

**Nothing Rhymes With Juneteenth**  
**A Free Play by Idris Goodwin**

JEAN - The Parent

PETE - The Kid

Any gender may play these parts

*Please perform the lines as written. Do not add or subtract, alter or repeat. Feel free however to emphasize, speed up, slow down--to feel it from the bottom of your feet.*

PETE

Hey what rhymes with Juneteenth?

JEAN

Oh... I'm not sure that's a hard one  
Juneteenth, June-Teenth, June...teenth...

PETE

I been sitting here blank for ten minutes.

JEAN

What're you doing?

PETE

It's for school--we're supposed to present about our favorite holiday.

JEAN

I thought your favorite was Halloween?

PETE

It is Halloween.

JEAN

Soooooo why are you asking me how to rhyme Juneteenth?

PETE

Because this year for Halloween I'm going as one of the liberation soldiers in 1865 who went down to Galveston, Texas and delivered the message that the enslaved people were free. Did you know it took two years after the emancipation proclamation?!

JEAN

Wow.

PETE

I love soldiers but I thought wouldn't it be cool to be one of the soldiers who marched all the way to Galveston Texas to deliver the good news to hundreds of enslaved people

JEAN

So...your report is NOT about Halloween

PETE

The report is, but the rap will be about Juneteenth.

JEAN

Your report is about Halloween and your rap is about Juneteenth

PETE

Exactly

Every kid knows Halloween but not everybody knows Juneteenth so putting it in a rap makes sense right?

JEAN

Yes it does....

PETE

I just need to think of a rhyme

JEAN

Maybe you break it in half? Rhyme *June* and then *Teenth*  
So moon----and uh....

PETE

Moon Thief?

JEAN

Juneteenth  
Moon Thief

PETE

But what does liberating enslaved people have to do with stealing the moon?

JEAN

Good question

What if you just didn't rhyme Juneteenth but rhymed the words around them?

PETE

I thought of that BUT if I can think of a good rhyme for Juneteenth more people will remember it. That's what rhymes are for.

JEAN

True

PETE  
June Teenth

JEAN  
Let me just check the rhyming website

PETE  
There's a rhyming website?

JEAN  
Yup...  
Okay---  
June  
Teenth

PETE  
Is it cheating to use a rhyming website?

JEAN  
No more or less than using a dictionary.  
Nope. Nothing rhymes with Juneteenth

PETE  
Argh!

JEAN  
Well don't get frustrated.  
We'll figure this out....You know what?

PETE  
What?

JEAN  
I rapped a little in middle school

PETE  
Really?

JEAN  
Well once. Some friends and I went as the hip hop group Arrested Development for Halloween.

PETE  
Who?

JEAN

Doesn't matter

We learned one of their songs and performed it at the Halloween school assembly

PETE

You did!?

JEAN

I think your grandma has a video of it somewhere

I was Speech, the lead rapper and I really had to study his lyrics

And the thing I noticed is that he never actually rhymes the entire word

Tenn-e-ssee---he just rhymes be and see

*For some strange reason it had to **be***

*he guided me to Tennessee*

So don't get caught up in trying to find the perfect rhyme. There are lots of ways to make it work.

PETE

How?

JEAN

You tell me. What's Juneteenth?

PETE

A celebration.

JEAN

Of?

PETE

Being Free

JEAN

*Free rhymes with a lot doesn't it*

PETE

Yes it does. It does!

Soooo many things

Here---let me change it

Pete makes some scribbles

JEAN  
Ready to try it out?

PETE  
Okay---so pretend I am in my liberation soldier uniform

JEAN  
Ohmigosh! You look amazing!

PETE  
Thank you...

(clears throat)

*You all the know the story  
divided states  
civil wars  
Bullets and hate  
Brother vs brother  
Slave vs master  
A bloody chapter  
Of american disaster*

*Lincoln had a plan  
To free every man  
Woman and girl  
Enslaved in the land*

*The south said wait  
That's not your call  
The war wasn't over  
the news got stalled*

*Two years after  
Emancipation  
Black people were enslaved*

...I said black and not african american because african american has so many syllables

JEAN  
No problem keep going!

PETE

Okay

Let me start back a bit

*The south said wait  
That's not your call  
The war wasn't over  
So the news got stalled*

*Two years after  
Emancipation  
Black people were enslaved  
across the nation!*

*They didn't know  
The south would lose  
And soon they'd get  
the freedom news*

*Until then  
They stayed in danger  
Waiting on the troops  
Of General Granger*

*June 19  
Was the date  
Jubilee Jubilee  
Let's Celebrate*

*And word it spread  
Across the south  
And that's what juneteenth  
Is about*

*So from Texas to Tennessee  
Hip Hip Hooray! Now we're free*

*June is here  
We are free  
Celebrate this day  
For eternity*

*We are free*

*We are free  
June Teenth is here  
It's a Jubilee*

*When I say June  
You say Teenth*

*June!*

JEAN  
*Teenth!*

PETE  
*June!*

JEAN  
*Teenth!*

PETE  
*And one more thing  
I must say  
Juneteethn my real favorite holiday*

I just made that last part up in my head just now

Applause from Jean

JEAN  
How Subversive

PETE  
What's subversive mean?

JEAN  
It means that you are the best kind of liberation soldier. And for that you get ice cream.

END OF PLAY