

THE 1980s AIDS CRISIS: A NOVELLA

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Objective

My goal was to express historic actualities through literature and I chose the form of the novella as a medium. I wanted to accurately represent the lives of people during the 1980s AIDS crisis in the US while still staying in the realm of fiction.

Overview of the Crisis

Early 1980s: Deadly lung infections and skin cancers affect at first only **young gay men**.

- Confusion about the disease's origin and its rapid spread lead to **fear** and **stigmatization** of the risk groups (mainly gay men)
- People with AIDS became **activists** and **volunteers** to help themselves and those in need.

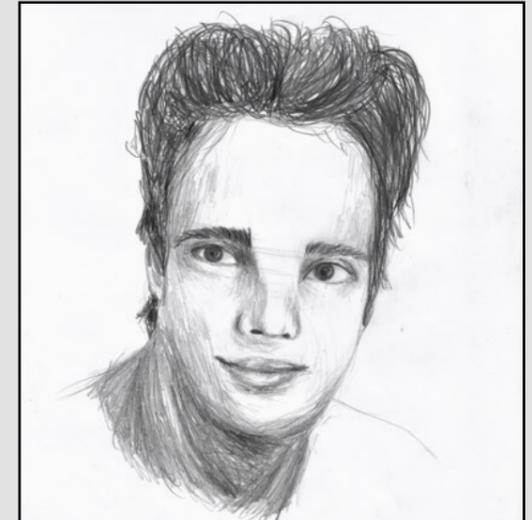
Subthemes

Death

Social stigma

Strength in crisis

Sexuality



Vincent

compassionate
introverted
insecure

The Novella

Definition:

- Prose
- Medium length (between short story and novel)
- Often narrative framework (meaning a story contained in another one)
- Limited characters and one single, compact plot
- Themes and symbolism



Thomas

confident
outgoing
passionate

The Story

The Pitch

Main story: In 1983, a young man (Vincent) volunteers to help an AIDS patient (Thomas) with his daily chores. We follow them over the course of a few months, see their friendship develop and how they deal with the sinister reality they live in. **Frame story:** Years later, Vincent meets a young woman (Lucy) at his HIV support group, whom he shares his experience with.

Outlining & Writing

Thoroughly planning out characters, the plot line and symbolism made the writing process much more straightforward.

Editing

The first draft had to be edited to make it more compelling and to rid it of mistakes. With the feedback of six test readers I could incorporate a broad range of criticism.



Lucy

cheeky
single-minded
rebellious

Source: Living with AIDS during the 1980s
AIDS crisis: A novella