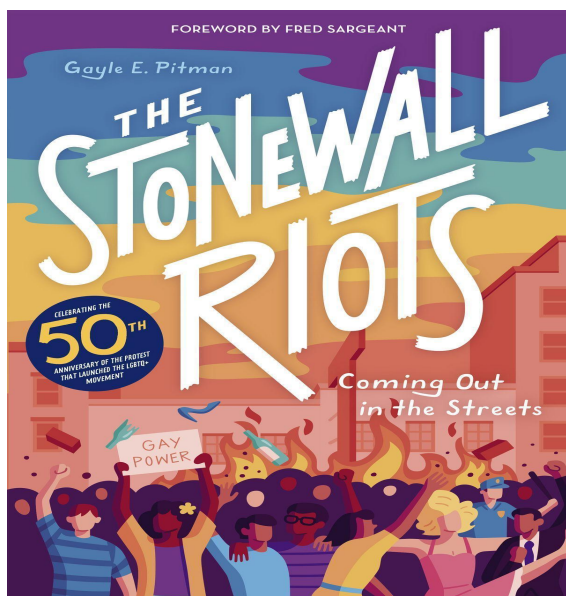
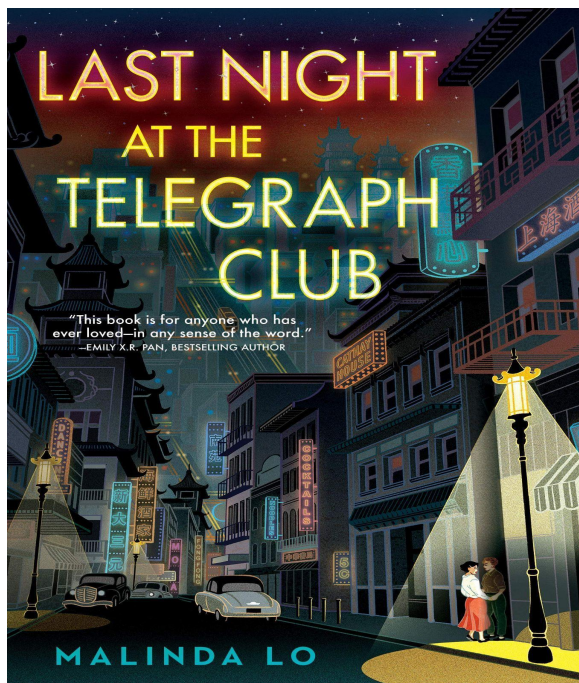


On LGBTQ Pride and Rights
A 9th Grade Teacher's Guide for Paired Texts Featuring
The Stonewall Riots - Coming Out in the Streets by Gayle E. Pitman, and
Last Night at the Telegraph Club by Malinda Lo



The book is a thoughtfully assembled account of pivotal events in the movement for LGBTQ rights. Focused mainly on developments in New York city, it describes how people in the LGBT community went from being hidden, exploited, and abused to rising during the Stonewall riots to defend themselves, emerge from the margins and proclaim pride in who they are. Pitman builds her account around an array of exhibits. Objects such as a police hat and baton, photographs, news clippings, and picket signs, paint a picture of the oppressive impact of laws, policies and attitudes that gave rise to the riots. Moreover, through photographs, Pitman pays homage to courageous and creative people that provided transformational leadership to LGBTQ advocacy groups. A useful inclusion towards the end of the book is a 1843-2016 timeline that succinctly captures milestones in New York LGBTQ history. While the exhibits make a lasting impression, and the notes on each one at the back of the book are a helpful bonus, the absence of captions, particularly under the photographs, is frustrating. Still, with this book, Pitman makes an important contribution towards fully documenting the march towards LGBTQ rights. It is an excellent primer for teen to adult readers.

About the Author: Gayle E. Pitman is a professor in psychology and women's gender studies. She writes informative books about LGBT people and concepts for children and young adult audiences. Other books of hers include *Sewing the Rainbow*, a history of the rainbow pride flag and its designer Gilbert Baker, and *My Maddy*, a story about a child's nonbinary parent. Pitman won the American Library Association Rainbow Project Award in 2015 for her book *This Day in June*.



