

That Summer Night on Frenchmen Street

written by Chris Clarkson

About the Book

Genre: Young Adult Fiction

Format: Hardcover
416 pages, 5-1/2 x 8-1/4

ISBN: 9781643795010

Reading Level: Grade 8

Interest Level: Grades 8–College

Guided Reading Level: Z+

Accelerated Reader® Level/Points:
N/A

Lexile™ Measure: N/A

*Reading level based on the ATOS Readability Formula

Themes: African/African American Interest, Conflict resolution, Coping with Death, Cultural Diversity, Diversity, Dreams & Aspirations, Empathy/Compassion, Families, Fathers, Fiction, Friendship, Identity/Self Esteem/Confidence, Kindness/Caring, LGBTQ, Mothers, Optimism/Enthusiasm, Overcoming Obstacles, Pride, Realistic Fiction, Responsibility, Siblings, Similarities and Differences, Teen Interest, Tolerance/Acceptance, YA interest

Resources on the web:

leeandlow.com/books/that-summer-night-on-frenchmen-sreet

All guided reading level placements may vary and are subject to revision. Teachers may adjust the assigned levels in accordance with their own evaluations.

SYNOPSIS

Being there for her family is the most important thing to Jessamine Monet. And her family is complicated. Her twin brother Joel has a secret boyfriend, and her transgender cousin Solange is flourishing, despite the disapproval of Solange's dying mother. Yet Jessamine doesn't mind being caught up in family drama. Being busy keeps the water at bay -- the water of memories, of Katrina, of past trauma. So when Tennessee Williams -- a rich white boy named after the writer -- asks her out, she hesitantly says yes. He'll be like a library book, she figures, something to read and return. Falling for him is another burden she can't afford to carry.

Tennessee has always lived his life at the mercy of his mom's destructive creativity and his dad's hypermasculine expectations. Jessamine's caring and aloof nature is a surprisingly welcome distraction. While she fights her attraction to him, Tennessee is pulled into her inner family circle and develops a friendship with Joel's boyfriend, Saint Baptiste. Together Saint and Tennessee bond over the difficulty of loving the emotionally unavailable Monet twins.

As senior year progresses, old traumas and familial pressures rise higher than hurricane waves. Can this group of friends make peace with each other, their families, and most importantly, with themselves?

BACKGROUND

A Note About Teaching with *That Summer Night on Frenchmen Street*

The themes in this story must be addressed and handled with deep sensitivity and open mindedness. Below are resources for those who may be affected or who wish to support someone through mental health issues.

- Childhelp: childhelp.org
 - A 24-hour, seven-days-a-week child-abuse hotline with professional counselors. Childhelp provides crisis intervention, information, literature, and referrals.
- Suicide Prevention: suicidepreventionlifeline.org
 - The Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals in the United States.
- Mental Health Awareness Month: <https://www.nami.org/Get-Involved/Awareness-Events/Mental-Health-Awareness-Month>
 - The month of May is Mental Health Awareness Month. This initiative aims to fight stigma, provide support, educate the public and advocate for policies that support people with mental illness and their families.

For LGBTQ+-inclusive curriculum, lesson plans, and booklists, consult the following organizations for more information:

- Garden State Equality: <https://www.gardenstateequality.org/trainings/safe-schools/>
- Learning for Justice Gender & Sexual Identity: https://www.learningforjustice.org/topics/gender-sexual-identity?gclid=Cj0KCQiAmKiQBhCIARIsAKTsj-kvW8E3-NJzTyCIDmqB-HSOp-55n6IRyz4cUfwYAbgcNWkCRtUwE4bkaAhzIEALw_wcB
- Welcoming Schools: https://www.hrc.org/resources/schools?utm_source=GS&utm_medium=AD&utm_campaign=BPI-HRC-Grant&utm_content=276041283782&utm_term=lgbt-inclusive%20curriculum&gclid=Cj0KCQiAmKiQBhCIARIsAKTsj-lqvPXTXDTm4dtrKEv-uq5-OqccdGd_30xQjQ5aKRZK9Eiv0x13SdbMaAqtQEALw_wcB
- GLSEN Inclusive Curriculum Guide: <https://www.glsen.org/activity/inclusive-curriculum-guide>
- Safe Schools Project Curriculum: <https://safeschoolsproject.org/curriculum/>

