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## Sommario/riassunto

In both the UK and the rest of the world there have been rapid increases in the numbers of women in prison, which has led to an acceleration of interest in women's crimes and the social control of women, and women's experience of both prison and the criminal justice system is very different to men's. This text is concerned to address the key issues relating to women's imprisonment, contributing at the same time to an understanding of prison issues in general and the historical and contemporary politics of gender and penal justice. What are women's prisons for? What are they like? Why are lone