

Monday's Not Coming

Tiffany D. Jackson

Katherine Tegen Books (2018)

Reviews

- [Booklist](#) (15 March 2018): “In her sophomore effort (Allegedly, 2017), Jackson offers up a suspenseful new mystery. Claudia and Monday have been friends since childhood. When Claudia returns from summer vacation, Monday isn’t at school, and she’s not returning calls. No one seems to know where she is. Claudia knows something is wrong, but what reason would anyone have to lie about Monday’s whereabouts? Jackson hits all the right notes in this compelling mystery. Claudia has a strong voice that will resonate; she struggles with bullying, dyslexia, loss, and the pains of growing up. The plot weaves through time, slowly piecing together clues, until the painful truth is revealed. Jackson doesn’t hold anything back when it comes to the pain of abuse and the ramifications of turning a blind eye. This is a powerful and emotional novel that is gripping and heartbreaking and hits upon serious topics. It’s a frank, devastating read filled with real and flawed characters, and it’s a story that needs to be read. •—Elizabeth Konkel”
- [Horn Book](#) (July/Aug. 2018.): “It’s the end of the summer before eighth grade, and Claudia can’t wait to see her best friend, Monday. When she doesn’t hear from Monday in the days leading up to school, Claudia is confused. Her confusion turns to worry when Monday doesn’t show up for the first day—and then to terror when she doesn’t show up in the days after that. The horrible realization that Monday is missing sends Claudia on a heart-wrenching quest to find her friend. The search for Monday leads readers through a winding tale of sisterhood, identity, and loss, in which secrets between friends are kept and revealed. The nonlinear narrative can be challenging to follow at times, but it holds readers’ attention as we, too, become invested in learning what happened to Monday—and subsequently what happens to Claudia. In addition to a gripping plot line, underlying social issues bubble beneath the surface, such as neighborhood gentrification (the story is set in and around the predominantly African American Southeast quadrant of Washington, DC), race, poverty, community, the healing of connection, and the destruction in disconnection. Ultimately, the very real question of how a young girl can go missing for so long without alarm will haunt readers long after the last page is turned.”
- [Kirkus Reviews](#) (1 April 2018): “Washington, D.C., eighth-graders Claudia Coleman and her best (and only) friend, Monday Charles, were inseparable, often mistaken for twins—until the day Monday disappeared. Brown-skinned with kinky hair, the girls had each other’s backs, and Claudia relied on Monday in ways no one else knew. But when Monday doesn’t show up for the first day of school with no warning

or explanation, Claudia becomes worried. After a week goes by, Claudia begins a search for her Monday without much help from the adults around her. Claudia refuses to give up on Monday like she thinks everyone else has: How can a young girl just disappear and have no one look for her? The plot unfolds in nonchronological order, a technique that risks having the story feel clumsy at times. Despite a resolution that reads as somewhat anticlimactic and a narrator who is sometimes as naïve as she is skeptical, the draw of this novel, which was inspired by actual events, lies in its interwoven themes of the effects of gentrification, especially on black residents whose connections, culture, and community become afterthoughts in the face of capitalism; mental illness in the black community; and biases around the value of missing children, black girls in particular. Secrets and how silence often causes more harm than we can imagine are also addressed. A tragic and heartbreaking tale of love, loss, grief, growth, and perseverance. (Fiction. 13-adult)

- [Publishers Weekly](#) (27 Nov 2018. Starred review): “Jackson’s sophomore novel, following 2017’s acclaimed *Allegedly*, features another ripped-from-the-headlines premise that will keep readers guessing through the final pages. After a summer in Georgia with her grandmother, Claudia returns to Washington, D.C., ready to take on eighth grade with her best friend, Monday, even though Monday didn’t respond to any of Claudia’s letters over the past two months. Claudia soon finds, though, that Monday is gone. Stories about where she is don’t add up and no one seems concerned, but Claudia can’t shake the feeling that Monday might be in real trouble. Time shifts—in chapters such as “Before the Before,” “The Before,” and “The After”—create a measured and intense buildup as Claudia realizes that Monday was keeping painful and potentially dangerous secrets. Claudia’s mother’s frequent reminder to check in at home—“Breadcrumbs, Claudia. Always good to leave breadcrumbs”—prompts both Claudia and the reader to remain vigilant. Jackson’s characters and their heart-wrenching story linger long after the final page, urging readers to advocate for those who are disenfranchised and forgotten by society and the system.” Ages 13–up.
- [School Library Journal](#) (April 2018. Starred review): “Gr 9 Up—Galvanized by real-life accounts of black girls whose disappearances went unnoticed, the author depicts a young African American teen unwilling to let her best friend fall through the cracks. Claudia frets when Monday misses the first day of eighth grade, and her worries increase when weeks, and then months, go by with no sign of the girl. Both outsiders, the two have always tried to protect each other: academically gifted Monday keeps teachers from realizing that Claudia has learning disabilities, and Claudia’s stable family gives Monday a respite from her often erratic home life. Monday’s mother and older sister offer conflicting stories about where she is, and

even sympathetic adults are little help—Claudia alone becomes Monday's champion. Just as Jackson's suspenseful debut, *Allegedly*, explored the corrupt justice system, this thought-provoking thriller examines issues such as abuse, gentrification, and the marginalization of people of color with nuance and sensitivity. The narrative deftly moves back and forth between past and present, building to a devastating conclusion. The Washington, DC, setting is superbly rendered, and the author presents a rich portrayal of the girls' bond, displaying an intuitive understanding of adolescent friendship. VERDICT A spellbinding, profoundly moving choice for YA collections."

Awards

- [Coretta Scott King - John Steptoe Award for New Talent](#), 2019
- [Eliot Rosewater Indiana High School Book Award](#), 2020-2021