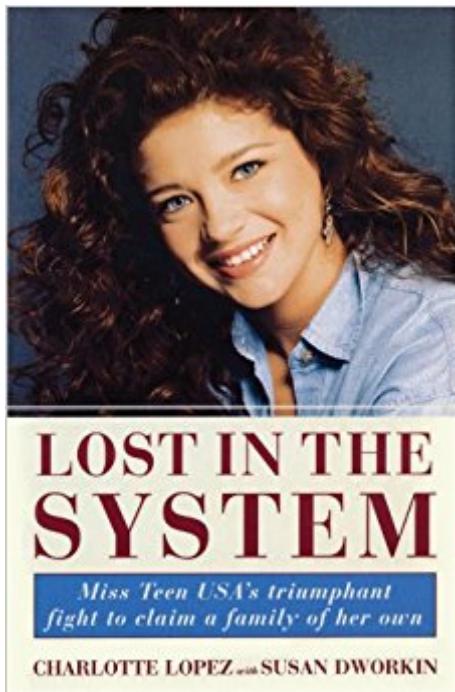


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Lost In The System



Synopsis

Miss Teen USA for 1992, a foster child, recounts her struggle since the age of two to find stability within multiple homes and shelters, her triumphant pageant success, and her joyful adoption. 25,000 first printing.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A foster child who ricocheted around the system and emerged as Miss Teen USA writes trenchantly about her experiences. Daughter of a mentally disturbed Puerto Rican mother, raised in a series of foster homes in chilly Vermont, Lopez grew up rootless and confused about her identity and her future. By the time she was a year old, she had experienced two foster placements; at three, she was on her fourth. The fifth foster family, the Wensleys, provided a home for the next 11 years.

Although she had been separated early on from her older brother, Lopez's younger sister, Diana, stuck with her from home to home, in line with generally accepted social service practice: Keep siblings together, if possible. They anchored each other through a long period of adjustment; Diana settled in at the Wensleys while Charlotte never stopped feeling dislocated. She yearned to be adopted. The Wensleys, willing at first, grew reluctant. ``Adopting two impoverished kids was a huge financial commitment," Lopez writes, ``which they feared they would not be able to afford."

Charlotte, by then a teenager, began clashing so frequently with her foster family that she moved to a group home. She began her quest to be Miss Teen USA, winning the title in 1992. It gave her a unique opportunity to become a spokeswoman for foster children. She was also reunited with her

brother and adopted, at the age of 17, by a Vermont couple. The book's final chapter has suggestions for the professionals, which boil down to: Listen to the children; they know what's missing in their lives and where it hurts. Written in plain and simple prose (with the help of Dworkin, coauthor of *The Ms. Guide to Women's Health*), this is a story of a foster child who made good--and is seizing the opportunity to become an eloquent spokeswoman for all those children who have shared her predicament. (40 b&w photos, not seen) -- Copyright ©1996, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.

This is Charlotte Lopez' (The best Miss Teen USA that has ever been represented!!!)autobiography telling about her life growing up "Lost in the System" of foster care and emerging triumphant as a beauty queen.I remember watching the Miss Teen USA pageant in 1993 and watching Charlotte as she caught the hearts of the audience in her \$37.00 evening gown. There was no way anyone else could have won that title. Charlotte doesn't reveal any pageant dirt in this book. What this book is about is her life in foster care and how she overcame the obstacles put before her to no longer be just another statistic "lost in the system". She succeeds brilliantly on all counts.Charlotte, alas, is now a struggling actress with a few B pictures to her credit. One wishes that after such a triumphant success with promoting her advocacy on "foster care" that this would have been her mission in life instead of relegating herself to playing inconsequential parts in movies that don't make a mark. But Charlotte has already made her mark in this world. For those of us who remember, she will always be the beautiful young lady from Vermont who was crowned Miss Teen USA of 1993! Hopefully, one day, Charlotte will return to her advocacy in foster care! This book is superb!

