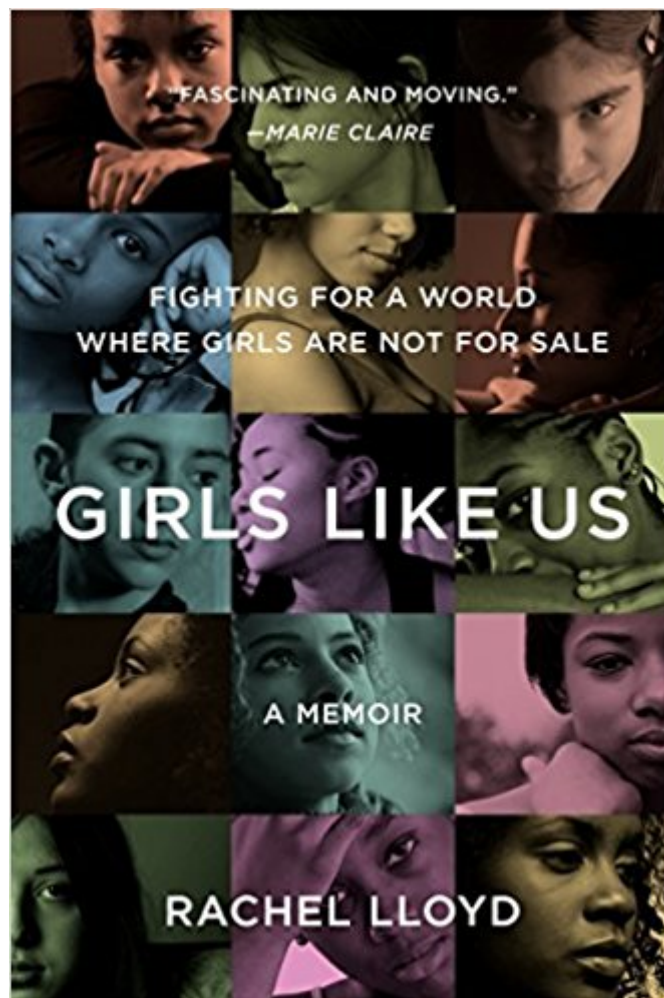




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# Girls Like Us: Fighting For A World Where Girls Are Not For Sale: A Memoir



## Synopsis

"Powerfully raw, deeply moving, and utterly authentic. Rachel Lloyd has turned a personal atrocity into triumph and is nothing less than a true hero." — *Rolling Stone* "Never again will you look at young girls on the street as one of 'those' women — you will only see little girls that are girls just like us." — *Demi Moore, actress and activist* With the power and verity of *First They Killed My Father* and *A Long Way Gone*, Rachel Lloyd's riveting survivor story is the true tale of her hard-won escape from the commercial sex industry and her bold founding of GEMS, New York City's Girls Education and Mentoring Service, to help countless other young girls escape "the life." Lloyd's unflinchingly honest memoir is a powerful and unforgettable story of inhuman abuse, enduring hope, and the promise of redemption.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Riveting. . . [Lloyd's] passionate, persuasive arguments for recognition and protection give a voice to the thousands of girls all around us who work and suffer in near invisibility." — *Corrie Pikul, Elle* "Fascinating and moving." — *Marie Claire* "Heartbreaking. . . But the book is also at times funny, bawdy, and optimistic, as is Lloyd herself." — *Jennie Yabroff, Daily Beast* "Rachel Lloyd's astonishing stories of life on the street have an accumulative power that left me reeling. What makes *Girls Like Us* such an extraordinary achievement is that her storytelling is unflinchingly honest, and yet filled with a sense of promise, filled with a profound sense of hope." — *Alex Kotlowitz, author of*

There Are No Children Here and The Other Side of the River) “This book will burn a hole in your heart. The beauty of Rachel Lloyd’s searing memoir is how she exorcises the pain of her own troubled girlhood by connecting with hundreds of young women on a brutal path. (Mira Nair, director of Salaam Bombay!, Mississippi Masala, and The Namesake) “With empathy and intellect, Rachel Lloyd brings to light the heart-breaking stories of these lost, forgotten, and abused girls. Her own life story is a source of inspiration and hope. She is an important new voice of conscience to which America needs to pay attention. (Geoffrey Canada, president and CEO, Harlem Children’s Zone) “Rachel Lloyd’s memoir should be mandatory reading for every cop, prosecutor, judge, and John, but also every mainstream American who thinks racism, classism, and misogyny don’t exist. (Sarah Jones, Tony Award-winning playwright/performer and UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador Sarah Jones, Tony Award-winning playwright/performer and UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador Sarah Jones, Tony Award-winning playwright/performer and UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador) “Girls Like Us is a life-changing book, in every sense of the word. Rachel Lloyd changed her life in order to help change the lives of thousands of others •read her incredibly powerful story, and your life will be changed too. (Janice Erlbaum, author of Girlbomb: A Halfway Homeless Memoir and Have You Found Her: A Memoir) “Girls Like Us is a powerful and eloquent recounting of the lives of children and young women caught up in the ravages of sexual exploitation. [It] offers valuable insights into understanding the complex emotional and economic factors that contribute to the exploitation of children and youth. (Richard J. Estes, Professor of Social Work, University of Pennsylvania)

