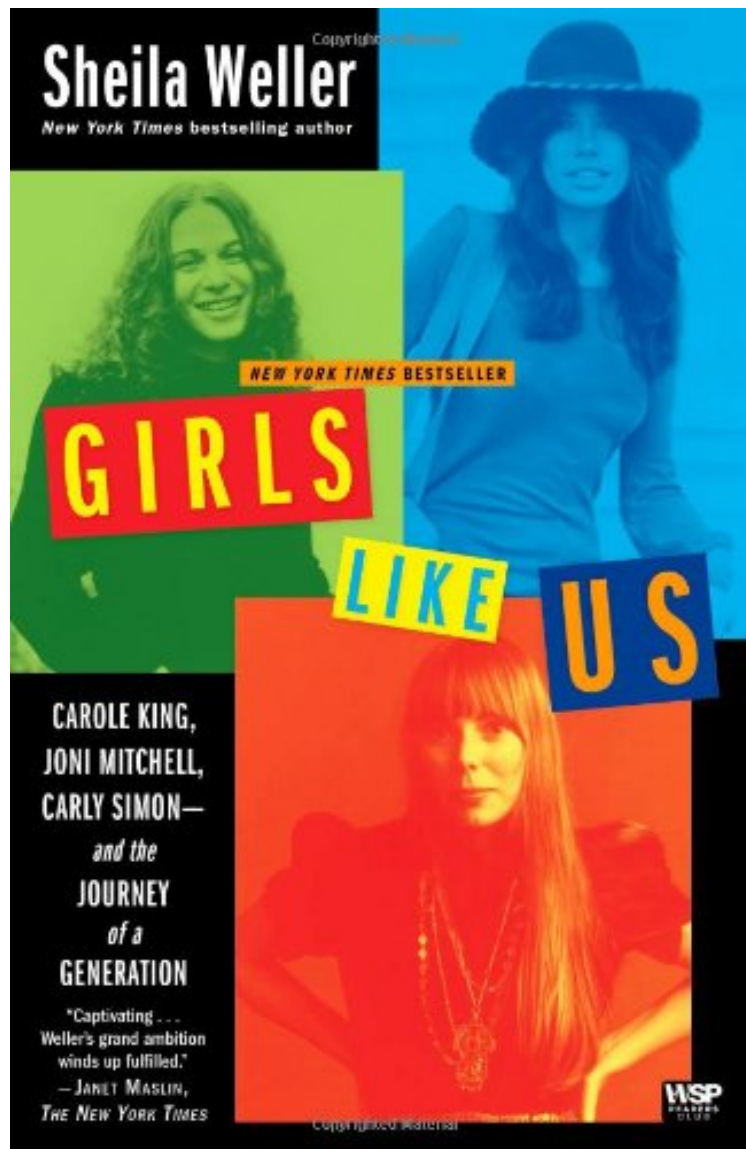


(Download free ebook) Girls Like Us: Carole King, Joni Mitchell, Carly Simon--and the Journey of a Generation

Girls Like Us: Carole King, Joni Mitchell, Carly Simon--and the Journey of a Generation

Sheila Weller

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Sheila Weller : Girls Like Us: Carole King, Joni Mitchell, Carly Simon--and the Journey of a Generation before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Girls Like Us: Carole King, Joni Mitchell, Carly Simon--and the Journey of a Generation:

