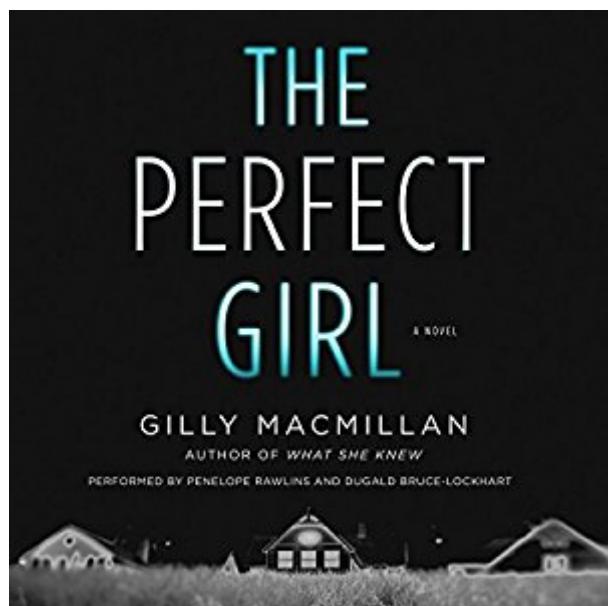


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# The Perfect Girl: A Novel



## **Synopsis**

Zoe Maisey is a 17-year-old musical prodigy with a genius IQ. Three years ago she was involved in a tragic incident that left three classmates dead. She served her time, and now her mother, Maria, is resolved to keep that devastating fact tucked far away from their new beginning, hiding the past even from her new husband and demanding Zoe do the same. Tonight Zoe is giving a recital that Maria has been planning for months. It needs to be the performance of her life. But instead, by the end of the evening Maria is dead. In the aftermath everyone - police, family, Zoe's former solicitor, and Zoe herself - tries to piece together what happened. But as Zoe knows all too well, the truth is rarely straightforward, and the closer we are to someone, the less we may see.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

THIS. This book is my sort of book. Maybe it will be yours too? Or maybe not. I'll try and help you find out. The Perfect Girl is a steadily paced, family drama sort of novel set in the UK and has a soapy style that, to me, was juuuust right for the tone of the story. I'll explain that later. I had a hard time putting it down! The Perfect Girl is a story that takes place over just 24 hours (or less) and told from the point of view of several characters (not always well done, but I liked it here). But it mostly centers around Zoe, a teenage musical prodigy with a criminal past that haunts her. I will not post any major spoilers! I promise. At the start of the book, we find Zoe just about to perform for the first time in her "Second Chance Life" alongside her new stepbrother, who is also a skilled musician. By the end of the first chapter, however, you learn that Zoe's mother doesn't survive the evening. And so off you go into the literary adventure that is discovering what happens to mom and why. Quite a

story unfolds! I say it's a bit soapy, in a good way, in that this book has it all: murder, criminal pasts, tragic diagnoses, affairs, addictions, and teenage angst. That said, I've never actually watched soap operas because I can't take them seriously with all that bad acting and lighting, but have enjoyed movies and shows called "prime time soap operas" such as *Desperate Housewives* or the more serious, *Secrets and Lies*. This book carried that sort of dark tone. I loved it. But I mention this aspect because I know not everyone does love this style. Stick to your laborious Tana French reads, if that's the case! I need a story that moves. The interesting thing about this book, is how Zoe goes from defendant in the beginning to play judge by the end.

At fourteen, Zoe Guerin, a musical prodigy, was bullied by the kids at the school she attended as a scholarship student. In an attempt to fit in, she reacts to a dare and takes the driver's seat after a party. An accident, with Zoe driving, led to the deaths of her three teenage passengers. Now, three years later, she is performing in a new venue, trying to thrive in her Second Chance Life, with her mother Maria and stepfather, a step-brother Lucas, and a baby sister Grace. Chris, her stepfather, does not know about Zoe's life in Devon. In the new life in Bristol, with her new name, Zoe Maisey, she has another chance. But somehow, secrets always have a way of getting out, and something happens that night during the performance that will bring Zoe's secrets to light. And before the night is over, her mother will be dead. *The Perfect Girl* was a multi-layered tale of the various secrets, lies, and hidden moments that make up the lives of the characters. Multiple narrators show us each character's particular view on events, including some of what actually happened to cause Zoe to crash that car. Why did her blood alcohol test high when she didn't recall drinking anything? And how did the testimony of the bullies seal her fate? Most of the characters had flaws and some were quite unlikeable. I felt more sympathetic toward Zoe, but just when I wanted to root for her, she would do something questionable, or her mind would follow some pathway that would make me doubt her. In the end, a decision she makes changes everything; can something wrong make a right? I definitely disliked Chris, with his attitudes, his cold eyes, and the mean words he shouted.

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