Charlotte Lopez was a foster child in Vermont and was living with her foster family at a very young age. She wanted adoption but because the family had other children they were unable to adopt at that time. Charlotte and her sister lived in the same foster home and she had a brother that lived in another foster home. Charlotte entered her states Miss Teen USA pageant and won, however she had some difficulties while a titleholder.Inspirational story and you can also look at the site T3Media, type in 1993 Miss Teen USA Pageant and you can see Charlotte compete and hear Charlotte's story. Please check it out.

In *Lost in the System*, Charlotte Lopez recounts her childhood spent in foster care, with all its struggles, and ending in her eventual triumph. The story is told from a VERY rare point-of-view . . . that of the voiceless, often ignored, and frequently disbelieved foster child.Though not as

earth-shattering as some other recent literature, I believe it was Charlotte's book and her much-publicized story which inspired the Clinton-era reforms in foster care and adoption. As my wife and I prepare to become foster parents ourselves, I feel I am much better prepared for our looming task, having read this book. A must-read for every foster and/or adoptive parent.

This is not great literature, but it is a great accomplishment! When I read this, I was angry, sympathetic, and resentful. Several years before Charlotte wrote her book, I had written a book about my experiences in 2 decades of state care without ever being adopted. I did not have the opportunity that the pageant brought to Charlotte in terms of national exposure and the deals that can result from that. I was angry because in reading the story in the context of my own life of abuse, neglect and bouncing around 5-600% more than Charlotte, her woes as a foster child seemed pretty lightweight to me. I was sympathetic because many of the observations she made were right on, only more amplified with greater instability or degree. And I was resentful that she had found some caring people such as the Scheps and the Wensley families. The Scheps sound like the kind of people I dreamed about and cried myself to sleep many a night until one day there were no more tears. All my grief was gone and I was numb. But then I thought of the good Charlotte has done in using her exposure as a platform to heighten awareness of the issues of foster children. Writing a book such as *Lost in the System* is generally not a big profit taker, but anyone who walks away and gets something out of it in terms of understanding throwaway kids is one more ally in this forgotten corner of American society. It was painful for me to read some of the passages in this book, for it dredged long-forgotten feelings and this shows a shared quality of experience. I have known persons such as Janet Henry and the enormous patience she must have. One must wonder how her life must be both gratifying and sad; gratified to help kids no one else will, and sad to bond with kids only to see them leave. The Wensleys impressed me a great deal for it must have been no small feat for them to show the humility needed to change their approach from strict Fundamentalist Protestantism to a more compassionate tone as evidenced by Charlotte's visits following their separation. I also understand fully the financial considerations the Wensleys faced, as while I was growing up foster parents had no reservations about making me feel unworthy of even food or clothes. Fortunately, Charlotte was spared this. And when I read about the Scheps, I felt enormous gratitude to them for helping Charlotte realize her dream. I did not get that dream and I know the pain I have felt my whole life. Because the Scheps have more caring than the two of them can hold, they have truly changed Charlotte's life forever. I have seen many peers die, become drug addicts/dealers, prostitutes, absentee parents, prisoners and each time I saw it I saw some of me in

them. In Charlotte i see the past i never had but by her sharing her story i got a glimpse into a life i wish i could have had and for a few hours i forgot. Knowing that there are people like the Scheps, the Wensleys, Janet Henry and Charlotte Lopez not forgetting to thank them reassures me there are still good people in the world.

This stunning book chronicles the coming of age of one of America's most beloved beauty queens. Charlotte Lopez won the Miss Teen USA title in 1993 after telling her moving story of growing up in several foster homes throughout her home state of Vermont, and how her life had adjusted without ever having any true parents she could call her own. Her frank and touching narrative transports us into her life of growing up with a mentally unbalanced mother, a talented sister, and several completely different foster parents. We encounter her stories of life, first loves, and winning the most prestigious teenage pageant the world in a \$37 evening gown. A delightful and personal book, who's clever author never leaves us with a dull moment, and makes us question both the role of parenting and the placement of foster children in our country and society. Wonderfully witty, deeply moving, and always energetic, this book is an amazing read for anyone of any age who has wondered what life is without any true family unit, or has dreamed about becoming a beauty queen

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