148 of 152 people found the following review helpful. No SecretsBy Kevin KillianEverything in *GIRLS LIKE US* will be amazingly familiar to those of us born in the baby boom, and yet Sheila Weller, a talented if erratic prose stylist, brings us to emotional places that will be new to all but those most intimate with the trio of songwriters whose lives, she declares, form a "journey of a generation." I don't know if I'd go that far, but I'm not a woman, and Weller's argument is that King, Simon, and Mitchell pushes back the barriers for women specifically, "one song at a time."The cryptic one remains Carole King, whom Weller just can't illuminate in any meaningful way. Her life was amazing--up to a point, then it stopped being of any interest at all, which is a shame. We hear again and again how she wrote all those Brill Building masterpieces before she was 21, and broke down under the strain of a troubled marriage to a high-stakes husband and lyricist, Gerry Goffin, coming out the other end with an LP. *Tapestry*, that everyone loved. Then what happened? Bad men galore, attracted to her wealth. She once estimated that every time she divorced a man, it cost her a million dollars. Weller gives us all the facts ad nauseam but we always wonder, why did King do this to herself?Carly Simon, on the other hand, who cooperated with Weller extensively or so it seems, comes off as nearly normal. Of the upper, upper middle class, Simon was to the manor born and the icy, plangent chords of her first song, "That's the Way I Always Heard It Should Be," gave notice that the old New Yorker fiction writers of the 40s and 50s hadn't died, they had just rolled over and told Carly Simon the news. Though obviously spoiled and cosseted by her own wealth, Simon doesn't seem spoiled; her reactions throughout, even meeting and marrying the drug-zombie James Taylor, are always understandable and sympathetic.Joni Mitchell isn't sympathetic per se, but she has the integrated personality of the genius totally in love with herself and obsessed with her own reflection, so she's great in a special way. Weller pokes amused fun at Mitchell's vanity and enormous self-esteem, but we get the picture that, in her opinion at any rate, Mitchell actually is pretty f--ing amazing. Does our society have it in for women who want to be artists? Mitchell's encounter with the aged, reclusive Georgia O'Keeffe seems like an emblem of a certain baton-passing, as is Carly Simon's relationship with former First Lady Jackie Kennedy. Weller is OK about male-female relationships, but in this book at any rate she's more interested in the ways women deal with each other.It's nearly a biography of five people, not just three, as there is so much about James Taylor you will never need to read another word about him if you have this book on your shelf; and for some reason there's tons of material about Judy Collins. I wonder if Weller proposed a book with King, Mitchell, Simon, and Collins, and some editorial board nixed the addition of Collins--but there was so much good material about Collins, Weller kept it in anyhow. She is the Vanity Fair writer supreme, whose motto is that no sentence is complete without some action and punch, and the best way to get that is to string along many words with hyphens to invent new forms of adjectival excitement. You won't be able to read for more than a few minutes without being hit on the head by Weller's mad stylings--here's a typical hyphenfilled sentence about the Eagles: "Their at-home-in-Death-Valley image and bleating-lost-boy-in-expensive-boots sound had become era-definingly successful." (Ten hyphens in a mere 20 words! Sheila Weller is era-definingly successful at inventing a new form of writing--like the classic circus act when a small VW would pull up to center ring and then clown after clown would prance out. Then more clowns--then still more. She's pretty amazing and *GIRLS LIKE US* is a book that, for all its flaws, convinces us roundly in its larger arguments and dazzles with its wide-ranging portraits of artistic life in the 50s, 60s and 70s.2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A *Tapestry of Riches*By Patrick DayAs an overly sensitive and dramatic thirteen year old, I was obsessed with Joni Mitchell's "Blue." I would race home from school, throw myself on my tie-dyed comforter and cry as I listened to Joni sing "A Case of You." I wanted to grow up to be "cynical and drunk and boring someone in some dark caf." Three years later it was "Court and Spark" and "Down to You." "Everything comes and goes, marked by lovers and styles of clothes." And 1976, the Bi-Centennial and my high school graduation, brought "Hejira." I thought if I ever had a daughter I would name her Amelia. I would play the live version for her with Pat Metheny's inspiring guitar solo so she could understand. I can tell you the story of my life through Joni Mitchell's music. The same goes for Carole King's "Tapestry" and Carly Simon's many hits. So imagine my delight to find Sheila Weller's terrific "Girls Like Us." This collection of stories about these groundbreaking women, their beginnings, their loves and losses, and most of all the SONGS... well, I devoured it in a matter of hours. The details and the well-researched facts ran down my chin like juice from a ripe peach. Ms. Weller is a journalist with the heart of a novelist. Anyone with an interest in music history and women's struggles to make it in the male-dominated world of rock'n'roll will find this book a source of unending pleasure.2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Even Hubby loved this!By Along for the RideWhen this book arrived my husband sort of scoffed at it and implied that it was a chick book and he wouldn't even consider reading it. So I left it on the coffee table, because I knew his interest of the music of the 60's and 70's would tempt him to flip through the pages. After he did, he decided to read it. He said that the beginning of the book was something that would interest a woman more than a man, but once it got into the musical history of these women, he was completely pulled in. Weller didn't interview the subjects for the book, but spoke with other people, who knew these women. The stories are fascinating and fun to read. (I loved the book, too!)

A groundbreaking and irresistible biography of three of America's most important musical artists -- Carole King, Joni Mitchell, and Carly Simon -- charts their lives as women at a magical moment in time.Carole King, Joni Mitchell, and

Carly Simon remain among the most enduring and important women in popular music. Each woman is distinct. Carole King is the product of outer-borough, middle-class New York City; Joni Mitchell is a granddaughter of Canadian farmers; and Carly Simon is a child of the Manhattan intellectual upper crust. They collectively represent, in their lives and their songs, a great swath of American girls who came of age in the late 1960s. Their stories trace the arc of the now mythic sixties generation -- female version -- but in a bracingly specific and deeply recalled way, far from cliché. The history of the women of that generation has never been written -- until now, through their resonant lives and emblematic songs. Filled with the voices of many dozens of these women's intimates, who are speaking in these pages for the first time, this alternating biography reads like a novel -- except it's all true, and the heroines are famous and beloved. Sheila Weller captures the character of each woman and gives a balanced portrayal enriched by a wealth of new information. *Girls Like Us* is an epic treatment of midcentury women who dared to break tradition and become what none had been before them -- confessors in song, rock superstars, and adventurers of heart and soul.

