



Tuesday, Sept. 23, 2025

LOUISIANA BOOK FESTIVAL TO FEATURE SHORT STORIES OF KATE CHOPIN IN “ONE BOOK, ONE FESTIVAL” DISCUSSION GROUP

Louisiana writer famous for portrayals of women, Creole and southern heritage



Selected short stories of Louisiana writer Kate Chopin (1850-1904) will be the focus of the 2025 Louisiana Book Festival's "One Book, One Festival" discussion group.

BATON ROUGE, La. — The [Louisiana Book Festival](https://LouisianaBookFestival.org) has selected a trio of short stories by renowned Louisiana author Kate Chopin as the focus of its popular [One Book, One Festival](#) discussion group on **Saturday, November 1, 2025**.

One Book, One Festival participants read the program's featured material in advance and then join the scholar-led discussion with others at the festival. Chopin's featured stories are "At the 'Cadian Ball" and "La Belle Zoraïde" from *Bayou Folk*, and "Athenaise" from *A Night in Acadie*.

The program is open to all festival attendees and will be led by [Dr. Gary Richards](#), professor of English and former chairman of the Department of English and Linguistics at the University of Mary Washington. Richards is an expert on southern literature and culture who previously taught at the University of New Orleans and has facilitated twelve previous sessions since *One Book, One Festival* began in 2008.

“One of the things that makes the Louisiana Book Festival special is the opportunity for festivalgoers to engage directly in the literary discussions,” said Lieutenant Governor Billy Nungesser. “Gary Richards always brings wonderful insight and expertise to the *One Book, One Festival* program and we’re excited to welcome him back to lead the conversation again this year.”

The work of American short story writer and novelist Kate Chopin (1850-1904) focuses on the inner lives of intelligent women striving for independence and individual freedom. Born in St. Louis, Missouri, she lived in New Orleans and Cloutierville, Louisiana in the 1870s and early 1880s, and most of her stories are set in the Bayou State. She is best known for her novel *The Awakening* (1899) and her collections of short stories read throughout the world.

“At the ‘Cadian Ball” is the prequel to Chopin’s famous short story “The Storm,” and addresses social class and relationships, contrasting Creole and Acadian culture through its main characters. It was written in July 1892 and first published in *Two Tales* (Boston), October 1892.

“La Belle Zoraïde” explores themes of love, loss, and oppression through the story of an enslaved woman who is pressured by her mistress to marry a man she does not love. It was written in September 1893 and published in *Vogue* in January 1894.

“Athenaise” is the story of a willful young woman who runs away from her husband’s Louisiana plantation and lives secretly in New Orleans. It was written in April of 1895 and published in the *Atlantic Monthly* in August and September 1896.

“Kate Chopin's short stories helped to revolutionize 19th century literature by giving voice to women's experiences that had been largely absent in American fiction,” said State Librarian Meg Placke. “We are honored to feature the work of this important Louisiana author in our *One Book, One Festival* program this fall. Her influence on subsequent generations of writers, particularly women writers, cannot be overstated.”

Participants can access Chopin’s featured stories online or read them in the Penguin Classics edition of *The Awakening and Selected Stories*. More information about Kate Chopin’s life and work is available at the Kate Chopin International Society website at KateChopin.org.

Free and open to the public, the Louisiana Book Festival is scheduled for **Saturday, November 1, 2025**, at the [State Library of Louisiana](http://StateLibraryofLouisiana.org) and Capitol Park area in downtown Baton Rouge. For more information, visit LouisianaBookFestival.org and the [Louisiana Book Festival Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/LouisianaBookFestival).

The [Louisiana Center for the Book](http://LouisianaCenterfortheBook.org) was established in the State Library of Louisiana in 1994. Its mission is to stimulate public interest in reading, books, literacy, and libraries and to celebrate Louisiana’s rich literary heritage. It is the official state affiliate of the Library of Congress Center for the Book.



Contact Information:

Kevin Calbert
State Library of Louisiana
225-342-4930
kcalbert@library.la.gov

Barry Landry
Office of the Lieutenant Governor
225-342-7009
blandry@crt.la.gov