Lily Hu, a Chinese American girl with dreams of a career in space exploration, comes of age in 1950s San Francisco against a backdrop of cold war induced fear and excesses. She navigates family, school, church, and social life with friends within the limited confines of an insular Chinese community as she yearns to explore unfamiliar stirrings of sexuality. Lily's awkward insights into her own sexuality unfold slowly and are touchingly portrayed in the relationship she develops with Kathleen Miller, a White classmate who has similar interests in science. Their visits to the Telegraph Club in a forbidden part of town that caters to lesbians becomes, for Lily, a doorway to an eye-opening other world that is more diverse with remarkable, fulfilling experiences. Lo has produced an amazing work of fiction that captures America's social, political, and cultural aura during the Eisenhower years. The Red scare, the Lavender scare, McCarthyism, revocation of the American citizenship of a prominent Chinese scientist who co-founded the prestigious Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Mrs. Chang Kai Shek's visit to the US - all are detectable historical touchpoints. Lo wisely includes a detailed author's note that provides outstanding factual context to events in her story. This must-read book for teens to adults is a valuable and necessary acknowledgement of an ignored aspect of America history and diversity – LGBTQ people that are Asian.

About the Author: Malinda Lo was born in China and currently lives in Massachusetts with her partner. She writes LGBT novels for young adults. Other books include *Ash*, a lesbian reimagining of the fairy tale Cinderella. Her bestselling book *Last Night at the Telegraph Club* made Oprah Magazine's list of Top 50 LGBT books of 2021. She was a finalist for the Lambda Literary Award three times.



Discussion Questions: *The Stonewall Riots*

1. What were the origins, objectives, and tactics of the early LGBTQ and Homophile activist organizations during the 1950s?
2. Bars and social clubs that catered to the LGBTQ community were located in seedy neighborhoods. What were the reasons for this? What purpose did these spaces serve?
3. Among the objects pictured in the book are a New York City Police hat and nightstick. In what ways do these serve as symbols of the tactics authorities employed in their interactions with the LGBTQ community? What were these tactics? Were they legal?
4. The Mattachine Society adopted and adhered strictly to a specific form of protest. Why did they adopt this form of protest? How effective was it? What led to their demise after the Stonewall riots?
5. In what ways was the media complicit in advancing and reinforcing negative views of LGBTQ people?
6. How did news articles in the Village Voice, the New York Times and the Daily News characterize the Stonewall riots in their reporting and what impact did these stories have on the activists?
7. Why was Stonewall significant in the struggle for LGBTQ rights?
8. What connections do LGBTQ people make with the film the Wizard of Oz.

Discussion Questions: *Last Night at the Telegraph Club*

1. A recurring theme in the book is the cultural complexity of navigating Chinese and American culture. What are some examples of scenes in the book where this conflict is evident?
2. Shirley and Mrs. Hu have similar reactions to Lily's coming out as a lesbian. What concerns do their statements reflect?
3. What are the ways in which the author illustrates racial tension and racism between caucasians and Chinese Americans?
4. As Chinatown has its own cultural norms, Lily discovers that the Telegraph also has its own culture. What are some of the things she learns from, and about, the other women at the club?
5. What are some acts described in the book that were considered deviant in the 50s that are considered normal or more widely accepted now?
6. Why does Lo highlight the achievements of Aunt Judy and other Asian womens' work as computers in the space program?

7. Why does Lily feel more at ease at the Telegraph, and a sense of pride, when she is told that there was a male impersonator who was Chinese-American? How would you interpret Lo's inclusion of this historical fact?
8. Consider the characters of Shirley and Lily. What is Lo communicating through their conflicts?

Discussion Questions Across Both Texts

1. How are stereotypes of American middle class family life in the 1950s depicted in the two books as seen through TV shows in one book and the Hu family in the other? In what ways were they deceptive? How inclusive were they?
2. Consider New York and San Francisco in the 1950s. Compare and contrast the freedoms homosexuals and lesbians had or didn't have. What accounted for these differences?
3. How does Lo's book illustrate that the Stonewall book, though considered comprehensive, is incomplete history?
4. Compare and contrast the police raids of New York bars and clubs as described in the Stonewall book with the raid of the Telegraph club.
5. Compare and contrast the New York newspapers' characterization of Stonewall patrons with the San Francisco newspaper's characterization of Telegraph Club patrons. Were they equally sensational and disrespectful?

Activities

Pre-Reading Warm Up Activity

To begin to engage students on this topic, the teacher will project the 12-minute film clip from the Library of Congress collection titled *Gay and Proud* about the first Pride march held in New York City on June 28, 1970. Instruct the students to do the following as they watch: 1. Pay close attention to the marchers' chants, the writing on their placards, and demographic makeup of the marchers. 2. Write down what they see on the placards, what they hear in the chants, and characteristics of the marchers. After the students finish writing, the teacher will invite student volunteers to shout out what they saw and heard as she lists this information in three columns on a board. The teacher will then lead students in a discussion on The Cause. What are the specific grievances? What are the marchers advocating for? What can be said about who the marchers are?

