



The Case of the Crying Signpost

Written by Tom Xavier

Age Range: 9-12

Page Count: 100

Publisher: Saguaro Books (2023)

ISBN-13: 9798361863372

What to Expect: Friendship, disability, ghosts, African American culture, and overcoming fear.

Set against the historical backdrop of segregated 1930s New Orleans and suffused with the sounds, sights, and voices of a past era, *The Case of the Crying Signpost* offers noir-style detective fiction packaged just right for the middle-grade classroom.

Nelly's mom is a famous pilot, and her dad is a steamship captain, so Nelly's fear of heights and preference for reading over adventure disappoints them. Still, Nelly is pretty sure that when they suggest she be a bit more adventurous, what they *don't* have in mind is an unplanned trip to New Orleans in the company of a six-inch tall, saxophone-playing Scotland Yard detective.

Detective Tim Morcombe needs Nelly's help to search for a woman kidnapped by ghosts. Together, Nelly and Tim will face witches, villains, and other things much scarier than flying—and along the way, she'll learn a few things about taking risks.

Nelly is an engaging narrator with a lively personality, and the story packs a lot of adventure into a short space. Short chapters and age-appropriate language help keep

the story accessible while stretching readers to consider new words and challenging concepts—including how history continues to impact our lives today.

The Case of the Crying Signpost is exciting, instructive, and enjoyable—great for young mystery, history, and ghost-story fans.

—*The Children's Book Review*