



CLAY COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOLS

900 WALNUT STREET, GREEN COVE SPRINGS, FL 32043
P (904) 336-6500 F (904) 336-6536 W oneclay.net

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS
David S. Broskie

12/15 @ 11am
Lab 1002

BOARD MEMBERS:

- Janice Kerekes, District 1
- Mary Bolla District 2
- Beth Clark District 3
- Tina Bullock District 4
- Ashley Gilhousen, District 5

Request for Reconsideration or Review of Instructional Materials

Individual Requesting Review: BRUCE FRIEDMAN
 Phone: [REDACTED] Email: BRUCE.FRIEDMAN@NOLEFTTURN.VS
 Physical Address: [REDACTED]
 City: [REDACTED]
 School: RISEVIEW etc Grade Level: HS etc Subject: VARIES

Check as applicable:

- I represent a special interest group named NOLEFTTURN IN EDUCATION FLORIDA
- I already have a copy of the material
- I will review the material on-site
- I wish to check out the material for a two-week period

Type of Instructional Material:

- Novel
- Textbook
- Workbook
- Symbol
- Video (YouTube, DVD, etc.)
- Other: VARIES

Title: * Fable
 Author: * Adrienne Young ISBN: * 978-1-25025436-8

1. What is your interest or reason for this request? PROTECT CHILDREN

2. What is objectionable about the material: specific pages, chapters, language, scenes?
 Attach additional information, if necessary. ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT PAGES

- COMMON CORE
- CSE
- SEL
- DEI / CRT / ANTI-POLICE
- SEXUAL CONTENT

See ATTACHED

IS THIS AVAILABLE IN KEYSTONE TO JR HIGH STUDENTS? Why?

3. What do you believe might be the result of a student using this material? DAMAGED SOULS

4. For what age group would you recommend this material? ADULT

5. Is there anything good in this material? NA

6. Would you care to recommend another instructional material in the same format, covering the same subject or content standards? If so, please list the title, author, publisher, and ISBN: NA

Printed name of Complainant: BRUCE FRIEDMAN

Signature of Complainant: 

Date: 7/31/2022

Please submit the completed form and any additional documentation to:

Clay County District Schools
Attn: Supervisor of Instructional Resources
900 Walnut Street
Green Cove Springs, Florida 32043

To be completed by Instructional Resources Office Staff:

Received in Instructional Resources: Date 8/2/22 by gf

Attachments were included with this form. Total number of pages 4

The form was fully completed and accepted? Yes/No. If not, why?

Date Committee convened: _____

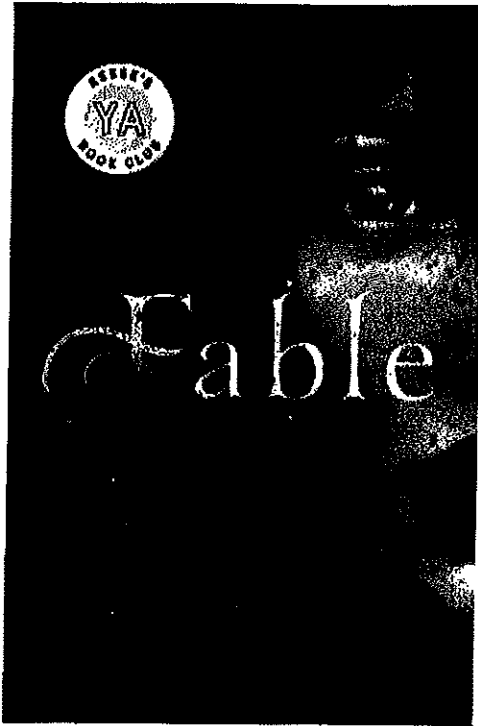
Committee Members: _____

Outcome: _____

Notification of Complainant: Date _____ by _____

Additional information: _____

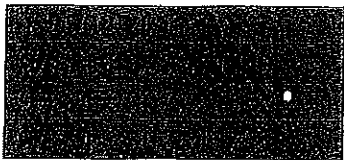
FABLE



Young Adult

By Adrienne Young

ISBN:978-1-250-25436-8



Summary of Concerns:

This book contains references to sexual activities.

337 I lifted onto my toes, pressing my mouth to his, and the boiling heat that had flooded into me underwater found me again, racing beneath every inch of my skin. The smell of rye and saltwater and sun poured into my lungs, and I drank it in like the first desperate sip of air after a dive.

His hands found my hips, and he walked me back until my legs hit the side of the bed. I opened his jacket and pushed from his shoulders before he laid me down beneath him. His weight pressed down on top of me and I arched my back as his hands caught my legs and pulled them up around him.

I closed my eyes and tears rolled down my temples, disappearing into my hair. It was the way his skin felt against mine. It was the feeling of being held. I hadn't been touched by another person in so long, and he was so beautiful to me in that moment that I felt as if my chest might crack open.

My head tipped back, and I pulled him closer so I could feel him against me. He groaned, his mouth pressed to my ear, and I tugged at the length of my shirt until I was pulling it over my head. He sat up, his eyes running over every inch of me and his breaths slowing.

I hooked my fingers into his belt, waiting for him to look at me. Because it was a wave that would retreat if I didn't say it...

...And when he kissed me again, it was slow. It was pleading.

...The smell of him and the drag of his fingers down my back. The taste of salt when I kissed his shoulder and the slide of his lips down my throat.

011_Summary of Fable by Adrienne Young

[some kissing and one page of steamy intercourse].

Format p # and content/keyword - my comments follow

P 337 It's a sex scene – doesn't make the book any better – does identify it as "appealing to prurient interests." Ergo, it violates the law! Stop filling the shelves with unlawful items please!

"His weight pressed down on top of me and I arched my back as his hands caught my legs and pulled them up around him.

I closed my eyes and tears rolled down my temples, disappearing into my hair. It was the way his skin felt against mine. It was the feeling of being held. I hadn't been touched by another person in so long, and he was so beautiful to me in that moment that I felt as if my chest might crack open.

My head tipped back, and I pulled him closer so I could feel him against me. He groaned, his mouth pressed to my ear, and I tugged at the length of my shirt until I was pulling it over my head. He sat up, his eyes running over every inch of me and his breaths slowing.

I hooked my fingers into his belt, waiting for him to look at me. Because it was a wave that would retreat if I didn't say it...

...And when he kissed me again, it was slow. It was pleading.

...The smell of him and the drag of his fingers down my back. The taste of salt when I kissed his shoulder and the slide of his lips down my throat."



District Committee Reconsideration Meeting Minutes

Title: Fable
Author: Adrienne Young
Date: 12.15.22
Committee Members: [REDACTED]
Complainant: Bruce Friedman (not in attendance) *Reconsideration form read aloud for committee.

1. What is the overall purpose, theme or message of the material?

Survival instinct against all odds, making friends in the hardest of circumstances, pleasing your parents

2. This work is most suitable for which grades? (Check all that apply.)

Pre-K K-6 7-8 9-12 None

3. Are concepts presented in a manner appropriate to the ability and maturity level of your suggested audience?

Yes No

4. Will reading or listening to this work result in a more compassionate understanding of human beings?

Yes No

If yes, explain how.

It paints a picture of when you don't have resources, it helps you think outside the box and gives you a perspective of people that may be taken advantage of

5. Does this work offer an opportunity to understand and better appreciate the aspirations, achievements, and problems of different cultures and/or minority groups?

Yes No

If yes, explain how.

Deals with the preconceptions of different cultures and groups, it speaks to how strong willed a person is, the girl has a lot of skills and she is able to survive against all odds... persevere



District Committee Reconsideration Meeting Minutes

6. Are questionable elements of this work an important part of the overall development of the story or text?

Yes No

Explain your answer in a few sentences.

I didn't find questionable elements.
The book depicted some cruelty, but very tamely written kiss scene.

7. Non-fiction ONLY: Does the material contribute to the evolution of ideas?

Yes No

Explain your answer in a few sentences.

n/a

8. Are the illustrations appropriate for the student's developmental age?

Yes No N/A

9. Does this work have literary merit?

Yes No Not Applicable

10. Could this work be considered offensive in any way due to:

<input type="checkbox"/> profanity	<input type="checkbox"/> brutality	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion or portrayal of religious practices/ideologies
<input type="checkbox"/> language	<input type="checkbox"/> sexual behavior	<input type="checkbox"/> manner characters are presented
<input type="checkbox"/> violence	<input type="checkbox"/> prurient behavior	<input type="checkbox"/> portrayal of any societal groups
<input type="checkbox"/> cruelty	<input type="checkbox"/> aberrant behavior	<input type="checkbox"/> political positions

Notes: I don't see how this book can be found offensive. Kids read much more explicit content. This book is nothing.

MEETING NOTES:

Fable

12/15/22

11 am

Vote/Recommendation:

4 Keep @ JH + HS only

1 Keep @ HS only

Reconsideration Ballot

Date: 12/15/22

Title: Fable

Author: Adrienne Young

Select ONE option:

I vote to remove the book from all libraries

OR

I vote to keep in Clay County School Libraries (*specify recommendation below*)

Keep the book at ALL school levels

Keep the book at the junior and high school levels

Keep the book at the high school level ONLY

Reconsideration Ballot

Date: 12/15/22

Title: Fable

Author: Adrienne Young

Select ONE option:

I vote to remove the book from all libraries

OR

I vote to keep in Clay County School Libraries (*specify recommendation below*)

Keep the book at ALL school levels

Keep the book at the junior and high school levels

Keep the book at the high school level ONLY

Reconsideration Ballot

Date: 12/15

Title: Fable

Author: Adrienne Young

Select ONE option:

I vote to remove the book from all libraries

OR

I vote to keep in Clay County School Libraries (*specify recommendation below*)

Keep the book at ALL school levels

Keep the book at the junior and high school levels

Keep the book at the high school level ONLY

Reconsideration Ballot

Date: 12/15/20

Title: Fable

Author: Adrienne Young

Select ONE option:

I vote to remove the book from all libraries

OR

I vote to keep in Clay County School Libraries (*specify recommendation below*)

Keep the book at ALL school levels

Keep the book at the junior and high school levels

Keep the book at the high school level ONLY

Reconsideration Ballot

Date: 12/15/2022

Title: Fable

Author: Adrienne Young

Select ONE option:

I vote to remove the book from all libraries

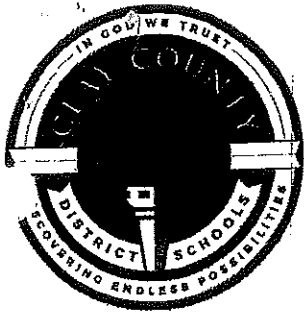
OR

I vote to keep in Clay County School Libraries (*specify recommendation below*)

Keep the book at **ALL** school levels

Keep the book at the **junior and high** school levels

Keep the book at the **high school** level **ONLY**



TOWN HALL #2 1/19/23
to Broskie By Hand
CLAY COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOLS

900 WALNUT STREET, GREEN COVE SPRINGS, FL 32043
P (904) 336-6500 F (904) 336-6536 W oneclay.net
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS
David S. Broskie

BOARD MEMBERS:

- Janice Kerekes, District 1
- Mary Bolla, District 2
- Beth Clark, District 3
- Tina Bullock, District 4
- Ashley Gilhousen, District 5

DHS
RAS
FTH
KHH

Request for Reconsideration or Review of Instructional Materials

Individual Requesting Review: David Friedman

Phone: [REDACTED]

Physical Address: [REDACTED]

City: M...

School: CLAY COUNTY HS... Grade Level: HS... Subject: VIRTUES

Check as applicable:

- I represent a special interest group named NO LEFT TURN IN EDUCATION
- I already have a copy of the material
- I will review the material on-site
- I wish to check out the material for a two-week period

Type of Instructional Material:

- Novel
- Textbook
- Workbook
- Symbol
- Video (YouTube, DVD, etc.)
- Other: VARIES

Title: FAN FROM THE TREE

Author: ANDREW SOLOMON

ISBN: 978-1-48144090-5

NOTE: Requests may be returned if questions 1, 2, and 3 do not include a detailed response.

1. What is your interest or reason for this request?

PROTECT CHILDREN!

2. Does this material violate F.S. Chapter 847 regarding Obscenity? Circle one: YES/NO
If YES, please explain in Question 3.

(Circled NO)

3. What is objectionable about the material? Include specific pages, chapters, language, scenes, etc., in your response. Attach additional information, if necessary.

PROMOTES TRANSGENDERISM
CRT / SEL / DEI
ANTI RELIGION

SEE 2 SIMILARS IN DESTINY
& EXCERPTS ATTACHED

4. What do you believe might be the result of a student using this material?

DAMAGED SOULS!

5. For what age group would you recommend this material? ADULT

6. Is there anything good in this material? NA

7. Would you care to recommend another instructional material in the same format, covering the same subject or content standards? If so, please list the title, author, publisher, and ISBN: NA

Printed name of Complainant:

BRUCE FRIEDMAN

Please do not forget to sign, as forms without signatures may be returned.

[Redacted]

[Signature]

[Redacted]

1/13/2023

Please submit the completed form and any additional documentation to:

Clay County District Schools
Attn: Supervisor of Instructional Resources
900 Walnut Street
Green Cove Springs, Florida 32043

To be completed by Instructional Resources Office Staff:

- Received in Instructional Resources: Date 1/20/23 by [Signature]
- Attachments were included with this form. Total number of pages 12
- The form was fully completed and accepted: Yes/No. If not, why?
- Date Committee convened:
- Committee:
- Outcome:
- Notification of Complainant: Date by
- Additional information:

AWARD-WINNING AUTHOR OF
MONDAY DEMON

FAR FROM

THE TREE

ANDREW SOLOMON

self-destructive behavior in the wake of such episodes; one man had committed suicide in middle age as the culmination of despair that his family traced to the youthful exploitation. The article made me profoundly sad—and confused, because some teachers accused of such acts had been kinder to me than anyone else at my school during a desolate time. My beloved history teacher took me out to dinner, gave me a copy of the Jerusalem Bible, and talked with me during free periods when other students wanted nothing to do with me. The music teacher awarded me concert solos, let me call him by his first name and hang out in his office, and led the glee club trips that were among my happiest adventures. They seemed to recognize who I was and thought well of me anyway. Their implicit acknowledgment of my sexuality helped me not to become an addict or a suicide.

When I was in ninth grade the school's art teacher (who was also a football coach) kept trying to strike up a conversation with me about masturbation. I was paralyzed. I thought it might be a form of entrapment, and that if I responded, he'd tell everyone that I was gay, and I'd be even more of a laughingstock than I already was. No other faculty member ever made a move on me—perhaps because I was a skinny, socially awkward kid with glasses and braces, perhaps because my parents had a reputation for protective vigilance, perhaps because I assumed a self-insulating arrogance that made me less vulnerable than some others.

The art teacher was removed when allegations against him emerged soon after my conversations with him. The history teacher was let go and committed suicide a year later. The music teacher, who was married, survived the ensuing "reign of terror," as one gay faculty member later called it, when many gay teachers were ousted. Kamil wrote to me that the fringes of nonpredatory gay teachers grew out of "a misguided attempt to root out pedophilia by falsely equating it with homosexuality." Students spoke monstrously of and even to gay teachers because their prejudice was so obviously endorsed by the school community.

The head of the theater department, Anne MacKay, was a lesbian who quietly survived the recriminations. Twenty years after I graduated, she and I began corresponding by e-mail. I drove to the east end of Long Island to visit her a decade later when I learned she was dying. We had both been contacted by Amos Kamil, who was then researching his article, and had both been unsettled by the allegations he shared. Miss MacKay had been the wise teacher who once explained gently that I was teased because of how I walked, and tried to show me a more confident stride. She staged *The Importance of Being Earnest* my

senior year so that I could have a star turn as Algernon. I had come to thank her. But she had invited me to apologize.

At a previous job, she explained, word had got around that she lived with another woman, parents had complained, and she'd gone into a kind of hiding for the rest of her career. Now she regretted the formal distance she'd sustained and felt she had failed the gay students to whom she might have been a beacon—although I knew, and she did, too, that if she'd been more open, she'd have lost her job. When I was her student, I never thought to wonder about greater intimacy than we had, but talking decades later, I realized how forlorn we'd both been. I wish we could have been the same age for a while, because who I am at forty-eight would be a good friend for who she was when she was teaching young me. Off campus, Miss MacKay was a gay activist; now, I am, too. When I was in high school, I knew she was gay; she knew I was gay; yet each of us was imprisoned by our homosexuality in a way that made direct conversation impossible, leaving us with only kindness to give each other instead of truth. Seeing her after so many years stirred up my old loneliness, and I was reminded of how isolating an exceptional identity can be unless we resolve it into horizontal solidarity.

In the unsentimental reunion of Horace Mann alumni that followed the publication of Amos Kamil's story, one man wrote of his sadness for both the abuse victims and the perpetrators, saying of the latter, "They were wounded, confused people trying to figure out how to function in a world that taught them that their homosexual desire was sick. Schools mirror the world we live in. They can't be perfect places. Not every teacher will be an emotionally balanced person. We can condemn these teachers. But this deals with a symptom only, not the original problem, which is that an intolerant society creates self-hating people who act out inappropriately." Sexual contact between teachers and students is unacceptable because it exploits a power differential that clouds the demarcation between coercion and consent. It often causes irrecoverable trauma. It clearly did so for the students Kamil interviewed and described. Wondering how my teachers could have done this, I thought that someone whose core being is denied a sickness and an illegality may struggle to parse the distinction between that and a much greater crime. Treating an identity as an illness invites real illness to make a braver stand.

Sexual opportunity comes often to young people, especially in New York. One of my chores was to walk our dog before bedtime, and when I was fourteen, I discovered two gay bars near our apartment: Uncle Charlie's Uptown and Camp David. I would walk Martha, our Kerry

SCANNED WITH C

about their gay children; if we come up with a viable preventative drug, many parents will be willing to try it.

I would no more insist that parents who don't want gay children must have them than I would that people who don't want children at all must have them. Nonetheless, I cannot think about Blanchard's and New's research without feeling like the last quagga. I am not evangelical. I don't need to verticalize my identity onto my children, but I would hate for my horizontal identity to vanish. I would hate it for those who share my identity, and for those who lie outside it. I have the loss of diversity in the world, even though I sometimes get a little worn out by being that diversity. I don't wish for anyone in particular to be gay, but the idea of no one's being gay makes me miss myself already.

