

YOU DON'T KNOW EVERYTHING, JILLY P!



Juvenile

By Alex Gino

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Book Summary:

A young girl joins a chat room and begins to find instances of racism and injustice in her everyday occurrences.

Summary of Concerns:

This book contains controversial racial and cultural commentary; references to racism; and alternate sexualities.

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Child Guidance
BookLooks Review Rating

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1	<p>A photograph of a Black teen in a blue tank top fills the television screen. She is smiling, and Mickey Mouse earrings dangle from her ears. The news anchor introduces us to “Ella Davila, age fifteen, fatally shot in an incident with police in Santa Rosa, California.” Details at eleven.</p> <p>“Again?” Dad says. “This world gets scarier and scarier.”</p>
53	<p>“It is something. A great big something. A Black boy was just shot, this time in Philly. He’s in the hospital now. His name is James Dupree. They haven’t found the guy who did it yet, but a witness says James was pulling out his wallet to lend her a dollar, and then someone from across the street shot him.” She swallows. “He’s thirteen.”</p>
59	<p>And if Justin and Jamila aren’t safe because they’re Black, does that mean that Emma and I are safe because we’re white?</p>
60	<p>Aunt Alicia: Black parents in this country have to talk with their kids about being careful around police. But until white parents can talk about what’s happening to Black kids too, nothing’s going to change.</p>
107	<p>Did he use the n-word? I thought that was a word only racist people used. Was Grandpa Julian racist? Is Uncle Mike? What about Gram? Aunt Lou? I know there are still racist people around—even in California—but I didn’t think they were in my own family.</p>
110	<p>“Patti, don’t defend your mom right now. She wants me to bring over my ethnic food so she can feel like a cool white lady. Meanwhile, her son’s saying some racist bull about his racist father and I’m supposed to play nice? Oh, no. I am not bringing you a sweet potato pie. In fact, I’m not even bringing my Black self or my Black babies over here for your family’s enjoyment. They can have their little White Christmas without me. I love you. I’ll see you on Tuesday.”</p> <p>...Me: I’m sorry Uncle Mike is a racist. And that Grandpa Julian was too.</p> <p>And twice more on Friday morning:</p> <p>Me: I’m sorry that my whole family is a bunch of racists, I guess.</p> <p>Me: I love you, Aunt Alicia, and I hope I’m not a racist too. I don’t want to be.</p>
123	<p>“And sweet potato pie is twice as good as pumpkin. Even when your mom makes it. But that’s how a lot of racism goes down these days. Now that white people can’t put up signs telling colored people where to sit and stand and live and drink water”—she rolls her eyes at the word colored and it’s like her whole head goes along for the ride—“ it gets more subtle.”</p>
128	<p>It’s not just Uncle Mike talking about Grandpa Julian scaring teenagers and not being able to tell Black people apart. It’s also Gram’s comment about the sweet potato pie—the way she expected Aunt Alicia to make a pie for her, just because Aunt Alicia is Black.</p>
129	<p>“But there’s a difference between uncomfortable and unsafe. And sometimes we white people need to make ourselves uncomfortable in order to help Black people feel safe.”</p>
135	<p>SwordWielder42: But it’s fiction, because the real world is racist.</p> <p>profundinoaktown: so if you tried to have auras here, white people would abuse it to keep Black and Brown people down, like they always do</p> <p>VidalianLayers: can’t you just enjoy the fantasy and not bring race into it?</p> <p>profundinoaktown: nope. because we’re Black every minute of our lives</p>
136	<p>Telling Black folk you don’t see us as Black is kind of like saying you don’t want us to be Black. Like being Black is a bad thing or something.</p>

