



***The Music of What Happens* by Bill Konigsberg**

Scholastic Press, an imprint of Scholastic Inc., 2019

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*Age Range: 14 and Up (Suggested by Publisher)

Grade Range: 10 Up (Recommended by *School Library Journal*)

BOOK SYNOPSIS

From the award-winning author of *Openly Straight*, a story about two teens falling in love over a summer that throws everything possible to keep them apart.

Max: Chill. Sports. Video games. Gay and not a big deal, not to him, not to his mom, not to his buddies. And a secret: An encounter with an older kid that makes it hard to breathe, one that he doesn't want to think about, ever

Jordan: The opposite of chill. Poetry. His "wives" and the Chandler Mall. Never been kissed and searching for Mr. Right, who probably won't like him anyway. And a secret: A spiraling out of control mother, and the knowledge that he's the only one who can keep the family from falling apart.

Throw in a rickety, 1980s-era food truck called Coq Au Vinny. Add in prickly pears, cloud eggs, and a murky idea of what's considered locally sourced and organic. Place it all in Mesa, Arizona, in June, where the temp regularly hits 114. And top it off with a touch of undeniable chemistry between utter opposites.

Over the course of one summer, two boys will have to face their biggest fears and decide what they're willing to risk -- to get the thing they want the most.

REVIEWS AND PRAISE

★ "Konigsberg demonstrates once again why he is one of the major voices in LGBTQ literature." —*Booklist*, **starred review**

★ "Give to fans of Benjamin Alire Saenz's *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* and Laurie Halse Anderson's *Speak*. A first purchase for public and high school libraries." —*School Library Journal*, **starred review**

"The result is a story with imperfect characters who are, refreshingly, called out on problematic behaviors and aim to do better. A fresh addition to the menu of queer teenage love stories." —*Kirkus Reviews*

"Konigsberg explores how conventional ideas about masculinity trap young men into believing they must act a certain way.... A fun, romantic, and moving novel." —*Publishers Weekly*

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"Readers seeking an unusually thoughtful gay-positive romance will find this moving." —*The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*

"This book offers an interesting perspective on growing up and coming-of-age by crafting two main characters who offer unique points of view for an often underserved audience. This is a much-needed book in every high school library." —*School Library Connection*

"Konigsberg portrays gayteen relationships in a way that is consistently authentic, compassionate, hopeful, and empowering; and this story, which also touches on issues of masculinity, homophobia, and rape, is no exception." —*The Horn Book*

"Like all of Konigsberg's previous young adult books, *The Music of What Happens* isn't afraid to tackle complex personal and social issues like race and gender... This is an utterly contemporary take on the age-old summer love story." —*BookPage*

"With *The Music of What Happens*, Bill Konigsberg serves up a profound examination of masculinity, consent, and relationships through the eyes of two of the most endearing narrators I've ever read. Jordan and Max are vulnerable, sweet, funny, and flawed. Teens, whether they identify as LGBTQIA+ or not, are lucky to have this book in their lives." —Shaun David Hutchinson, author of *We Are the Ants*

"*The Music of What Happens* is a compelling, laugh-out-loud story, as swoon-worthy as it is deeply affecting. Max and Jordan grabbed hold of my heart from the moment I met them and I don't see them letting go any time soon. Konigsberg has a way of making me see the world--and food trucks!--a little differently." —David Arnold, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Mosquitoland* and *The Strange Fascinations of Noah Hypnotik*

"Bill Konigsberg has a way of creating characters that could be your next door neighbor, your best friend, or that cute boy who once helped you change a flat tire. Max and Jordan will find their way into your heart, and after the last page, you'll regret that they aren't real. Once you start reading *The Music of What Happens*, you won't be able to stop." —Brigid Kemmerer, author of *Letters to the Lost*

AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

- YALSA Best Fiction for Young Adults (BFYA)
- NYPL 2019 Best Books for Teens
- *Seventeen* Best YA Books of 2019
- B&N Most Anticipated LGBTQIA+ Books of January-April 2019
- *She Reads'* Best YA Books of 2019

MEDIA AND RESOURCES

- [Read with Pride Resource Guide](#)
- School Library Journal, [article](#)
- I Read YA, [excerpt](#)
- The Huffington Post, [cover reveal](#)
- ManKind Project Journal, [article](#)
- Scholastic YouTube, [Spring 2019 Preview](#)

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- Publishers Weekly, "[Authors to look out for at Winter Institute](#)"
- Readers Live 100 Lives, [review](#)
- Youth Services Book Review, [review](#)
- Germ Magazine, [review](#)
- The Fandom, [review](#)
- Lambda Literary, [review](#)
- Teenreads, [review](#)
- Writing Follies, [review](#)
- MuggleNet, [review](#)
- Audiofile Magazine, [author interview](#)
- Seventeen, "[20 Best Teen Romance Books to Read When You're Crushing](#)"
- The Bookish Devil, [review](#)
- Epic Reads, "[33 Best YA Books to Celebrate Pride Month](#)"
- Girls' Life Magazine, "[14 Books to Read in Honor of LGBTQ+ Pride Month](#)"
- WGBH: Boston's Local NPR, "[Summer Reading Special](#)"
- Pride.com, "[29 New LGBTQ+ YA Books to Add to Your Reading List](#)"
- BuzzFeed, "[25 YA Novels That You Need to Read During Pride Month](#)"
- Bitch Media, "[A Queer World: 2019 is the Year of the LGBTQ YA Novel](#)"
- BookRiot, "[Most Popular Books in Libraries, July-September](#)"
- Chicago Public Library, "[Best Teen Fiction of 2019](#)"
- Epic Reads, "[It's \(Probably\) Dark Outside, But These 21 Books Will Bring You Light](#)"
- She Reads, "[The Best YA Books of 2019](#)"
- Epic Reads, "[16 Books About Food Perfect to Read Between Second Helpings](#)"

RESPONSE TO CHALLENGES

[PEN American Statement of Support](#): PEN America said today the decision this past weekend by the Orange Unified School District removing a digital library app due to concerns raised over two books with LGBTQ+ themes represents an overreaction and sets a "worrisome precedent."

The digital library app, Sora, grants students access to ebooks and audiobooks, and connects them to required reading assignments and courses. The suspension was reportedly enacted after individuals raised concerns during open comments at a school district board meeting about two books available through the app – *Polar Bear in Love* by Koromo and *The Music of What Happens* by Bill Konigsberg. Both books have LGBTQ+ themes: in *Polar Bear in Love*, two male animals fall in love, and in *The Music of What Happened* two teens do the same.

In response to the proposals, Allison Lee, managing director of PEN America's Los Angeles office, released the following comments:

"The decision to immediately remove access to thousands of books for students due to a few vocal parents and citizens is both an overreaction, and a worrisome precedent. Digital libraries and related applications are integral to school and district resources and services. Unfortunately, this development in Orange County tracks with the wave of book bans and educational censorship seizing the country. There's a misconception that California is going to be immune to these forces. Clearly, that's mistaken. Efforts to remove books that feature LGBTQ+ characters, or that touch on gender, sexuality, or racism, are certainly underway."

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***A NOTE ON AGE RANGES**

A publisher-suggested age range covers the gamut of readers that 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 age range for the diverse learners they work with and understand these ranges vary depending on a book's intended use.

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