

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Homeroom: \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

## One Crazy Summer (1-7) "Cassius Clay Clouds"

**Lesson Objective:** Analyze how the narrator reveals her role and potential conflicts.

### Do Now

**Directions:** Read the text below and answer the questions that follow.

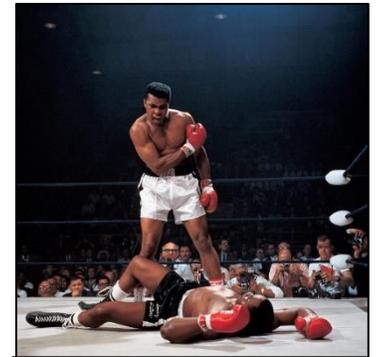
#### A Champ Like No Other

*Adapted from Turbulent Years: The 60s*

In 1964, when Cassius Clay, the 22-year-old Olympic gold medalist from Kentucky, entered the boxing ring with heavyweight champion Sonny Liston, most people predicted a quick knockout by Liston. But the underdog Clay triumphed, boldly jabbing and dancing his way to victory, instantly becoming world-famous.

Soon after defeating Liston to become the heavyweight champion, Clay announced that he was joining the Nation of Islam, a black nationalist group fighting against racism to improve the condition of African Americans in the United States. Many followers of the Nation of Islam chose new names to signify their new identities; followers often believed they had lost their true identities through slavery and therefore rejected their old names as symbols of oppression. The leader of the Nation of Islam gave Cassius Clay a new name: Muhammad Ali. Using that name, he became perhaps the most famous boxer of all time.

Some saw Ali's embrace of the Nation of Islam as a betrayal of his country. Many people refused to use Ali's new name and continued to refer to him as Cassius Clay. In 1967, Ali fought Ernie Terrell, another boxer who continued to refer to him as Cassius Clay. During the match, Ali taunted Terrell, yelling, "What's my name?" as they fought, a move typical of his brashness.



*Cassius Clay knocking out Sonny Liston to win the heavyweight title*

1. Complete each of the following sentences:

- Cassius Clay changed his name to Muhammad Ali **because** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- Cassius Clay changed his name to Muhammad Ali, **but** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### Vocabulary: Spectacle, Turbulent

Word	Definition	Related Parts of Speech	Situations	Image
<p><b>spectacle</b> <i>noun</i></p>	<p>1) an unusual, impressive public display 2) an object of curiosity or disapproval</p>	<p>spectacular <i>adjective</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As the boy threw a tantrum at the mall, his mom told him to stop making a <b>spectacle</b> of himself.</li> <li>_____</li> <li>_____</li> <li>_____</li> </ul>	
<p><b>turbulent</b> <i>adjective</i></p>	<p>full of disturbance or disorder; not stable or steady</p>	<p>turbulently <i>adverb</i></p> <p>turbulence <i>noun</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>After <b>turbulent</b> days of protests and rallies in the streets, the mayor agreed to meet with the leader of the resistance group.</li> <li>_____</li> <li>_____</li> <li>_____</li> </ul>	

## Vocabulary Active Practice

As we apply our new word knowledge, be sure to use the vocabulary word in your answer!

1. What are some holidays that might be celebrated with a **spectacle**? Describe the most **spectacular** things you might see.
2. If a plane is going to encounter **turbulence**, what might the captain say to passengers? Why?
3. What might a parent mean if they warn you not to make a **spectacle** of yourself in a public place?
4. The book from which our Do Now was excerpted is called *Turbulent Years: The 60s*. What might it mean that the 1960s were a **turbulent** time in American history?

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Pages 1-2

1. **Turn and Task:** Who are Vonetta and Fern? Underline any evidence that shows what the relationship between these characters and the narrator is like.

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-  2. Reread this line from p. 1:

*Still I anchored myself and my sisters best as I could to brace us for whatever came next. Those clouds weren't through with us yet and dealt another Cassius Clay-left-and-a-right-jab to the body of our Boeing 727.*

- a. What is literally happening in this line? **Challenge:** Include a vocabulary word in your response.

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- b. An **allusion** is a reference to a significant historical or literary figure. Why might the narrator **allude** to Cassius Clay the line above?

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- c. **Challenge:** Reread the first sentence from the excerpt above:

*Still I anchored myself and my sisters best as I could to brace us for whatever came next.*

Consider the word “anchored.” How might we interpret this line in multiple ways? What could it reveal about the narrator’s character?

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3. Consider these lines from pp. 1-2:

- *I kept my whimper to myself. It was bad enough my insides squeezed in and stretched out like a monkey grinder's accordion—no need to let anyone know how frightened I was. (p. 1)*
- *I took a breath so, when my mouth finally opened, I'd sound like myself and not like some scared rabbit. (p. 2)*

What do you notice about the narrator in these lines? Note any differences between her feelings and her actions.

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An **accordion** is an instrument played by pulling the sides apart and pushing them together. Street musicians called **organ grinders** sometimes included pet monkeys in their acts.