All people are both the objects and the perpetrators of prejudice. Our understanding of the prejudice directed against us informs our responses to others. Universalizing from the cruelties we have known, however, has its limits, and the parents of a child with a horizontal identity often fail at empathy. My mother's issues with Judaism didn't make her much better at dealing with my being gay; my being gay wouldn't have made me a good parent to a deaf child and I'd discerned the parallels between the Deaf experience and the gay one. A lesbian couple I interviewed who had a transgender child told me they approved of the murder of George Tiller, the abortion provider, because the Bible said that abortion was wrong, and yet they were astonished and frustrated at the intolerance they had encountered for their identity and their child's. We are overextended in the travails of our own situation, and making common cause with other groups is an exhausting prospect. Many gay people will react negatively to comparisons with the disabled, just as many African-Americans reject gay activists' use of the language of civil rights. But comparing people with disabilities to people who are gay implies no negativity about gayness or disability. Everyone is flawed and strange; most people are resilient, too. The reasonable corollary to the queer experience is that everyone has a defect, that everyone has an identity, and that they are often one and the same.

It's terrifying to me to think that without my mother's sustained intervention, I might never have learned fluency in letters; I am grateful every day for the sufficient resolution of my dyslexia. Conversely, while I might have had an easier life if I had been straight, I am now wedded to the idea that without my struggles, I would not be myself, and that I like being myself better than I like the idea of being someone else—someone I have neither the ability to imagine nor the opinion

of being. Nevertheless, I have often wondered whether I could have ceased to hate my sexual orientation without Gay Pride's Technicolor fiesta, of which this writing is one manifestation. I used to think that I would be mature when I could simply be gay without emphasis. I have decided against this viewpoint, in part because there is almost nothing about which I feel neutral, but more because I perceive those years of self-loathing as a yawning void, and celebration needs to fill and overflow it. Even if I adequately address my private debt of melancholy, there is an outer world of homophobia and prejudice to repair. Someday, I hope this identity may devolve into a simple fact, free of both party hats and blame, but that's some ways off. A friend who thought Gay Pride was getting a bit carried away with itself once suggested we organize Gay Humility Week. It's a good idea, but its time has not yet come. Neutrality, which appears to lie halfway between shame and rejoicing, is in fact the endgame, reached only when activism becomes unnecessary.

It is a surprise to me to like myself, among all the elaborate possibilities I contemplated for my future, that never figured. My hard-won contentment reflects the simple truth that inner peace often hinges on outer peace. In the gnostic gospel of St. Thomas, Jesus says, "If you bring forth what is within you, what is within you will save you. If you do not bring forth what is within you, what is within you will destroy you." When I run up against the antigay positions of modern religious bodies, I often wish that St. Thomas's words were canonical because his message embraces many of us with horizontal identities. Keeping the homosexuality locked away within me nearly destroyed me, and bringing it forth has nearly saved me.

Although men who murder, target people not related to them, nearly 40 percent of women who inflict death kill their own babies. Reports of human children discarded in Dumpsters and the overburdened foster-care network point to the ability of human beings to detach. Oddly, this seems to have at least as much to do with the infant's appearance as with its health or character. Parents will usually take home a child with a life-threatening internal defect, but not one with a minor visible defect; at a later stage, some parents will reject even children with severe burn scars. Manifest disabilities affront parents' pride and their need for privacy; everyone can see that this child isn't what you wanted, and you must either accept the world's pity or insist on your own pride. At least half of the children available for adoption in the United States have disabilities of some kind. Half of those available for adoption, however, still constitutes only a small proportion of disabled children.

XI

Transgender

Western culture likes binaries: life feels less frightening when we can separate good and evil into tidy heaps, when we split off the mind from the body, when men are masculine and women are feminine. Threats to gender are threats to the social order. If rules are not maintained, everything seems to be up for grabs, and Joan of Arc must go to the stake. If we countenance people who want to chop off their penises and breasts, then what chance do we have of preserving the integrity of our own bodies? As the noted psychoanalyst Richard C. Friedman once joked, "It might help if they all wore T-shirts that said, 'Don't worry—it won't happen to you.'" Gender itself is a slippery concept. The author Amy Bloom says, "Male is not gay or straight; it's male. Neither the object of desire nor the drinking of beer nor the clenching of fists makes maleness. We don't know what does, and neither do transsexual men, and neither do the people who treat them, psychologically and surgically." But though gender is hard to define, it is not hard to know. Jan Morris, who wrote bravely of her transition—the process of switching gender—in the 1970s, has said, "Transsexualism is not a sexual mode or preference. It is not an act of sex at all. It is a passionate, lifelong, ineradicable conviction, and no true transsexual has ever been disabused of it." She explained, "My inner uncertainty could be represented in swirls and clouds of color, a haze inside me. I did not know exactly where it was—in my head, in my heart, in my loins, in my blood."

The term *transgender* is an encompassing term that includes anyone whose behavior departs significantly from the norms of the gender suggested by his or her anatomy at birth. The term *transsexual* usually refers to someone who has had surgery or hormones to align his or her body with a nonbirth gender. The term *transvestite* refers to someone who enjoys wearing clothing usually reserved for the other gender.

GENETICS
IS
BINARY
WITH
RARE
EXCEPTION

NO

←



Ridgeview High School

Log In

Catalog

Library Search > Search Results > "Far from the tree"

Library Search

Destiny Discover

Resource Lists

Français

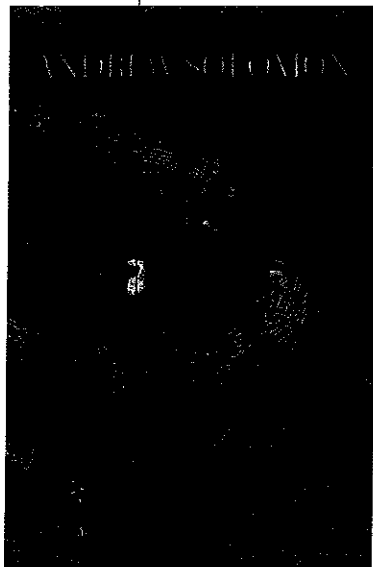
Español

How do I... ?

Title Details

Reviews

Copies



Far from the tree

Andrew Solomon ; adapted by Laurie Calkhoven.

Call #:	362.4 SOL	Local copies available:	1 of 1.
Sublocation:	Literary Nonfiction	Off-site copies available:	1 of 1. See all...

From New York Times bestselling author Andrew Solomon comes a stunning, poignant, and affecting young adult edition of his award-winning masterpiece, **Far From the Tree**, which explores the impact of extreme differences between parents and children. The old adage says that the apple doesn't fall **far from the tree**, meaning that children usually resemble their parents. But what happens when the apples fall somewhere else—sometimes a couple of orchards away, sometimes on the other side of the world? In this young adult edition, Andrew Solomon profiles how families accommodate children who have a variety of differences: families of people who are deaf, who are dwarfs, who have Down syndrome, who have autism, who have schizophrenia, who have multiple severe disabilities, who are prodigies, who commit crimes, and more. Elegantly reported by a spectacularly original and compassionate thinker, **Far From the Tree** explores how people who love each other must struggle to accept each other—a theme in every family's life. The New York Times calls the adult edition a "wise and beautiful" volume, that "will shake up your preconceptions and leave you in a better place."

TitlePeek™

Selected List: My List

Add to This List

Publication Info | Explore! | Additional Info

Publication Info

Published New York : Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, [2017]
 Edition The Young Adult ed.
 Format 464 p. ; 22 cm.
 LCCN 2016-27697
 ISBN 978-1-48144090-5 (hardcover)
 978-1-48144091-2 (trade paper)

Explore!

• Children with disabilities -- United States -- Psychology.

Find It

Rvw All Attached

- Exceptional children -- United States -- Psychology. [Find it](#)
- Parents of children with disabilities -- United States. [Find it](#)
- Identity (Psychology) -- United States. [Find it](#)
- Parent - child relationship -- United States -- Psychological aspects. [Find it](#)
- Titles by: Solomon, Andrew, 1963- [Find it](#)
- Titles by: Calkhoven, Laurie. [Find it](#)
- Titles by: Online version: Solomon, Andrew, 1963- author. **Far from the tree** The Young Adult edition. New York : Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, [2017] 9781481440929

Additional Info

- Contents: Son -- Deaf -- Dwarfs -- Down syndrome -- Autism -- Schizophrenia -- Disability -- Prodigies -- Rape -- Crime -- Transgender -- Father.
- Lexile Service: 1050L

[Top](#)

©2002-2022 Follett School Solutions, LLC 19_5_0_RC2 8/8/2022 11:04 AM EDT



Ridgeview High School

Follett

Catalog

Library Search > Search Results > "Far from the tree"

Library Search

Destiny Discover

Resource Lists

Français

Español

How do I... ?

Title Details

Reviews

Copies

Far from the tree



Andrew Solomon ; adapted by Laurie Calkhoven.

Copies at Ridgeview High School

Call #	Barcode	Status	Description	Sublocation
362.4 SOL	T 32152	Available		Literary Nonfiction

Off-site Copies

Copies: 1 - 1 of 1

Call #	Barcode	Status	Description	Site
NFN 362.4 SOL	T 21655	Available		Oakleaf High School

Copies: 1 - 1 of 1

©2002-2022 Follett School Solutions, LLC 19_5_0_RC2 8/8/2022 10:50 AM EDT



Ridgeview High School



Catalog

Library Search > Search Results > "Far from the tree" > Search Results > "Far from the tree"

Library Search

Destiny Discover

Resource Lists

Français

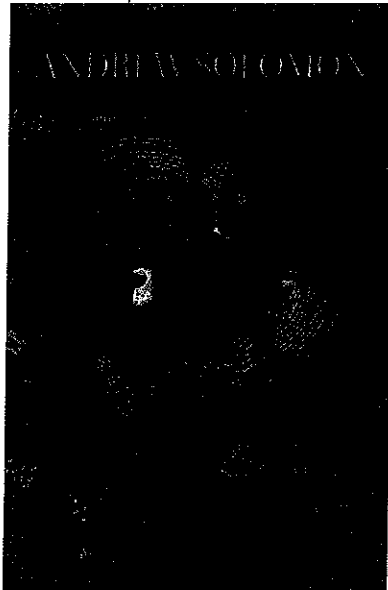
Español

How do I... ?

Title Details

Reviews

Copies



Far from the tree : how children and their parents learn to accept one another--our differences unite us / [Book]



Andrew Solomon ; adapted by Laurie Calkhoven.

Call #:	362.408	There are no local copies of this title.
	Cal LX 1050	Off-site copies available:
		1 of 1. See all...

Offers adaptation of the exploration of the impact of extreme differences between parents and children.

TitlePeek™

Selected List: My List

Add to This List

Publication Info | Explore! | Additional Info

Publication Info

Published New York : Simon & Schuster BFYR, [2017]
 Copyright 2017
 Edition Young adult edition, first edition.
 Format 454 pages ; 22 cm.
 Content type term text
 Media type term unmediated
 Carrier type term volume
 LCCN 2016-27697
 ISBN 978-1-48144090-5
 1-48144090-X

Explore!

- Children with disabilities -- United States -- Psychology
- Exceptional children -- United States -- Psychology
- Parents of children with disabilities -- United States
- Parents of exceptional children -- United States

Find It

Find It

Find It

- Identity (Psychology) -- United States
- Parent and child -- United States -- Psychological aspects
- Parents of children with disabilities.
- Parents of exceptional children.
- Identity (Psychology)
- Parent-child relationship -- United States -- Psychological aspects.
- Titles by: Calkhoven, Laurie.
- Titles by: Solomon, Andrew, 1963- Far from the tree.
- <http://www.perma-bound.com/ws/image/cover/000144755/m>

Additional Info

- Includes index.
- Kirkus Reviews
- Notable Children's Trade Books
- Reading grade level: 8.3 Perma-Bound Books.
- Interest grade level: 9-12 Perma-Bound Books.
- Lexile Service: 1050L

Top

©2002-2022 Follett School Solutions, LLC 19_5_0_RC2 8/8/2022 10:51 AM EDT



Ridgeview High School

Log Out

Catalog

Library Search > Search Results > "Far from the tree" > Search Results > "Far from the tree"

Library Search

Destiny Discover

Resource Lists

Français

Español

How do I... ?

Title Details

Reviews

Copies

Far from the tree : how children and their parents learn to accept one another---our differences unite us / [Book]



Andrew Solomon ; adapted by Laurie Calkhoven.

Copies at Ridgeview High School

There are no local copies of this title.

Off-site Copies

Copies: 1 - 1 of 1

Call #	Barcode	Status	Description	Site
362.408 Cal LX 1050	T 60207	Available		Fleming Island High School

Copies: 1 - 1 of 1



CLAY COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOLS

900 WALNUT STREET, GREEN COVE SPRINGS, FL 32043
P (904) 336-6500 F (904) 336-6536 W oneclay.net

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS
David S. Broskie

BOARD MEMBERS:

- Janice Kerekes, District 1
- Mary Bolla District 2
- Beth Clark District 3
- Tina Bullock District 4
- Ashley Gilhousen, District 5

Request for Reconsideration or Review of Instructional Materials

Individual Requesting Review: BRUCE FRIEDMAN
 Phone: [REDACTED] Email: BRUCE.FRIEDMAN@NOLEFTTURN.VS
 Physical Address: [REDACTED]
 City: [REDACTED]
 School: RTS REVIEW etc Grade Level: HS etc Subject: VARIES

Check as applicable:

- I represent a special interest group named NOLEFTTURN IN EDUCATION FLORIDA
- I already have a copy of the material
- I will review the material on-site
- I wish to check out the material for a two-week period

Type of Instructional Material:

- Novel
- Textbook
- Workbook
- Symbol
- Video (YouTube, DVD, etc.)
- Other: VARIES

Title: * Fangirl Fangirl
 Author: * Rainbow Rowell ISBN: * 978-1-25003095-5

1. What is your interest or reason for this request? PROTECT CHILDREN

2. What is objectionable about the material: specific pages, chapters, language, scenes?

Attach additional information, if necessary. ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT PAGES

COMMON CORE

CSE

SEL

DEL / CRT / ANTI-POLICE

SEXUAL CONTENT

see
ATTACHED

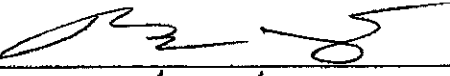
3. What do you believe might be the result of a student using this material? DAMAGED SOULS

4. For what age group would you recommend this material? ADULT

5. Is there anything good in this material? NA

6. Would you care to recommend another instructional material in the same format, covering the same subject or content standards? If so, please list the title, author, publisher, and ISBN: NA

Printed name of Complainant: BRUCE FRIEDMAN

Signature of Complainant: 

Date: 7/31/2022

Please submit the completed form and any additional documentation to:

Clay County District Schools
Attn: Supervisor of Instructional Resources
900 Walnut Street
Green Cove Springs, Florida 32043

To be completed by Instructional Resources Office Staff:

Received in Instructional Resources: Date 8/2/22 by 8

Attachments were included with this form. Total number of pages 4

The form was fully completed and accepted Yes/No. If not, why? _____

Date Committee convened: _____

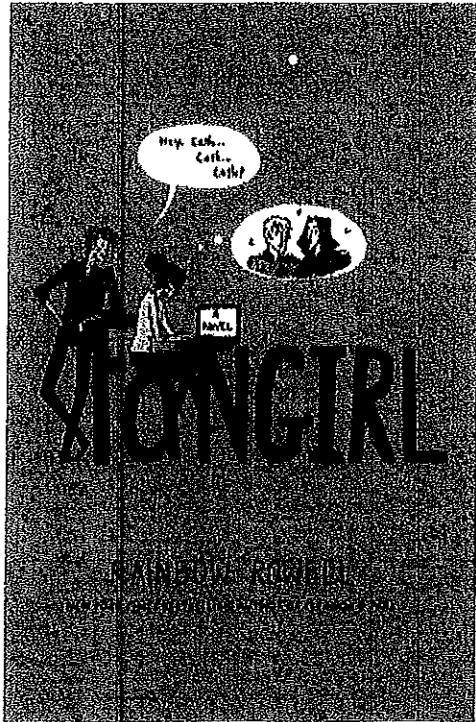
Committee Members: _____

Outcome: _____

Notification of Complainant: Date _____ by _____

Additional information: _____

FANGIRL



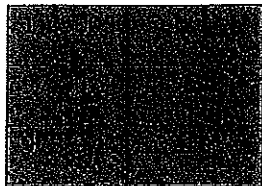
Summary of Concerns:

This book has excessive profanity and alcohol abuse.

Young Adult

By Rainbow Rowell

ISBN: 978-1-250-03095-5



Page	Content
352	"You were just hospitalized for alcohol poisoning," their dad said. ..."Everybody drinks," she said calmly.

Profanity	Count
Bitch	4
Fuck	19
Shit	7



District Committee Reconsideration Meeting Minutes

Title: Fangirl

Author: Rainbow Rowell

Date: 2/28/2023

Committee Members: [REDACTED]

Complainant: Bruce Friedman (not in attendance) *Reconsideration form read aloud for committee.

1. What is the overall purpose, theme or message of the material?

A coming of age story of twin girls and the life of a college student and the trauma they faced.

2. This work is most suitable for which grades? (Check all that apply.)

Pre-K K-6 7-8 9-12 None

3. Are concepts presented in a manner appropriate to the ability and maturity level of your suggested audience?

Yes No

4. Will reading or listening to this work result in a more compassionate understanding of human beings?

Yes No

If yes, explain how.

When dealing with alcohol and understanding the consequences it has when using it. Also the issue of the mental illness of the father.

5. Does this work offer an opportunity to understand and better appreciate the aspirations, achievements, and problems of different cultures and/or minority groups?

Yes No

If yes, explain how.

Yes, it gives insight from the neighborhood they came from and the differences around them. Also, it showed the insignificance that Levi felt.



District Committee Reconsideration Meeting Minutes

6. Are questionable elements of this work an important part of the overall development of the story or text?

Yes No

Explain your answer in a few sentences.

7. Non-fiction ONLY: Does the material contribute to the evolution of ideas?

Yes No N/A

Explain your answer in a few sentences.

8. Are the illustrations appropriate for the student's developmental age?

Yes No

9. Does this work have literary merit?

Yes No Not Applicable

10. Could this work be considered offensive in any way due to: N/A

<input type="checkbox"/> profanity	<input type="checkbox"/> brutality	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion or portrayal of religious practices/ideologies
<input type="checkbox"/> language	<input type="checkbox"/> sexual behavior	<input type="checkbox"/> manner characters are presented
<input type="checkbox"/> violence	<input type="checkbox"/> prurient behavior	<input type="checkbox"/> portrayal of any societal groups
<input type="checkbox"/> cruelty	<input type="checkbox"/> aberrant behavior	<input type="checkbox"/> political positions

Notes:

MEETING NOTES:

No discussion was provided.