That Summer Night on Frenchmen Street addresses toxic masculinity. See below for additional resources and lesson plans on teaching about toxic masculinity in the classroom:

- Teaching LGBTQ History's Masculinities Lesson Plan: <https://www.lgbtqhistory.org/lesson/masculinities-high-school/>
- *The New York Times*' "Boys to Men: Teaching and Learning About Masculinity in an Age of Change": <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/12/learning/lesson-plans/boys-to-men-teaching-and-learning-about-masculinity-in-an-age-of-change.html>

BEFORE READING

Prereading Focus Questions

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strand 5 and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

Before introducing this book to students, you may wish to develop background knowledge and promote anticipation by posing questions such as the following:

Teachers must be aware and prepared that by teaching this novel (and the corresponding topics addressed in it) they may be addressing a legacy of harm and violence, specifically within largely minority and underrepresented socioeconomic groups.

- Change is a major theme in the novel. Why can change be scary? What is the relationship between change and loss? What tools are necessary to adapt to change? How do you feel when change occurs in your life?
- What do you know about Hurricane Katrina (2005)? What were the damages? How many people died? How did the federal government respond? What happened to Black families in New Orleans? Where did you learn about Hurricane Katrina (in school, at home, in the media, etc.)? What is the legacy of Hurricane Katrina and how does it impact New Orleans in the present day?
- Why is senior year of high school important? What personal growth happens during senior year? How are friendships tested? What pressures can occur? What brings joy and celebration during senior year?
- Ask students to think about their family and what family means to them. How is family important to you? How do you interact with your family members? How do you help and support them? How do they help and support you?
- Quote Analysis: Use quotes from the novel to analyze character traits and predict the plot. Type select quotes from the novel (enough for each student in the class) and cut the quotes into individual paper strips. Using the graphic organizer (sample below), students will analyze their quote and then walk around the classroom and switch with a classmate until they have analyzed a minimum of five quotes. (Chart can be extended or shortened to meet classroom needs.) At the end of the activity, lead a whole class discussion on the quotes and how they can help students get to know the characters and the plot before diving in to the text. (see the end of the guide for quote analysis chart)
- As a hook for readers, consider showing students a video of Frenchmen Street, posted on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BoLm5FdpWlQ>

You may want to have students journal their responses to these questions so that they can refer back to it throughout and after the reading of the book to further their thinking on the topic(s).

Exploring the Book

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strand 1; Craft & Structure, Strand 5; and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)
(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

- Talk about the title of the book. Ask students what they think this book will most likely be about and whom the book might be about. What do they think might happen? What information do they think they might learn? What makes them think that?
- Read Chris Clarkson's Biography: Read about Chris Clarkson on the jacket back flap. Encourage students to think about what could have been his inspiration for writing *That Summer Night on Frenchmen Street*.
- Take students on a book walk and draw attention to the following parts of the book: front and back covers, illustrations, title page, acknowledgements.
- Have students quickly write a feeling in their notebooks during reading. After reading, ask students why they wrote down that feeling and have them write a journal entry about it.

Setting a Purpose for Reading

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)

Have students read to find out:

- what happened to Jessamine's father and how that impacts Jessamine
- the difficulties of dealing with the loss of a parent and troubling family dynamics
- the vibrant culture of New Orleans
- what lessons Jessamine and Tennessee learn about confronting their feelings in order to thrive

Encourage students to consider why the author, Chris Clarkson, would want to share this story with young people.

VOCABULARY

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strand 4)

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

The story contains several content-specific and academic words and phrases that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary below.

Encourage a variety of strategies to support students' vocabulary acquisition: look up and record word definitions from a dictionary, write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, create a specific action for each word, list synonyms and antonyms, and write a meaningful sentence that demonstrates the definition of the word. (Many of the Spanish words can be found in the book glossary, but there are also some that are not included. Students could be encouraged to create a log of these words—they will not be listed here.)

Content Specific

sashayed, conspirator, boudin, sauntered, proactive, sauntered, cotillion, audacity, contrary, enamel pin, conflict avoidant, bucolic, percolated, jousts, aristocrat, satsuma, stucco, effervescent, pirouette, toxic masculinity, grenade, enamored, parasol, triathlon, penance, steepling, awning, cypress, deveining, taekwondo, siesta, soiree

Academic

mediocre, desensitized, obscenities, bigot, parish, proactive, prestigious, detached, ludicrous, prying, versatile, decadence, meander, nonchalantly, drawled, macabre, nectar, creole, connoisseur, grandeur, heady, languidly, fraught, diligently, telekinetically, telepathically, self-deprecating, fraudulent, subdued, debris, replenishing, aligning, subtly, preemptively, deranged, reciprocate, excels, reluctantly, warily, indifference, agonized, patronize, distorted, diluted, malicious, immaculately, oblivious, hypothermia, entwined, demoting, repentant, jovially, bountiful, pristinely, barren, peckish, stagnant, meticulously, egregious, impromptu, solemnly

AFTER READING

Discussion Questions

After students have read the book, use these or similar questions to generate discussion, enhance comprehension, and develop appreciation for the content. Encourage students to refer to passages and/or illustrations in the book to support their responses. **To build skills in close reading of a text, students should cite textual evidence with their answers.**

Literal Comprehension

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

Chapters 1-10

1. What character traits do you learn about Jessamine in the first chapter? What is your first impression of her?
2. Who is Solange? How are Jessamine and Solange related?
3. Who is Jessamine's twin? What differences do you notice between them in the beginning of the novel?
4. Who is Iz and what role does she play in Jessamine's life?
5. When Tennessee's dad drinks, how is Tennessee impacted?
6. Who is Nadia Guillory to Jessamine? How does Ms. Nadia make Jessamine feel?
7. How does Jessamine feel about senior year?
8. Why does Tennessee feel as though he is disappointing his dad?
9. Why does Tennessee write?

10. Describe Solange's love life. How does Jessamine describe it?
11. Where do Jessamine and Tennessee first meet each other? How does Tennessee feel when he first meets Jessamine?
12. What does it mean to be an Other?
13. What feelings come up for Jessamine at the art shop?

Chapters 11-20

14. Who is Saint Olivier Baptiste? How do him and Tennessee meet?
15. Where do Solange and Joel work? Who ends up working with them?
16. What kind of art does Jessamine create? Joel?
17. What does Jessamine call fireworks?
18. Who is Ronnie? How does he impact the characters in the story?
19. How does Solange show love?
20. How do Solange and Iz learn that Joel is dating Saint?
21. Why is it hard for Joel to be consistently open to Saint?

Chapters 21-30

22. How are Jessamine and Joel's relationship different with their mother?
23. Where and when do Jessamine and Tennessee share their first kiss?
24. What is Tennessee's relationship with his mom? What is his mom's relationship to her writing?
25. Why does Tennessee's mom leave? For how long? How does this make Tennessee feel?
26. What pressure does Joel feel and why?
27. How does Joel's mom react when Joel reveals he is gay?

Chapters 31-40

28. What happens when Tennessee gets angry?
29. How does Auntie Myrtle spend her final moments?
30. Why do Tennessee, Jessamine, and Iz spend Thanksgiving in Oxford?
31. What is revealed in "One Million Pieces of Tennessee?"
32. When does Tennessee say I love you to Jessamine? How does she react? How does Jessamine feel?
33. What is revealed in "Días de los Muertos"? What does Días de los Muertos mean?
34. Why did Jessamine's family stay during Hurricane Katrina?

