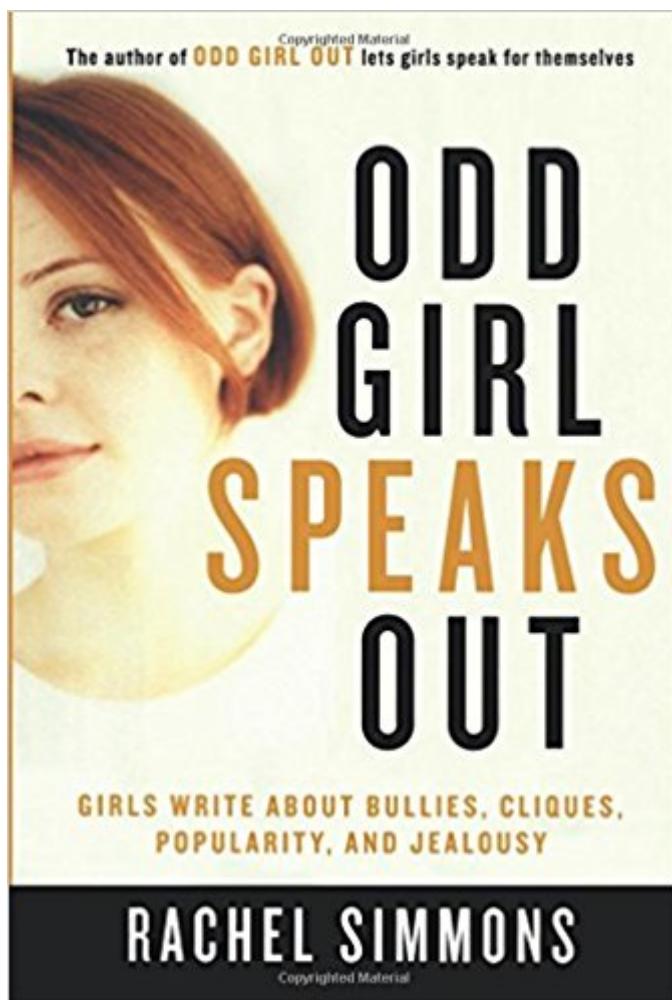


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# Odd Girl Speaks Out: Girls Write About Bullies, Cliques, Popularity, And Jealousy



## Synopsis

The national bestseller Odd Girl Out exposed a hidden culture of cruelty that had always been quietly endured by American girls. As Rachel Simmons toured the country, these girls found their voices and spoke to her about their pain. They wanted to talk-and they weren't the only ones. Mothers, teachers, counselors, young professional women, even fathers, came to Rachel with heart-wrenching personal stories that could no longer be kept secret. Here, Rachel creates a safe place for girls to talk, rant, sound off, and find each other. The result is a collection of wonderful accounts of the inner lives of adolescent girls. Candid and disarming, creative and expressive, and always exceptionally self-aware, these poems, songs, confessions, and essays form a journal of American girlhood. They show us how deeply cruelty flows and how strongly these girls want to change. Odd Girl Out helped girls find their voices; Odd Girl Speaks Out helps them tell their stories.

I'm always the odd girl out  
No one talks to me  
I try to be friendly and speak out  
But I'm invisible, see?  
You know, gossip is a natural thing in high school.  
I'm one of those girls that will do it right in front of you.  
I'll whisper at my friends and look at you the whole time.  
Then we'll all cut up laughing.  
You know we're talking about you.  
My best friend and I started being friends with this other girl.  
But she was fat. It was hard because she always wanted to go down the slide second and she would crush us.  
We didn't want to tell her she was fat, so we decided to drop her.  
Her mother called my mother and told her we were being mean.  
But we just couldn't be friends with her anymore.