Faingirl

2/28/23

Lab 1001

9:00 am

Votes

2 votes Keep a H.S. ONLY

1 vote Keep at J.H. and H.S.

Recommend majority vote!

Keep at H.S. ONLY

Reconsideration Ballot

Date: 2/28/23

Title: Fangirl

Author: Rainbow Rowell

Select ONE option:

I vote to **remove** the book from all libraries

OR

I vote to **keep** in Clay County School Libraries (*specify recommendation below*)

Keep the book at **ALL** school levels

Keep the book at the **junior and high** school levels

Keep the book at the **high school** level **ONLY**

Reconsideration Ballot

Date: 2/28/23

Title: Fangirl

Author: Rainbow Rowell

Select ONE option:

I vote to **remove** the book from all libraries

OR

I vote to **keep** in Clay County School Libraries (*specify recommendation below*)

Keep the book at **ALL** school levels

Keep the book at the **junior and high** school levels

Keep the book at the **high school** level **ONLY**

Reconsideration Ballot

Date: 2-28-23

Title: Fan Girl

Author: Rainbow Rowell

Select ONE option:

I vote to remove the book from all libraries

OR

I vote to keep in Clay County School Libraries (*specify recommendation below*)

Keep the book at **ALL** school levels

Keep the book at the **junior and high** school levels

Keep the book at the **high school** level **ONLY**



CLAY COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOLS

900 WALNUT STREET, GREEN COVE SPRINGS, FL 32043
P (904) 336-6500 F (904) 336-6536 W oneclay.net

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS
David S. Broskie

BOARD MEMBERS:

- Janice Kerekes, District 1
- Mary Bolla District 2
- Beth Clark District 3
- Tina Bullock District 4
- Ashley Gilhousen, District 5

Request for Reconsideration or Review of Instructional Materials

Individual Requester: DAVID FRIEDMAN
 Phone: [REDACTED]
 Physical Address: [REDACTED]
 City: [REDACTED]
 School: [REDACTED] Grade Level: HS Subject: VALUES

Check as applicable:

- I represent a special interest group named NO LEFT TURN IN EDUCATION
- I already have a copy of the material
- I will review the material on-site
- I wish to check out the material for a two-week period

Type of Instructional Material:

- Novel
- Textbook
- Workbook
- Symbol
- Video (YouTube, DVD, etc.)
- Other: VALUES

Title: FIVE NIGHTS AT FREDDY'S
 Author: CHRIS HASTINGS ISBN: 978-1-33813932-7

NOTE: Requests may be returned if questions 1, 2, and 3 do not include a detailed response.

1. What is your interest or reason for this request? PROTECT CHILDREN!

2. Does this material violate F.S. Chapter 847 regarding Obscenity? Circle one: YES/NO NO
 If YES, please explain in Question 3.

3. What is objectionable about the material? Include specific pages, chapters, language, scenes, etc., in your response. Attach additional information, if necessary.
PLEASE REMOVE THIS REVOLTING SERIES FROM ALL SCHOOLS. CCSD HAS 29 UNIQUE TITLES FROM THIS SERIES.

4. What do you believe might be the result of a student using this material? _____

DAMAGED SOULS

5. For what age group would you recommend this material? ADULT

6. Is there anything good in this material? NA

7. Would you care to recommend another instructional material in the same format, covering the same subject or content standards? If so, please list the title, author, publisher, and ISBN: NA

Printed name of Complainant: _____

Please do not forget to sign, as forms without signatures may be returned.

Signature of Complainant: _____

Date: _____

Please submit the completed form and any additional documentation to:

Clay County District Schools
Attn: Supervisor of Instructional Resources
900 Walnut Street
Green Cove Springs, Florida 32043

To be completed by Instructional Resources Office Staff:

Received in Instructional Resources: Date 1/17/23 by [Signature]

Attachments were included with this form. Total number of pages 23

The form was fully completed and accepted: Yes/No. If not, why? _____

Date Committee convened: _____

Committee: _____

Outcome: _____

Notification of Complainant: Date _____ by _____

Additional information: _____

From the #

... COUNTY ... STATE

... 1960 ...



... TOYS

THE

FOURTH

CLOSE

... 1960 ...

THE POLYMER

... 1960 ...

MIDDLEBURG-CLAY HILL
BRANCH LIBRARY

**Five Nights
at
Freddy's**

**THE
FOURTH
CLOSET**

by
**SCOTT CAWTHON
KIRA BREED-WRISLEY**

Scholastic Inc.
New York

pressed on. His palms slipped as he tried to lift the next block, and when he looked he realized, dazedly, that his hands left streaks of blood wherever they touched. He wiped his palms on his jeans and tried again. This time the broken concrete moved, and he balanced it on his thighs and took it three steps away, then dropped it on a pile of debris. It crashed down onto the rubble and shattered rock and glass beneath it, starting an avalanche of its own, and then, beneath the sounds of wreckage, he heard her whisper: "... John ..."

"Charlie ... " His heart stopped beating as he whispered back to her, and again the rubble moved under his feet. This time he fell, landing hard on his back, knocking the wind out of him. He struggled to inhale, his lungs useless, then haltingly he began to breathe. He sat up, light-headed, and saw what the collapse had revealed: He was in the little, hidden room in Charlie's childhood house. Before him was a plain, smooth metal wall. At the center was a door.

It was only an outline, without hinges or a handle, but he knew what it was because Charlie had known, when she stopped running in the midst of their escape, and pressed her cheek against the surface, calling to someone, or something, inside.

"... John ... " she whispered his name again, and the sound seemed to come from everywhere at once, bouncing off the walls of the room. John got to his feet and put his hands on the door; it was cool to the touch. He pressed his cheek to it, just as Charlie had, and it grew colder, like it was draining the warmth from his skin. John pulled back and rubbed the cold spot on his face, still watching the door as the shiny metal began to dull before his eyes. Its color paled

and then the door itself began to thin, its solidity vanishing until it looked like frosted glass, and John saw there was a shadow behind the glass, the figure of a person. The figure stepped closer, the door clarifying until he could almost see through it. He moved closer, mirroring the figure on the other side. It had a face, sleek and polished, its eyes like a statue's, sculpted, but unseeing. John peered through the door between them, his breath clouding the near-transparent barrier, then suddenly the eyes snapped open.

The figure stood placidly before him, the eyes fixed on nothing. They were clouded, and unmoving—dead. Someone laughed, a frantic, mindless sound that echoed in the small, sealed room, and John looked wildly around for the source. The laughter rose in pitch, growing louder and louder. John covered his ears with his hands as the piercing noise became unbearable. "CHARLIE!" he cried again.

John jerked awake, his heart racing; the laughter went on, following him out of the dream. Disoriented, his eyes darted around the room, then lit on the TV, where a clown's painted face filled the screen, caught in a convulsive fit of laughter. John sat up, rubbing his cheek where his watch had been pressing against it. He checked the time, then breathed a sigh of relief—he had just enough time to get to work. He sat back, taking a moment to catch his breath. On the TV screen, a local news anchor was holding a mic up for a man dressed as a circus clown, complete with a painted face, a red nose, and a rainbow-colored wig. Around his neck was a collar

screen was black and white, and the reception was terrible; he could scarcely make out faces through the static, but the chatter of what sounded like a talk-show was rapid and cheerful. He turned the volume low and settled back, staring at the ceiling and half-listening to the television voices until slowly, he drifted into sleep.

Her arm was limp, the only part of her he could see dangling from the twisted metal suit. Blood ran in red rivers down her skin, pooling on the ground. Charlie was all alone. He could hear her voice again if he tried: "Don't let go! John!" She called my name. And then that thing—He stuttered, hearing again the sound of the animatronic suit snapping and crunching. He stared at Charlie's lifeless arm as if the world around them had disappeared, and as the noise echoed in his head, his mind conjured up thoughts unbidden: The crunching sounds were her bones. The tearing was everything else.

John opened his eyes with a start. A few feet away, a studio audience laughed, and he looked at the TV, its static and chatter bringing him back to waking life.

John sat up, rolling his neck to work out kinks; the couch was too small, and his back was cramped. His head ached, and he was exhausted but restless, the shot of adrenaline still working its way through his system. He went out, locking the door forcefully behind him, and breathed in the night air.

He started down the road, heading toward town and whatever might still be open. The lights on the road were far apart, and there was no sidewalk, just a shallow dirt

shoulder. Few cars passed him, but when they did, they loomed up from around corners or cresting hills, blinding him with headlights and rushing by with a force that sometimes threatened to knock him back. He had begun to notice himself edging ever closer to the road as he walked, playing a halfhearted game of chicken. When he found himself too far out, he would always take deliberate steps back to the shoulder, and it was always with a secret, sinking disappointment in himself that he would do so.

As he approached town, lights pierced the darkness once again, and he shielded his eyes and took a step back from the road. This one slowed as it passed, then came to a sudden stop. John turned and walked a few steps toward it as the driver's window rolled down.

"John?" someone called. The car went into reverse and haphazardly pulled onto the shoulder. John jumped out of its path. A woman stepped out and took a few quick steps toward him, as if she might try to hug him, but he stayed planted where he was, his arms stiff at his sides, and she stopped a few feet away. "John, it's me!" Jessica said with a smile that quickly faded. "What are you doing out here?" she asked. She was wearing short sleeves, and she rubbed her arms against the night air, glancing back and forth along the near-deserted road.

"Well, I could ask you the same thing," he answered, as though she had accused him of something. Jessica pointed

over John's shoulder. "Gas." She smiled brightly at him, and he couldn't help but mirror her a little. He had almost forgotten this ability of hers, to turn on cheerful goodwill like a faucet, splashing it all over everyone. "How have you been?" she asked cautiously.

"Fine. Working, mostly." He gestured down at the dusty work clothes he hadn't bothered to change out of. "What's new with you?" he asked, suddenly aware of the absurdity of the conversation as cars passed nearby. "I really have to be going. Have a good night." He turned and began to walk away without giving her a chance to speak.

"I miss seeing you around," Jessica called. "And so does she."

John paused, digging at the dirt with one foot.

"Listen." Jessica took a few quick steps to catch up to him. "Carlton's going to be in town for a couple of weeks, it's spring break. We're all getting together." She waited expectantly, but he didn't respond.

"He's dying to show off his new cosmopolitan persona," Jessica added brightly. "When I talked to him on the phone last week, he was faking a Brooklyn accent to see if I'd notice." She forced a giggle. John smiled fleetingly.

"Who else is going to be there?" he asked, looking directly at her for the first time since she got out of the car. Jessica's eyes narrowed.

"John, you have to talk to her sometime."

"Why is that?" he said brusquely, and started walking again.

"John, wait!" Behind him, John heard her break into a run. She caught up quickly, slowing to jog beside him, matching his pace. "I can do this all day," she warned, but John didn't answer.

"You have to talk to her," Jessica repeated. He gave her a sharp look.

"Charlie's dead," he said harshly, the words rasping in his throat. It had been a long time since he spoke the words aloud. Jessica stopped in her tracks; he kept going.

"John, at least talk to me."

He didn't answer.

"You're *hiring* her," she added. He stopped walking. "Don't you understand what you're doing to her? After what she went through? It's insane, John. I don't know what that might do to you, but I know what it did to Charlie. And you know what? I don't think anything hurt as badly as having you refuse to speak to her. To say she's *dead*."

"I saw her die." John stared out into the city lights.

"No, you didn't," Jessica said, then hesitated. "Look, I'm worried about you."

"I'm just lost." John turned to her. "And after what I've been through, after what *we've* been through, that's not an unreasonable reaction." He waited a moment for her to respond, then looked away.

"Oh, pardon me, ma'am." The man looked up and smiled momentarily, then went back to his form, waiting as he talked. "Scrap is fifty cents a pound. It might be more if you find a specific part, but we can see when you come back in. Just go have a look around; you have to bring your own tools, but we can help you load it up when you're ready to leave."

"I'm looking for something specific." The woman peered down at him, observing his name tag. "Bob," she added belatedly.

"Well, I don't know what to tell you." He set his pencil down, then reclined and crossed his arms behind his head. "It's a dump." He laughed. "We try to at least separate the junk cars from the tin cans, but what you see is what you get."

"Bob, you received several truckloads of scrap metal on this date, and from this location." The woman set a piece of paper down on top of the form Bob had been working on. Bob picked it up and adjusted his reading glasses, then looked up at her over them.

"Well, as I said, it's a dump," he said slowly, growing more concerned as the moments passed. "I might be able to point you in the right direction; I mean, we don't catalog the stuff."

The woman walked around the side of the desk, stepping up beside Bob's chair, and she straightened nervously in his seat. "I hear you boys had some trouble here last night," she said casually.

"No trouble." Bob furrowed his brow. "Some kids snuck in; it happens."

"That's no what I heard." The woman studied a picture on the wall. "Your daughters?" She asked lightly.

"Yes, two and five."

"They are beautiful." She paused. "Do you treat them well?" Bob was taken aback.

"Of course, I do," he said, trying to hide his indignation. There was a long pause; the woman tilted her head, still looking at the picture.

"I heard you called the police because you thought someone was trapped in the scrap heaps out there," she said. Bob didn't answer. "I heard"—the woman continued, leaning in close to the picture—"that you thought you heard screaming and sounds of distress and panic. Something was trapped; a child was trapped, you thought. Maybe several."

"Look, we run a clean business and we have a good reputation."

"I'm not disputing your reputation. Quite the opposite. I think what you did was honorable, running to the rescue in the middle of the night, cutting your legs on jagged scraps of metal as you ran blindly through the yard."

"How do you . . ." Bob's voice trembled, and he stopped talking. He moved his legs under the desk, hoping to hide the bandages that bulged out visibly under both pant legs.

"What did you find?" the woman asked.

even to acknowledge her presence that day in the diner was too bizarre to be dismissed. *How can he think I'm not me?*

The tailights of John's car vanished around a bend. Charlie stared into the dark where he had been, not wanting to return to the bright, noisy house. Carlton would tell her a joke; Jessica and Marla would comfort her the way they had in the diner that day, when she had come to show them that somehow, impossibly, she had survived. The walk from her car—really Aunt Jen's borrowed car—toward the diner had felt like miles that day, her stomach fluttering anxiously even though she knew, of course, that they would be happy to see her. How could they not be? Every step was stiff, uncertain; every time she moved it hurt, her body sore all over from the day before, though there were no marks on her to show it. Even breathing was strained and unfamiliar, and she had a persistent feeling that if she forgot to do it, she would stop, die of asphyxiation right there on the pavement, unless she was reminded, *take a breath*. She could see them through the window as she made her way to the front of the diner, her heart racing, and then they saw her and it was everything she had dared to hope: Marla and Jessica ran to the door, jostling over who would hug her first, crying at the sight of her living face. She let herself be wrapped in the warmth of their relief, but before they even let her go, she was looking for John.

When she saw him, his back to the door, she almost called out his name, but something stopped her. He said something

she could not hear, and she watched, incredulous, as he failed to come to her, clenching a spoon in his hand like a weapon. "John!" she called at last. But he did not turn around. Marla and Jessica ushered her out of the restaurant, making reassuring sounds that must have been words, and Charlie strained to see him through the window he had not moved. *How can he pretend I'm not here?*

A shock of pain hit her suddenly, yanking her back to the present, and Charlie hugged herself tightly, though it didn't really help. It was everywhere, sharp and hot. She clenched her jaw, unwilling to make a sound. Sometimes it eased to an ache she could push to the back of her awareness; sometimes it vanished for days at a time, but always it came back. *Were you hurt?* John had asked, the first—the only—sign he'd given that he might still care, and she had been unable to reply. Yes, she could have said. *Yes, I was and I still am. Sometimes I think I'll die of it, and what I feel now is just an echo of what it used to be. It feels like all my bones are broken; it feels like my guts are twisted and torn; it feels like my head has cracked open, and things are leaking out, and it happens again and again.* She clenched her teeth, taking deliberate breaths, until it began slowly to recede.

"Charlie? Are you okay?" Jessica said quietly, appearing beside her on the sidewalk outside Clay's house. Charlie nodded.

"I didn't hear you come over," she said hoarsely.

for breaks. "Mind me," he grumbled, and glanced up at the still motionless bear. "It needs to be heated more." The hissing sound continued as the figure turned on the table, pushing off plumes of steam as it rolled on the hot surface.

"We can't heat it more," the woman said. "You'll destroy them."

The man looked up at her with a warm smile, then jerked his eyes back to the bear: he was now looking down at them, his eyes open wide and tracking their subtle movements. "Their lives will now have a greater purpose," the man said contentedly. "They will become *more*, just like you did." He looked up at the woman, kneeling over him, and she looked back, her glossy-painted cheeks gleaming in the light.

John locked himself into his apartment and locked the deadbolt behind him, sliding the chain into place for the first time since he moved in. He went to the window and fiddled with the blinds, then stopped, pushing back the impulse to close them and seal himself away completely from the outside world. On the other side of the glass, the parking lot was still and silent, cast in the eerie light of a single street lamp and the blue neon sign of a nearby car dealership. There was an unfamiliar whining sound coming from somewhere, and John watched the parking lot for a moment, not sure what he was expecting to see. The sound was gone soon after anyway, and

he went into the bathroom to splash water on his face. When he came back into his bedroom, he froze: it was the sound again, this time louder—it was in the room with him.

John held his breath, straining to listen. It was a quiet noise, the sound of something moving, but it was too regular, too mechanical to be a mouse. He flipped on the light: the noise continued, and he slowly turned, trying to hear where it was coming from, and found himself looking at Theodore.

"Is that you?" he asked. He stepped closer and picked up the disembodied rabbit's head. He held it to his ear, listening to the strange sound emanating from inside the stuffed creature. There was a sudden click, and the sound stopped. John waited, but the toy was silent. He put Theodore back down on the dresser and waited for a moment to see if the sound would begin again.

"I'm not crazy," John said to the rabbit. "And I won't let you, or anyone else, convince me that I am." He went to his bed, reaching under the mattress with a suspicious glance at the toy rabbit, suddenly feeling watched. He took out the notebook he had hidden there, and sat back on the bed, looking at its black and white cover. It was a plain composition notebook, the kind with a little place on the front for your name and class subject. John had left that blank, and now he traced the empty lines with his finger, not really wanting to open the book that had sat, untouched, beneath his mattress for nearly three months now.

