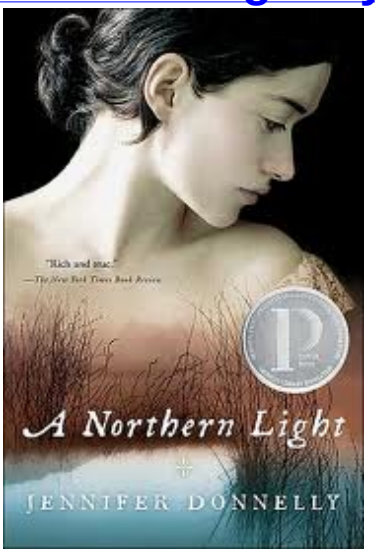
A northern light

Northern Light by Jennifer Donnelly



Grace Brown, a 20 year old skirt factory employee, was murdered in 1906 just outside an Adirondack mountain resort by Chester Gillette. Gillette was arrested soon after Grace?s body was recovered in a lake and he was later executed in a New York prison.

This gruesome true story serves as part of the backdrop for the very non-gruesome and excellent young adult novel, *A Northern Light* by Jennifer Donnelly. The main character, Mattie Gokey, receives a bundle of letters from a guest at the resort and makes a promise to burn them. But when Grace?s body is later pulled out of the lake, Mattie becomes unsure what the right thing to do. Maybe the letters hold answers?

Mattie is also torn between her duty to her family and her dream of going to college. Her family lives in a rural area and they work extra hard making a living off of the land, made especially difficult since her mother has passed away and there are three younger girls to look after.

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