From Publishers Weekly The epic story of three generational icons, this triple biography from author and Glamour senior editor Weller (*Dancing at Lughnasa*) examines the careers of singer-songwriters Carole King, Joni Mitchell and Carly Simon, whose success reflected, enervated and shaped the feminist movement that grew up with them. After short sketches of their early years, Weller begins in earnest with the 1960s, switching off among the women as their public lives begin. A time of extremes, the 60s found folk music and feminist cultures just beginning to define themselves, while the buttoned-down mainstream was still treating unwed pregnant women, in Mitchell's terms, like you murdered somebody (thus the big, traditional wedding thrown for King, pregnant by songwriting partner Gerry Goffin, in 1959). Pioneering success in the music business led inevitably to similar roles in women's movement, but Weller doesn't overlook the content of their songs and the effect they have on a generation of women facing a lot more choice, but with no one to guide them. Taking readers in-depth through the late 80s, Weller brings the story up to date with a short but satisfying roundup. A must-read for any fan of these artists, this bio will prove an absorbing, eye-opening tour of rock (and American) history for anyone who's appreciated a female musician in the past thirty years. Bw photos. (Apr.) "Captivating. A strong amalgam of nostalgia, feminist history, astute insight, beautiful music and irresistible gossip. Weller's grand ambition winds up fulfilled." -- Janet Maslin, *The New York Times* "Let's get one thing clear right from the start -- this is a fabulous book... *Girls Like Us* unfolds with drama and panoramic detail. Written with a keen journalistic and, more importantly, female eye, [it] works as a healthy, long overdue counterweight to the endlessly repeated, male-sided version of rock 'n roll. Before these women broke the cultural sod during the rock 'n roll years, there were no girls like us. Now there are millions." -- Caitlin Moran, *London Sunday Times* "Even at 500-plus pages, the book goes down as easy as a Grisham yarn on a vacation flight... The only flaw to *Girls Like Us* is that it comes to an end. Few people lead lives as action-packed and spiritually opulent as Carole King, Joni Mitchell and Carly Simon did during such intensely interesting times. And few writers are able to impart so much freight with such vigor. The towering triumvirate got what it deserves." -- *The Toronto Sun* "A page-turner of the first order.... a must read." -- *The Boston Globe* "As an avid music reader, sometime reviewer, and teen of the '60s myself, I was sure I knew just about everything there was to know about Carole, Joni, and Carly.... But *Girls Like Us*, an ambitious collective biography by six-time author and magazine journalist Sheila Weller, showed me exactly how much I didn't know. This absorbing, well-reported book chronicles a time when women in all walks of life were exercising new-found freedom. And as icons of that era, nobody did it better." -- *Christian Science Monitor* "Both scholarly and dishy. A superb journalist, Weller has managed to uncover a trove of unreported facts on her subjects." -- *People* ***** (Pick of the Week) "When we were little, and someone said, 'I love chocolate pudding,' there was always some nutball who'd ask, 'Do you want to marry it?' Well, I love Sheila Weller's *Girls Like Us* so much that I would marry it. This lush, beautifully-researched and lyrically written biography of the three women whose music was emblematic of the generation who pioneered the way for me and so many others is literate, bold, charming and ... cuddly.... [E]very page brought a fresh surprise. Weller raised the bar for this book above even a classy celebrity bio... This book probably gave me more pure enjoyment than any but a handful I've read in years. If you're passionate about music -- and about passion -- you'll have to hand it to Sheila Weller for a bravura composition of her own." -- Jacquelyn Mitchard the bestselling author of *Still Summer*, *Cage of Stars*, and the first Oprah Book Club selection, *The Deep End of the Ocean*, on *WritersAsReaders.com* "Incisive, painstakingly researched... Any woman who grew up during the late 1960s and '70s will fall head over heels for Sheila Weller's *Girls Like Us*." -- *Ladies Home Journal* "A sharp-eyed vision of the worlds which nourished these ambitious, determined and singular artists... Weller digs deep into [Joni Mitchell's] complex psychology and provides as close to an understanding of this difficult figure as anyone is likely to ever offer. An unfailingly entertaining read... a riveting story." -- *Mojo* "Juicy... I doubt I'll listen to Mitchell's songs again without considering the child she gave up for adoption... and her subsequent bouts with depression or hear the oft-married King's music without thinking of her tumultuous relationships. As for Simon, Weller captures fully both the richness and glamour of her romantic life and the profound sensitivity that made her especially vulnerable to ex-husband James Taylor's drug abuse and the cavalier charm of Warren Beatty." - USA Today About the Author Sheila Weller is a *New York Times* bestselling author and award-winning magazine

journalist. She is the author of five previous books, most recently her 2003 family memoir, *Dancing at Ciro's*, which *The Washington Post* called "a substantial contribution to American social history." She is the senior contributing editor at *Glamour*, a contributor to *Vanity Fair*, and a former contributing editor of *New York*. To learn more, visit www.girlslikeusthebook.com.