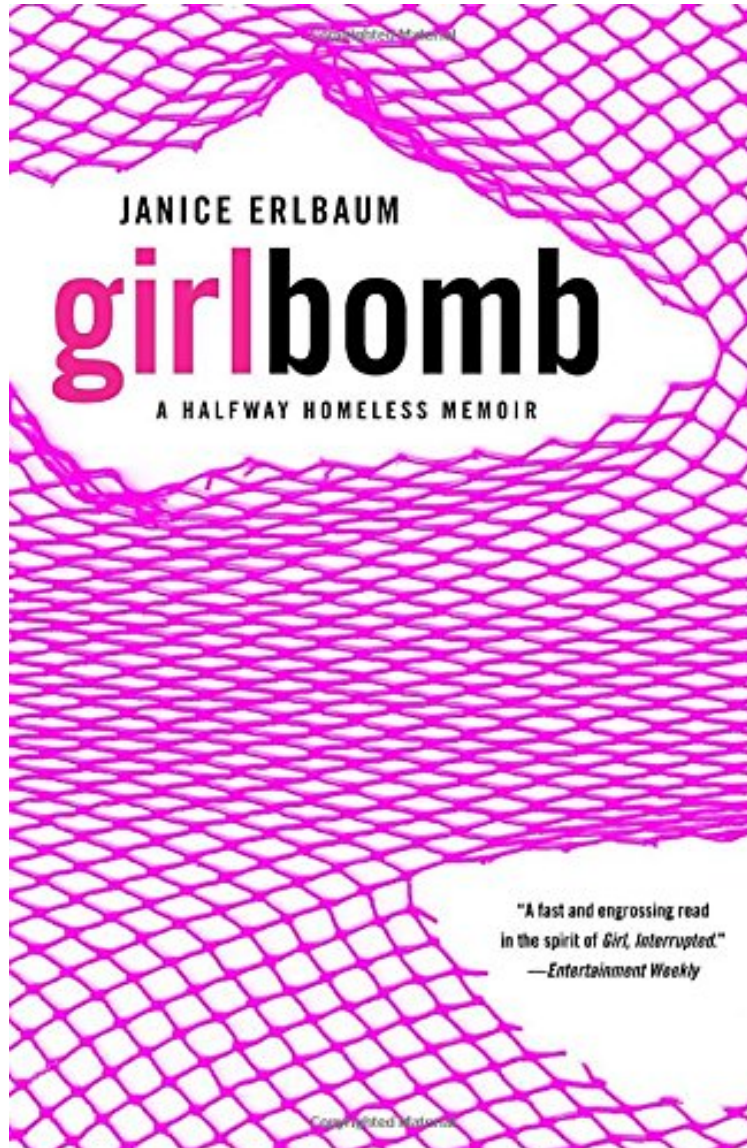


(Mobile library) *Girlbomb: A Halfway Homeless Memoir*

Girlbomb: A Halfway Homeless Memoir

Janice Erlbaum

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Janice Erlbaum : Girlbomb: A Halfway Homeless Memoir before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *Girlbomb: A Halfway Homeless Memoir*:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. This book did not disappoint, and I was delighted to be brought back ...By TempestJanice Erlbaum fascinates me. From the first time I read "Have You Found Her?" I knew I needed more. This book did not disappoint, and I was delighted to be brought back to my own teenage years as I read about hers.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. RealBy MichelleI read this book a few years ago. I was stunned when I

learned the real struggle of being on the street, especially in a big city. This book will definitely hold your attention. It is honest, raw, and sad. It is always a relief when the person is still around to write about it though. I told the author how much I liked her book and she actually replied, which I thought was pretty cool. For anyone looking for first-hand insight on what its like to be a homeless addict, I recommend this book. I think it is good to know that these are real people, and this is exactly the type of book that can shed light on the real problems so many teens face here in the U.S. A great read.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Four StarsBy Clarabelle01Good quick read