 4. Reread this excerpt from p. 2:

*I didn't know about clouds fighting and pushing for a fact, but I had to tell my sisters something. As long as Vonetta kept her fear to one shriek and Fern kept hers to biting Miss Patty Cake, I kept on spinning straw, making everything all right. That's mainly what I do. Keep Vonetta and Fern in line. The last thing Pa and Big Ma wanted to hear was how we made a grand Negro **spectacle** of ourselves thirty thousand feet up in the air around all these white people.*

a. In the fairy tale Rumpelstiltskin, a young girl must spin straw into gold. Because of this story, the phrase "spinning straw" means to make something out of nothing. What does the narrator mean when she says, "I kept on spinning straw"?

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b. What do you notice about her role in the family? Why might this be?

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c. **Turn and Talk:** Prior to the late 1960s, the word Negro was a term commonly used among both blacks and whites to refer to African Americans. What might the narrator mean by a "grand Negro **spectacle**"? Why might she be worrying about this potential **spectacle**?

Pages 2-5

**Annotation Task:** As we read this section, note anything we learn about a character named Cecile. Who do you think she is? Why? What do you notice about how she's mentioned?

<b>Notes</b>
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5. In one artful sentence, explain why the girls are on a plane. Where are they traveling from? Where are they going? Why?

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6. Reread these lines from pp. 2-3:

*Big Ma—that's Pa's mother—still says Cassius Clay. Pa says Muhammad Ali or just Ali. I slide back and forth from Cassius Clay to Muhammad Ali. Whatever picture comes to mind. With Cassius Clay, you hear the clash of fists, like the plane getting jabbed and punched. With Muhammad Ali you see a mighty mountain, greater than Everest, and can't no one knock down a mountain.*

a. Consider what we learned about Muhammad Ali in the Do Now. Why might it suggest that Big Ma continues to call him Cassius Clay?

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b. Why might the narrator "slide back and forth" between the names Cassius Clay and Muhammad Ali? What might this reveal about her character?

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c. **Challenge: Alliteration** refers to multiple words close together that begin with the same consonant sound. Annotate any examples of **alliteration** in the excerpt. How might this alliteration impact the narrator's perspective on each name?



7. Reread this excerpt from p. 3:

*Even though it had been his idea that we fly out to Oakland to see Cecile, Pa'd never once said how exciting our trip would be. He just said that seeing Cecile was something whose time had come. **That it had to be done.** Just because he decided it was time for us to see her didn't mean he wanted us to go.*

a. Consider the sentence in bold. What does the pronoun "it" refer to? Why might Pa think "it had to be done"?

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b. What **conflict** might these lines be predicting? **Challenge:** Contrast Pa's perspective on the trip with the girls' perspective in the next paragraph.

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In 1960, **John F. Kennedy (JFK)** was the youngest person elected president of the United States. His wife, **Jacqueline (Jackie) Kennedy**, was the First Lady, known for her style and sophistication. In 1963, President Kennedy was shot and killed while riding through the streets of Dallas, Texas. Six weeks after his assassination, **Idlewild Airport** in New York City was renamed John F. Kennedy International Airport.

8. Consider these lines from p. 4:

*Big Ma was as mad as sad as anyone when they killed the president. It's change she has no pity on. However things are stamped in Big Ma's mind is how they will be, now and forever. Idlewild will never be JFK. Cassius Clay will never be Muhammad Ali. Cecile will never be anything other than Cecile.*

a. Explain Big Ma's perspective on change. How is this perspective reflected in her use of names?

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b. What do you notice about Big Ma's perspective on Cecile?

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Pages 5-7: On Your Own

**Annotation Task:** As you read, note any additional moments of potential **foreshadowing** or additional **allusions**.



In April 1968, **Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.** was assassinated in Memphis. After King's murder, **riots** (violent confrontations including theft, destruction of property, or vandalism) broke out in over 100 American cities.



The United States military was directly involved in the **Vietnam War** from 1965-1973. Men between the ages of 18-26 were randomly selected for military service through the draft. Most of soldiers drafted were young men from poor and working-class families.

9. Reread this line from p. 5:

*There weren't too many of "us" in the waiting area, and too many of "them" were staring.*

Who does the narrator mean by "us" and "them"? Based on this line (and additional evidence from this scene), what can we infer about this time?

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 10. Consider this excerpt from p. 7:

*"Better come on and get some loving now..." She hadn't had to finish the rest about how this might be the last time in a while for kissing and hugging. A flash of memory told me Cecile wasn't one for kissing and hugging.*

Why might this "be the last time in a while for kissing and hugging"? What might this moment be **foreshadowing**?

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### Exit Ticket

1. Reread this line from p. 1:

*Still I anchored myself and my sisters best as I could to brace us for whatever came next.*

- a. What does this line show about the narrator of the novel?

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- b. What might this line be **foreshadowing**?

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## Homework

**Directions:** Answer the questions below using your knowledge of pp. 1-7.

1. Complete each of the following sentences:

- Pa decided the girls should see Cecile **because** \_\_\_\_\_

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- Pa decided the girls should see Cecile, **but** \_\_\_\_\_

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- Pa decided the girls should see Cecile, **so** \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Develop the sentence below using the following guidelines.

*Big Ma told Fern and Vonetta to “act right.”*

- a. Expand to include the word **spectacle**.

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- b. Begin with the phrase “Even though.”

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- c. Add the word “since” and complete the thought.

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