



# allegedly

BY TIFFANY D. JACKSON

## ABOUT THE BOOK

Mary B. Addison killed a baby. Allegedly. She didn't say much in that first interview with detectives, and the media filled in the only blanks that mattered: a white baby had died while under the care of a churchgoing black woman and her nine-year-old daughter. The public convicted Mary and the jury made it official. But did she do it?

There wasn't a point to setting the record straight before, but now she's got Ted—and their unborn child—to think about. When the state threatens to take her baby, Mary's fate now lies in the hands of the one person she distrusts the most: her Momma. No one knows the real Momma. But does anyone know the real Mary?

## Questions for Group Discussion

- When Mary is taken away from her mother, she is supposed to be taken care of by different state facilities. How is Mary treated by the adults and institutions in her life?
- How would you describe Mary's relationship with her mother? How does your understanding of their relationship change throughout the book? What major life event drives Mary to finally tell her story? Who is she trying to protect?
- What language does Mary use to describe Ted and their relationship throughout the book? Is this the kind of relationship that you imagine for yourself? Why or why not?
- Is there such a thing as an evil person? How does this book answer that question? How would you answer that question?
- How has Mary's environment and life choices shaped who she is? How has your environment and/or the choices you have made shaped you?
- What is foreshadowing? How does the author use foreshadowing to give you clues about what happens later in the book?
- Who do you believe in the book and why? Does that change throughout the book? How does the author make you question the trustworthiness of various characters?
- How does race contribute to the public perception and media coverage of Alyssa's death? What differences can you find in the ways characters talk about race in relation to Mary's alleged crime?
- What is Mary's relationship to hope? How does being incarcerated/in the system affect Mary's perspective on what is possible for her? How does it affect her views of herself and those around her?
- How does Mary understand herself to be similar to or different from the girls in her group home? How does she distance herself from the other girls there? Why do you think she aligns herself with the "New Girl"? What connects them and what draws them apart?
- What is the language that Mary uses when she describes other court-involved girls and/or adults in her life? What does Mary think about these people? How does she describe

them? How does this reflect the way Mary thinks about other people in general? How does the way you think about the people around you illuminate what kind of person you are? Do your thoughts define you?

- Why doesn't Mary initially like Ms. Claire (pg. 114)? How does Ms. Claire "see" and/or treat Mary differently than other adults in her life? How does this make Mary feel? Do you have people in your life that see through you?
- Do you think your actions define you? On page 337, Ms. Claire says "What yuh may or may not've done is not di definition of *who* yuh really are." Who do you think Mary is? What do you think defines her? What defines you?
- How do the news articles and quotes from books about Mary and her trial illuminate different aspects of her personality and alleged crime? How does the world see Mary? How does Mary react when she finds books that have been written about her? How does she react to the way people think about her?



## About the Author

**TIFFANY D. JACKSON** is the critically acclaimed author of YA novels including the NAACP Image Award–nominated *Allegedly*; *Monday's Not Coming*, a Walter Dean Myers Honor Book and John Steptoe New Talent Award winner; and *Let Me Hear a Rhyme*. A TV professional by day, novelist by night, she received her bachelor of arts in film from Howard University and her master of arts in media studies from the New School. A Brooklyn native, she is a lover of naps, cookie dough, and beaches, currently residing in the borough she loves, most likely multitasking. You can visit her online at [www.writeinbk.com](http://www.writeinbk.com).



Photo by Andrew Fennell