

## Every Word You Never Said

**Jordon Greene**

F/K Teen (Apr 26, 2022)

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Disabilities and adoption are themes in Jordon Greene's LGBTQ+ novel *Every Word You Never Said*, a sweet romance story that's informed by social justice concerns.

Newly adopted and entering a new high school in North Carolina as a sophomore, Skylar is nonverbal and gay, making him a target for bullies. Two other outsiders—Seth, a bookworm, and Imani, who's Wiccan—befriend him, though their support is not enough to quell the homophobic attacks by others.

Jacob, another student at the school, is also gay, but he has a different social life and home life: he is in a rock band, and he is the son of a religious, conservative politician. As Skylar and Jacob become close, their fears and the pressures from those around them threaten to tear them apart.

Skylar and Jacob communicate through text messages and social media as well as in person; transcripts of their text messages, complete with emojis, help to tell the story. Visual and sensory descriptions abound as the boys grow and develop, finding their voices and values, even when facing judgment from school boards and a pastor, all of whom insist that they are living sinful lives.

Indeed, Skylar's tendency to wear skirts gets him detention, and gets Jacob's father involved: a school board member wants to institute a gender-restrictive dress code. The friends and family who rally around Skylar help him to see that he is valued, even in a society that largely devalues the worth of disabled people. This realization is the story's turning point, helping to bring the narrative to a satisfying conclusion.

In the moving young adult romance *Every Word You Never Said*, two gay teenagers find each other and fight bigotry.

JEANA JORGENSEN (March / April 2022)

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