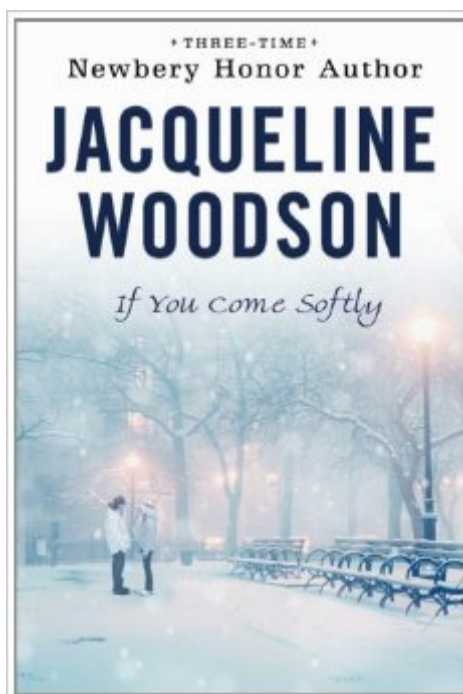


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# If You Come Softly



## Synopsis

A heartbreaking contemporary romance from a three-time Newbery Honor winning author Jeremiah feels good inside his own skin. That is, when he's in his own Brooklyn neighborhood. But now he's going to be attending a fancy prep school in Manhattan, and black teenage boys don't exactly fit in there. So it's a surprise when he meets Ellie the first week of school. In one frozen moment their eyes lock and after that they know they fit together -- even though she's Jewish and he's black. Their worlds are so different, but to them that's not what matters. Too bad the rest of the world has to get in their way. Reviewers have called Coretta Scott King Award-winning author Jacqueline Woodson's work "exceptional" (Publishers Weekly) and "wrenchingly honest" (School Library Journal), and have said "it offers a perspective on racism and elitism rarely found in fiction for this age group" (Publishers Weekly). In *If You Come Softly*, she delivers a powerful story of interracial love that leaves readers wondering "why" and "if only...."

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: HL570L (What's this?)

Paperback: 224 pages

Publisher: Speak; Reprint edition (January 7, 2010)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0142415227

ISBN-13: 978-0142415221

Product Dimensions: 5.4 x 0.4 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 6.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (121 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #71,920 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #48 in [Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Prejudice & Racism](#) #93 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Prejudice & Racism](#) #455 in [Books > Teens > Romance > Contemporary](#)

Age Range: 12 - 17 years

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

I should have known better...I've been touched by Jacqueline Woodson's writing before. I picked up *If You Come Softly* after one of my 6th grade students recommended it to me. I read the first few chapters effortlessly, and when someone asked me what it was about, I simply said, "Not much."

You see--it's not an in your face narrative. It's simple and soft, and the alternating perspectives are hardly noticed--all signs of outstanding writing. I was halfway through the book before I realized the gentle power of the story. Ellie and Miah attend the same school and have similar views of the world, but they are so different that their sudden love for each other seems impossible. Ellie is the white daughter of a distantly married couple; her numerous brothers and sisters are older and have moved throughout the country. Miah is the black son of celebrities who have recently separated. Both teenagers attend the exclusive Percy School, which is where they meet by chance and fall in love. Despite the stares and whispers, they choose to stay together and learn more about each other. Their love is mature and real (and the author spares us from unnecessary sex scenes). We know from page one that tragedy awaits this relationship, but it doesn't damper the unfolding of their relationship and our interest in the potential of their lives. They love each other innocently and completely, and they tip-toe cautiously into the world of each other's families. Woodson demonstrates a world view through the voices of these two high school characters--they understand more about race relations than most adults do. There are times, however, when their views of races seems too simplistic--perhaps this was intentional, or perhaps this is Woodson's own view.

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