



Perfect: A Novel

Rachel Joyce

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A spellbinding novel that will resonate with readers of Mark Haddon, Louise Erdrich, and John Irving, *Perfect* tells the story of a young boy who is thrown into the murky, difficult realities of the adult world with far-reaching consequences.

Byron Hemmings wakes to a morning that looks like any other: his school uniform draped over his wooden desk chair, his sister arguing over the breakfast cereal, the click of his mother's heels as she crosses the kitchen. But when the three of them leave home, driving into a dense summer fog, the morning takes an unmistakable turn. In one terrible moment, something happens, something completely unexpected and at odds with life as Byron understands it. While his mother seems not to have noticed, eleven-year-old Byron understands that from now on nothing can be the same.

What happened and who is to blame? Over the days and weeks that follow, Byron's perfect world is shattered. Unable to trust his parents, he confides in his best friend, James, and together they concoct a plan. . .

As she did in her debut, *The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry*, Rachel Joyce has imagined bewitching characters who find their ordinary lives unexpectedly thrown into chaos, who learn that there are times when children must become parents to their parents, and who discover that in confronting the hard truths about their pasts, they will forge unexpected relationships that have profound and surprising impacts. Brimming with love, forgiveness, and redemption, *Perfect* will cement Rachel Joyce's reputation as one of fiction's brightest talents.

Praise for *Perfect*

"Touching, eccentric . . . Joyce does an inviting job of setting up these mysterious circumstances, and of drawing Byron's magical closeness with Diana."—**Janet Maslin, *The New York Times***

"Haunting . . . compelling."—**Minneapolis Star Tribune**

"[Joyce] triumphantly returns with *Perfect*. . . . As Joyce probes the souls of Diana, Byron and Jim, she reveals—slowly and deliberately, as if peeling back a delicate onion skin—the connection between the two stories, creating a poignant, searching tale."—**O: The Oprah Magazine**

"*Perfect* touches on class, mental illness, and the ways a psyche is formed or broken. It has the tenor of a horror film, and yet at the end, in some kind of contortionist trick, the narrative unfolds into an unexpected burst of redemption. [Verdict:] Buy It."—**New York**

"Joyce's dark, quiet follow-up to her successful debut, *The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry*, could easily become a book club favorite. . . . *Perfect* is the kind of book that blossoms under thoughtful examination, its slow tendencies redeemed by moments of loveliness and insight. However sad, Joyce's messages—about the limitations of time and control, the failures of adults and the fears of children, and our responsibility for our own imprisonment and freedom—have a gentle ring of truth to them."—**The Washington Post**

“There is a poignancy to Joyce’s narrative that makes for her most memorable writing.”—NPR’s *All Things Considered*

From the Hardcover edition.

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