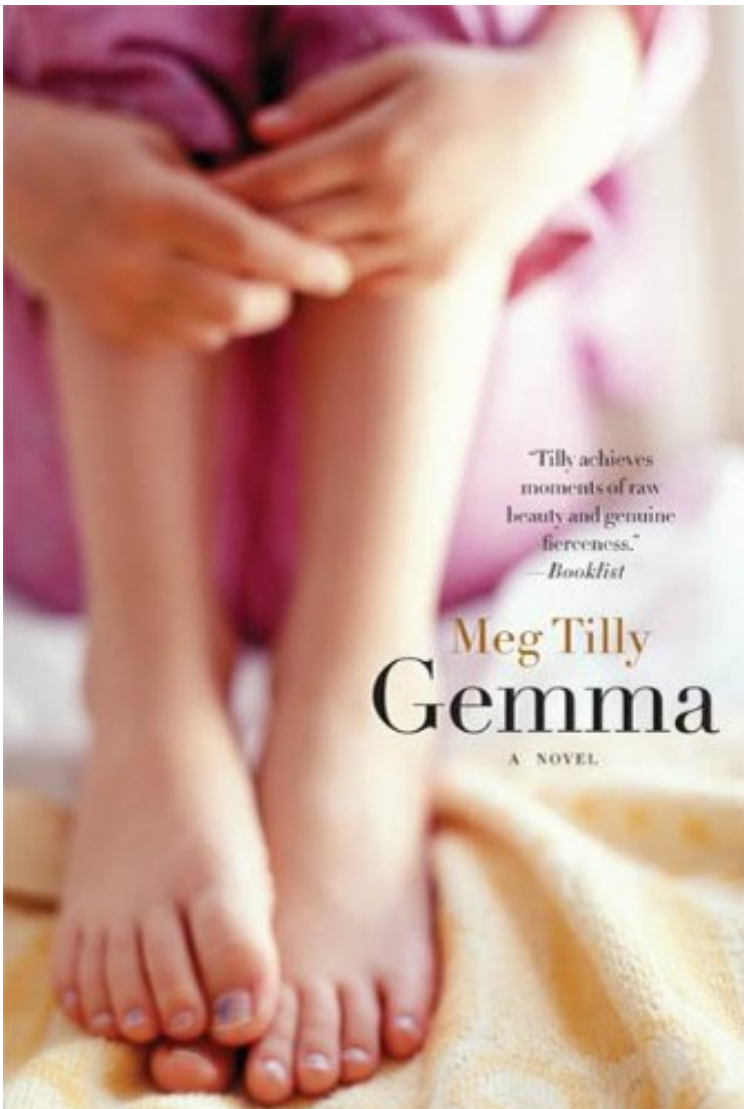


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Gemma: A Novel



Par Meg Tilly
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Par Meg Tilly : **Gemma: A Novel** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Gemma: A Novel:

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Description : Description du produitAfter Hazen Wood kidnaps 12 year-old Gemma Sullivan, the two embark upon a cross-country journey that tests the limits of Gemma's endurance. In graphic scenes of physical and sexual violence, Hazen tries to destroy the young girl's will. It is only Gemma's childlike resilience and fertile imagination that protect her from the worst of the abuse she suffers. And in the end, the healing power of unconditional love gives Gemma the courage to speak out against her abuser at last--reclaiming her dignity as a human being.

Prsentation de l'diteurAfter Hazen Wood kidnaps twelve-year-old Gemma Sullivan, the two embark upon a cross-country journey that tests the limits of Gemma's endurance. In scenes of physical and sexual violence, Hazen tries to destroy the young girl's will. When she does manage to escape he drags her back and threatens to have her arrested for the violent acts he performs. It is only Gemma's resilience and fertile imagination

that protects her from the worst of the trauma she suffers. And, in the end, it is the healing power of unconditional love that gives Gemma the courage to speak out against her abuser at last and claim the life she deserves. Alternating between the voices of Gemma and Hazen Wood, Meg Tilly has brilliantly brought to life powerful and unforgettable characters that will leave you thinking about them long after you turn the last page. From Publishers Weekly Tilly's second novel arrives more than a decade after *Singing Songs* and more than two decades after the author's defining roles as Chloe in *The Big Chill* and as the title character of *Agnes of God*. But Tilly's not wasting any timeless than halfway through the first chapter, her 12-year-old title character is well into graphic descriptions of the systematic rape she's endured since she was eight. By the end of chapter two, she's been kidnapped by the man to whom her mother's boyfriend had nonchalantly sold her for sex. And by the end of chapter three, he's been collared in turn by the criminal justice system. The second half of the book sees Gemma taken in by a generous and capable foster mother who grew up with similar abuse, and who encourages her to tell her story at trial. Tilly leaves them awaiting a verdict.

While this is in some ways an effective novel, its directness has a lot in common with social services pamphlets and with child pornography. Its intentional artlessness may be valuable to those who have been through the worst and are recovering, but for unwary readers lured by the sunny pink cover, and particularly for young readers untouched by these issues, it presents real NC-17 horrors. (Oct. 1) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. Booklist Actor turned writer Tilly's first novel, *Singing Songs* (1994), is narrated by a young girl who survives sexual violence, as is her second. Clearly, sexual child abuse is a cause, and that results in a hint of agitprop. At the other extreme is rampant graphic detail. That said, Gemma is an astonishingly vital and involving character. She is first raped at age 8 by Buddy, her despicable mother's live-in boyfriend. When Gemma turns 12, Buddy pimps her to another psycho, Hazen Wood, who kidnaps Gemma and sets out on a cross-country rape-and-torture spree. Tilly has entered Joyce Carol Oates' country, where preyed-upon girls survive by virtue of the power of their minds. Gemma teaches herself to "Gemma travel," a form of meditation that allows her to separate her mind from her body. Girlish cuteness alternates with sexual violence, highlighting the horror of the crimes Tilly so unflinchingly imagines. Tilly achieves moments of raw beauty and genuine fierceness while sustaining the intensity of an X-rated thriller and driving this harrowing story all the way to the courtroom. Donna Seaman Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved