



Girls Like Us

By Gail Giles

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Girls Like Us By Gail Giles

A 2015 Schneider Family Book Award Winner

With gentle humor and unflinching realism, Gail Giles tells the gritty, ultimately hopeful story of two special ed teenagers entering the adult world.

We understand stuff. We just learn it slow. And most of what we understand is that people what ain't Speddies think we too stupid to get out our own way. And that makes me mad.

Quincy and Biddy are both graduates of their high school's special ed program, but they couldn't be more different: suspicious Quincy faces the world with her fists up, while gentle Biddy is frightened to step outside her front door. When they're thrown together as roommates in their first "real world" apartment, it initially seems to be an uneasy fit. But as Biddy's past resurfaces and Quincy faces a harrowing experience that no one should have to go through alone, the two of them realize that they might have more in common than they thought — and more important, that they might be able to help each other move forward.

Hard-hitting and compassionate, *Girls Like Us* is a story about growing up in a world that can be cruel, and finding the strength — and the support — to carry on.

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Gr 8 Up—Quincy and Biddie are "spedties" (special education students). They have just graduated high school and must live out in the world on their own. After being matched together by their teacher, they are given adult responsibilities: Quincy works at a supermarket while Biddie cooks and cleans for the older woman who is boarding them. The teens must learn how to fend for themselves in a world that is unfamiliar. They have both experienced physical, mental, and sexual violence, and must rely on each other to come out stronger than they were before. *Girls Like Us* is filled with genuine relationships that develop over time and feel authentic. There is humor and heart throughout, making the severity of the protagonists' situations more accessible to readers. A story line about Biddie's obsession with a family of ducks in their backyard is particularly poignant. The one- or two-page chapters alternate between Quincy and Biddie and are told in voices that are genuine to their experiences but never sensationalized. The frank discussions and depictions of the violence committed against them are shocking but never vulgar. Giles has constructed a unique, hard-hitting yet refreshing story with well-developed characters free from expected clichés or caricatures. A powerful novel that teens will enjoy wholeheartedly.—Christopher Lassen, Brooklyn Public Library

From [Booklist](#)

Starred Review In compelling, engaging, and raw voices, 18-year-olds Biddy and Quincy, newly independent, intellectually disabled high-school graduates, narrate their growing friendship and uneasy transition into a life of jobs, real world apartments, and facing cruel prejudice. Obese and illiterate Biddy has more emotional intelligence than Quincy, whose normal brain development was shattered when her mother's boyfriend hit her with a brick when she was six. Biddy's limited cognitive capacities spring from oxygen deprivation during birth as well as lifelong deprivation of nurturing. Paired by a social service program, the girls are made roommates in a live-work placement where they share a small apartment at the home of a wealthy, sensitive, and supportive widow, Elizabeth. Biddy cleans and provides physical assistance for Elizabeth, while Quincy, who loves cooking, works at a market. Biddy and Quincy share deep secrets and narrate lives heartrendingly full of anger, abandonment, and abuse, including explicit, realistic descriptions of two rapes. But with the help of patient Elizabeth and the support they gain from each other, they are empowered to move forward with strength and independence. Giles (Dark Song, 2010) offers a sensitive and affecting story of two young women learning to thrive in spite of their hard circumstances. Grades 8-12. --
Francisca Goldsmith

Review

In compelling, engaging, and raw voices, 18-year-olds Biddy and Quincy, newly independent, intellectually disabled high-school graduates, narrate their growing friendship and uneasy transition into a life of jobs, "real world" apartments, and facing cruel prejudice. ... Biddy and Quincy share deep secrets and narrate lives heartrendingly full of anger, abandonment, and abuse... But with the help of patient Elizabeth and the support they gain from each other, they are empowered to move forward with strength and independence. Giles offers a sensitive and affecting story of two young women learning to thrive in spite of their hard circumstances.

—Booklist (starred review)

Giles's background teaching special education students informs this blunt, honest, and absorbing story about two young women overcoming challenges that have less to do with their abilities to read or write than with how society views and treats them. In short, alternating chapters, the girls narrate in raw and distinct voices that capture their day-to-day hurdles, agony, and triumphs. The "found family" that builds slowly for Quincy,

Biddy, and Elizabeth—with no shortage of misunderstandings, mistrust, or tears—is rewarding and powerful.

—Publishers Weekly (starred review)

Girls Like Us is filled with genuine relationships that develop over time and feel authentic. There is humor and heart throughout, making the severity of the protagonists' situations more accessible to readers. ... Giles has constructed a unique, hard-hitting yet refreshing story with well-developed characters free from expected clichés or caricatures. A powerful novel that teens will enjoy wholeheartedly.

—School Library Journal (starred review)

The story is told with both gentleness and a humor that laughs with, not at, the two girls. ... [T]he warmth, conflict and mutual caring that develop among Quincy, Biddy and elderly Miss Lizzy is authentic and genuinely moving. A respectful and winningly told story about people too often relegated to the role of plot device—bravo.

—Kirkus Reviews

The book gives memorable voice to underrepresented young women.

—The Horn Book

Girls Like Us is a quick, enjoyable read that is hard to put down. The author draws readers in with deep, meaningful characters who play on sympathies. ... The book is well written, with believable scenarios and dialogue most readers will enjoy. Girls Like Us will remain with readers long after they finish this story.

—VOYA

Often humorous, this story is realistically fashioned to portray the lives of two young girls whose stories usually go unmentioned, yet are both encouraging and triumphant.

—Library Media Connection

The brief chapters allow plenty of time for thought on the part of the readers as they're steeped into the daily challenges and thoughts of differently abled people. ... Intellectually disabled young people don't receive a lot of attention in literature... especially when it comes to the difficult transition to adult living; readers with their own launch concerns may find this particularly rewarding.

—Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books

In the market for a new favorite writer? Gail Giles just might fit the bill. This novel, written in short, alternating chapters in the voices of two special-ed teens, is an absolute stunner. ... This novel has the feeling of an instant classic, from its impeccable use of language to its stirring message.

—Philly.com

This highly readable story is a welcome addition to a growing literature about teens with mental and physical challenges.

—BookPage

Never have I read so deep, evocative, and hard-hitting of a statement (on so many topics nonetheless) as *GIRLS LIKE US*. This book may be smaller and on the shorter side, but don't be fooled. I can guarantee you will be crying and/or feeling quite moved by the last page. ... *GIRLS LIKE US* will break your heart, but you will be glad for it, because you will learn an invaluable lesson, and ultimately, the breaking will feel more like an uplifting breath of air.

—TeenReads.com

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Peter White:

Have you spare time for the day? What do you do when you have considerably more or little spare time? That's why, you can choose the suitable activity to get spend your time. Any person spent their particular spare time to take a move, shopping, or went to the Mall. How about open or perhaps read a book called Girls Like Us? Maybe it is to get best activity for you. You realize beside you can spend your time together with your favorite's book, you can cleverer than before. Do you agree with it is opinion or you have additional opinion?

Megan Martelli:

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