-from Odd Girl Speaks Out

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This sequel to the controversial bestseller *Odd Girl Out* compiles pseudonymous accounts of bullying, backstabbing and other nastiness that girls say they have suffered or perpetrated on other girls, intercut with brief commentary from political scientist Simmons. Simmons argues that for "thousands of years, women have been barred from showing aggression," although feeling jealous, competitive or threatened are "natural, appropriate" responses to the world we live in. Furthermore, because "girls are taught that expressing anger directly is wrong, many girls (and women) have no choice but to resort to secret acts of meanness." Although there is nothing "secret" about most of the nastiness the girls in this book describe—they're very verbal in their abuse, very obvious and deliberate in their shunning of other girls—there are more fundamental problems with Simmons's model. Since she finds aggression universal, there's no need to look for the happy girls. She does not include accounts from kind young women, even though their insights into living a good life might be instructive. Still, this anthology's target audience is the girl in trouble, and Simmons has some decent advice: e.g., don't take offense right away, don't assume you have an exclusive relationship with anyone, don't try to IM (instant message) your way through a fight, don't accept a bad relationship, get involved in positive activities, be kind when ditching an old best friend, etc. It's not much different from what teen advice manuals have always offered, but some readers may find Simmons's presumption-of-wickedness approach more disarming than the conventional, presumption-of-goodness literature. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Sara Shandler's *Ophelia Speaks* (1999) responded to Mary Pipher's watershed title *Reviving Ophelia* (1994) with teens' own comments about the difficulties of growing up in a "girl poisoning" society. Now Simmons releases a collection of teens' words that builds on her own groundbreaking work, *Odd Girl Out* (2002), about the secret culture of aggression among adolescent girls. In this collection, Simmons draws from her workshops with teens, offering anecdotes, poems, and letters written by teens as well as her own insightful commentary. The chapters are loosely organized and examine bullying from a variety of angles: the voices of the bully, the victim, and the not-so-innocent bystander all speak here. Simmons also explores the more subtle hurts that come from shifting friendships and simmering jealousies. A section about "finding your inner strength" closes the book on a hopeful note. Parents, teachers, and social workers will find this revealing, but the book's most obvious audience is the young adults who will find support, direction, and even a community in their peers' words. Gillian Engberg Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

This should be required reading for every parent and especially the husbands. It was an eye opener for me. I come from a family of five sons. I had a daughter and had no idea of the world girls must navigate. Even my friends who have sisters were oblivious too. I have met many A type women who had no idea this type of world existed and, after my recommendation of a "must read." We all profitted from this work. We and our daughters thank you.

This book was recommended by my 6th grader's school counselor after she started making some questionable friend choices. We moved to a new area about a year ago and my two middle school daughters went from a very conservative charter school to a tight knit small town public school. My younger (6th grader) daughter has had a more difficult time adjusting and this helped a lot. My older daughter has always been the over-achiever, and expects the same of her sister. This book helped a lot even within their relationship as I would consider my older child a "queen bee". This book helped my daughter open up to me more because it was easier for her to start a conversation about something she read in the book, that happened to someone else, and it would lead us into things she is or has been going through. I read Queen Bees and Wannabes while she was reading this and it seemed to work out well, gave us a common thread and set the stage for planned conversations, something difficult to do well with girls this age.

It is inevitable that our daughters will experience some sort of emotional bullying. Prepare yourself and the ones you love by reading this book and understanding the dynamic. This book helped me to see how my natural reactions "Well I'll just speak to her parents" WRONG "Honey Just talk with her and it will work out" WRONG "She is such a rotten kid! How can she do that?" WRONGWRONGWRONGWRONGWRONGWRONG. It hasn't changed since we were young- its only better enabled by technology. In any case- information is the best weapon. Read this with your daughter before it happens- you may be able to avoid heartache.

Created a dialogue between my daughter and me. She is entering 8th grade in a new school. She said at times it was a little depressing it the things she could relate too.

I actually bought this for my daughter who has looked at it but that is about it. I am hoping that it is because she really hasn't faced bullying as of yet. I know it is just a matter of time because everyone gets bullied sooner or later. I enjoyed the personal narratives more than the author's comments. I think that this book does a good job of showing all points of view and helping girls to

see that they are NOT alone. Now if we can just STOP the bullying...

I didn't really like the book because it was kind of disturbing and wrong. Otherwise, it was kind of interesting to hear all of these stories, because they were interesting. Of course I felt bad for these girls, but I'm the kind of person who loves drama in books and in shows! These all were kind of the same stories as well, so that was a little boring.

The stories shared in this book definitely let girls who are being bullied know they are not alone. In that respect it is helpful. However, it doesn't really contain any information in how to deal with female aggression. I also maybe would have liked to read more success stories from girls that had been bullied and are now leading productive and happy lives.

Excellent book for mothers with tween daughters. Really a scary age. They are all very cutthroat. I am hard pressed to think of another book that can prepare you to deal with the emotions of this.

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