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	...JillyinP: well, saying you forgot they're Black is kind of like saying you expect everyone to be white.
146	On the left, a little girl sits between her two moms.
173	"We don't need to deal with a repeat of Thanksgiving, and we certainly don't need to deal with my homophobic folks. Nah, the best present we can give each other is a day of rest."
176	<p>"It's racism," I say, and I watch the mouths of the adults drop around the table.</p> <p>"Whoa, now," says Uncle Mike.</p> <p>"I am not a racist."</p> <p>... "No one's saying you're a racist," says Mom.</p> <p>"Sure sounds like your daughter is," Uncle Mike says.</p> <p>"What I'm saying is that racism is a big problem. Like really big, and sometimes you don't even know you're doing it."</p> <p>"All I wanted was to taste sweet potato pie," says Gram. "I don't see what's so wrong with that."</p> <p>"Aunt Alicia says it's all related, and that it hurts even if you didn't mean it to."</p> <p>"Wow, it's like having that woman here anyway," says Uncle Mike.</p> <p>"Her name is Alicia," says Mom.</p> <p>"I know."</p> <p>"Then stop calling her that woman."</p>
177	"Black kids get shot all the time," I say. "And it keeps happening because no one does anything about it."
179	Me: I called what he said at Thanksgiving racist
196	<p>We see the picture of a girl, smiling in her gray tank top, the arm of an out-of-frame friend casually draped on her left shoulder like they'd be best buds forever. At the bottom of the screen, it says in bold type, Jessica Johnson, seventeen. Fatally shot by police in Fremont.</p> <p>... "According to witnesses," announces one, "Jessica Johnson was running down a side street off of Mission Boulevard when two police called for her to stop. Unfortunately, Ms. Johnson was Deaf and did not hear the directive. Police called again for her to halt, and when she did not respond, they fired, shooting her seven times in the back. She died within minutes."</p> <p>... And even if I didn't know her, it's sad beyond sad that the cops shot her just for running down the street.</p>
199	<p>profoundinoaktown: no one on tv is saying that. they just see another Black kid running in the street at night</p> <p>...POLICE KILLED JESSICA JOHNSON IN FREMONT!!! HOME OF CSD! #BlackLivesMatter #SayHerName</p> <p>...Jessica Johnson was my math tutor. i wouldn't know fractions without her. because of police, she is gone.</p>
202	She should have been safe. Derek should be safe. Everyone should be safe. But they're not. Especially people who are Deaf. Or Black. Or both.
206	She encourages people to think about Jessica and other victims of police violence.
207	And that makes me realize that none of the people who have been killed are ever going to have another birthday wish. Because they were Black. And police, the very people

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	<p>who are supposed to protect us, killed them. It makes me wonder who us is, because I can't imagine being hurt by police, but the Black people here can.</p>
208	<p>Someone starts chanting in English, in time with the signers, "Protect Deaf Black Lives!" Others join her. Then I do too. Protect Deaf Black Lives! Protect Deaf Black Lives! Protect Deaf Black Lives!</p>
210	<p>I'm glad we're here to support Jessica's family, and Derek, and everyone who knows someone who was killed by police.</p>
213	<p>"No wait, it wasn't good at all. It was terrible. It was really, really sad. I mean, Jessica Johnson got shot! By a cop! And she's not the only one. Black kids keep getting shot, and it's awful! Police are supposed to keep us safe!" "You're right, they are," says Dad. ..."Why don't we talk about this stuff more? I probably talk more about racism with Aunt Alicia than I do with you, and you're my parents."</p>
214	<p>"Like the vigil, but not just for one day. I want to make sure that people know that racism is still a big problem. I mean, Black people already know it, but what about here in Piedmont?" Most of our neighbors are white like us. "I want more people to talk about it." We sit together quietly for a moment, until Mom's head pops up with an idea. "What if we put a sign on the lawn?" "I like it," Dad says, drawing out the words. "Like a Black Lives Matter sign?" I ask. I've seen them around in Oakland, but I've never seen one on our street. ...Mom says that she'll get something more permanent soon, but as of now, the Pirillo family of Oakland Avenue in Piedmont officially declares that BLACK LIVES MATTER.</p>
215	<p>I've learned that racism is still around today; it's in the police and it's in my family.</p>
223	<p>"No one should be unsafe from the cops like that."</p>
234	<p>It is impossible to see my privilege myself. The nature of privilege is that it feels "normal." It is only in conversation with others, whether by reading and reflecting on their work or by talking with them directly, that I am able to see the differences between what we have and how we are treated. I wouldn't know about racism if not for the work and thoughtfulness of many Black and other People of Color in my life and in the world. I want to name that you have just read yet another story that centers a white hearing main character. Readers of Color and Deaf readers, particularly Black Deaf readers, I appreciate your patience as I bring this story aimed at white folks into the world. I hope that you will forgive me killing two Black youth on the page, and injuring another, for the edification of my white main character. I ...In a world in which so many books are unconsciously written for white audiences, this book is consciously written for white people as a catalyst to talk about modern racism and police violence in the United States. I hope that Jilly's experiences will help young white readers learn a bit more about their privilege and how to support marginalized people in their lives. ...These often unintentional mistakes are microaggressions, and while any one of them seem small, they pile up into deep wounds. Neither Jilly nor Grandma mean to say</p>

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	anything hurtful or racist, but microaggressions can be a lot to face, especially from someone you love and who you thought understood you.
235	Endless appreciation is due to the people in my life who fostered my understanding of racism in America, especially the Black, Brown, and Indigenous people of Nolose who challenged me and other white people to see our privilege and the active work we need to do to confront white supremacy. ...I also hold great gratitude for Patrisse Cullors, Opal Tometi, Alicia Garza, and the many activists and advocated engaged in the Black Lives Matter movement for their relentless pursuit of justice.