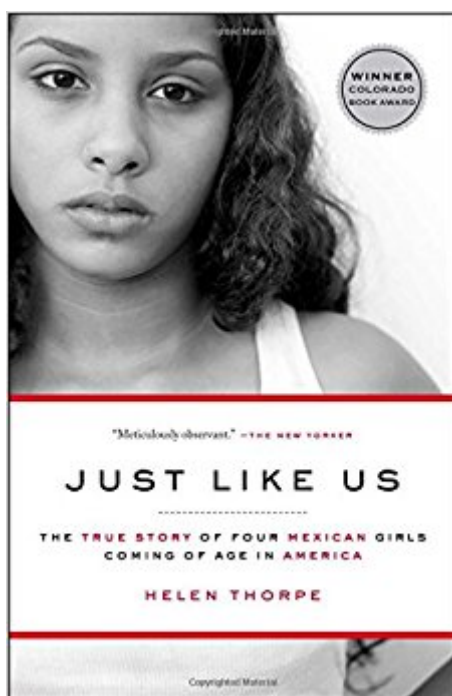


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Just Like Us: The True Story Of Four Mexican Girls Coming Of Age In America



Synopsis

Now updated, the powerful account of four young Mexican women coming of age in Denver, two who have legal documentation, two who don't, and what happens to them as a result. Just Like Us tells the story of four high school students whose parents entered this country illegally from Mexico. We meet the girls on the eve of their senior prom in Denver, Colorado. All four of the girls have grown up in the United States, and all four want to live the American dream, but only two have documents. As the girls attempt to make it into college, they discover that only the legal pair sees a clear path forward. Their friendships start to divide along lines of immigration status. Then the political firestorm begins. A Mexican immigrant shoots and kills a police officer. The author happens to be married to the Mayor of Denver, a businessman who made his fortune in the restaurant business. In a bizarre twist, the murderer works at one of the Mayor's restaurants under a fake Social Security number. A local Congressman seizes upon the murder as proof of all that is wrong with American society and Colorado becomes the place where national arguments over immigration rage most fiercely. The rest of the girls' lives play out against this backdrop of intense debate over whether they have any right to live here. Just Like Us is a coming-of-age story about girlhood and friendship, as well as the resilience required to transcend poverty. It is also a book about identity—what it means to steal an identity, what it means to have a public identity, what it means to inherit an identity from parents. The girls, their families, and the critics who object to their presence allow the reader to watch one of the most complicated social issues of our times unfurl in a major American city. And the perspective of the author gives the reader insight into both the most powerful and the most vulnerable members of American society as they grapple with the same dilemma: Who gets to live in America? And what happens when we don't agree?

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Customer Reviews

By the time Marisela, Yadira, Clara and Elissa—four girls of Mexican descent from the suburbs of Denver—entered their freshman year in high school, they were inseparable, but four years later, their fundamental difference threatened to divide them: Clara and Elissa were legal residents, but Marisela and Yadira had begun to suffer the repercussions of their parents' choice to illegally enter the U.S. Journalist Thorpe, married to Denver mayor John Hickenlooper, met them as the girls without legal status were finding their friends' liberties—big and small—to attend college, drive or even rent a movie unbearable. It was hard for Marisela and Yadira to see why they should labor over their homework if they were just going to end up working at McDonald's; Thorpe writes. Marisela slid into trouble with ease, but Yadira found the experience profoundly disorienting. With striking candor, Thorpe chronicles the girls' lives over four years, delineating the small but arresting differences that will separate them and shape their futures. She personalizes the ongoing debate over immigration and frames it so compassionately and sensibly that even the staunchest opponents of immigration liberalization might find themselves rethinking their positions. (Sept.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to the MP3 CD edition.

“Thorpe puts a human face on a frequently obtuse conversation, and in so doing takes us far beyond the political rhetoric.” —O Magazine.

Helen Thorpe describes how undocumented children are affected by not having legal papers through no fault of their own. The stories of the four girls tore at my heart, especially the two girls who are undocumented. They had been brought to the USA when they were young children. Everything was so much more difficult for them than for the girls who had documents. They worked very hard to get their college educations and support themselves and help their families all the while having to hide their status. The author went to the girls' school, got to know their families, joined them socially, got to know them. She presents the issues of immigration from many points of view. My feeling is that there needs to be a simple way for these young people to obtain American citizenship without being punished. These girls, especially Marisela, would fit right in with my family.

She is smart, high spirited, and is an asset to her community. Thank you, Helen Thorpe for bringing these girls to our attention as well as presenting the problems they face not having documents to our attention. It's something most people in this country don't have to worry about. Loved this book..

Truthfully, this book is a gem: an imperfect one, but a gem all the same. While the book can sometimes meander and struggle to accommodate the impossibly vast array of subjects, characters, and details, it is truly a cerebral exercise in providing actual, human insight into a political issue that Americans are so perpetually ignorant about. So book, article, or study has so critically moved me on the topic of illegal immigration. I recommend this to anyone who wishes to explore this issue or who just wants to be a responsibly-informed citizen.

This book comes at the whole "immigration" issue from a much different place. Things are not so black and white. Helen Thorpe does an excellent job of showing the reader all the complications of the issue!

I live in a border state and hear a lot about immigration issues. This book puts real faces on the complexities of what it means to be in the US illegally. I learned a lot about what it means to be "illegal" in America for young people who were brought here as very young children. I highly recommend this book regardless of your current feelings on the DREAM act and immigration issues in general. This is a very timely issue!

The subject matter could have been interesting, but the book is so poorly written - scattered, irrelevant details, chronologically confusing, annoying after a few chapters.

Even though the book was written a few years ago, and published in 2009, the problems of immigration and education are still with us in Colorado and nationally. Helen Thorpe worked tirelessly to produce this book, and I would recommend it to everyone who are on both "sides" of the issues."

It brings to light the very- very complex issue of immigration- legal or not not- it's not black and white and won't be solved to the appeasement of everyone. A warming story of friendship, struggles, love and fear.

This book provides an realistic inside look at what it's like to be an undocumented teenager in America today.

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