Chapters 41-48

35. When is Jessamine's and Joel's birthday?

36. How does Solange's life change financially after her mom dies? What becomes possible for her? What are her dreams?
37. What Christmas traditions does Jessamine's family have?
38. Why does Tennessee leave home to go and stay with Saint?
39. Why is it significant that Jessamine started seeing a psychologist?
40. Why is Joel afraid to start officially dating Saint? What grand gesture does Joel perform to show Saint he cares?
41. How did Jessamine and Joel's dad die?
42. What occurs during Mardi Gras?

Extension/Higher Level Thinking

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 2 and 3 and Craft & Structure, Strands 4 and 6)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1-3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

1. What does the title *That Summer Night on Frenchmen Street* mean to you after reading the book? Why do you think the author chose this particular title?
2. There are many relationship dynamics in the novel. Choose a character (i.e. Solange, Jessamine, Saint, Joel, Tennessee, etc). Analyze that character's relationships with other characters in the novel (see the last page for a character relationship chart).
3. What role does New Orleans play in the story? What are the characters' relationship to the city?
4. How do racism, homophobia, and transphobia intersect in this novel? Connect this to real-world current events and community issues, nationally or locally.
5. What antagonisms does Solange have to deal with because she is trans? How do people love and support Solange in moments when others are harmful towards hers?
6. What makes both Jessamine and Joel seem unavailable for romantic relationships?
7. How is Jessamine the narrator different from Tennessee the narrator? What do you think accounts for these differences? Are there similarities? If so, what are they?
8. Tennessee has an alter ego, Tennessee David. Name and describe your own alter ego. Who would you be if you participated in Jessamine and Iz's Others game?
9. What does it mean to be conflict avoidant?
10. How kind effects did Hurricane Katrina have on Jessamine?
11. How can making art be a healing process?
12. What does it mean to be a people pleaser?
13. How does Solange deal with the knowledge that Auntie Myrtle dying? Why is it complicated for her?
14. Saint tells Tennessee "there is strength in vulnerability" (p229). Do you agree or disagree with this statement? How do characters learn to be vulnerable over time?

15. Different kinds of mothers are featured in this story. How are they different? Do any of these mothers change over the course of the book? If so, how?
16. Describe the relationship between Solange and Auntie Myrtle. How does their relationship change over time?
17. Why do Jessamine and Joel have different memories and experiences of their father?
18. How does Tennessee's family dynamic impact his mental health? How does he feel about each parent? Why is he hard for him to open up to Jessamine about his struggles?
19. A chosen family is made of people who are not necessarily related biologically, but have intentionally chosen to embrace, support, love and nurture one another. How does the idea of a chosen family show up in the novel? Do you have a chosen family? How do you all love and support each other?
20. What kind of relationship does Ms. Nadia have with her students? How would you describe her mentorship? Have you had mentors like Ms. Nadia?
21. What makes the friendship between Jessamine and Iz strong? Tennessee and Saint?
22. What do you learn about love from this novel? What different kinds of loves are represented?
23. Compare and contrast the restaurant scene in Chapter 2 and Chapter 46. What similarities and differences do you notice?
24. What does it mean to choose yourself? Which characters choose themselves and how?
25. How did you feel about the way *That Summer Night on Frenchmen Street* ended? Were you satisfied with the ending? Why or why not?

Reader's Response

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4–6)

Use the following questions and writing activities to help students practice active reading and personalize their responses to the book. **Suggest that students respond in reader's response journals, essays, or oral discussion.** You may also want to set aside time for students to share and discuss their written work.

