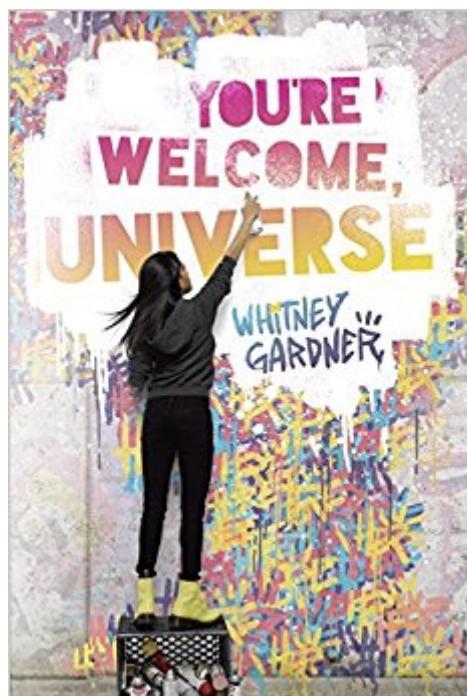


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# You're Welcome, Universe



## Synopsis

A vibrant, edgy, fresh new YA voice for fans of *More Happy Than Not* and *Simon vs. the Homo Sapiens Agenda*, packed with interior graffiti. When Julia finds a slur about her best friend scrawled across the back of the Kingston School for the Deaf, she covers it up with a beautiful (albeit illegal) graffiti mural. Her supposed best friend snitches, the principal expels her, and her two mothers set Julia up with a one-way ticket to a "mainstream" school in the suburbs, where she's treated like an outcast as the only deaf student. The last thing she has left is her art, and not even Banksy himself could convince her to give that up. Out in the 'burbs, Julia paints anywhere she can, eager to claim some turf of her own. But Julia soon learns that she might not be the only vandal in town. Someone is adding to her tags, making them better, showing off—and showing Julia up in the process. She expected her art might get painted over by cops. But she never imagined getting dragged into a full-blown graffiti war. Told with wit and grit by debut author Whitney Gardner, who also provides gorgeous interior illustrations of Julia's graffiti tags, *You're Welcome, Universe* introduces audiences to a one-of-a-kind protagonist who is unabashedly herself no matter what life throws in her way. "[A] spectacular debut...a moving, beautifully written contemporary novel full of quirky art and complicated friendships...this book is a gift to be thankful for." •BookRiot

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"The perspective of a strong-willed, deaf protagonist is unique, enlightening, and a great addition to young adult collections." •VOYA, Starred Review "[A] spectacular debut...a moving, beautifully written contemporary novel full of quirky art and

complicated friendships...this book is a gift to be thankful for."â•BookRiot"Julia...is a Deaf teen girl who is creative, artistic, and passionate. She can be sulky and vengeful when she feels she has been wronged, but she is also caring and fiercely loyal to the few that she considers friends. And she is an authentic portrayal of deafness."â•DisabilityInKidLit.com"Fresh and compelling...a satisfying story about trust, forgiveness, hard work, and friendship."â•Publishers Weekly"Julia's strong voice and multifaceted background offer an eye-catching glimpse of graffiti culture while introducing deaf culture."â•Kirkus"This debut novel is a dive into self-discovery for Julia and a compelling, engaging read for a wide variety of teens, including those interested in graffiti and street art. [A] well-told, artsy coming-of-age tale that is also an excellent representation of a Deaf protagonist."â•School Library Journal"Gardner brings together Deaf culture, discrimination, sexuality, friendship, body image, trust, betrayal, and even a potential Banksy spotting for this fresh novel, brightened by black-and-white illustrations from Julia's notebooks."â•Booklist"The Deaf details are enveloping and credible without being forced, and Julia's artistry will make readers itch to get their fingers on a can of spray paint."â•The Bulletin

WHITNEY GARDNER played her ukulele in an episode of *Portlandia*, danced the rumba with Bill Nye the Science Guy in a New York swing-dance club, and experimented with LARPing in college. She lives with her husband, Roger, and their incredibly cool pugs, Gouda and Fig, in Portland, Oregon. Find her online at [heywhitney.com](http://heywhitney.com) and follow her at @HeyWhitney.