Charlie looked at him searchingly. "So, what do you think is the truth? Who do you—" she swallowed, and started again. "Who do you think I am, if I'm not me?"

John sighed. "I've thought about it a lot," he said at last. "Almost constantly, actually." Charlie nodded slightly, barely moving her head, like she was afraid she would spook him. "I thought about a lot of things, I guess—theories—um . . ."

"Like what?" Charlie asked gently.

"Well . . ." John's face was getting hot. *I should never have agreed to see her.*

"John?"

"I—I guess maybe I thought you might be Sammy," he mumbled; she looked puzzled for a moment, like she had not quite heard him, then her eyes widened.

"Sammy's dead," she said tightly. John looked up at the ceiling and put his hands to his temples.

"I know," he said, and met her eyes again. "But, Charlie, look: I don't know that. Neither do you. The last thing . . . you remember, of Sammy, what was it?"

"You know the answer to that," she said in a low, level voice.

"You saw him being taken," John said after a moment. She made no response, and he took it as license to continue. "You saw him being kidnapped, not killed. By Dave, or Afton—Springtrap. So, what if he wasn't killed? What if

Sammy was raised by William Afton, twisted, and brought up by a murderous madman to replace you—to replace Charlie—after her death? Also, Sammy could be short for Samantha. I forgot that part. Sammy could have been a girl all along." Charlie was motionless across the table; she scarcely looked like she was breathing. "I know how it sounds when I say it out loud," John added in a rush. "That's why I mostly don't." Charlie had covered her face with her hand, and her shoulders were shaking. He broke off as she looked up; this time she was laughing. There was a manic edge to it, like it might turn back into crying at any moment, but John tentatively tried to smile.

"Oh, John," she said at last. "I don't even—You know that's crazy, right?"

"Is it crazier than anything else we've seen?" he argued without much conviction.

"John, you took me to see the grave yourself, remember?"

John paused and looked confused for a moment, trying to reconcile what he'd just heard.

"You took me yourself, to Sammy's grave."

"I took you to the cemetery, but I never saw Sammy's grave, or your father's," John corrected.

"Then go look sometime." Charlie's voice was patient. John felt immediately foolish.

* * *

John let his front door fall shut behind him with a heavy thud and tossed his keys on the kitchen counter. He sat down heavily on the couch, letting his head fall back, weighted down with fatigue. After only a moment, he lifted his head back up: the strange noise was coming from his bedroom again. It sounded a little like the sounds the rabbit's head had been making, but something had changed, though he couldn't pinpoint how. It sounded like a voice, then static, a voice, then static. Something was being repeated.

John's bedroom door was almost all the way closed, and he got up from the couch and approached it slowly from the side, putting his feet down silently one after the other, the rubber soles scarcely tapping the floor. He eased the door open: the sound was louder now, more distinct, the voice continued, garbled and muffled. John turned on the light and went to Theodore's head. He bent over so his eyes were level with Theodore's plastic ones, and listened. The rabbit head stared back, muttered words, broke into static, then a moment later repeated John grabbed a notebook and pen off his bed and closed his eyes, concentrated on the sounds.

After a minute, he began to hear words. "Shining? John whispered. "Shining—something Silver?" He continued to listen, but he couldn't make out the rest. John gritted his teeth and opened his eyes, glaring at the stuffed rabbit's head

as it continued to repeat the same incoherent phrase. John drew in a long breath, then let it out, trying to release the tension in his neck, in his jaw, in his back. He sat down on the bed, put the pen and paper down, and closed his eyes once more *just listen*. The sounds repeated, again and again. Suddenly, they resolved, like song lyrics after the thousandth play. John understood.

"Shining Star? Silver... something. Silver Reef? Shining Star, Silver Reef?"

"Shining Star, Silver Reef." Theodore repeated. John got up again, putting his ear to Theodore's nose, trying to make sure he had it right. "Shining Star, Silver Reef..." the rabbit intoned. John raced back to his car.

When he reached Clay's driveway again, John stopped dead: the front door was gaping open, light from inside the house spilling into the yard. He ran up the steps, calling "Clay! Clay, are you here?" He ran inside, still shouting, and made for Clay's office just a few steps past the front hall. "Clay!"

John dropped to his knees beside Clay; he was on the floor, one side of his face slick with his own blood, more pooling beneath his head. His eyes were closed. John grabbed his wrist and pressed his fingers against the veins, hoping for a pulse after a few frantic seconds, he found it, and relief washed through him, but it was momentary. "Clay?" John repeated, jostling him lightly. Clay didn't respond. John looked around

the night, picturing Aunt Jen's face in the moment it had dawned on her what was about to happen. That smooth, neat-impermeable calm had ruptured; the cold-blooded woman had become a soft, frightened animal in the space of an instant. *At least she had the dignity not to beg.* Charlie thought. *Or maybe she just knew it wouldn't help.* She shivered, then shrugged.

They had been having pleasantries, then Charlie gave Jen a wide, cruel smile, and Jen screamed. Charlie advanced on her, and she screamed again; this time Charlie choked off the noise, grabbing Aunt Jen by the throat. She lifted her off her feet, and slammed her into a door with such force it clattered in its hinges. Her aunt tried to crawl away, and she caught her by her hair, now sticky with blood, and threw her into the wall again. This time she did not try to run, and Charlie crouched beside her and put a hand around her throat again, taking her time now, relishing the feeling of her aunt's pulse beneath her fingers, and the terrified look in her eyes. Jen opened and closed her mouth, gawping like a fish, and Charlie watched for a moment, considering.

"Is there something you'd like to say?" she asked mockingly. Jen made a tiny, pained nod, and Charlie leaned in close so she could whisper, keeping an iron grip on her throat. Jen took a thin, rattling breath, and Charlie reluctantly lightened the pressure enough to let her speak.

Her aunt wheezed for a moment, trying twice to speak before the words made it out. "I've always . . . loved you . . . Charlie."

Charlie pulled back and gave Aunt Jen a calmed look. "I love you, too," she said softly, and then she ripped open her stomach. "I really do."

Charlie reached her car; she was running so fast she ran a few yards past it before she could stop. She wanted to keep running, to keep this feeling alive. She opened and closed her fists; the blood on them was tacky and growing uncomfortable. She started the car and opened the trunk to get the first-aid kit she always carried. Standing in the beam of the headlights, Charlie took out some gauze and hydrogen peroxide and carefully wiped her hands clean finger by finger. When she was done, she examined them and nodded, satisfied; then she got in her car and sped off into the dark.

"I was—" he started, then paused, taking a moment to gather his thoughts. "I was looking for an old friend," he said, his answer calm. She nodded, then met his eyes. He blinked, but forced himself not to look away. He had seen eyes like those before: not the madness of Springtrap, or the uncanny, living plastic of the other robots, but the stark, brutal gaze of a creature bent on survival. Charlie was looking at him like he was prey.

"Did you find your old friend?" she asked, her tone warm, and out of place.

"Yes. I did," John said, not flinching from her stare. Charlie's eyes narrowed, the facade between them growing thinner by the moment. John leaned forward on his crossed arms, resting all his weight on the table between them. "I found her," he said in a low voice. There was a brief flare of something on Charlie's face—surprise, maybe, and she leaned in closer across the table, mimicking his pose. John tried not to flinch as Charlie's arms slid closer to his.

"Where is she?" Charlie asked, her tone as soft as John's. Her smile was gone.

"I don't know what it will take to show these people what you really are," John said. "But I can try all sorts of things before you make it out that door." He grasped his soda glass, not looking away from her. "I'll start with this glass of soda, then I'll try a chair over the back of your head, and we'll go from there."

Charlie tilted her head, as though taking in his posture. He knew his hand was twitching, and his face was red. His heart was racing; he could feel his pulse pounding at his throat. Charlie smiled, then stood and gently leaned over the table. John set his jaw, keeping his eyes fixed on her. Charlie kissed his cheek, placing a hand on the side of his neck. She kept it there as she moved away, watching his eyes. Charlie smiled, her fingers resting on his pulse for a scant moment before letting them drift away. John snapped back in his seat as if she'd been holding him in place.

"Thank you for dinner, John," she said, the words sounding almost giddy. She slowly let her hand recoil, as if relishing the moment. "It's always so wonderful to see you." She turned away, not waiting for a response, and went to pay the bill.

There was a long pause. "She's gone." John's voice came over the walkie-talkie. Jessica looked to Carlton; he seemed slightly in shock, staring after Charlie like he'd been hypnotized. "Carlton!" Jessica hissed. He snapped out of it, shaking his head. "She looks hot!" Carlton said.

Jessica reared back and slapped Carlton as hard as she could.

"You idiot! You're supposed to be watching his back, not watching her butt! Besides, she put your father in the hospital!"

Jessica looked around the dimly lit room helplessly. Apart from the chair, the only object she could see was a gigantic, old-fashioned coal-burning furnace, with a warm orange glow emanating from the thin vents in its door.

"At least," the creature began, "part of me is Charlie." She held her hand out in front of her, studying it. Jessica looked up and suddenly it was Charlie standing in the light of the window, looking confused and innocent. "It's strange," the animatronic said. "I have these memories. I know they don't belong to me; and yet at the same time, they do." She paused, and Jessica returned to wrestling with the knots. "I know that they don't belong to me because I don't feel anything when they come to mind. They are just there, like a long road you walk on, lined with billboards of things happening somewhere else."

"Well, what do you feel?" Jessica muttered, trying to drag out the conversation as her survival instincts kicked in.

The animatronic girl's eyes darted toward her. "I feel... disappointment," she said, her voice growing more tense. "Desperation." She looked out the window. "A father's disappointment, and a daughter's desperation," she whispered.

"Henry?" Jessica gasped. The girl looked back at her.

"No. Not Henry. He was more brilliant than Henry. I watched my father work from a distance, a great, great, distance." Her voice trailed off. Jessica waited for her to go on, half forgetting that she was trying to escape. "I see

everything clearly now," the animatronic continued. "But in my memories... things were much simpler, which made it so much more painful. Now I know that people are all fading, fragile, inconsequential. But when you are a child, your parents are everything. They are your world, and you don't know anything else. When you are a little girl, your father is your world. How tragic and miserable such an existence is." Jessica felt a wave of dizziness and looked up to see that the animatronic now appeared as the clown again, but the image passed. Suddenly, it was Charlie in the light, but the moment's disruption in the illusion was enough to remind Jessica of where she was—and that she had to get away.

The animatronic girl stood beside the only window in the room. There was a door nearby; she was closer to it than the animatronic, not that she could count on outwitting her. *What else am I going to try?* Tentatively, keeping her eyes fixed on her captor, Jessica started working her wrists back and forth, trying to loosen the rope that held her. The girl watched, but did not move to stop her, so Jessica kept going.

"That's the flaw, and the greatest sin of humanity," the girl said. "You are born with none of your intelligence, but all of your heart, fully capable of feeling pain, and torment, but with no power to understand. It opens you up to abuse, to neglect, to unimaginable pain. All you can do is feel." She studied her hands again. "All you can do is feel, but never understand. What a sick power it is that you are given."

The ropes only seemed to tighten as Jessica pulled at them, and Jessica felt tears of frustration prickling at her eyes. *No wonder she doesn't care if I try to escape; she thought bitterly. JM could just see the knots . . .* She stopped moving and took a deep breath, then closed her eyes. *Find the knot. Ignore the robot.* Jessica fumbled with her right hand, searching for the end of the knot, bending her wrist painfully. At last, she found the end of the rope and grasped it; the rope tightened, but she inched her fingers along until she came to the base of the knot, then began to carefully push the end of the rope up through the final loop.

"I wanted so desperately to have been the one on that stage, but it was always her. All of his love went into her."
"You're talking about Afyon." Jessica stopped, and Charlie nodded confirmation. "William Afyon never made anything with love," Jessica snarled.

"I should rip you in half!" Charlie's appearance flashed, the animatronic's face and body seeming to break, then reassemble in an instant. For a moment her expression wavered, a vulnerability showing on her face, but she quickly collected herself. "She was his obsession."

The animatronic twisted her hair around her fingers. "He worked on her day and night, the clown baby with bright orange pig tails. Petite enough to be sweet and approachable, but large enough to swallow you whole." She laughed.

Jessica pulled the rope a last time. She had managed to undo the first knot. Breathing heavily with the effort, Jessica opened her eyes. The animatronic had not moved from the window—she seemed still to be watching with a kind of amused interest. Jessica gritted her teeth and closed her eyes, and started on the next knot.

"I wanted to be her," the girl whispered. "The focus of his attention, the center of his world."

"You're delusional!" Jessica snickered as she struggled with the rope, trying to keep her distracted. "You're a robot; you're not his child."

The animatronic pulled a chair away from the wall, and sat with a pained expression. "One night I snuck out of bed to see her. It'd been told not to a hundred times. I pulled the sheet away. She was gleaming bright, beautiful, standing over me. She had happy red cheeks and a lovely red dress."

Jessica paused in her work, confused. *Who is she talking about?*

"It's odd, because I remember looking down at the little girl as well. It's strange seeing through both sets of eyes now. But as I said, one is no more than a data tape, a record of my

first capture, my first kill." The animatronic's eyes flared bright in the darkness. "The little girl approached me and pulled the sheet away. I felt nothing; it's no more than a record of what happened. But there is feeling, my feeling as

I pulled the sheet away, and stood in awe before this creature my father loved, this daughter he had made for himself. The daughter who was better than me, the daughter he wished had been. I wanted to be her, so badly." Charlie's appearance faded, revealing the painted clown, and Jessica sighed as a wave of nausea and dizziness passed over her again. "So, I did what I was built to do," the girl said, and stopped talking. The room was silent.

When the last knot slipped loose and the rope fell to the floor, Jessica's eyes popped open in surprise. She leaned forward, moving her numb, tingling arms down to her ankles as she watched the girl, who simply continued to observe her. Jessica undid the knots that held her ankles quickly—they were looser, done carelessly, and she put her feet flat on the floor, her stomach fluttering. *Time to run.*

Jessica ran for the door, propelling her wobbly knees and sore ankles through sheer force of will. There was no sound from behind her. *She's going to be right behind me!* she thought wildly as she reached the door and turned the knob. She yanked it open with overwhelming relief—and screamed.

Close enough to touch was a mottled face, swollen and misshapen. The skin looked too thin, and the bloodshot eyes staring angrily at her, quivered as if they were about to burst. Jessica jerked away, stumbling back into the room. Her eyes darted to his neck, where two rusting lengths of metal protruded from his skin. He stank of mold: the furry suite he wore

was covered in it, turning the cloth green, though as Jessica took in the whole of him, she knew it had once been yellow.

"Springtrap," she breathed, her voice shaky, and his lips twitched into something that might have been a smile. Jessica ran to the chair she'd been tied to, putting it between them as if it would do any good, then horribly, Springtrap began to laugh. Jessica tensed, grasping the chair's wooden back, ready to defend herself, but Springtrap just kept laughing, not moving from the spot where he stood. He cackled on and on, rising to an impossible pitch, then he broke off abruptly, his eyes snapping to Jessica. He shuffled closer, then, inexplicably, he began to caper in a grotesque dance as he sang in a thin, unsteady voice.

Oh, Jessica's been caught

Oh, Jessica she fought

But now she's going to die!

Oh my!

Jessica glanced at the animatronic girl in the corner, who looked away as though disgusted. Springtrap danced closer, circling Jessica as he repeated the verse, and she hefted the chair between them, watching for a chance to strike. Jessica

tipped over her own feet trying to get out of his way. *Even for him, this is insane.* He danced closer and away, the words he sang degenerating into syllables of nonsense, interrupted by maniacal laughter. Jessica held the chair steady, ready to swing it. Suddenly, Springtrap froze in place.

"How did the creatures at Freddy's move, of their own will, with no outside force controlling them?" he asked mildly. He tilted his head, waiting.

"The children were still inside. Their souls were inside those creatures," she said, the words brittle. She felt brittle, like if anything touched her now, she might easily break apart.

Afton sneered again.

"Oh, Jessica, come now. What else? She closed her eyes. *What is he talking about?* "What else was inside them, to bind their spirits so inseparably to the bear, to the rabbit, to the fox? *How did they die, Jessica?*"

Jessica gasped, covering her mouth with both hands, as if she could stop herself from knowing, as long as she did not speak. "How, Jessica?" Afton demanded, and she lowered her hands, trying to steady her breath.

"You killed them," she said, and he made an impatient sound. She met his eyes again, not flinching from the empty socket. "They died in the suits," she said hoarsely. "Their bodies were bound inside, along with their souls."

He nodded. "The spirit follows the flesh, it would seem, and also the pain. If I wish to become my own immortal creation, my body must lead my spirit to its eternal home. Since I am still . . . experimenting . . . I move my flesh piece by piece." He looked thoughtfully over at the creature on the table. "More and more," he murmured, almost to

himself, "it is a test of the strength of my own will. How much of myself can I carve away, and still remain in control?"

"Carve-away?" Jessica repeated faintly, and he snapped his attention back to her.

"Yes. I will even allow you to watch," he said with a smirk.

"No, thanks," she said, shrinking back, and he wheezed a laugh.

"You will watch," he said, then gestured to the animatronic girl. "Keep an eye on her," Afton said.

"I have many eyes on her." The girl went to a cabinet and took out another IV bag before she closed the door; Jessica caught a glimpse of more like it, and a shelf of what looked like vacuum-sealed cuts of meat. Her stomach flipped, and she swallowed hard.

Jessica started to squirm in her seat; there was a hissing sound coming from somewhere, and a smell of burning oil began to fill the room. The table where the mass of metal rested was beginning to glow orange at its center, and the mass on the table seemed to move slightly, although only out of the corner of Jessica's eye. Jessica snapped back to attention and turned toward Afton.

He appeared to be asleep; his chest rose and fell with slow breaths, and his eyes were closed; his eyelid draped loosely over the steel rod in the center of his missing eye, the thin

precious pile of neatly folded sheets and towels aside, and sat down cross-legged on the carpet. From there, she could not even see John, though she could hear him, shuffling through paper and muttering to himself under his breath. She swept her eyes up and down the stacks, one after another, then she saw it: *Henry*, written in her aunt's careful script. Charlie moved three overcoats and another box, and then it was in her hands.

