

Title: *Give Me a Sign*

Author: Anna Sortino

Genre: young adult, contemporary fiction

Reviewer Name and Grade: Amanda T., 8th

Date Reviewed: September 7, 2024

"Give Me a Sign" by Anna Sortino is a heartwarming contemporary young adult novel that follows the journey of Lilah, a 17-year-old girl struggling with her identity as a hard-of-hearing individual. Lilah lives in Chicago and is caught between two worlds: the hearing world, where she feels invisible, and the Deaf community, where she's uncertain about her place. Her insecurity about her hearing aids and lack of fluency in American Sign Language (ASL) contribute to her feelings of isolation. The story is set in present-day and centers around Lilah's decision to work as a counselor at a summer camp for Deaf and hard-of-hearing children. At camp, she's exposed to a diverse group of people who help her explore her identity. The camp provides a sense of community and safety where communication happens in ASL, fostering a deep sense of belonging for the campers and staff. Lilah meets several significant characters, including Isaac, a Deaf boy with a confident and friendly personality. He helps Lilah feel more comfortable using ASL and becomes her love interest. Jordan, another hard-of-hearing counselor, represents a middle ground for Lilah, as they share some similar experiences but are at different stages in embracing their identity. There's also Vanessa, a Deaf counselor who is passionate about Deaf pride and often challenges Lilah to rethink her feelings about her own hearing loss. Throughout the summer, Lilah experiences significant personal growth as she navigates friendships, a blossoming romance with Isaac, and her evolving relationship with the Deaf community. One of the key events is when Lilah gains confidence in communicating with ASL and finds herself more integrated within the camp. She realizes that she doesn't have to choose between the hearing world and the Deaf world, she can belong to both.

Did the plot keep you interested? Yes, the plot kept me interested with its blend of self-discovery, romance, and exploration of the Deaf and hard-of-hearing community, making Lilah's journey relatable and engaging.

Was the pace of the book too slow, too fast, or just right? The pace was just right, balancing emotional moments with character development and allowing enough time for the reader to connect with the protagonist's internal struggles.

What grade level is this book appropriate for? This book is appropriate for grades 7-12, as it deals with themes of identity, relationships, and personal growth that are relevant to teens.

What type of reader would you recommend this book to? I would recommend this book to readers interested in stories about self-acceptance, the Deaf community, and those who enjoy contemporary YA fiction with a focus on personal growth.

Other helpful information for teens Teens should know that Give Me a Sign offers valuable insight into the Deaf and hard-of-hearing experience while encouraging empathy and understanding of different forms of communication.

4 stars: I enjoyed this book and found it worthwhile reading. The book offers a heartfelt and realistic portrayal of a young woman navigating her identity and the Deaf community, with strong character development and a sweet romance. While compelling, some secondary characters could have been more fully developed.