



Perfect
Girl

Mary Hogan
author of THE SERIOUS KISS

Mary Hogan



For Bob,
Forever

Contents

1	SHE WALKS INTO CLASS TEN MINUTES AFTER THE BELL. Twenty...	1
2	“DUCK.”	3
3	IT WAS DELICIOUSLY WARM OUT, ONE OF THOSE PRE-SUMMER nights...	9
4	MOM HAS HER FEET PROPPED UP ON OUR OLD BURLED...	15
5	AS LONG AS I LIVE, I WILL NEVER FORGET THE...	22
6	WE MADE IT THROUGH THE TUNNEL INTO MANHATTAN absolutely dry.	26
7	AUNT MARTY REFUSED TO TAKE US TO THE STATUE OF...	32
8	“WE CAME ALL THIS WAY FOR A DAY?”	41
9	“AUNT MARTY?”	48
10	IT’S SATURDAY. THE DAY OF MY DOOM. I COULDN’T SLEEP...	50
11	WE’RE TOO LATE. BY THE TIME I BRING THREE GLASSES...	59
12	“OKAY,” I SAY TO AUNT MARTY. “HERE’S THE THING.”	62
13	AT SCHOOL, CELESTE AND FRANKIE ARE BUZZING ABOUT IT.	66
14	WE SIT NEAR THE BACK OF THE BUS...OUR NORMAL SPOT.	70

15	IF AUNT MARTY WEREN'T SMACK IN THE CENTER OF THE...	75
16	PERRY ANSWERS ON THE SECOND KNOCK.	86
17	THE HOUSE IS QUIET WHEN I GET HOME. THE WORKMEN...	90
18	AUNT MARTY'S CAR SMELLS LIKE HER—RICH, EXOTIC, well traveled.The...	97
19	WALTER MAYNARD, MY GEEKY NEIGHBOR, STARES OPENLY. Even the school...	100
20	IT'S THE SMELL OF CINNAMON AND BUTTER. OR THE pounding...	107
21	THE WHOLE DAY IS SURREAL. CELESTE, FRANKIE, AND I can't...	114
22	LE BISTRO IS THE MOST GROWN-UP RESTAURANT I'VE ever been...	118
23	IT'S ABOUT NINE O'CLOCK WHEN WE GET HOME, BUT IT...	129
24	FOR THE REST OF THE WEEKEND, THE HOUSE IS EERILY...	136
25	FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE, EVERYTHING FEELS EXACTLY...	140
26	THROUGH THE BUS WINDOW, WE BOTH WATCH THE SUN RISE...	147
27	WHO CARES WHAT TIME IT IS? PERRY JUST CALLED ME...	156
28	AS WE SPEED TOWARD THE BUS STATION, MY MIND RACES...	160
29	IT'S PRECISELY SIX FIFTEEN WHEN THE BUS PULLS INTO Wilmington.	164

30	MOM WON'T GET OUT OF BED. I HADN'T REALIZED HOW...	168
31	ODESSA, LIKE MOST SMALL TOWNS, LOVES A PARADE. IT'S hilarious,...	182
32	WE HAVE ONE LAST FAMILY DINNER—THE THREE OF US. Aunt...	189
33	IT'S THE HOTTEST SUMMER I CAN REMEMBER. MY ARMS are...	192

[Acknowledgements](#)

[About the Author](#)

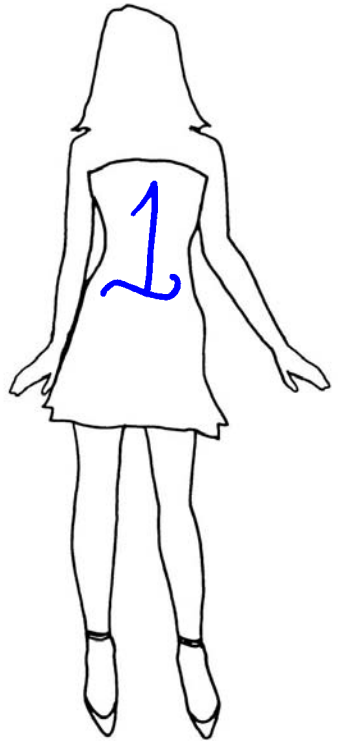
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SHE WALKS INTO CLASS TEN MINUTES AFTER THE BELL. Twenty heads turn. Forty eyes watch her walk up to the front with her perfectly tan legs, perfectly blue halter top, and perfectly sweeping bangs.

Mr. Roland is already boring us. Chalk dust flying, he lists the six member councils of the United Nations on the board. His short-sleeve white shirt is so thin you can see the

shadow of his back hair.

“ . . . General Assembly, Security Council . . . ,” his nasal voice drones on.

“I’d like to member her council,” one of the guys says, flicking his head at the new girl. The class erupts in laughter. Well, the *boys*, anyway.

“Oh my,” Mr. Roland says, turning around. “Who do we have here?”

She hands him a note. I stare and twirl a strand of red hair around my finger.

“Take a seat,” our teacher says. And the new girl does. She calmly walks to the back of the room without blushing though everyone is watching her every move. Especially Perry. *My Perry*.

“This is Jenna Wilson, everyone,” says Mr. Roland. The boys nod and smirk. The girls bend their lips up in fake smiles. Jenna sits and faces front. I notice she has a French manicure on her fingers and her toes. Curling my ragged nails into my palms, I face front, too.

“ . . . Economic and Social Council, International Court of Justice . . . ”

Mr. Roland returns to the chalkboard and blathers on. The way he has all semester. I hear with my ears, but my mind is on the new girl. The *perfect* girl, who now sits between me and Perry Gould. I feel him checking her out. My heart sinks.

Of all times, why *now*?