She stared at the lettering for a long moment. The ink had faded over the years. Charlie traced it with her index finger, her pulse fluttering in her throat like her heart was trying to get out. *Daddy*. She opened the box, and saw it—on top was an old, green plaid flannel shirt, worn down as thin and soft as cotton. She picked it up as if it were something delicate and pressed it to her face, inhaling through the fiber. It only smelled like dust and time, but the touch of the fabric on her face brought tears to her eyes. She breathed in and out slowly, trying to force them back, and finally regained her composure, though part of her howled out the unfairness of it all: she could not even take a moment to cling to his slight presence, and mourn. Self-consciously, Charlie put the shirt over her shoulders, letting it drape over her back as she leaned once more over the box. The rest of the box was stacked with smaller boxes, and she opened the first one to find a framed picture of herself with Sammy, infant in those few

precious years before everything was ripped apart. Under the picture was an envelope, addressed in her father's handwriting to "Jenny." Charlie smiled and shook her head. *I can't imagine anyone calling Aunt Jen, Jenny.* She opened the letter.

My Dearest Jenny,

I had an entire list of instructions written out for you, schedules and timetables, keys and procedures. You have indulged me so much, and it's only now, at the end, that I see how it has helped me get through these dark times, but also how ultimately empty it has been. I had everything so carefully planned. I've worked so tirelessly. I've warped and twisted my surroundings to the point where I can never be sure if I've completely settled back into reality, and even if I did manage to turn off everything planted in the walls to deceive myself, I think my mind would deceive me still. I don't need clinical testing of the long-term effects of these devices to know that I've undoubtedly done permanent damage to myself. I will always see what I want to see, but worse than that, there is the splinter, more like the stake, always deep into my heart reminding me more and more every day that what I see is a lie. Through your patience and your indulgence of me, you've tried to keep me happy, but it's also somehow brought me back from this world I've made for myself. I think maybe it would have been better for you to have not indulged me; then I could have excluded you

from my bubble, convinced myself that you were crazy like everyone else. But instead, your unceasing love caused me to listen to you, to let you in, and the consequence of that was seeing the truth in your eyes, and letting that in as well.

I have my Charlie here with me. You will never have to indulge me in her again. Rather than taking joy in her, I have cried over her, so many countless tears. I have poured agony into her, until she serves as another reminder not of what I once had, but of the unbearable pain of what was taken from me. She has come to reflect my pain back to me; whereas I, for a time, took great comfort in her eyes. I now only see loss, endless, debilitating loss. Her eyes will never fill me again. In fact, they have emptied me.

Keep all the closets shut. Let them be tombs for my denial and my grievance. My only lasting instruction for you concerns the fourth closet. It is not enough to keep it shut, you must keep that one sealed and buried. My grief was already beginning to awaken me to reality when I began what was to be her final stage. When I rose, slightly, from the depth of my despair, I saw that I had no choice but to cease my work, for I was only feeding my own delusion. My old faithful partner, who I can only hope now is in a grave of his own, took what I had begun, and made something of his own—something dreadful. He crafted my beloved work into something of his own, and endowed it with who knows what kinds of evil. I was able to stop him, and to seal away what he made, and you, Jenny, must ensure that the seal remains.

HEE2

I would instruct you to demolish the house if I could trust that it could be done effectively. Keep it, and make sure the world forgets it. Then, someday after many decades have passed and no one remembers, fill it with every kind of flammable thing and burn it to the ground, standing close guard to put a bullet into anything that emerges from the rubble, no matter what, or who, it looks like.

I'm going to be with my daughter.

Love always. & to the end,

Henry

"Charlie?" John was standing behind her. Wordlessly, she held the pages out to him. He took them, and she moved aside the box the letter had been in and stared down at the next one. It was sealed with packing tape, but the sticky side was old and dry, the edges curling up from the cardboard. John shuffled the pages, still reading. Charlie shivered, despite the warm air, and she put her arms through the sleeves of her father's shirt and rolled them up to her elbows.

"Do you know what it means?" John asked quietly. Charlie looked up at him and shook her head. "Scoot over," he said with a small smile, and she did, making room for him in the little space among the boxes. He sat down facing her, crossing his legs awkwardly. He handed the pages back to her,

235

SCANNED WITH U

The door opened, and Jessica screamed and lunged into the doorway, as though ready to karate-chop whatever was coming through.

Carlton and Marla jumped back with startled expressions, and Jessica stared for a moment, then seized Carlton in a hug, holding tight to his shoulders as if he could stop her from shaking.

"Jessica?" Marla said, spotting the children. Jessica pushed Carlton away.

"Something goes one of the kids, a little boy," she said in a rush. "I didn't see where it went."

Marla was already beside the children, checking them for injury. "We have to get them out," she said.

"Oh, really, Marla? Is that what we should be doing? Here I was painting my nails," Jessica said crisply. Carlton reached for his car and pulled something out.

"Here, take this," he said.

"What? Ew." Jessica made a face instinctively, then peered at the tiny device. "Is that a hearing aid?"

"Not exactly. It makes you invisible to the animatronics. You and Marla take these kids out, I'll find the other kid they took."

"How does it—?" Jessica took the device and studied it. "I have to put it in my ear?"

"Yes! You have to put it in your ear! I'll explain later."

268

"But, are your ears even clean?" She leaned in, peering suspiciously at Carlton's ear. Marla grabbed the earpiece out of her hand and shoved it into Jessica's ear.

"OW!" Jessica cried.

Marla turned back to the kids. "Shouldn't we give them to the children, instead?"

"There are only two earpieces, and you can both protect them better if you're invisible, right?" Carlton said imitatively.

"What if Jess and I stay here with the kids, and you take one out at a time, wearing the earpieces?" Marla pressed. Jessica shook her head immediately.

"And what if that thing comes back and kills us all while we're waiting for Carlton to take his sweet time? We have to make a break for it, Marla, it's the only way."

They were all quiet for a moment. Carlton looked from Jessica to Marla and back.

"Right? Now, give me thirty seconds to get away from here, that way if something chases me, I can draw them away from you. Anything I should know?" Carlton paused at the door.

"Alfon's still alive," Jessica said, and he nodded.

"This ends today," he said quietly. "One way or another. No more children dies because of that psychopath. I owe that much to Michael."

Jessica bit her lip. "We all do," she said.

269

an extended metal arm—the figure he had first thought was holding the knife had instead been run through with it, and behind that was something else—something familiar. He backed away, bending to look at the inhuman face of the creature impaled on the knife.

He stared for a moment, his face growing hot, then suddenly he turned away and doubled over, overcome with a wave of nausea. He dropped to his knees and retched, his ribs screaming protest as he heaved, but there was nothing in his stomach to throw up. He gasped, trying to make it stop, but his stomach clenched and spasmed until he felt like he would be turned inside out.

When at last it began to abate, John rested his forehead against the wall, his eyes watering. Light-headed, he got on his feet, feeling as if years had passed. He did not look into the closet again.

John limped toward the door, grinding his teeth with every step, but he did not stop moving until he was outside the house, and he did not look back.

"There!" Michael cheered, momentarily distracting Susie from trying to leave. The last phantom of the girl, with long black hair came and sat with them. When she had merged with the others like her, she blinked, then looked up and took in a long, calm breath. "We're all together now."

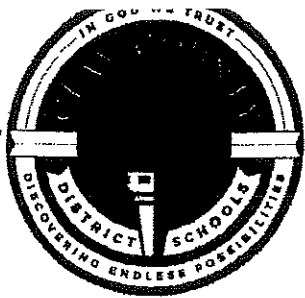
Michael said with a smile. The drawings on the ground had disappeared, and five real-seeming children sat with Carlton under the table, no longer ghostly images.

"The rabbit isn't your friend," Carlton repeated. Susie gave him a puzzled look, and pointed to the only drawing left, the large one that showed all five children with the smiling yellow rabbit.

"I said bring him to the table," William said angrily, drawing Carlton's attention across the shadows. The painted fox cocked its head to the side, but before William could scold it again, more noises came from the hall. The door opened, pushed like something was bumping against it, and a variety of mechanical things made their way into the room, crawling and clawing their way across the floor in various states of disrepair. There were the climbing babies, and the gangly clown that had sat atop a carnival game in the dining room; others filed in that Carlton did not recognize: waddling dolls painted with clowns' faces, disjointed circus animals, and other things he could not even name.

"Get back," William hissed at the macabre procession, and brushed a crawler aside with his foot, struggling to keep his balance. The little blond boy had stopped crying; he was staring stunned at the creatures, shrinking away with his hand half blocking his face.

"Afraid of them, now?" William turned on the boy. "Don't fear them. Fear me," he snarled with renewed strength, and



CENTURY OF HAND DOWN
CLAY COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOLS

900 WALNUT STREET, GREEN COVE SPRINGS, FL 32043
P (904) 336-6500 F (904) 336-6536 W oneclay.net
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS
David S. Broskie

BOARD MEMBERS:
Janice Kerekas, District 1
Mary Bolla District 2
Beth Clark District 3
Tina Bullock District 4
Ashley Gilhousen, District 5

Request for Reconsideration or Review of Instructional Materials

Individual Requesting Review: BRUCE FRIEDMAN
Phone: [REDACTED]
Physical Address: [REDACTED] Email: BRUCE.FRIEDMAN@NOLEFTTURN.US
City: [REDACTED]
School: RIDGEVIEW HS... Grade Level: HS... Subject: VARIES

Check as applicable:

- I represent a special interest group named NO LEFT TURN IN EDUCATION
- I already have a copy of the material
- I will review the material on-site
- I wish to check out the material for a two-week period

Type of Instructional Material:

- Novel
- Textbook
- Workbook
- Symbol
- Video (YouTube, DVD, etc)
- Other: VARIES

Title: FROM THE DESK OF ZOE WASHINGTON
Author: JANAE MARKS ISBN: 978-0-06-287585-3
& OTHERS

NOTE: Requests may be returned if questions 1, 2, and 3 do not include a detailed response.

1. What is your interest or reason for this request? PROTECT CHILDREN!

2. Does this material violate F.S. Chapter 847 regarding Obscenity? Circle one: YES/NO
If YES, please explain in Question 3. NO

3. What is objectionable about the material? Include specific pages, chapters, language, scenes, etc., in your response. Attach additional information, if necessary.

DARK BUT W/ "HAPPY ENDING"

SEE ATTACHED
CRT: SYSTEMIC RACISM
MENTIONS BLM/JASON REYNOLDS/"THE TALK" = CRT
LIES TOLD BY ALL CHARACTERS - BAD BEHAVIOR
PREOCCUPATION WITH SKIN COLOR = CRT
MENTIONS AUTOPSY, "BLUNT FORCE TRAUMA", DEATH
68 DISTRICT COPIES!
MOST MANY IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS
CRT - RACISM - MANY PAGES - PG 48 "THE LOOK"
P. 93 -> "BLACK PEOPLE ALL OVER THE COUNTRY.. SHOT BY POLICE.. NO GOOD REASON"

4. What do you believe might be the result of a student using this material?

DAMAGED SOULS

5. For what age group would you recommend this material?

ADULT

6. Is there anything good in this material?

NA

7. Would you care to recommend another instructional material in the same format, covering the same subject or content standards? If so, please list the title, author, publisher, and ISBN:

NA

Printed name of Complainant:

BRUCE FRIEDMAN

Please do not forget to sign, as forms without signatures may be returned.

Signature of Complainant:

[Handwritten Signature]

Date:

3/28/2023

Please submit the completed form and any additional documentation to:

Clay County District Schools
Attn: Supervisor of Instructional Resources
900 Walnut Street
Green Cove Springs, Florida 32043

To be completed by Instructional Resources Office Staff:

Received in Instructional Resources: Date 4/12/23 by [Signature]

Attachments were included with this form. Total number of pages _____

The form was fully completed and accepted: Yes/No. If not, why? _____

Date Committee convened: _____

Committee: ESC

Outcome: no evidence of ch. 847 violation as presented

Notification of Complainant: Date _____ by _____

Additional information: _____

Help (<https://help.overdrive.com?Key=claycofl&Sup=https%3A%2F%2Ffrontline.overdrive.com>)

<https://claycofl.overdrive.com?Key=claycofl&Sup=https%3A%2F%2Ffrontline.overdrive.com>



(1)

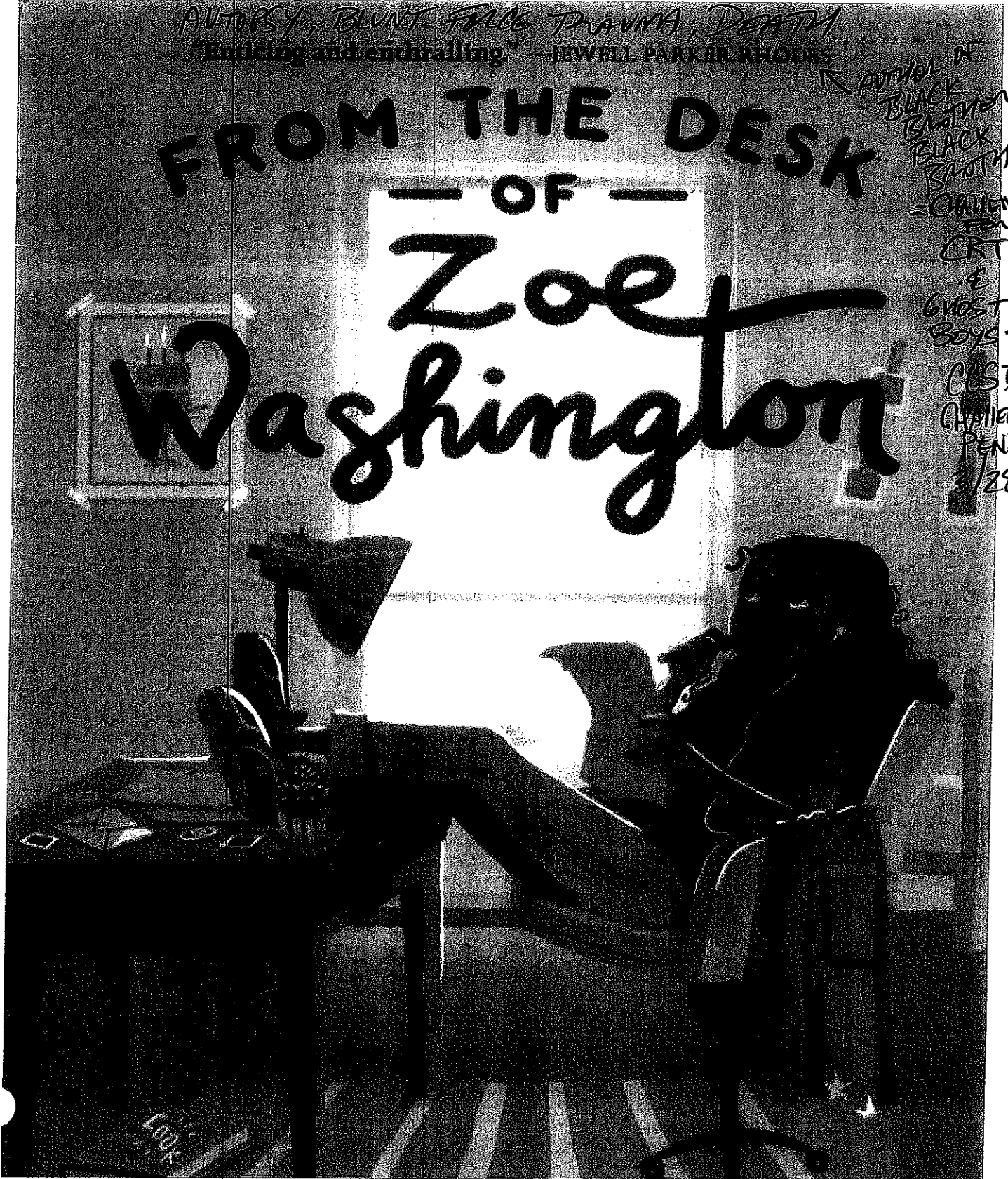
A STORY ~~SO~~ THAT TRIVIALIZES A CHILD'S LIES
AND ADULT LIES

AUTORSY, BLUNT FACE TRAUMA, DEATH
"Enticing and entralling" -- JEWELL PARKER RHODES

FROM THE DESK
— OF —

Zoe Washington

ARTICLE OF
BLACK
GIRLBOY,
BLACK
BOYBOY
CHALLENGED
FOR
CRT
&
GHOST
BOYS TOO!
CUSD
CHALLENGES
PENDING
3/28/23



BY JANAE MARKS

JANAE MARKS

From the Desk of Zoe Washington

by Janae Marks (/search/creatorId?query=1930582&sortBy=newlyadded)

EBOOK

★★★★☆

1 of 1 copy available

BORROW

READ A SAMPLE

ADD TO WISH LIST ADD TO HISTORY

Description Details Reviews

#1 Kids Indie Next List * Parents Magazine Best Book of the Year * Chicago Public Library Best of the Best Book of the Year * SLJ Best Book of the Year * Kirkus Best Book of the Year * Junior Library Guild Selection * Edgar Award Nominee * Four Starred Reviews * Bank Street Best Children's Book of the Year * An Indie Bestseller *

From debut author Janae Marks comes a captivating story full of heart, as one courageous girl questions assumptions, searches for the truth, and does what she believes is right—even in the face of great opposition.

Zoe Washington isn't sure what to write. What does a girl say to the father she's never met, hadn't heard from until his letter arrived on her twelfth birthday, and who's been in prison for a terrible crime? *

A crime he says he never committed. *

Could Marcus really be innocent? Zoe is determined to uncover the truth. Even if it means hiding his letters and her investigation from the rest of her family. Everyone else thinks Zoe's worrying about doing a good job at her bakery Internship and proving to her parents that she's worthy of auditioning for Food Network's Kids Bake Challenge.

But with bakery confections on one part of her mind, and Marcus's conviction weighing heavily on the other, this is one recipe Zoe doesn't know how to balance. The only thing she knows to be true: Everyone lies.

"When Marcus tells Zoe he is innocent, and her grandmother agrees, Zoe begins to learn about inequality in the criminal justice system, and she sets out to find the alibi witness who can prove his innocence." (Publishers Weekly, "An Anti-Racist Children's and YA Reading List")

Plus don't miss Janae Marks's A Soft Place to Land!

ZOE LIES TO PARENTS
ZOE'S FRIEND TREVOR LIES
ZOE'S GRANDMA KEEPS
HER SECRET TO ZOE'S PARENTS
(LIES BY OMISSION)

AWARD
WINNING
RUBBISH

ZOE LIES TO GRANDMA...

← CRT!

