

From the Desk of Zoe Washington

Author: Janae Marks

Related Books:

[*Wink*](#) by Rob Harrell

[*Clean Getaway*](#) by Nic Stone

[*Ways to Make Sunshine*](#) by Renee Watson

[*All Rise for the Honorable Perry T. Cook*](#) by Leslie Connor

[*Amina's Voice*](#) by Hena Khan

Websites:

Author website: <http://www.janaemarks.com/>

Teaching Guide:

<https://harperstacks.harpercollins.com/blog/teaching-criminal-justice-from-an-educator-whose-father-was-incarcerated/>

Book Trailers: [Book Trailer by Christina Larrachea](#)

Book Talk: [Book Talk by JCLS Beyond](#), [Book Talk by Great Stone Face](#)

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.

Discussion Questions:

- What is the book's primary theme?
- The book addresses several issues that are not fair. What are they?
- Can punishments be fair? Why or why not?
- Define the character of Zoe's grandmother. Would you describe her actions as good or bad? Why?

- Zoe realizes that sometimes people do the right things for the right reasons. Can you think of an example in which this has happened in real life?
- Define the word, *bias*. What is an example of it in the book?

Activities:

- Learning-at-Home and School Activities
 - Experience baking cupcakes like Zoe does! Try this at home, with or without working in teams:
<https://www.beyondthechalkboard.org/activity/cupcake-science/>
 - Make indoor s'mores with author, Janae Marks
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YKghMhYIqNw>
 - Make a Playlist: Music becomes important to Zoe as she learns more about her father. Put together a playlist (digital or written) of songs and artists that are meaningful to you. Share the playlist with a friend or family member.
- Online Learning Activities
 - That's not fair! Was it fair that Zoe's father was in jail? What other situations would you judge to be fair or not? Watch the CyberSquad as they look at a game to decide if it is fair. Grades 4-5
<https://unctv.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/vtl07.math.data.pro.squaresgam/the-squares-game/>
 - If you watched the CyberSquad video, try some games of chance for yourself. How is something "fair" in a game? What does probability mean?
<https://www.turtlediary.com/games/probability.html>
- Refutation activity, grades 4-5
https://www.esuus.org/esu/programs/middle_school_debate/educators/lesson_plans_teaching_materials/1_Refutation_lesson:en-us.pdf