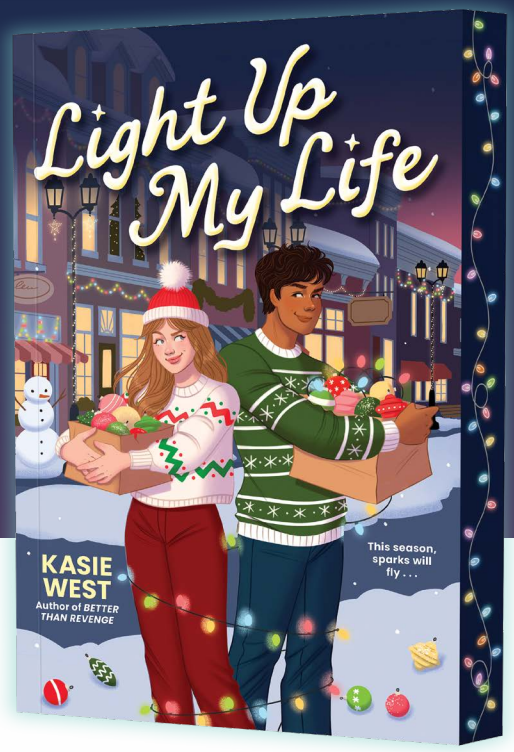

BOOK GUIDE

Light Up My Life

BY KASIE WEST

Light Up My Life: A Holiday Novel
By Kasie West
PB: 9798225008260 • $14.99
EB: 9798225008277 • $14.99
Also available in audio
Ages 12 & Up • Grades 7 & Up
On sale 10/20/2026

The Story

For as long as Jasmine Costa can remember, her family has had a sworn enemy: the snobby Moreno family, who live next door. Jasmine especially can't stand the teenage son, Ryan, who acts like he's so much better than her.

This Christmas, the rivalry heats up when their small town holds a contest for a best-decorated house. Jasmine HAS to take home the trophy. But then she and Ryan unexpectedly get thrown together during a holiday party . . . and discover that they have undeniable (and inconvenient) chemistry. Uh-oh.

As a secret romance blossoms amid the snow and the tinsel, Jasmine will have to make a choice. Can she stay loyal to her loved ones while falling for the one boy who's off-limits?

Beloved author Kasie West delivers a cozy Christmas rom-com that's the perfect read for anyone who's ever had a crush.

Reading Group Questions

1. At the beginning of the story, what is Jasmine's main goal? Is her goal at the end different from what it was at the start? If so, why did it change?
2. Jasmine makes a lot of assumptions about Ryan and his family before getting to know him better. Can you name one of her assumptions? Does she end up being right or wrong?
3. What do you think draws Jasmine and Ryan to each other? Is part of their interest in each other the fact that each of them is "off-limits" in some way? Why?
4. How does the theme of holiday spirit tie into the story?

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About the Author

Photo © Stephanie Ryan Photography

Kasie West is the critically acclaimed author of several YA novels, including *P.S. I Like You, Room to Breathe*, *Listen to Your Heart*, and more. Her books have been named as ALA Quick Picks for Reluctant Readers and YALSA Best Books for Young Adults. Kasie lives in Fresno, California, with her family, and you can visit her online at kasiewest.com.

Author Q&A

How did you become a writer?

I took a roundabout path into writing. I was always a reader. I love books with all my heart. But I went to school to be a teacher. Then in the process of raising kids, I thought of a book idea. I decided to try to write it. I loved the process and creativity of writing so much that I never looked back. My first few books became practice books, but eventually, I improved and decided to see how the whole publishing process worked. I'd never met a writer before and had no idea. After much research and many rejections, I found an agent and sold a book! Even though it was later in my life, I'm so happy to have found my love for writing.

Is Christmas your favorite holiday to write about? If so, why? Is there another holiday you think you'd enjoy writing about?

I LOVE Christmas. Everything about it, the decorations, the music, the treats, the cheesy movies, the togetherness! But I had never written a full-length Christmas book. Before this, I had only written a short story (which I loved). So this was my first go at a longer book. And I found it so much fun. So yes, this is my favorite holiday to write about. Another holiday I might enjoy writing about? Hmmmm . . . . I have a book called MAYBE THIS TIME where I wrote about many holidays. That was fun too! But my favorite after Christmas? Maybe 4th of July. I love a good summer party. And fireworks!

What would you say is your writing process?

My writing process is that I write when I can and where I can. For the most part these days, I'm writing during the day. But when I first started writing, I would write late at night when all my kids were in bed. I'm a night owl and there's something about nighttime that turns my inner editor down to a less judgy notch and I'm able to not be so hard on myself. So if I'm struggling, I find myself staying up til the wee hours of the morning to write. I generally have a loose outline of some major plot points in mind when I start to write, but the rest is a bit of 'discover the story as I go.'

Are there any people, experiences, or other stories that particularly influenced you as you were writing this book?

I called on a lot of childhood nostalgia for this book. My parents (mostly my mom) were really good at creating Christmas magic for us. I'm one of five children and my parents didn't have a lot of money, but they had a lot of love. And I have so many good memories from past Christmases. We ate good food and drank hot cocoa and sang songs (with Christmas bells even) and we drove around neighborhoods looking at lights. That last one plays a big role in this book. The lights. So yes, it was a very heartwarming experience for me to write this book while remembering bits of my own magic moments from the past. I hope those feelings shine through for readers.

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