First and foremost, *YOU ARE WELCOME, UNIVERSE* is an instantly captivating and immensely entertaining story. It offers a quick pace, fantastic writing, amazing illustrations. It also incorporates diversity, creativity, and originality. It is one of those reads that will pull you in, make you promise yourself "just one more chapter, " but won't let you put it down until you've reached the end. The main character, Julia, is interesting and relatable. She is also creative and different and moody and impulsive. Some readers may find her immediately likable, others may have to warm up to her. She is sympathetic but not pitiable. She is daring but also distrustful. She is deaf but is not handicapped by it. She's an artist whose brand of art has gotten her into a lot of trouble. There aren't many, if any, stories about a female graffiti artist. Certainly not many that share illustrations of each tag, sketch, mural the character has done. Author Whitney Gardner has not only managed to successfully weave in these visuals but also paint a picture with her words that

allows readers to imagine what being deaf is like for Julia. The author lets readers see just how frustrating it can be to communicate even the simplest of things, how challenging it can be to understand someone talking quickly, how ignorant and ridiculous people can be when speaking with someone who is deaf, and how peaceful it can be to not have to hear anything at all. But *YOU ARE WELCOME, UNIVERSE* is not a story about overcoming the adversity of diversity. It is not a love story. It is a story about friendship, about learning to trust, about forgiveness, about growing up. It is about a girl who loves her art more than her schoolwork, who thinks that being alone is better than risking letting anyone in, who loves her moms even if they don't understand her, who takes no small amount of pleasure in aggravating her interpreter, who is ready to do battle in secret to defend her art, who does not ever want to be called a toy, who has no time or patience for idiots, and who is reluctant to admit when she is wrong. Refreshingly different and informative, *YOU ARE WELCOME UNIVERSE* is a compelling, fun, and incredibly satisfying read.

This was the first book I've ever read to my knowledge in the POV of someone who is Deaf. From the story I learned there is a difference in d/Deaf, capitalized or not, it was really interesting. I knew that ASL was its own language with speech patterns for words but I guess I never knew how intricate it was. I enjoyed learning all of that. I've no idea if the book is own voices or not, it never says and I've never read anything saying it was. If it's not I can't say how good or bad the representation in the story, I enjoyed it but that doesn't mean it's not horrible. So if it is please point me to someone who says so, otherwise this review will stand as my opinion for now. I really liked the MC Julia, she is very headstrong and opinionated, but she also keeps her heart on her shoulder. She was very hurt by a friend and decided she doesn't need any friends. Also she has 2 moms who play a huge role in her life, both also Deaf and are very influential in getting her to be who she is. So, Julia got kicked out of her old school and is now in a new school with kids who can hear, it's hard and she doesn't know what to do. She lost her last best friend so has no intention of making new friends and in walks Yoga Pants or YP for short and they hit it off oddly well. The only annoyance I had is the fact she never has another name than YP, like what does everybody call her Bridget? No idea. Well, they start to become friends and Julia opens up to her about the one thing she really loves, art, but the illegal kind, graffiti. So Julia has been going around and tagging random places and soon someone is coming by and changing her work, she feels like she's in a graf war and doesn't know why. I really enjoyed this story, for once it wasn't about love interest and dating the enemy but making friends and figuring life out. I thought there was going to be a love interest at

one point but the author really used him as a learning to expect more from the people around you, and especially yourself lesson. I didn't care for that part but it made sense. I also liked how the author was okay showing sometimes you have to burn bridges, people don't always want what's best for you, even if you want it for them you have to learn to step back and move on. Over all it was a really fast read and one I'm glad I read, and have made plans to go look for more books written from this kind of perspective.

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