^
CRT
READING
LIST

ANTI-RACISM
IS RACISM

FORMATS
Kindle Book
OverDrive Read
EPUB ebook

SUBJECTS

JUVENILE FICTION
(/SEARCH?SUBJECT=43)

When my parents and I got home, Dad pulled his rain jacket hood onto his head and rushed inside with the box of leftover cupcakes. Mom, using an umbrella, carried my gift bags. I hurried behind them, and on my way in, grabbed the mail from the mailbox next to our front door.

While I kicked off my sneakers in our foyer, I flipped through the envelopes, checking to see if my great-aunt's birthday card arrived. She usually included money, and I was dying to add an egg separator to my baking supplies.

There was a catalog and some junk mail from credit card companies. And then I spotted a plain white envelope with my name, Zoe Washington, and my address handwritten in neat, blue print.

I glanced at the return address and froze. "Massachusetts State Penitentiary" was typed on the upper left corner, across from a waving American flag stamp. The name Marcus Johnson was written in that same blue handwriting above the prison's name.

It was a letter from my convict father, a man I'd never heard from before. I couldn't believe it.

Just like that, my birthday didn't matter anymore. The envelope slipped from my fingers, landing on the floor. My dog, Butternut, ran over and started licking it, but I snatched it up and dropped it onto the table next to the front door.

Why would Marcus write to me? Why now?

I only owned one picture of him, which Grandma had given me, since Mom would never approve. It was one of Mom's pictures that Grandma had saved from when Mom and Marcus were high school sweethearts. I'd hidden the picture between the pages of one of my

11-12
BIOLOGICAL FATHER
FALSELY IMPRISONED
MARCUS JONSON BEFORE HE WAS BORN
OK

journals. In it, Marcus was at a Boston Celtics game, wearing a team sweatshirt and a huge smile. My smile looked like his, which was weird. Someone I never met had the exact same smile as me. And his brown skin matched mine. Mom's skin was a little lighter.

Now Marcus was sitting in a prison cell, probably wearing an orange jumpsuit. That's how I imagined people in prison.

I bet he didn't smile much there.

I picked up the envelope and rubbed my thumb across the seal, but all of a sudden, my fingers stopped working and I froze in place. I wanted to read it, but I was also terrified of what it might say. He'd committed a terrible crime. What if he'd written something scary? It was only a piece of paper, but the feeling wouldn't go away.

I took a deep breath and started to open the envelope again, but then I heard Mom come down the stairs. I knew it was Mom and not my stepdad, Paul, because she was humming a song, which she did a lot, especially in front of the bathroom mirror when she was putting on makeup. She had a pretty good voice, but she always said it was because of the bathroom acoustics. That was wrong, because my stepdad sometimes sang in the shower, and the acoustics didn't stop him from sounding like a dying coyote.

I quickly tucked the letter into the pocket on the inside of my rain jacket. It wouldn't be a good idea to show Mom. I was pretty sure she'd take it away without letting me read it. I hoped she couldn't hear how hard my heart was beating.

"I put the gift bags in your room," she said.
"Thanks."

OK

"Did you have fun today?" she asked. "Your cupcakes came out so pretty."

"It was amazing!" I told Mom.

But now I couldn't focus on how amazing it was, not with Marcus's letter taking up so much space in my brain.

"This today's mail?" Mom stared at the foyer table, where I'd left the rest of it.

"Yep. I grabbed it from the mailbox."

"Thanks." But then her eyebrows scrunched together, and her shoulders did what they did when she was stressed—they lifted up toward her ears. She smiled at me, but it was a forced smile, like she wasn't actually happy. She picked up the pile of mail, and as she flipped through it, her shoulders slowly returned to their normal position.

"I thought Auntie Lillian's card might've come, but I didn't see it." I swallowed hard, thinking of the letter that *had* come. I wondered if I should tell Mom about it. But what if it made her mad or upset? She didn't like to talk about Marcus.

Mom smiled at me for real. "I'll come. Anyway, there's one more birthday surprise for you. We're going to order Hawaiian-ish pizza for dinner."

I forced myself to smile. "Hawaiian-ish" was the name I'd given my favorite pizza combo—pineapple and pepperoni instead of ham. Since my mom and stepdad thought it was gross, we usually only got those toppings on half a pie.

"Sounds great." I cleared my throat. "I'm gonna go to my room, and um . . . put my gifts away."

It was a total lie, but that's not what Mom noticed.

"You're not going to take your jacket off?" she asked.

Marcus's envelope was still in my pocket, right over my heart, which was beating fast.

"I'll take it off in my room." I walked away before Mom could say anything else.

What could Marcus have to say to me?
I had to know.

GROSS,
OK

From
Prison

music sounds better coming from a record player. He might be right. His favorite singer is Stevie Wonder. Have you ever heard any of his songs? He has a pretty great voice. There's this one song called "Isn't She Lovely." You should look it up sometime. Stevie's saying exactly how I feel about you, my baby girl. Well, you're not a baby anymore, but I know you've gotta be pretty lovely at this age.

I wish I could give you a hug and see your smiling face on your big day. I'm sorry I can't be there to celebrate with you. I know your mom is doing something special. She was always good at knowing how to celebrate birthdays when we were together.

Even if you never reply to these letters, I'll keep writing them. Though I hope you'll write me back one day. In the meantime, I want you to know that I think about you every day.

Love,
Daddy

All I could do was stand there staring at the paper in my hands. I was like the Tin Man in *The Wizard of Oz* when he needed to be oiled. My arms and legs felt stiff, like they'd weigh a million pounds if I tried to move them.

Why did Marcus sound so . . . nice? Mom always made it seem like he was a bad person. He didn't seem like he was writing from prison. I wasn't sure how someone in prison would sound, exactly, but I guessed they wouldn't be so smart.

He seemed normal. He liked music, like any other

dad. Like my stepdad, who was into classical and jazz music. I'd heard of Stevie Wonder, and I thought I knew a couple of his songs. I'd look up "Isn't She Lovely" later.

I read the letter again. Why had he called me Little Tomato? It was kind of weird. I liked tomatoes, especially the little ones, but I didn't want to be called one.

What did Marcus mean when he wrote "these letters"? This was the first one I'd ever gotten from him. It didn't make any sense.

None of this did.

I stared at my striped rug as a million thoughts swirled around my head like cake batter in a mixer.

Should I write him back? What will happen if I do?

I had no idea Marcus thought about me. But what if he was pretending to be nice to me because he wanted something from me? What, though?

Maybe I should throw the letter away.

There was a knock on my bedroom door, which made me jump two feet and almost drop the letter. I clutched the loose-leaf paper in my now-sweating hands.

"Hey, Zoe?" It was Mom.

I tensed up. "One second!" I stuffed the letter back into the envelope and tucked it underneath my purple comforter. I remembered I was still wearing my jacket, so I took it off and threw it over the back of my desk chair.

Then I cracked my bedroom door open.

"Trevor's here," Mom said.

Trevor? What's he doing here?

As if she could hear my thoughts, Mom said, "He

RECORDED WITH SKIN

his olive skin and hazel eyes, but he was my dad in all the ways that mattered.

I sometimes called adults by their first names—like Trevor's mom, Patricia. But that was because I'd known Patricia forever, and at one point she told me to call her that.

I crossed out "Dear" and started over.

Dear

Hi,

Even with that settled, I had no idea what to write next.

I got your letter, I began. I was really surprised since I never thought I'd hear from you. I—

There was a tap on my shoulder, so I looked up. Trevor. He had scooted down toward my end of the porch steps. Now he was clearly in my space, with Butternut happily wagging his tail next to him.

Trevor's mouth was moving, and when he realized I couldn't hear him, he pointed to my earbuds.

I yanked them out. "What do you want?"

"What're you writing?" he asked.

"Are you kidding me?" I stood up.

"What?" Trevor rubbed one of his eyes.

"I'm not talking to you."

"Why not?"

"Because!" I said.

"That's not a reason," Trevor said.

Butternut barked and jumped up my leg.

I sighed loudly. I couldn't even write a letter on my own steps without Trevor messing it up. "Forget it. Take the whole porch if you want. I'm going inside." I turned toward my door with my journal tucked under my arm.

"Hold up," Trevor said.

I took a deep breath and got ready to yell at him to get a clue already, but when I faced him, he was holding Marcus's letter. Which must've fallen out of my journal. It was unfolded, and he was reading it.

"What are you doing? Stop it!" I snatched the letter from him. "That's mine. It's private."

Trevor put his hands up in the air, but looked me straight in the eyes. "Is that from your dad?"

I stopped short. "What are you talking about?" I tried to keep my face even and make my voice sound casual.

"Your dad that's in jail." Trevor paused, and then said, "He's there because he killed somebody, right?"

My breath caught in my throat. "How do you know that?"

Even though Trevor and I used to be close, I never told him about what Marcus did. I didn't want to talk about it with anyone. Trevor, Jasmine, and Maya knew my birth dad was in prison, but not why.

I hated that this person related to me was a monster. A murderer. It made me want to throw up. He could be locked up for the rest of his life, but there was a chance he could get out early after serving twenty-five years. It was called "parole." I sort of hoped that wouldn't happen.

Trevor shrugged. "Your mom told my mom once.

They were in our kitchen, and I was coming down the hall. They didn't know I could hear them."

"When?" I asked.

Trevor thought about it. "Last year or something."

"You never told me."

"I didn't know if you knew. It seemed like a secret

or something.”

“Oh.” I wasn’t sure what else to say.

Trevor stepped closer to me. “Why aren’t you talking to me? And why didn’t you invite me to your birthday?”

There was a long pause before I said, “I know what you said about me.”

His eyebrows scrunched up. “Huh?”

I didn’t want to repeat the words. Plus, I was in the middle of something, and Trevor was getting in the way. Again. “I don’t have time for this right now,” I told him.

Before Trevor could say anything else, I turned around and began to storm inside. But then I remembered something important and turned back.

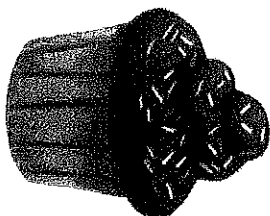
“One other thing. You better not tell anyone about the letter. Seriously, you cannot tell *anyone*. If you do, I . . .” I paused. “I’ll never, ever forgive you.”

“I won’t tell,” Trevor said, his face serious. “Even though you won’t say why you’re mad at me. You can’t ignore me forever.”

Watch me.

Before Trevor could say anything else, I went inside, Butternut trailing behind me.

A moment later, I heard Trevor’s storm door creak open and closed. With my journal and Marcus’s letter in hand, I ran down the hall to my room. Now I could focus on what really mattered.



Chapter Five

Almost an hour later, I finished the letter.

June 26

Hi,

I got your letter. I was really surprised since I never thought I'd hear from you.

I'm not sure what to call you. I can't call you Dad because Mom's husband, Paul, is my dad. Mom taught me to always call adults by Ms. or Mr. whatever their last name is, unless they say it's okay to use their first name. Am I allowed to call you Marcus? This is all kind of weird.

I listened to the Stevie Wonder song "Isn't She Lovely." It's nice. I started listening to some of his other songs too. I really like "Signed, Sealed, Delivered (I'm Yours)." We don't have a record player, but I do know what one is. I downloaded some of his songs to my phone.

Part of me wants to know more about you, but I don't know what to ask you, what to ask someone in prison. What I really want to know is why you did what you did.

I was happy with it so far—except for that last line. I wanted to know why Marcus committed his crime, but I was scared to ask. Scared of the answer. He didn't seem like a bad person in his letter, but that didn't mean he wasn't one.

I decided to cross that line out. Maybe if I sent another letter, I'd ask him then, when I felt ready for whatever answer he had to give.

Part of me wants to know more about you, but I don't know what to ask you, what to ask someone in prison. What I really want to know is why you did what you did.

Also, why did you call me Little Tomatio?

Sincerely,

Zoe

In my desk drawer, there was a box of stationery that my grandmother had given me for my eleventh birthday. I didn't usually send letters to people, so I'd never used it before. But now it was exactly what I needed. I took out a sheet of the stationery—it was fancy white paper with one dark purple line going around the perimeter. On the top in script were the words:

From the Desk of Zoe Washington

The pretty paper made me feel more grown-up, like

I knew what I was doing.
With my journal open beside me, I rewrote my letter on the stationery in my neatest print. This was really happening.

When I was done, I wrote Marcus's prison address on the envelope. I wondered how far away it was, so I did a quick search on my computer. Less than an hour drive, but I hadn't been to that part of Massachusetts before. I sealed the letter and went to grab a stamp from the junk drawer in the kitchen.

The next morning, I waited for my parents to leave for work, then got ready to head to the blue mailbox at the corner of our street. I didn't want to leave Marcus's letter in the mailbox at our house and risk my parents seeing it. But before I could step onto the porch, I heard familiar voices: Trevor and his basketball friends, Lincoln and Sean. I went to the living room and glanced out the window. They were standing at the bottom of the porch steps, talking and laughing about something. Trevor dribbled a basketball while Lincoln and Sean held on to their bikes. They weren't even wearing helmets!

My hands balled into fists.

Please leave. I waited for Trevor to get his bike and ride away with them. But they didn't leave. Instead they all went to the driveway to play basketball.

What do I do? I could go outside through the back door, but I was pretty sure they'd still see me. After what happened, after what they'd said about me, I didn't want to face those boys.

Would I be stuck inside my house all summer, forced to listen to their voices and laughter echoing

YOU KNOW YOU'RE LYING TO YOUR MOTHER

RECEIVED CONTINUES

one of the soaps. "But what do you think about doing an internship at a bakery this summer?"

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"I talked to Ariana last night, and she said she can always use extra help during the summer, since the bakery is extra busy. You can go over and help her out once a week, and she can also teach you some of her baking tricks."

"Are you serious?"

"Yep. If you do a good job—if Ari gives you a positive review—then at the end of the summer, you can apply to the Food Network show."

I couldn't believe it. I could be on the *Kids Bake Challenge!* and intern at a real, professional bakery.

"Thank you so much!" I tackled Mom with a hug.

She laughed as she hugged me back. "You're welcome. But don't get too excited yet. You still have a lot of work to do. Working in a bakery is *not* easy." I could totally handle it.

"When do I start?"

"Tomorrow. Dad will drop you off on the way to work, and you'll stay for the first half of the day. Then he'll pick you up around lunchtime. How does that sound?"

"Amazing!" I grinned.

If I was gone for only half a day, then I could still check the mail for a letter from Marcus when I got home.

I hated that I had to pay so much attention to the mail. But maybe I wouldn't have to.

We continued our loop around the market and passed by four vendors before I built up the nerve to say, "Mom? Can I ask you something?"

"Of course," she said.

"Would you ever let me speak to Marcus?" I asked. "Like, maybe send him a letter in prison?"

Mom stopped walking and her expression got serious. "Marcus?" She said his name like it tasted rotten. "Why would you want to do that?"

"Because he's my dad. I mean, you know. My birth dad."

"He may have had something to do with your birth, but that's it." Mom's voice hardened. "He's never even seen you."

"Because I'm not allowed to visit him. Right?" I asked.

"Right," she said. "I'm not taking you to a prison."

"But shouldn't I get to decide if I want to know him?" I asked.

"When you're an adult, if that's what you want, I can't stop you. But right now, you're still a child," Mom said.

I frowned. "You act like I'm a baby. I'm twelve now, practically a teenager."

Mom shook her head. "There's still so much you don't know."

"So tell me!"

I didn't mean for it to come out so loud. A few people turned their heads to look at us.

Mom pulled me away from the center of the market, and we ended up next to a big oak tree. She put her hands on my shoulders and looked me in the eyes.

"Listen to me, Marcus is not a good man. He lies and manipulates people. And he's a convicted murderer. I don't want him in your life. You have to understand." She paused. "Where is this coming from? Why are you

SM's 12

asking about this now?"

"No reason," I mumbled.

"Are you sure?" Mom asked.

"Yes."

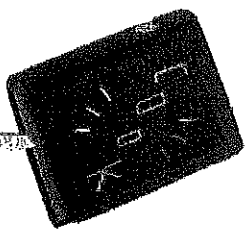
"Okay, then. I don't want to talk about this anymore." She exhaled. "Let's go home."

I silently followed Mom to where we parked our car. My chest felt tight.

Mom wasn't being fair. I wasn't a little kid anymore. I was old enough to figure out for myself how I felt about him. Besides, Marcus couldn't hurt me from behind bars.

I had no choice—his letters would have to stay secret.

NOT TRUE



Chapter Seven

CRT

Dad and I got "the look" again on our way to my first day at Ari's Cakes. The look we got sometimes when we were out together, just the two of us. Dad parked the car a block away from the bakery. As we were getting out, an older white lady walked by and stared at us a little too long, her face twisting into a confused and judgmental glare. I knew exactly what that look meant. She was wondering why a Black girl was getting out of a white man's car. What we were doing together.

My face got hot.

"Hey, Dad?" I said, extra loud so the woman would hear.

"Yes, kiddo?"

"Do you have quarters for the meter?" I asked.

"Yup, right here," he said.

I peered behind me to see if the woman was still staring. But she had gone back to walking.

THIS "INCIDENTAL SCENE IS NO ACCIDENT"

anyone would understand, it might be Grandma.

"Not long," I said. "He sent two letters, and I sent two back."

Grandma nodded. "That time I saw you with a letter in your room? It wasn't from your friend at camp, was it?"

I shook my head.

"You were upset. Are the letters bothering you?" Grandma asked.

"No! In that letter, Marcus said that he wanted me, before I was born. I wasn't expecting that." A lump appeared in my throat.

"I see," Grandma said.

"Do you think Marcus is bad?" I asked. "He sounds nice when he writes to me, but he's in prison for doing something terrible."

Grandma shook her head. "You know, there are multiple sides to everyone. People aren't so black-and-white. Sometimes good people do bad things, and bad people do good things."

"So, you think Marcus is only somewhat bad?" I asked.

She opened her mouth as if to say something, but then changed her mind and closed it.

"What?" I asked.

"I think Marcus is a good person at heart," she said.

"I kind of want to keep writing to him," I told Grandma. "I still have so many questions. But Mom can't know about this." I paused. "Will you keep my secret?"

Grandma exhaled. "I don't know, baby. I shouldn't keep secrets about you from your mom."

"Please? I promise I'll tell her. I just want to write a

few more letters to Marcus. Before she makes me stop. You know she won't let me write to him."

A few long seconds passed as Grandma stared thoughtfully out of the window.

"You're probably right," she said, looking at me again. "I still don't like the idea of lying to my daughter, but this situation is not normal. And I think your mom has been stubborn. She's let her own feelings about Marcus get in the way."

Grandma paused, and then said, "How about you give him my address instead. You can read his letters at my house. But I'll read each of them first, to make sure they're okay."