Bulletin Board Idea

To create interest in the selected books, the teacher will create a classroom bulletin board on the theme: They Were in the Rooms Where it Happened. The board will consist of photographs and brief biographies of 6-8 people of color highlighting their contributions towards advancing LGBTQ rights. Each class session, a student volunteer will be solicited to select a biography from the board and do a shoutout to classmates about S/he who was in the room where it happened.

Lesson Plans

History/Social Studies

SOL VUS.13: The student will apply social science skills to understand the social, political, and cultural movements and changes in the United States during the second half of the twentieth century by: g) evaluating and explaining the changes that occurred in American culture.

Lesson Idea: A deep dive into the recent history of LGBTQ advocacy organizations, beginning post WWII. Students will develop posters for an exposition in the school library. The exposition and corresponding posters will cover three periods. Period 1 -Before the Stonewall Riots. Period 2- The immediate aftermath. Period 3 - Legacy today. Each student will select a period and develop a print or digital poster that clearly depicts critical issues, key people, events, laws/policies, and associated organizations that were transformational in advancing LGBTQ rights.

English

Reading

SOL 9.4: The student will read, comprehend, and analyze a variety of literary texts including narratives, narrative nonfiction, poetry and drama. i) Explain the influence of historical context on the form, style, and point of view of a written work.

Lesson Idea #1: Have a classroom debate. In preparation, assign students to read *Last Night at the Telegraph Club*. Tell them to prepare written notes using concrete examples from the book to support their interpretation of the book's title. On debate day, divide the class into two groups. Teacher will assign group A to represent last night as in final night and group B, last night as in the previous night. The teacher facilitates the debate helping each side to draw out historical influences that are the backdrop to the book's title.

SOL 9.4: The student will read, comprehend, and analyze a variety of literary texts including narratives, narrative nonfiction, poetry, and drama: k) Analyze how an author's specific word choices and syntax achieve special effects and support the author's purpose.

Lesson Idea#2: Have students identify as many instances as possible in *Last Night at the Telegraph Club* where the author uses some expressions and terms that might be considered

archaic and others derogatory today. Next, the teacher will lead a discussion on the author's likely intent in the use of that language.

Writing

SOL9.6: The student will develop narrative, expository, and persuasive writings for a variety of audiences and purposes.

Lesson Idea: An expository paper. Teacher will assign each student a word on the glossary list. Students will write an expository paper that explores their assigned word in-depth. Content of the essay could include (but would not be limited to):

Etymology/breakdown of the word, organizations whose objectives are to advocate for people of that identity, historical examples of people with that identity, and examples of contemporary public figures with that identity.

Research

SOL9.8: The student will use print, electronic databases, online resources, and other media to access information to create a research project.

a) Use technology as a tool for research to organize, evaluate, and communicate information.

Lesson Idea#1: Teacher will develop a list of LGBT-related identities and terminology without including their definitions. Students will be split into small groups. In their groups, the students will use various resources and databases to research these words and learn what they mean. In their own words, students will write definitions of each word on the list. The resulting list of terms with definitions will serve as a mini glossary or pocket-guide.

Lesson Idea #2: Exploring research sources. As a warm-up activity, tell students to review the timelines provided in *Last Night at the Telegraph Club*. Next, assign students to select ten milestones from the timelines that relate to LGBTQ history. For example, a 1950 milestone reads "Senator Joseph McCarthy produces a list of alleged communist working in the State Department." A 1951 milestone reads, "Stoumen v. Reilly, the California Supreme Court rules that homosexuals have the right to public assembly." Next, develop an annotated list of authoritative sources from electronic databases and online resources, for doing in-depth research on each of the ten milestones.

Family Life Education (FLE)

SOL: FLE 9.6: Students will recognize development of sexuality as a lifelong aspect of personality. "...Sexual orientation terms..and gender identity terms will be defined."

Lesson Idea #1: Provide students with a list of terms related to sexual orientation and gender identity. Have students develop a glossary consisting of the definition for each term in their own words. Have students identify one important person in their lives that would appreciate receiving

the glossary. Encourage students to use the glossary to clarify misconceptions and provide accurate information to friends and family.

Lesson Idea #2: Have students role play two scenes from *Last Night at the Telegraph Club*. The first, when Lily comes out as lesbian to her best friend Shirley. The second when she comes out to her mother Mrs. Hu. Next, have students discuss the ways in which Shirley and Mrs. Hu's reactions indicate gross misconceptions and lack of real knowledge about homosexuality.

