



BOOK RESUME: THE WHISPERS

BOOK SYNOPSIS

Eleven-year-old Riley believes in the Whispers, magical wood creatures that will grant you wishes if you leave them tributes. Riley has a lot of wishes. He wishes bullies at school would stop picking on him. He wishes Dylan, his 8th grade crush, liked him, and Riley wishes he would stop wetting the bed. But most of all, Riley wishes for his mom to come back home. She disappeared a few months ago and Riley is determined to find her. So he goes on a camping trip with his friend Gary to look for the Whispers and ask them to bring his mom back home. But Riley doesn't realize the trip will shake the foundation of everything that he believes in for forever.

REVIEWS AND PRAISE

"This taut, moving tale delves beyond loss into issues of sexuality, conformity and self-acceptance...a masterful exploration into the power of storytelling but also its dangers, including self-denial and escapism." —*The New York Times Book Review*

"With sensitivity and skill, Howard handles themes of sexual identity, self-worth, loss and friendship." —*The Washington Post*

"Howard's personal story helps create a fictional narrative both realistic and relevant, while also calling on the fantastical magic of the imagination.... A tale of family, friendship and loss, filled with magic and heart." —*Associated Press*

"A dreamy novel recalling *Bridge to Terabithia*." —*Entertainment Weekly*

"A heartbreaking, beguiling debut... This poignant journey through the badlands of grief is crammed with tenderness, wit and warmth." —*The Guardian*

★"This is a story of a boy coming to grips with heartbreak and trying to understand why he is the way he is, who must learn to discern what is real, and who discovers redemption." —*School Library Connection, starred review*

"A realistic tale of coming to terms and coming-of-age, of friendship and loss, with a touch of magic and humor." —*Kirkus Reviews*

"We're predicting this emotional story will be an award winner." —*Parents Magazine*

Title: The Whispers

Author: Greg Howard

Imprint: Nancy Paulsen Books

Publisher: Penguin Young Readers

On sale date: January 14, 2020

ISBN: 9780525517511

Format: Paperback

Age Range*: 10 and up

Grade Range: Gr 5-8

(Recommended by School Library Journal)

Updated 3.25.2024

Penguin Random House

Contact BannedBooks@penguinrandomhouse.com

*Publisher suggested age range covers the wide range of readers publishers envision using the book, whether for independent reading, family sharing, group study, or in other ways. Educators have the best sense of the appropriate range for their diverse learners they work with and understand these ranges vary depending on a book's intended use.

"A touching story of grief and healing." —*Booklist*

"This touching, often wry novel offers a memorable psychological puzzle and explores grief and acceptance." —*Publishers Weekly*

"[Riley's] a thoroughly sympathetic [narrator], and it's easy to root for his eventual understanding of the truth—and of his own blamelessness." —*The Horn Book Magazine*

"An inspired and sensitive portrait of childhood traumatic grief." —*The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*

AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

- **A 2020 Edgar Award Nominee**
- **A Wisconsin State Just One More Page selection**
- **A Garden State Book Award selection**

MEDIA AND RESOURCES

- [The Tennessean: Nashville author writes often untold story of boy discovering he's gay in the deep South](#)
- [Lambda Literary: Three LGBTQ Middle Grade Novels About Self-Acceptance and Inner Strength](#)
- [Read Write Teach ELA: Using "Controversial" Texts: Why We Need Them and How to Use Them](#)
- [EW: Why Greg Howard's *The Whispers* marks a breakthrough moment for LGBTQ middle grade books](#)

Updated 3.25.2024

Penguin Random House

Contact BannedBooks@penguinrandomhouse.com

*Publisher suggested age range covers the wide range of readers publishers envision using the book, whether for independent reading, family sharing, group study, or in other ways. Educators have the best sense of the appropriate range for their diverse learners they work with and understand these ranges vary depending on a book's intended use.