1. What do you think the author's message to the reader is? Think about Chris Clarkson's author's biography. What do you think he wanted to tell young readers?
2. Have students make a text-to-self connection. What kind of connections did you make from this book to your own life? How do you react to change? What is your role in your own family? What are ways you express yourself after an emotional event?
3. Have students make a text-to-text connection. What is the relationship between *That Summer Night on Frenchmen Street*? Did you think of any other books while you read *That Summer Night on Frenchmen Street*? Why did you make those connections?
4. Have students make a text-to-world connection. What kind of connections did you make from this book to what you have seen in the world or on the news? Why did *That Summer Night on Frenchmen Street* make you think of that?

5. What is one big thought that you have after reading this book? Think about different character changes, the setting, and the relationships. What did you learn from reading *That Summer Night on Frenchmen Street*?
6. Prejudice results in the mistreatment and isolation of people based on preconceived ideas and beliefs. Have you or someone you know ever been treated differently based on something they had no control over? How did you feel experiencing this or witnessing it? How did you react? What can we do to confront this kind of prejudice?
7. Jessamine learns that she has to confront her fears and let people in emotionally. What does vulnerability mean to you? Think of the people in your life who you look to for guidance and support. How do these people support and help you? How have these people helped you overcome obstacles and challenges?

ELL Teaching Activities

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 4–6)
(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

These strategies might be helpful to use with students who are English Language Learners.

1. Assign ELL students to partner-read the story with strong English readers/speakers. Students can alternate reading pages, repeat passages after one another, or listen to the more fluent reader.
2. Have each student write three questions about the story. Then let students pair up and discuss the answers to the questions.
3. Review the five parts of the stories. Have students summarize what is happening in each part, first orally, then in writing. Depending on students' level of English proficiency, after the first reading:
 - Review several chapters and have students summarize what happened, first orally, and then in writing.
 - Have students work in pairs to retell either the plot of the story or key details. Then ask students to write a short summary, or opinion about what they have read.
4. Have students illustrate or discuss a loss and/or major change they have experienced and had to deal with.
5. What real-life people or events are you reminded of by characters or events in the story? Prepare a short essay, citing examples from the book and your chosen character/event to justify the similarities.

Social and Emotional Learning

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1-3 and Craft & Structure, Strands 4-6)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1-3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1-2 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4-6)

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 6)

Social and emotional learning involves being aware of and regulating emotions for healthy development. In addition to understanding one's own feelings, strong socio-emotional development allows individuals to develop empathy for others and to establish and maintain relationships.

Use the following prompts to help students study the socio-emotional aspects of this book.

1. Have students examine Jessamine's and Tennessee's characters in terms of helpful and harmful traits. According to *The Reading Strategies Book* (<http://www.heinemann.com/products/e07433.aspx>), students can think about them in terms of traits that are helpful, or traits that keep her stressed and anxious. Consider providing students with a sentence starter to get them thinking about her character, "Often my character seems to _____, but sometimes _____." How do these character traits influence the story? How does Minerva's harmful traits and helpful traits contribute to how she feels emotionally?
2. Jessamine, Joel and Solange all deal with the loss of a parent in very different ways. Have you ever dealt with a loss of someone you love? Why do some people become reserved and emotionally closed off during times of sadness or trauma? What causes this retreat? What are some other grieving processes people usually go through when dealing with the loss of someone they love?
3. It is often difficult for Jessamine to feel trusting of others. What does it take to trust someone and feel secure with them? Cite evidence from the text as well as personal experience.
4. What are some things you feel responsible for in your household? How do these responsibilities make you feel? Write a journal entry explaining these feelings.
5. How can we affirm the people we love, how they love themselves, and who they love? Why is affirmation and support important?
6. Goodbyes are difficult for Jessamine. She designs enamel pins for those she loves in order to show her affection and stay connected. When you have to say goodbye, what are some things you do/ create or practices you have in order to stay connected.
7. Coping mechanisms are the strategies people often use in the face of stress and/or trauma to help manage painful or difficult emotions. Coping mechanisms can help people adjust to stressful events while helping them maintain their emotional well-being. What coping mechanism do Jessamine, Solange, Tennessee, and Joel use to manage their difficult feelings and circumstances? What are your coping mechanisms?

INTERDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES

(Introduction to the Standards, page 7: Students who are college and career ready must be able to build strong content knowledge, value evidence, and use technology and digital media strategically and capably)

Use some of the following activities to help students integrate their reading experiences with other curriculum areas. These can also be used for extension activities, for advanced readers, and for building a home-school connection.

English/Language Arts

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1–3, Craft and Structure, Strands 4–6, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7–9, Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6, Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9, Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1–3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4–6)

- **What real-life people or events are you reminded of by characters or events in the story?** Prepare a critical essay, citing examples from the novel and your chosen event to justify the similarities.
- **Examine the different literary elements that author Chris Clarkson uses throughout *That Summer Night on Frenchmen Street*.** Have students come up with a list and select portions of the text that showcase a specific literary device (i.e. foreshadowing, flashback, metaphor, etc). Afterward, students can select one literary device and write about how that was impactful when reading *That Summer Night on Frenchmen Street*. How do literary devices make the story engaging, and how do they contribute to the story overall? See PBS's Literary Elements and Techniques video for more information about how to teach about literary devices (<https://ny.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/litel18-fig/literary-elements-and-techniques-figurative-language/>).
- **Prepare a defensive essay that explains your views on which character changed the most throughout the course of the novel.** Defend your views by citing specific examples.
- **Select a scene in which you disagreed how a character handled a situation, person, or event.** In the voice of that character, rewrite the scene as you think it should have happened.
- **Creative Writing Activity: Write a Twitter conversation.** Group students in pairs to summarize a scene from the novel as a Twitter chat among two characters. You may use the following Twitter template, made publicly available via Share My Lesson or create your own (<https://sharemylesson.com/teaching-resource/twitter-template-149015>). Be sure to use hashtags to reflect the characters' mood during the scene.
- **Assign students different characters from *That Summer Night on Frenchmen Street* and have them brainstorm about a guiding question: what and how can this character teach us?** Students can think about different characters to examine as a whole class and then break into smaller, specific character groups. Encourage students to think about how characters have shown resilience in the face of adversity and ultimately what they learned from that character. Have students share their findings: How is this character important to the

book, and what lessons did they teach us over the course of the story? How did their actions develop the narrative, and why are they crucial to understanding the meaning of the book?

- **Pretend you are creating a movie based on *That Summer Night on Frenchmen Street*.** Who would you cast as each main character and what would you want the sets to look like? Make notes about these items and then describe the scenes you would be most excited to film.

Social Studies/Geography

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1-3, Craft and Structure, Strands 4-6, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7-9, Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10) (Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1-3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6, Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7-9, and Range of Writing, Strand 10)

- **Design a lesson or unit on New Orleans.** Detail the history of New Orleans and include a specific section on Frenchmen Street. The Historic New Orleans Collection provides resources, primary sources, and other information about teaching about the history of New Orleans in the classroom (<https://www.hnoc.org/programs/lesson-plans>) (<https://www.hnoc.org/programs/interactive-lesson>). PBS' "Race & Jazz in New Orleans" also provides insight as to how music has shaped the city over time (<https://ny.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/fyr12.socst.us.1950pres.lpracejaz/crescent-city-gumbo-race-jazz-in-new-orleans/>).
- ***That Summer Night on Frenchmen Street* touches upon the impact of Hurricane Katrina.** Conduct and present research detailing the effects of Hurricane Katrina. Include scientific, historical, and sociopolitical facts. Consult *The New York Times*' "Hurricane Katrina and New Orleans, Then and Now" ([https://archive.nytimes.com/2010/08/30/hurricane-katrina-and-new-orleans-then-and-now/](https://archive.nytimes.com/learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/08/30/hurricane-katrina-and-new-orleans-then-and-now/)) to get started. Carleton University also has several lesson plans and resources dedicated to teaching about the history and impact of Hurricane Katrina (https://serc.carleton.edu/research_education/katrina/index.html).
- **Create a PowerPoint or other visual media on Mardi Gras.** What is the meaning and history behind Mardi Gras? Who celebrates it? How is it celebrated in different places? National Geographic's article, "Do You Know Where Mardi Gras Began?" provides an overview of the history of Mardi Gras and its origins (<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/newsletters/history/article/where-mardi-gras-began-february-24>). Students can also watch videos of Mardi Gras to get a glimpse into what the celebrations are like (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EklZwXbSh-Y>).

