



Girls Like Me

by Nina Packebush

ISBN 978194580535

Girls Like Me opens with sixteen-year-old, queer identified Banjo Logan waking up in a juvenile mental ward, groggy and fearing for the life of her unborn child. Banjo is unsure if she wants to raise her baby or give her up for adoption. Soon after waking up she is ushered out of her room and into the day room Pru, a strange and slightly manic girl, who we later find out is trans, approaches Banjo and manages to prod her out of her self-inflicted silence. Pru was born in Ethiopia, but was adopted as a preschooler by rich, white parents who never let Pru forget how they “rescued” her. Pru confesses to Banjo that she is also queer. So begins Banjo’s journey of healing and remembrance of the wonderful and terrible day she got pregnant.

From the author

Two things inspired me to write this book. First, I wanted to write a book for teenage me and for the teenage version of many of my friends. Many of my friends are grown up teen mamas and many of them have come out as queer. We have had long discussions about how impossible it is to find books with characters that we can relate to as teenage mothers, much less as queer teenage moms.

The other thing that inspired me to write this book was the death of two friends at very young ages. Allison Crews was a queer teen mom, writer, and activist. She was named one of the top thirty activists under thirty by Elle magazine when she was just twenty-years-old. She died when she was only twenty-one, leaving behind her five-year-old son. Amy Schneider committed suicide at the age of twenty-four. Her life was very similar to the life of my character, Gray. I wanted to honor these two fierce women, as well as reach out to all of the teenagers in the world who are dealing with the aftermath of suicide and the feelings of isolation brought on by not fitting in to mainstream society.

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think Mom was so disengaged from Banjo’s pregnancy?
2. Do you think Banjo made the right decision in keeping Gracie?
3. Why do you think Lou was so invested in Banjo keeping Gracie?
4. Do you think Gray’s mom really visited them? Was she a ghost, or was Gray having hallucinations?
5. Do you think that Gray was mentally ill? What about Banjo? Lou? Dylan? What makes you think they were or were not?
6. What role did Lou and Dylan play in helping Banjo come to terms with Gray’s death?
7. How do you think retracing her steps from the night that Gray died helped Banjo come to terms with Gray’s death?



8. Why was it so important for Banjo to know if Lou would remain friends with her if she gave Gracie up for adoption before she told Lou that she was keeping Gracie?

About the author

Nina Packebush is a grown up queer teen mama, zinester, mental health advocate, audio producer, and wannabe urban farmer. She lives in Washington state with her rad girlfriend, a bunch of children, and way too many animals. She's passionate about supporting queer youth and teen parents, loves hiking, and likes to draw comics about empowered snails. She was a 2012 Lambda Literary Fellow in Young Adult Fiction and has been published in a variety of alternative magazines, websites, and anthologies.