Citations for Professional Reviews

Kirkus. (2019, March 17). [Review of the book *The Stonewall Riots: Coming Out in the Streets* by G.E. Pitman].

<https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/gayle-e-pitman/stonewall-riots-pitman>

Kirkus. (2020, November 12). [Review of the book *Last Night at the Telegraph Club* by M. Lo]. Kirkus Reviews.

<https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/malinda-lo/last-night-at-the-telegraph-club>

Publishers Weekly. (2019). [Review of the book *The Stonewall Riots: Coming Out in the Streets* by G.E. Pitman]. Publishers Weekly.

<https://www.publishersweekly.com/978-1-4197-3720-6>

Publishers Weekly. (2021). [Review of the book *Last Night at the Telegraph Club* by M. Lo].

Publishers Weekly. <https://www.publishersweekly.com/978-0-525-55525-4>

Additional Resources for the Historical Topic/Era

1. A news segment: “Why Stonewall Marked a Sea Change for LGBT Rights”

An eight-minute segment of the PBS News Newshour to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall uprising. It features interviews with one queer and one bisexual woman, generations apart in age, providing reflections on the challenges then, the sea change since, and what cultural acceptance has meant to them. It is an affirming piece for young, contemporary LGBTQ people. Reported by John Yang.

<https://video.whut.org/video/stonewall-at-50-1561413381/>

2. A review of the documentary “The Lavender Scare”

This article by Hanh Nguyen reviews a Josh Howard documentary titled *The Lavender Scare* that aired on PBS. The article, not the documentary is included here because it includes considerable background information on the scare and its impacts that is sufficient in case of time constraints.

The reviewer refers to the film as an “Enraging Look at Government-Sanctioned Homophobia” and a good place to begin learning about the modern gay rights movement in America.

<https://www.indiewire.com/2019/06/the-lavender-scare-review-pbs-lgbtq-civil-rights-homophobia-1202150664/>

3. An Article: “Why Did the Mafia Own the Bar?”

This article is provided by PBS American Experience as a supplement to its documentaries on Stonewall. It explains how Mafia families owned gay bars and clubs as a means of circumventing New York state liquor licensing laws. Extorting their patrons and bribing the police were common practices. Thus, at the time of the 1969 Stonewall Uprising, the Greenwich Village bar Stonewall Inn was owned and operated by the New York Mafia illustrating how the underground lives of LGBTQ people left them exposed to criminals.

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/stonewall-why-did-mafia-own-bar/>

4. Before the Castro: North Beach A Gay Mecca

This historical essay is a first person account from someone who, as a teenager in the 1940s and 1950s, frequented the gay and lesbian clubs in the same North Beach neighborhood that is the setting for the fictitious Telegraph Club. The account describes how during a period of repression, LGBTQ people created their own communities in places called The Paper Doll, The Black Cat, The Beige Room, Mona’s, Tin Angel, and the Fallen Angel. Black and white photographs from the period are included. They strongly evoke the ambience of the settings described in *Last Night at the Telegraph Club*.

[https://www.foundsf.org/index.php?title=Before the Castro: North Beach, a Gay Mecca](https://www.foundsf.org/index.php?title=Before_the_Castro:_North_Beach,_a_Gay_Mecca)

5. A chapter in the book “LGBTQ America: A Theme Study of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer History.”

Chapter 11 in this National Park Service, National Park Foundation publication, is titled *Breathing Fire: Remembering Asian Pacific American Activism in Queer History* by Amy Sueyoshi. This chapter fills a void in the incomplete picture of American LGBTQ history by documenting less known stories of activism in the Asian-American LGBTQ community.

<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/lgbtqheritage/upload/lgbtqtheme-asianpacific.pdf>

6. Film clip from Library of Congress LGBTQ+ Studies: A Resource Guide

This film clip titled *Gay and Proud* presents footage without narration of the first Pride march held in New York City on June 28, 1970. Absence of narration and meandering camera shots, gives the viewer the sensation of being there moving among the participants.

<https://guides.loc.gov/lgbtq-studies/introduction>

7. Blog by Malinda Lo, *The Women of Color Behind the Daughters of Bilitis*

This June 2021 article is part of Lo's work to unerase Asian-American contributions to LGBTQ activism. It describes a working class Filipina woman and a Chicana woman's role in establishing The Daughters of Bilitis, the first lesbian rights group in the United States, founded in San Francisco in 1955.

<https://www.malindalo.com/blog/2021/6/15/daughters-of-bilitis>