During her teens, Rachel Lloyd ended up a victim of commercial sexual exploitation. With time, through incredible resilience, and with the help of a local church community, she finally broke free of her pimp and her past and devoted herself to helping other young girls escape "the life." In Girls Like Us, Lloyd reveals the dark world of commercial sex trafficking in cinematic detail and tells the story of her groundbreaking nonprofit organization: GEMS, Girls Educational and Mentoring Services. With great humanity, she shares the stories of the girls whose lives GEMS has helped •small victories that have healed her wounds and made her whole. Revelatory, authentic, and brave, Girls Like Us is an unforgettable memoir.

This book was tough read, but not due to lack of literary merit. It was difficult to read, because of the accounts of so many victimized girls and women right in the very U.S.A where we live. I stand firmly

corrected that Sex Trafficking and CSEC (Commercially, Sexually, Exploited Children) is not a Thailand, India, Russia, etc issue. It is a human issue. Rachel Lloyd captures the anguish and torment of young girls in vivid details. I was moved to rage and commitment to take action. I will never be the same after reading this book. I highly recommend it for readings not just in an academic setting, but in churches, schools, or just personal knowledge and awareness.

This book opened my eyes to many aspects of the sex industry, starting with the very fact that most "women" being bought and sold are actually underage girls (some not even teenagers) who have been forced into selling sex, first by a need to survive, then usually by violent means by the person taking the money. Rachel Lloyd weaves her own story in and out of the stories of the many girls she has helped, also providing stats and research. She addresses the pain and victimization of these girls by their pimps, johns, police, and even society that does not see them as real people. Somehow, she manages to tell all of this and leave the reader with hope along with immense admiration for her and the girls she serves.

Rachel begins this memoir by explaining that she is the Executive Director of a Program named GEMS (Girls Educational and Mentoring Services). The program is designed to help girls and young women who have been recruited and trafficked into the commercial sex industry. GEMS is a place where the girls can come and receive counseling from caseworkers; learn different skills such as (poetry, cooking, boxing group); use computers or just simply hang out. Rachel has a unique story of her own because she used to be a "Commercially Sexually Exploited Youth." Rachel knows firsthand of the things that happened to a girl while they are in "The Life." As Rachel shares her story from the age of 13 until her mid-thirties; she explains the life of a trafficked child in rich detail. Rachel explains of key phrases and terminology used by the girls and those used by law enforcement. Rachel explains that politicians, officials, police and many other people have biases towards these girls. Rachel also explains several scenarios that would enlist a girl to be sexually exploited. Rachel gives us several stories of the girls that has entered and left the GEMS program. Rachel describes how pimps recruit young girls and also how they treat the same girls badly. Rachel explains how the media can affect the outcome of a case and how much help a person can get on a case. Rachel has learned that through her helping these girls for 10 years that she has learned to value herself.

This book opens our eyes to the plight of troubled teens: lured, groomed, and controlled by pimps

and to the brave survivors who are fighting for the system to support survivors and persecute the perpetrators. Not so long ago, and still today, some states criminalize the prostituted girls. But people like Rachel Lloyd and the survivors she works with are changing the response on the ground. A gripping narration of real stories. If you read this you might also want to read books like *Disposable People* and *Half the Sky*.

I believe there can be no beginning to understanding commercial sexual exploitation of children without reading this well-written, thought-provoking book. Rachel's story is hard to imagine, certainly for those who are unfamiliar with CSEC, and her story (and others) must be shared with men and women alike if we are ever to learn and prevent more children and young adults from becoming victims of a horrible crime. CSEC is misunderstood by our society at large and this book is a must-read for anyone who cares about the children in our communities. Rachel should be commended for her courage in sharing her story so vulnerably. By doing so, she is able to help others and raise awareness; Rachel is a genuine inspiration. I only wish the johns of the world would be required to read this book, while serving a serious sentence for buying sex from a young person. Thank you, Rachel, for sharing your truth. You are supported!

This is required reading, period. The book exposes the huge problem of sex trafficking and the form it takes in the US; every individual needs to know the information in this book to understand the reality of the sex industry and the damage it causes young, very young, girls and boys. This is invaluable for anyone looking to volunteer or work with individuals who have suffered sexual abuse, and/or been in the life of trafficking. The author is the founder of GEMS (Girls Educational and Mentoring Services), and through her personal experience of being in the life she has had the unique ability to connect with the young women she reaches out to through the program. Most importantly for those of us who want to help, she explains the emotional background of trafficked persons so that we can avoid the insensitivity of ignorance to what they have been through and misplaced frustration at what seems to be antisocial behavior, as well as helping to have the patience and compassion to persevere even when girls return to the life. This book gives a window into the stories of the girls who have been rescued, the personal trauma they suffer, and the challenges of their journey to healing.

An important addition to the literature of sexual exploitation and trafficking of girls, I found this to be a terribly sad account of this growing problem, but one that is necessary if these crimes are to be

revealed and stopped.

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