"Really?" I asked.

"Yes. But you have to come clean with your mom," Grandma said. "Before the summer is over."

"Okay." I had no idea how I would tell my mom about this, but I'd figure that out later. "I guess I'll write to Marcus tonight and give him your address."

"Good idea. I'll mail it for you tomorrow."

I leaned over and gave Grandma a hug. She smelled like the lemonade tea and honey. "Thank you."

"Of course." She squeezed me back. "I love you, baby girl, you know that?"

"I love you, too."

From the Desk of Zoe Washington

July 11

Dear Marcus,

I told my grandma about these letters, and she's glad I'm writing to you. Do you mind sending your letters to her house instead? Her address is below.

I paused and pressed the back of the pen against my chin. I thought about what Grandma said about people not being black-and-white. Maybe that's how Marcus was—he did something terrible, the worst thing I could imagine. But at the same time, he'd been sweet to me in his letters and had interesting things to say. I still wanted to know more about him. Maybe he'd changed and was a better person now.

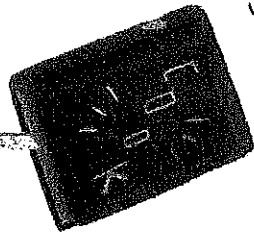
The one thing I'd been holding back talking to Marcus about was his crime. Before I could change my mind, I started writing again.

I've been wondering about what you did. I know a little about it. I don't want to think about you being a murderer, not when you've been so nice to me in these letters. Are you sorry you did it?

Zoe

PS Please send another song. I started making a playlist called "Little Tomato's Playlist." I thought you'd like that.

SOME S HAVE IN THIS
RELATIONSHIP
PUNISHMENT
CONSIDERATION
MOM'S CHILD
A = OK Chapter Eleven



On Saturday morning, I walked into the kitchen, itching to bake something. I opened the fridge and spotted Mom's container of raspberries. She liked to put them with granola on her yogurt for breakfast. The container was still almost full, so I took it out, thinking of the raspberry crumb bar recipe in Ruby Willow's cookbook. I was pretty sure we had the rest of the ingredients I'd need. I ran to get the cookbook from my room.

Mom was in the kitchen refilling her coffee mug when I got back.

She watched as I found the recipe and started pulling flour, sugar, and butter from the cabinet and fidge.

"Can I use the oven?" I asked, since that was the rule. "And can I use the rest of your raspberries?"

"Yes, and yes," Mom said. "Would you like some help?"

threw it on the floor.

RECEIVED
MARCUS
CONTINUES
Later that week, Grandma gave me a letter from Marcus. As my parents were leaving for work, she slipped the envelope to me. I went straight to my room to read it.

To my Little Tomato,

I got your last two letters. Actually, I started responding to the first one when the next one arrived.

I remember your grandmother well. She was always nice to me back when your mom and I were dating. Her house was always like a second home to me. Does she still drink a lot of tea? She used to always love her tea.

As to your question about my crime, I promised you that I would answer all of your questions honestly. I can't give you much from in here, but I can give you my word—I will never lie to you.

I hoped you wouldn't ask about this, because it opens up a can of worms. There's no easy way to put this: I didn't do it. I'm innocent. I have an alibi and there was even a witness, but I'm in here because my lawyer couldn't prove that I didn't do it. Even after we appealed my conviction. It's unfair, but nothing can be done.

I'm sorry that I'm in here instead of out there with you. I'm sorry that you've had to deal with a father in prison. If I could go back and somehow fix it, I would.

I want to end this letter on a happier note. You asked what else I like to do. When I was your age, besides basketball, I played a lot of video games. I

was also into drawing. I would draw the characters from my favorite games and cartoons. I used to think I was pretty good, but I stopped in high school when basketball started taking up all of my free time.

You know what else? I liked to cook! I used to help my mom all the time with her recipes, which were passed down to her from her mom. Even now, I get to cook some. My job here in prison is working in the kitchen. My favorite part is chopping the vegetables. I get in the zone and it's pretty relaxing. I never baked much, but it's great that you love baking. When you get on that show and win, I want a signed copy of your cookbook, okay? I hope one day I get to taste one of your recipes.

As for my family, I do have one sibling—a brother who's five years older than me. He lives in Atlanta with his wife and two daughters, and my parents moved down there to be closer to them. Unfortunately, my relationship with them isn't the same now that I'm in prison. I really hope that changes someday.

Here's another song for your playlist. I like all kinds of music, but my favorite has to be R&B. It reminds me of when I was growing up. Look up "Water Runs Dry," by Boyz II Men. That song brings back some good memories.

Please give your grandmother a big hug for me. And tell her to give you one for me too. :)

Love,

Marcus

showed a different person's face looking at the camera. They were all men, and most of them were Black. Like Marcus. I slipped it off the shelf and carried it to a nearby empty table.

SKIN

I sat down and cracked open the book, reading through the table of contents. Then I skimmed the introduction, which was written by some lawyer guy. He worked for an organization called the Innocence Project, which he explained helped innocent people get out of prison.

Did this mean Marcus could be telling the truth? If that kind of organization existed, then innocent people must go to prison. I couldn't believe it.

The rest of the chapters were about different cases, so I turned to the first one and started to read.

It described how one man went to prison for armed robbery, but more than one person said they saw him somewhere else, not at the crime scene. He didn't actually commit the crime. Still, in the end, the jury didn't believe his side of the story. He was sentenced to prison for twenty years. He had to leave his family, a wife and two kids.

He had an alibi like Marcus. But he still went to prison.

I read on. Years later, the man wrote a letter to the Innocence Project, and they agreed to help him. They got DNA evidence from the crime scene tested again, and the results showed it didn't belong to this guy. He really was innocent. The Innocence Project got him out of prison.

"Wow," I said out loud before remembering I was in the quietest room ever. I flipped through the rest of the book, where there were at least a dozen other stories

like that one, of people who had spent years in prison until the Innocence Project took on their cases and helped them get out. Now they were all free.

There was a page in the book with graphs and numbers. It showed how many people the Innocence Project helped get out of prison, which was in the hundreds. I couldn't believe that many innocent people were convicted. I stared at another chart that showed the different races of the people the Innocence Project helped. Most of them were Black.

Of course. I knew about the Black Lives Matter movement, how Black people all over the country were getting shot by police for no good reason. If those police officers weren't going to jail, then it made sense that the whole prison system was messed up. I never thought about whether prisons had the wrong people before. I assumed that if you committed a crime, you got the punishment you deserved, and innocent people would always be proven innocent. Apparently not.

NOT FACTUAL (BUT IS CRIMINALS)

SKIN

BT

I opened my journal and wrote down the name of the book. I couldn't take it home; I didn't want one more thing to hide from my parents. But I had to be able to look it up again later. Underneath the book's title, I wrote down "the Innocence Project." I needed to research them more.

I was about to get up to use a computer when somebody sat down at the table across from me. It must have been one of the other grown-ups on the floor, and I kept my head down as I figured out how to explain what I was doing there. But when I looked up, it wasn't a grown-up staring at me.

It was Trevor.



Chapter Fourteen

"Whatcha reading?" Trevor asked, smiling.

"Shhh! What are you doing here?" I looked past Trevor, but thankfully, he wasn't with either of his parents.

"I was gonna ask you the same thing," he said. "Simon dropped me off at the library so I could return my book and get another one. When I walked in, I saw you come up the stairs. I thought it was weird, since the kids' books and cookbooks are downstairs."

"So you followed me." Why did he keep butting his head where it didn't belong?

"No," Trevor said. "I went down to the kids' floor first, and got my book." He held up the book he'd chosen—*Ghost*, by Jason Reynolds. "And then I came up here to find you. Are you hiding from someone?"

"Who would I be hiding from?" I asked, as if it was the most ridiculous question ever. I closed *The Wrongfully Convicted*, ready to get up and away from

96

Rest assured, I'll be challenging this too.

If my instincts are wrong and these ARE fine books, I will let you know.



THIS ONE IS UNCLEAN
AUTHOR TBD

JASON REYNOLDS IS ASSOCIATED WITH

1 BRAM X. KENDI "STAMPED" = CRT

CRT

Black, I have to be extra careful around the police. Stuff like that.”

“My mom had that talk with me, too,” I said. “I hadn’t made the connection.”

I told Trevor about the Innocence Project and filled him in on the case I read about. I still couldn’t believe how unfair it was. What was the point of a legal system if it didn’t work a lot of the time? And what about all the people who didn’t know to ask for the Innocence Project’s help?

“That’s messed up,” Trevor said.

“I know,” I said. “I’m going to go use a computer and see what I can find about Marcus’s case.”

“Cool, let’s go,” Trevor said as he pushed his chair back.

“What do you mean, let’s?” I asked.

“I want to come, too,” Trevor said. “I’m curious now.”

“Um . . .” I hesitated, not sure if I was ready to be friends with Trevor again. But it was nice to talk all of this through with him. It was almost like before.

“Okay, then,” I finally said.

I left *The Wrongfully Convicted* on the table, gathered my other stuff, and then Trevor and I walked to the nearest computer.

My mom never told me any of the details of the crime—only that the victim was someone Marcus knew in college. I didn’t want to look it up before, because I was sort of scared of what I’d find. But now that I wanted to figure out if he was really innocent, I needed to know exactly what happened the day of the crime.

I typed “Marcus Johnson” into the search bar, and the page filled with links and pictures of some jazz

musician. I had to get more specific, so I put “Malden” after his name, since that’s where he and my mom grew up.

A few articles from over twelve years earlier popped up at the top of the list. In the middle of the page, a few images appeared. I immediately recognized Marcus in one of them.

I clicked on it to get a better look. The picture showed his head and the top of his shoulders, with a gray background. It had to be Marcus’s mug shot.

“That’s him.” The only other picture I’d seen of Marcus was him smiling at the basketball game. But in this one, Marcus looked mean—like a murderer would look. His jaw was tight, his eyes stony, as if he didn’t feel bad at all.

I started to panic; maybe this was all a mistake—he was guilty, of course he was guilty. But then I looked at the picture a little closer and noticed something else in his eyes. It seemed like maybe he was putting up a front, like he was really frightened but trying not to show it.

I wasn’t sure which was right.

It looked like the picture came from an article, so I clicked on it. I leaned even closer to the computer screen and started to read.

Arrest Made in UMass Student’s Murder
Published: Friday, November 1

A suspect has been charged today in the death of 18-year-old Lucy Hernandez, authorities said. The University of Massachusetts freshman was found dead in her apartment near campus on Sunday morning. Marcus Johnson, 18, UMass

Freshman and Malden resident, is charged with first degree murder.

Hernandez's roommate found her body in her apartment the morning of October 27. Authorities ruled the death a homicide later that day, a Sunday. An autopsy determined that the cause of Hernandez's death was blunt force trauma to her head, according to the prosecutor's office. The coroner estimated that her death occurred sometime between 3:00 and 5:00 p.m. on October 26.

Authorities said Hernandez and Johnson knew each other through school, and classmates believed the two were dating. A witness reported seeing Johnson exit Hernandez's apartment building the afternoon of her death.

Suddenly, it was hard to breathe. What happened to Lucy was so horrible. I couldn't read any more.

"He sounds guilty," Trevor said.

"I know," I said. "But maybe the witness got it wrong. Maybe this was all a misunderstanding."

"Maybe," Trevor said, but he didn't sound too convinced.

I went back to the search results and clicked on the next article. That headline read, "UMass Student Murder Suspect in Court." This article had more pictures. In one, Marcus was wearing an orange jumpsuit with handcuffs holding his hands in front of him, and a police officer walked beside him. It was hard not to see him as a criminal when he was in that jumpsuit. In the photo, his eyes were pointed toward the

floor, and hair dotted his chin and upper lip, like he hadn't gotten to shave. This is probably what he looked like right now, only older. Maybe he even had a full mustache and beard now.

In a low voice, I read a few lines of the article. "Marcus Johnson faced a judge in court today. The eighteen-year-old is accused of murdering his former classmate Lucy Hernandez in October."

Lucy's picture was in the article, too. The way she was posed, and with the blue fading background, it looked like a yearbook photo. Her wavy brown hair flowed past her shoulders, and she wore a black sweater, silver dangly earrings, and a silver necklace with a key charm. I wondered who gave her the necklace, and if it meant anything. She looked happy in the picture, probably excited to be graduating from high school.

She was alive, and then she wasn't. I swallowed hard as my stomach churned.

"You look like you're gonna throw up," Trevor said.

"It's just . . . that's her," I said.

"Yeah. She was pretty."

I stared at her picture for a few more seconds, memorizing her features. "I know."

Then I forced myself to go back to the article. It said Marcus pleaded "not guilty." There was a picture of Marcus standing next to his lawyer, Anthony Miller. He was white, shorter than Marcus, and had a bald spot on the top of his head. His gray suit and tie made him look like a lawyer, plus the way he stood there with his hands clasped in front of him, all serious, as he focused on the judge.

I glanced at the clock on the bottom right of the

In the letter, Marcus only said his lawyer couldn't prove his innocence, not that he never looked for the alibi witness. It didn't make any sense. "Why not? She could've told everyone that Marcus was somewhere else when the crime took place."

"Exactly," Grandma said. "She could've really helped Marcus's case. But, you know, he didn't have the money to pay for a big-shot lawyer after he was arrested. He had to use the defense lawyer assigned to him for free. And this lawyer . . ." She shook her head. "To me, it was like he didn't care one bit about what happened to Marcus."

"Why not?" I asked. "Didn't he want to win the case?"

Grandma exhaled. "He got paid either way, so I'm not sure it mattered. He seemed completely biased against Marcus. He wanted him to plead guilty, and take a deal, but Marcus refused."

"What do you mean by 'biased'?" I asked.

"I think he saw a Black man being charged with murder, and saw no reason to believe he was actually innocent," Grandma explained. "He went through the motions of defending him in court without putting in any real work."

"That's terrible!" I huffed.

Grandma nodded.

I thought of my email to Mr. Miller, and wondered what he'd say when he replied. If he replied at all.

"Do you think Marcus is really innocent?" I asked.

Grandma put her mug down on the coffee table.

"Yes, I do."

I blinked at her, surprised by how confident she sounded. "You do?"

"Yes," Grandma repeated. "Marcus dated your mom for two years, and I got to know him pretty well. He never seemed like a violent person. He was always so polite and respectful. And such a gentleman to your mom. You could tell he really respected her." She laughed. "Your mom would take forever to get ready for dates. She'd be in that bathroom singing along to some song, putting on makeup or whatever. Anyway, instead of waiting outside in the car, Marcus would come inside and talk to your granddad and me. He talked about college. Said he wanted to travel. One time he helped your granddad fix the leaky pipe under the sink while he waited for Natalie to get ready. He got his shirt all dirty, so he had to run back home and get a new one."

"Wow," I said.

"There's this quote from Maya Angelou," Grandma said. "When someone shows you who they are, believe them." That quote usually refers to when someone shows you their bad side, but I think it's also true when someone shows you how good they are. I really do think Marcus is a good person. I don't see how he was capable of killing someone. I always trust my gut, and my gut has always said to believe him."

I nodded, feeling a little more hopeful.

"Then I don't get it," I said. "Why did the court think he could've killed somebody?"

"The prosecutor told this one story about Marcus . . ." Grandma began, but then shook her head. "Never mind."

"What? You have to tell me."

Grandma exhaled again. "There was one time when Marcus was a senior. He got into a fistfight with another player at a basketball game."

TOO
SOULD
DOULD
ALL
THE
LYING

If Grandma told my parents now, the letters would end, and I'd definitely get in trouble for lying. I wouldn't be able to keep getting to know Marcus, and I'd never find out whether he really was innocent. I couldn't let either of those things happen.

How could I get Grandma to change her mind?

ANOTHER
LIE

"Please," I told her. "I promise I'll forget about the alibi witness, okay? But please let me keep writing to Marcus. Mom won't let me if she finds out, I know it. And then that'll be it."

I watched as Grandma considered this for the longest ten seconds of my life.

Clasping her hands together, she finally said, "Fine. You can keep writing to him. But no more talk about this alibi witness, okay? And we have to come clean to your parents at some point soon."

Phew, I thought, but I kept a straight face. "Okay."

"Good." She smiled. "Want some tea? I still have some of that pink lemonade one."

"Sure," I said, and Grandma left me in her living room.

There was no way I could forget about Marcus's alibi witness, especially now that I had her name. If Grandma wasn't going to help me, I'd have to find her on my own, without anyone finding out.

There was an icky feeling in the pit of my stomach when I thought about lying to Grandma, the one person who'd helped me keep writing to Marcus—even talk to him on the phone. But I had to find Susan Thomas. I had to.

All of the lying was wrong, I knew that. But maybe it was okay to do something wrong if you were doing it for the right reason.

THIS BOOK 161-162

SELLS THIS PARADISE
LYING IS A MEANS TO AN END — TO BETTER!

I didn't know how much time I had, how long Grandma would wait before finally telling my parents about my communication with Marcus. All I knew was that I needed to find Susan Thomas fast.

And then I remembered. I wouldn't have to do this on my own after all.

I picked up my phone and texted Trevor.

Susan Thomas. It was such a simple name, and also a pretty popular one. When I typed it into the search browser, over 150 million results popped up. There were photos of girls and women of all different ages, professional websites, personal blogs, social media pages, and more. When I skimmed through some of the sites, I saw that they were all over the country, and some even lived abroad. Lots of them had brown hair and brown eyes, and many of those Susan Thomases had freckles.

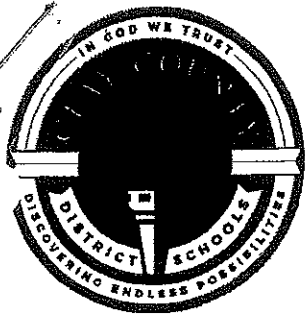
When I changed my search to "Susan Thomas Brookline MA," the results went down to one million. Which was better, but not good enough.

I was over at Trevor's house so we could search together. When I'd texted him to ask for his help, he immediately agreed. It was both weird and super familiar to be back in Trevor's room, which was really neat, as always. His bed was made, and there was a new basketball poster above his desk, plus even more novels on his bookshelf. We sat next to each other at his desk in front of his computer.

"I might never find her," I frowned at the computer screen. How would I narrow down all of these results to the one Susan Thomas I needed to find?