At fifteen, sick of her unbearable and increasingly dangerous home life, Janice Erlbaum walked out of her familys Brooklyn apartment and didnt look back. From her first frightening night at a shelter, Janice knew she was in over her head. She was beaten up, shaken down, and nearly stabbed by a pregnant girl. But it was still better than living at home. As Janice slipped further into street life, she nevertheless attended high school, harbored crushes, and even played the lead in the spring musical. She also roamed the streets, clubs, bars, and parks of New York City with her two best girlfriends, on the prowl for hard drugs and boys on skateboards. Together they scored coke at Danceteria, smoked angel dust in East Village squats, commiserated over their crazy mothers, and slept with one anothers boyfriends on a regular basis. A wry, mesmerizing portrait of being underprivileged, underage, and underdressed in 1980s New York City, *Girlbomb* provides an unflinching look at street life, survival sex, female friendships, and first loves. A fast and engrossing read in the spirit of *Girl, Interrupted*. Entertainment Weekly Gripping . . . a wry, compelling memoir of what it means to stand up for yourself, especially when no one else will. Bust How satisfying to watch Erlbaum survive adolescence and produce a smart, engaging book. The New York Times Book Review Erlbaums survival is hard-won, the journey rendered with page-turning intensity. New York Post A fast and engrossing read in the spirit of *Girl, Interrupted*. Entertainment Weekly Gritty . . . perversely riveting. You want her to survive. The Washington Post Book World

From Publishers Weekly Erlbaum, a columnist for *Bust*, left her Manhattan home at 15 after her mother reunited with Erlbaum's abusive stepfather. Landing first in a shelter and then a group home, Erlbaum shattered by her mother's choice embarks on a treacherous course of self-destruction. Casual sex with a series of brutally uncaring boys coupled with daily drug and alcohol abuse become her antidote to the violence and racism in the child-welfare system housing her. Her isolation and loneliness threaten to swallow her whole. Yet when Erlbaum's mother invites her home (the dreaded stepfather gone for good), things don't improve. Erlbaum has more freedom, which allows more opportunity for trouble. At 17 she leaves again (this time to live with an older boyfriend), becomes addicted to the cocaine so plentiful in the 1980s New York club scene and nearly dies from an overdose. Through Erlbaum's adolescence, she often seems a willing victim. In her chaotic senior year of high school, she begins writing stories, attempting to put the life she's been living into perspective. Her memoir (comparable to Koren Zailckas's *Smashed*) reads like a neorealist novel. Sharp yet poignant, raw and vivid, it illumines the dirty underside of American girlhood and brings it to harrowing life. (Mar.) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From School Library Journal Adult/High School The author's childhood was not a pleasant one. Her mother's string of abusive boyfriends and husbands had left her with no choice; after her mom kicked her last stepfather out, Erlbaum told her, If you take him back, then I'm leaving. When she was 15, she left her Manhattan home after her mother once again reunited with the man. She spent several weeks in a shelter and eventually ended up in a group home. She had casual, unprotected sex with a string of boys and abused alcohol and drugs. Just over a year after she moved out, she moved back in with her now-single mother, and the book's title (a play on the author's last name) was realized: life as a high school student clashed with the cocaine-fueled club scene of the 1980s. This memoir illustrates the conflicting desires of adolescence to fit in, to be loved, and to be independent. The writing is concise and engaging, but, most of all, it's honest. Erlbaum doesn't try to excuse her behavior; rather, she analyzes why she went down that self-destructive path and what made her change her ways. Readers will find solace in the knowledge that, despite the lack of structure in her home life, she managed to pull it all together. She worked at an after-school job, starred in a school play, graduated high school, and got into college. Erin Dennington, Chantilly Regional Library, Fairfax County, VA Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist "What that white bitch doin' here?" "Same as you, bitch, she ain't got noplacelse to go." "Here" is the gritty homeless shelter 15-year-old Jan entered after leaving her mother to fester in a dysfunctional marriage. Her 14 months in New York's social welfare system are marked by prejudice (directed at Jan by predominantly black shelter residents) and a parade of fierce, memorable characters, from "Shanita Who Could Squirt Breast Milk" to a juvie alumna who challenges newcomers by asking, "You ever get hit with a lock in a sock?" Halfway through the narrative, Jan rejoins her mother, at which point the book's title (a play on the author's last name) begins to make more sense; hormones, resentments, and insecurities detonate furiously as she and her new-wave high-school pals fish for thrills in the cocaine-fueled club scene of 1980s New York. The rounds of self-destructive behavior make for less captivating reading than the firsthand accounts of teen homelessness, but memoir readers who enjoy tales of harrowing, idiosyncratic coming-of-age will still embrace Erlbaum's rueful self-regard and savage humor ("Group Therapy was always a clusterfuck"). Jennifer

