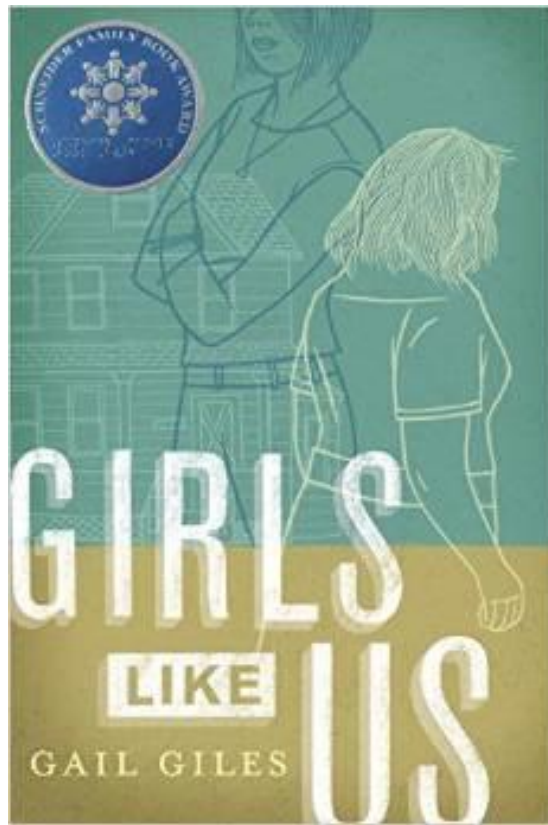


**Children and Young Adult Book Review**  
*High School*  
**Girls Like Us**

Educator Reviewer: Helene Halstead

Student Reviewer: Stephanie Wallace



Giles, G. (2014). *Girls like us*. Somerville, MA: Candlewick Press.

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Pages: 224

### **Educator Review:**

Biddy and Quincy share their stories, which becomes their story, through alternating chapters of *Girls Like Us* (Giles, 2014). As is implied in the title, our two protagonists feel they are different than other girls, yet their stories of hope, worry, support and understanding will resonate with most readers. The story begins as the girls are graduating high school, the only two “speddies” to do so that year. Through the school’s special education department, the girls are provided with a place to live in exchange for cooking and cleaning an older woman’s home. This is where the adventure of life begins and by the end we are all hoping for the girls to continue their life adventures together. While this book is truly a study of the characters, Giles shows us who they are through both big and small moments; the girls tell us who they are as they navigate their experiences.

Giles gives us plenty of time to get to know our characters through their own voices. In fact, we continue getting to know them, piece by piece, as they get to know themselves. We learn that Biddy’s grandmother, who calls her granddaughter white trash and retard and doesn’t want Biddy to live with her any more because the “state don’t send no more checks now” (p. 5). We learn that Biddy is sweet and caring, is a cleaning fiend, and is usually terrified of the world around her. We meet Quincy who explains that she entered foster care at the age of six after her mama’s boyfriend hit her on the head with a brick. Quincy shows us that she is fierce, independent, direct, and usually hides her feelings under a protective shield of armor.

The girls’ stories, story, engage the reader emotionally. While their words are simple, their voices are powerful. We invest in them as individuals and as friends. As observers, we see that they have more similarities than differences, and we rejoice when they begin to see this as well. We hope that they will grow stronger individually and know that they will as an “us.”

While middle school students can enjoy this story, the ideas are complex and might be better appreciated by students in high school who are also getting ready to discover the world. A younger reader would benefit from having a conversation with a more experienced reader to discuss the sexual situations, the concept of being without power or voice and the different ways people can live with challenges.

Helene Halstead  
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*While the words are  
simple, their voices  
are powerful.*

**Student Review:**

*Girls Like Us* is one of the best books I have ever read. This book is about two special education girls who just graduated from high school, and are learning and living together on their own. One girl is named Bidy, who cleans the house of an old lady named Ms. Elizabeth who also own the apartment Bidy lives in. The other girl is named Quincy and she works at a grocery store called Brown Cow, and cooks breakfast and dinner for Ms. Elizabeth. This book has an outreach to those who are more special than the usual, and if they can read they should read *Girls Like Us*.

I would recommend this book to my sister, who is in special ed. She is the most smart and amazing person I know and she would love this book. I believe that people who want to become teachers in the special ed. department or who are should read *Girls Like Us*. This book has a relationship of people, animals, and life, which I wish people would see out of books and in our world. The best thing about this book is how I love reading how close Bidy and Quincy get towards the end. I love books and this book has really opened my eyes to what people can do.

Stephanie Wallace  
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11<sup>th</sup> Grade