"We just started looking," Trevor said. "We'll find

160
PAGE
ENDING
HAPPY
THEN...



HAND DELIVER

7/30/22

CLAY COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOLS

900 WALNUT STREET, GREEN COVE SPRINGS, FL 32043
P (904) 336-6500 F (904) 336-6536 W oneclay.net

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS
David S. Broskie

BOARD MEMBERS:

- Janice Kerekes, District 1
- Mary Bolla, District 2
- Beth Clark, District 3
- Tina Bullock, District 4
- Ashley Gilhousen, District 5

Request for Reconsideration or Review of Instructional Materials

Individual Requesting Review: BRUCE FRIEDMAN
 Phone: [REDACTED] Email: BRUCE.FRIEDMAN@NOLEFTTURN.VS
 Physical Address: [REDACTED]
 City: [REDACTED]
 School: RIDGEVIEW etc Grade Level: HS etc Subject: VARIES

Check as applicable:

- I represent a special interest group named NOLEFTTURN IN EDUCATION FLORIDA
- I already have a copy of the material
- I will review the material on-site
- I wish to check out the material for a two-week period

Type of Instructional Material:

- Novel
- Textbook
- Workbook
- Symbol
- Video (YouTube, DVD, etc.)
- Other: VARIES

Title: * Front Desk
 Author: * Kelly Yang ISBN: * 978-1-33815779-6

1. What is your interest or reason for this request? PROTECT CHILDREN

NOT AN 847 VIOLATION

2. What is objectionable about the material: specific pages, chapters, language, scenes?
 Attach additional information, if necessary. ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~

- INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT PAGES
- COMMON CORE
- CSE
- SEL
- DEI / CRT / ANTI-POLICE
- SEXUAL CONTENT

*ACTUAL HAPPY ENDING - STILL NOT OKAY!

SEE ATTACHED: ANTI-POLICE SENTIMENT, RACISM, MARXISM (CLASS STRUGGLE), PROFANITY CRT (VICTIMHOOD, SYSTEMIC RACISM, PROFANITY) *ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION, INSURANCE FRAUD

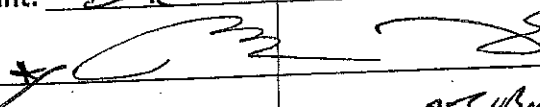
3. What do you believe might be the result of a student using this material? DAMAGED SOULS

4. For what age group would you recommend this material? ~~ADULT~~ ADULT

5. Is there anything good in this material? NA

6. Would you care to recommend another instructional material in the same format, covering the same subject or content standards? If so, please list the title, author, publisher, and ISBN: NA

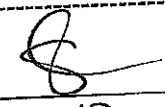
Printed name of Complainant: BRUCE FRIEDMAN

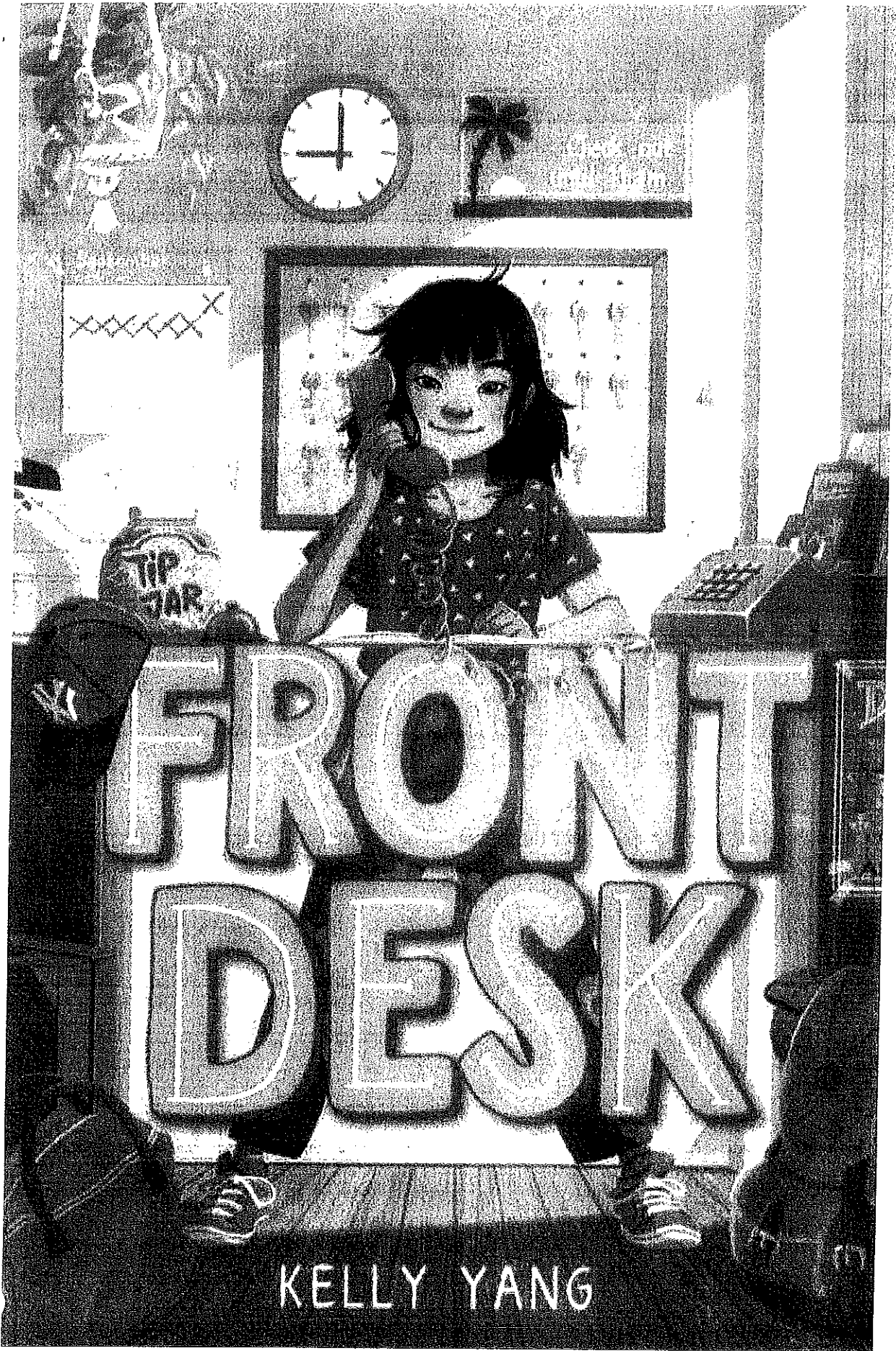
Signature of Complainant: 

Date: ~~7/28/2022~~ RESUBMITTED 2/26/2023

Please submit the completed form and any additional documentation to:

Clay County District Schools
Attn: Supervisor of Instructional Resources
900 Walnut Street
Green Cove Springs, Florida 32043

- To be completed by Instructional Resources Office Staff:**
- Received in Instructional Resources: Date 3/8/23 by  10
 - Attachments were included with this form. Total number of pages 10
 - The form was fully completed and accepted: Yes/No. If not, why? _____
 - Date Committee convened: _____
 - Committee Members: _____
 - Outcome: _____
 - Notification of Complainant: Date _____ by _____
 - Additional information: _____



KELLY YANG

No Late
Check-out!

FRONT DESK

KELLY YANG

Arthur A. Levine Books
SCHOLASTIC INC / NEW YORK

NOT TRUSTED!

CHAPTER 18

While Lupe's dad fixed the cable, I filled Lupe in on all the things that had happened, including Mr. Yao changing the deal on us, the drunk man attacking me, and Mr. Yao refusing to buy us a security camera.

"Oh, you'll never get Mr. Yao to buy that," Lupe said. "You're lucky if he pays the electricity."

"But he has so much money! Have you seen his house? It's enormous!" I said.

"Being rich doesn't mean you're generous. I've gone with my dad to some of the nicest homes in LA. You should see some of these rich people! They have so much money, but they're so mean to us—"

"Just because we're poorer than them," I finished the sentence.

Lupe looked at the floor.

"And because we're brown," she said quietly.

I looked down at our two arms, mine golden like the desert sand, and hers warm like cinnamon.

"Well, when we're rich, we're not going to be that way," I said.

"We're going to have to get off the roller coaster first," Lupe said. I furrowed my eyebrows.

"What roller coaster?" I asked.

Lupe explained. According to her dad, there were two roller coasters in America—one for rich people and one for poor people. On the rich roller coaster, people have money, so their kids get to go to great schools.

PARTLY
TRUE &
PARTLY
MARXIST
CLASS
WARFARE

Then *they* grow up and make a lot of money, so *their* kids get to go to great schools.

"And 'round and 'round they go," Lupe said.

"And poor people?" I asked.

"We're on a different roller coaster. On our roller coaster, our parents don't have money, so we can't go to good schools, and then we can't get good jobs. So then *our* kids can't go to good schools, they can't get good jobs, and so on and so forth," Lupe said.

It was an incredibly depressing thought. The only nice thing about it was that Lupe used the word *we*.

"Sucks," she said.

It did suck. And she was right too. My parents bobbed along from one bad job to another. Sometimes, I even felt like I was on a roller coaster—I had the same queasy feeling in my tummy.

"But wait. What about Jason?" I asked. "He goes to the same school as us."

"For now," she said. "But just wait. Come high school, he's going to go to a private school—for sure."

"That's good," I said. I wished he would go to private school now, somewhere far, far away.

Lupe shook her head.

"No, it's not," she said. "He'll learn all sorts of stuff that we don't know and we'll never be as successful."

I was curious what Lupe thought of as "successful." Everybody seemed to have different criteria. I used to think being successful meant having enough to eat, but now that I was getting free lunch at school, I wondered if I should set my standards higher.

When I asked Lupe, she put two fingers to her chin and thought real hard.

"I think being successful in this country means having a living room without a bed in it," she decided.

I immediately wanted to run over and cover up my parents' bed in the living room so she wouldn't see it. But Lupe spotted where I was looking and quickly added, "It's okay! Actually, you can think of the *front office* as being sort of like your living room."

I nodded.

"Right," I said.

It was really nice of Lupe to say that, but I knew it wasn't the truth. The living room was the living room and there was clearly a bed in ours, which meant we weren't successful in this country. Not yet anyway. We *had* to get off the bad roller coaster and onto the good one.

5

P
109

P
110

Mr. Yao arrived half an hour later. "How could this happen?" he said to my mom and dad, gesturing angrily with his hands.

"We don't know," my dad said. "We're just as surprised as you!"

Mr. Yao picked up the phone and called the police. After that, he went around from room to room, waking up all the customers.

"Have you seen a green Ford Thunderbird?" he asked them, peering suspiciously into their rooms.

One of the guests said he did hear some noise at around 3:00 a.m., like someone was trying to start their car.

Mr. Yao turned to my dad.

"Did you see anybody leave at three a.m.?" he asked.

My dad sheepishly admitted that he didn't know, he had been sleeping, to which Mr. Yao frowned and said, "Stop sleeping!"

Mr. Yao then asked us if there were any customers who left without checking out. My dad and I went to check if anyone had gone in the middle of the night, and sure enough, when we went around, we found five keys. We gave Mr. Yao the numbers of the rooms and the names of the customers.

Mr. Yao wanted to know what the customers looked like. I tried to describe them the best I could.

"Let's see, Mr. Roberto had a mustache," I said. "But it wasn't one of those long archy ones. It was a small and tidy one. And Mrs. Robinson, she was about

the same height as my mom, a little taller." I closed my eyes trying to recall any other details about her.

"She had long, curly black hair, past her shoulders, not in braids like some other black women," I said. Mr. Yao's eyes bulged.

"Wait a minute, she's *black*?" he yelled. "I thought I told you not to rent to bad people!"

My throat went dry. I could hear the sound of my breathing, hard and fast. "You said *bad* people, not black people."

"Any idiot knows—black people are dangerous," Mr. Yao said.

"That's not true!" I was stunned. "Hank's not dangerous. For one." I narrowed my eyes at Mr. Yao. "You're the one who's dangerous."

"Mia," my dad said. Nervously, my dad turned to Mr. Yao. "Sir, we can't judge someone based on their skin color. It isn't right. This is America."

Mr. Yao snorted.

"If you really believe that, you're even dumber than I thought," he said. "Clearly you have no idea how this country really works."

The sound of police cars pulling in made us look up.

"What's going on here?" the police officers asked when they stepped in. There were two officers, both male and white. They had lots of things on their uniforms, sticks hanging from their belt, radios, and walkie-talkies, which they talked into as they walked up to the front desk. And guns.

I stared at their guns.

Mr. Yao quickly filled them in on what happened.

RACIST
RUBBISH

P

P

125

126



"Excuse me?" Hank asked.

"Have you needed to borrow any money?"

"No."

"Have you sold anything in the last ten weeks?"

The cops suddenly turned their attention to me.

"Do people ever come over looking for him? Does he ever ask you to hold something for him? Doesn't have to be big..."

I shook my head. "No."

The officer seemed displeased with my answer and frowned. "I'm sorry. I'm going to need you to go back inside with your parents."

"Hank's a good guy!" I yelled as the officer took my arm and dragged me away.

The whole time, I looked back at Hank, at the frustration and fury in his eyes, as he said the words over and over, "I didn't do it!"

...

I sat with my nose pressed up against the window, watching the police interrogate Hank. Several times, I ran outside, only to be escorted back in.

"See? The police know I'm right," Mr. Yao said, taking their interrogation of Hank as evidence that his theory about black people was valid. He was wrong. The only thing it proved was that the police were just like him.

I counted the minutes until he and his racist thoughts would finally leave. Surprisingly, the person who remained most calm throughout the incident was Mr. Lorenz. It sounded like he had car insurance and he figured he could get the money back that way.

ANTI POLICE SENTIMENT

At half past noon, the cops finally stopped interrogating Hank and got back in their cars. They didn't have enough evidence to make an arrest (because he didn't do it—duh), but they said they'd be back.

"You'll hear from us again real soon," the commanding officer, Officer Phillips, said, looking at all of us. His eyes lingered especially long on Hank before he turned away.

After the cops and Mr. Yao finally left, I went over to Hank's room.

Hank was sitting in his chair, slumped over like a half-filled sack. He looked absolutely exhausted.

I walked over and put my hand on his shoulder. "I'm so sorry you had to go through that."

"It's all right," he said.

"It's not all right! They were awful. They just assumed you did it! How could they think that?"

The more I thought about it, the more filed up I got. But Hank just sat there, quiet and unfazed, gazing in the general direction of the pool. The sun burned through the window. I could see little tiny particles of dust floating in his room.

"Why are you not more upset?" I asked him.

He shrugged.

"Guess I'm just used to it," he said. "This kind of thing happens to me all the time."

"It does?"

He nodded. "To all black people in this country. In some way or the other."

He dropped his head into his hands. I sat very still, thinking about what he said. I could hear the faint honking of cars, a couple laughing in the room next to

ANTI POLICE

CRIT. 1
NOT IMPROV

P
129

P
130

took out my dad's big ledger with all the customers' names and information.

"Ready?" he asked.

"Ready," I said.

He grinned, revealing a mouthful of very yellow teeth.

"Let's start with last month. Give me the names of all the black customers who have come through here in the last month," he said.

I slammed the ledger shut.

"Get out," I said, pointing at the door.

"Hey! No need to get worked up!" he said, holding his hands up. "I'm just trying to help!"

"Get out!" I repeated.

"Suit yourself," he huffed as he walked out, stuffing his list into his pocket. "But don't come crying to me when this place gets robbed again, which it *will*."

RACISM

CHAPTER 24

I rocked back and forth with the ledger in my arms, waiting for Lupe. I'd called her as soon as the awful security guard left. As her dad's car pulled in, the air howled of a coming storm.

"We have got to sneak over there and grab those lists," I said to Lupe. I couldn't wait to rip them to shreds.

Lupe shook her head. She plopped down at the front desk.

"That won't do any good," she said. "We'd get caught, and besides, the stores probably already have copies."

Lupe helped herself to a blank piece of white paper from the fax machine and started drawing with a pencil. Lupe was always drawing—buildings, people, dogs, cats, mountains, and, most of all, trees. She loved trees.

"Will you stop drawing?" I all but shouted at her.

Lupe put her pencil down and gave me a look. "The thing about prejudice is you can't *tell* people not to be prejudiced. You've got to show them. It's like writing."

I thought back to what Mrs. Douglas was always saying—you gotta show, not tell.

"Why can't you tell people?" I asked.

"Because they won't listen. It'll go in one ear and out the other," she said.

"So how do we show them?" I asked.

She pointed to the ledger still in my arms.

P 139
P 140

think about it, and then, finally, he sighed and undid the chain to his door.

His house had a funky smell, like somebody had been cooking stinky tofu and forgot to open the window. Lupe wrinkled her nose as we took a seat on the couch.

"This better be quick," Mr. Lorenz said.

"Don't worry, this will only take a minute," I said. "I just wanted to come over and tell you personally that we can't find your car."

"That's okay. The insurance company has already compensated me," he said.

"I know. But still, it's important you know—"

"Is that it?" Mr. Lorenz snapped.

Just then, we heard a loud *vroom*. A car came speeding down the road and parked right in front of Mr. Lorenz's house. We glanced out the window. Our eyes stretched when we registered the color: neon green.

"Hey, isn't that—" Lupe asked.

Yes, yes, it was. It was a neon green Thunderbird. *The neon green Thunderbird!*

The driver of the car got up and walked up to the house. He turned the doorknob.

"Hey, man, you said the car was in perfect condition, but the windshield's got all these dents in it," the guy said, tossing the keys to Mr. Lorenz. Then he looked at us.

"Who are you?" he asked.

"We're just..." Lupe said.

"Leaving!" I announced. I grabbed Lupe's hand and lunged for the door, but Mr. Lorenz was quicker than me.

He slammed the door shut with one hand.

"Not so fast," he said. "Where do you two think you're going?"

"Home," I said. I glanced at Lupe. Sweat beads were falling like raindrops from her forehead. "We gotta go home and do our homework, right, Lupe?"

"Yeah! We have a lot of homework."

"And when you're done doing your homework, what are you going to say?" Mr. Lorenz asked. He leaned into us. I could feel the hairs rising on my neck. "About what you saw?"

My breath caught in my throat.

"Nothing!" I said. "I didn't see anything!"

"Me neither!" Lupe said.

He stared at us. Desperately, I tried to erase my thoughts so he couldn't read them.

"Good," he said, his wet lips twisted into a smirk. He crouched down and whispered into our ears, "Breathe a word about this to anyone and I will come and find you."

The threat grabbed me and smothered me as I ran all the way home.

INSURANCE FRAUD



P 255 P 256