**

**P19 – C has worked hard to lose weight**

**P23 – new student at OMS in 6<sup>th</sup> grade; never fit in**

**P39 – on a diet; has lost 18 pounds since 6<sup>th</sup> grade/inf – disciplined**

**P52 – has a brother Corky around whom all the family revolves; sister – Isabelle (nursery school age)**

**P59 – C’s mom looks for excuses why C can’t be with J**

**P90 – likes to play with her younger siblings**

**P91 – Corky is autistic; C;s dad is level-headed**

**P112 – C doesn’t like the attention; feels bad for Melody**

**P115 – C is scared; relies on S more than J**

**P136 – C sees herself as fat & ugly**

**P142 – C’s grades have dropped since changing schools and meeting J**

**P158 – C moves to Alphonso P Decker Middle School – a fresh start**

**P160 – at Decker C is quiet & trying hard**

**P161 – C meets Phoebe & P “changes everything”**

**P161 – uncertain of how good a friend J really was**

**Suzanne Elmore**

**P3 – whiner? Pleading tone of voice – an underdog? Weak?**

**P4 – S trembles under J’s pressure; timid**

**P5 – C describes S as ordinary – S has braces and blemishes/problems with her skin/says she is too fat/has red curly hair**

**P23 – has asthma/inhaler; shy; bad skin; not accepted by other girls**

**P24 – excluded; transferred to OMS in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade because of overcrowding**

**P94 – didn’t want to say anything; warned about getting into trouble**

**P117 – has the nicest, most expensive house of the 3 girls**

**P138 – has a big sis, Addy who asks S & C if they lied**

**Melody Mattero**

**P10 – 8<sup>th</sup> grader; band student; helpful attitude**

**P11 – daughter of Mr. Mattero; aspiring writer/poet; best friend is Annie**

**P12 – wears glasses; enjoys a close relationship with her dad**

**P13 – wears her hair in a long braid - - - inf/is she a little old-fashioned; her appearance is not the most important thing to her**

**P30 – a student leader – in the SGA**

**P32-33 – 14 yrs. Old BD is Jan. 25; takes honors classes & spends 5 hrs. a night on homework and makes all A's except math**

**P34 – volunteers at the stables with handicapped children – riding therapy program**

**P155 – Mel is generous – unselfish – gives one of her horse statues to Alexander**

### **Mr. Mattero**

**P11 – the band/music teacher; a dad; particular about his classes that things be right (but himself not a natural organizer)**

**P11/12 – appreciative of Mel's help**

**P13 – hates to disappoint his students; is a good teacher – convinces his students to try new things; is responsible for the creation of the band & orchestra program**

**P14 – dedicated; a 22 yr. veteran teacher/11 yrs at OMS**

**P16 – dedicated dad; coached soccer team; takes Mel on an annual summer fishing trip, supportive of her writing; sense of humor; gives time to Habitat for Humanity**

**P28 – could be pretty outspoken**

**P126 – was an alcoholic – got sober & attended AA after meeting his wife**

**P156 – never plays his clarinet again**

**(other Mattero family members)**

**Mom – Mary/works in a nursery; “the glue that holds the family together”**

**Song – oldest sibling – in college**

**Cade – middle sibling; football dreams**

**Harmony – the cat**

### **Commentary Passages**

**Chp 21 – pg 189**

**“I wasn't comfortable being in my own skin.” Explain what Claire means when she say this. Talk about a time when you felt the same way.**

**Chp. 22 – pg. 205**

**“I'm not sure,” Mom told her, “that we can ever put back what those girls took away.”**

**Explain what the girls took away from:**

**Mr. Mattero**

**members of the Mattero family**

**Chp. 24 –**

**Write the poem for which Melody could only write the title, “The Legacy of a Lie”.**

**Metaphor**

**Chp. 25 – pg. 216 - - - What does the weed represent? Do you have “weeds” in your garden? Talk about them.**

**Additional Teacher Notes:**

**Teacher read Chapters 1-7 of the book to students and did some editing of parts/words that parents might find objectionable. After Chapter 7 students had access to book.**