



2018

Allegedly

Emma Patton

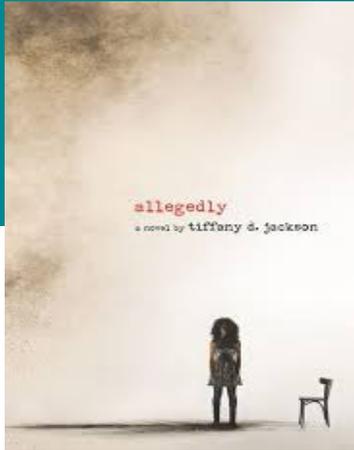
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Book Review

Allegedly

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Illustrator

Reviewer

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Rating

Dependable

Level

Young Adult

Pages

387

Year

2017

Publisher

Katherine Tegen Books

ISBN

9780062422644

Mary Addison killed a baby when she was nine years old. Allegedly. Now fifteen, Mary is out of “baby jail,” but lives in a group home for teenage girls with criminal records. Though she is supposed to have many advocates in her life, none of the professionals assigned to her case seem to care at all. Consequently, Mary lives a cold and tortured life. When she discovers she is pregnant, she knows that she has to find a way to keep the baby to prove to herself and others that she is more than a baby killer. Mary experiences hope like she never has before and plans to find a way to get an education, create a family with her boyfriend and growing child, and finally live in the truth. Opening herself up to her past is painful, but what is even more excruciating is the reality that the people who are supposed to be taking care of her seem content to keep her locked away forever, regardless of whether or not it is right.

Allegedly would be best suited to mature audiences, as it discusses violence among teenagers and violence toward infants, and it uses severe language. Though the characters are varied and complex, the adults are portrayed as largely uncaring and selfish. Mary struggles to find positive role models, and a teen reading this book could relate to her experience of being overlooked by the people who are supposed to support her. Eventually, Mary does find support, but she learns that criminal justice professionals, parents, and other figures of authority are not universally trustworthy. Unfortunately, the book does not have a very resolved or hopeful ending, so a reader might be frustrated by spending time on what seems like an incomplete story. However, Allegedly is important because it manages to turn a convicted felon into a character that is relatable and deserving of sympathy. Instead of using the basic archetypes of “good” and “bad” characters, the author explores the complexities of human nature and forces the reader to question what really makes a person virtuous.

*Contains severe language, moderate violence, and moderate sexual content.