Arts/Performing Arts

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1-3, Craft and Structure, Strands 4-6, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7-9, Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1-3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6, Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7-9, and Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1-3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4-6)

- **If Jessamine were to create an enamel pin for her father, what do you think it would be and why?** Design it and share with the class.
- **Create a playlist for someone you care deeply for (i.e. family member, friend, partner, loved one).** Have students share playlists with each other. Additionally, play some

of the songs in class.

- **Envision a sequel to *That Summer Night on Frenchmen Street* and have students title the second book.** What do they think it would be called? Write a synopsis and create a cover for the book. What kind of materials do they want to use for the cover? Encourage students to consider what they think will happen in the second book, and how that reflects the artwork for the cover. How can they use the current cover to inspire their work?
- **Listen and read lyrics to “Strange Fruit” by Billie Holiday** (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-DGY9HvChXk>). What emotions are present in the song? What themes stand out? How does this song connect to *That Summer Night on Frenchmen Street*?

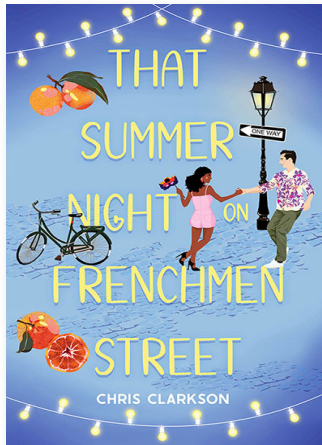
School-Home Connection

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 7 and 9)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1-3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strand 4, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7-9, Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1-3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4-6)

- **Assign students to look up news articles on Hurricane Katrina and take notes on how it was reported.** Have students survey a variety of news sources: local, national, cable, and network. What do they notice about the language and tone of the reports? What about the imagery, photographs, and film footage? How are the victims and community members talked about? Explain in advance that students should pay particular focus to the way race, gender, and identity figures into the coverage. After their research, have students discuss their findings.
- **Have students interview a parent, guardian, or adult mentor about their senior year of high school.** What were their experiences? How did this person react to and handle a situation when they were faced with obstacles? What advice do they have for someone transitioning from high school to college/university? What advice do they have for someone who is unsure of their next steps?
- **Ask students to research their top colleges and universities.** Think about location, classes, finances, extracurriculars, etc. If not interested in colleges and universities, ask students to list goals they want to work towards and what is needed to accomplish those goals.




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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Debut author Chris Clarkson studied English literature at the University of Maryland, where he earned his Bachelor's Degree. He works during the day as an outreach coordinator, where along with many other responsibilities in this role, he regularly assists with the implementation of diversity initiatives. When he is not writing, Chris spends his time as a wandering local, discovering his muse in coffee shops, street art, and old bookstores. He lives in New Orleans with his dog Avery and a collection of notebooks filled with words for stories waiting to be brought to life. Find him on Twitter at @ChrisWrites3434.

REVIEWS

"A New Orleans love story for these ages . . . Tenn's and Jess' respective journeys are refreshingly heartfelt." —*Kirkus*

"Clarkson eschews tidy relationships and characterizations in an emotionally extravagant, slowly paced depiction of complex familial circumstances and young love's trials." —*Publishers Weekly*

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