







On a starlit night in New Orleans, a young girl named Tiana waited for her mother to finish work. Tiana's mother, Eudora, was a talented seamstress, and was putting the finishing touches to a dress she was making for her very best customer, a little girl named Charlotte La Bouff. As Eudora sewed, she read a fairy tale to Tiana, who sat with Charlotte on the rug in Charlotte's pretty pink room.



Charlotte's bedroom was designed to reflect her desperate desire to be a princess.  
IAN GOODING, LISA KEENE AND ANN LEE / DIGITAL

"Here come's my favourite part," Charlotte whispered.

The girls listened, as the frog in the story pleaded with the beautiful princess to kiss him to break a witch's curse. The princess took pity on the frog, lifted him to her lips and kissed him.



"Then the frog was transformed into a handsome prince. They were married and lived happily ever after. The end," Eudora read.

Charlotte wanted to hear the story again, but Tiana crossed her arms in disgust.

"There is no way, in this whole wide world... I would ever, ever, ever, I mean, never kiss a frog. Yuck!" said Tiana.

Charlotte laughed and said she would kiss a hundred frogs to become a princess.

At that moment, Eli La Bouff – the most powerful man in all of New Orleans – walked into the room.

Big Daddy lifted his daughter in the air. From her father's arms, Charlotte could see the book of fairy tales.

Charlotte pleaded with her father for a dress just like the princess's in the picture.

Big Daddy, who would do anything for his little girl, asked Eudora if she could make Charlotte another new dress.

Eudora said she could for her best customer, before telling Tiana it was time to go.



Big Daddy is motivated by his unbridled adoration for his daughter, Charlotte.  
BILL SCHWAB / GRAPHITE, DIGITAL

As Eudora and Tiana rode home on the streetcar, Tiana looked out at the grand white houses on the La Bouff's wide, well-lit street.

The view at Tiana's stop looked very different. There, the street was dark. The houses were small and close together, but they were lit up on the inside.

At home, Tiana helped her father, James, make gumbo, adding a few splashes of hot sauce to get it just the way he liked it.



When he tasted it, James told Eudora that their daughter had a gift that needed to be shared. Tiana ran out to call the neighbours to come over to try her gumbo, and people gathered on the porch to enjoy the rich stew she had made.

At bedtime, Tiana's father told her that good food brought people together. He said that when he opens his own restaurant, people will be lining up to taste his food.

"Our food," Tiana corrected. Her father laughed, and agreed.

James gave Tiana a picture of a restaurant similar to the one he wanted to open. On it, he wrote, "Tiana's Place". Tiana hugged the picture to her chest.

"Daddy! Look!" Tiana cried, pointing to a star out of the window.

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Tiana's parents don't have much screen time, but are a very important part of the emotional storyline. **DISNEY STUDIO ARTISTS / DIGITAL**





Tiana explained how a story in Charlotte's book said that if they made a wish on the Evening Star, that wish would come true.

Tiana's mother and father encouraged her to wish, but her father said that wishing could only take her so far. Tiana also needed to work hard to make that wish come true. James made Tiana promise that no matter how hard she worked, she would never lose sight of what was important.

Once she was alone, Tiana rushed to the window to make her wish.

"Please, please, please!" Tiana wished, closing her eyes. She clutched the picture to her chest as the star twinkled silently. When Tiana opened her eyes, she found she wasn't alone, as on the windowsill there sat a frog.

Illustrating young Tiana, adult Tiana and frog Tiana all provided different challenges for the artists. **MARK HENN / ROUGH ANIMATION (TIANA) / RUSS EDMONDS / ROUGH ANIMATION (FROG) / JOSIE TRINIDAD / STORY SKETCH**



The frog croaked, and Tiana screamed and ran from the room.

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Tiana wished hard, and as she grew up, she worked hard, too. But after fourteen years of working and saving every penny she could, her wish had not come true. Meanwhile, Tiana's father died during the war, but even though he wasn't there beside her, Tiana never gave up on their dream.



Tiana wishes on a star to bring her and her father's dream to life. **LISA KEENE / DIGITAL**



After a long night waitressing, Tiana returned to her room and added the tips she had received to her jar of savings in her drawer.

"We'll be there soon," Tiana said to a picture of her father.

Tiana flopped onto her bed, but she didn't rest long, as moments later, her alarm rang. Tiana got up, changed and hopped on a streetcar to her second job at Duke's Café.

Tiana worked quickly. She served food with a flourish, and made the customers smile.



Among the diners, a table of Tiana's friends invited her out to celebrate Mardi Gras with them, but Tiana told them she had to work to save for her restaurant.

"Girl, all you ever do is work," her friend Georgia complained. She thought that Tiana needed to live a little.

Buford, the chef, laughed. He said that there was no way Tiana could save that much money.



Charlotte is grounded by her friendship with Tiana. **MARGIE DANIELS**  
/ GRAPHITE

Just then, a familiar customer walked into the café, and Tiana said good morning, as Eli La Bouff took a seat. Tiana congratulated Big Daddy on being voted King of the Mardi Gras.

Big Daddy had come to celebrate, and Tiana knew just what he wanted, as she put a plate of fresh beignets down in front of him. Big Daddy told her to keep them coming.

The door tinkled again, as Charlotte La Bouff rushed in with exciting news.

"Prince Naveen of Maldonia is coming to New Orleans," Charlotte said, holding up a newspaper.

Duke's Café is located in the French Quarter of the old city.  
**IAN GOODING AND ED LI / DIGITAL**