All of These and Everything in Between

By : lauricula

Andie doesn't really speak; ever. She watches people, her classmates mainly. She's not creepy, or at least she thinks so. But she admires, and wonders. She would love to have friends, but she doesn't know how. The Girl Who is Perfect has the opportunity to change Andie's world forever, and Andie has the opportunity to change The Girl Who is Perfect when their parents start dating.

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Table of Contents

All of These and Everything in Between Chapter 1

The Girl Who is Perfect

All of These and Everything in Between : Chapter 1

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Prologue

Her arms are clean. No cuts. No scars. Nothing. Envy rises in me, the longer I stare. I wonder what it's like to have clean arms as I look down at my own. Pink lines, white lines, red lines, purple lines. There isn't an inch of clean skin on my arms. I frown, suddenly perplexed at the realization. When did my arms become covered? Did I really cut this much? I look back at the girl with the clean arms. I wonder if she wears pretty sundresses on summer days. If she laughs too loudly at her friends jokes. If she kisses her lover good-bye at the end of the night. If she wears cute pajama shorts and a tank top to bed. If she gets up half an hour early to get ready for school. If the sun reflects off of her pale skin in the spring sunlight. If she swings at the park down the street and lets the wind blow through her long, red hair. I should ask her if she does these things. I should be her friend. Maybe then I can know what it's like to have a normal life.

A paper hits me in the head, and I jump. A boy in front of me sneers and nudges his friend, who turns and laughs at me. I frown back at them and wonder why they're so mean. I don't touch the crumpled paper on my desk. If I open it, they win and that can't happen. The teacher clears his throat, a command for the boys to stop their sneering. I send my teacher a silent thank you and continue staring at me peers.

There's another girl who wears baggy clothes, and has a skinny face. Sometimes when I go to the bathroom after lunch I hear her throwing up. I know her secret, and I know she knows that I know. She looks at me as she exits the stall. We don't say anything. I don't tell on her. That would make a hypocrite. I'm a lot of things, but I'm not a hypocrite. I see her in the cafeteria; she stares at her food, a sad expression on her face. I wonder how many people she fools. I wonder how many people tease her. I wonder if she gives her food to her dog, if she has one. I wonder if she thinks she's beautiful yet.

A boy with glasses scribbles the notes at a rapid rate. He's hunched over his desk, and his eyes dart across his paper. He has pimples on his face and his hair sticks up in all directions. He packs his lunch every day, and he sits alone. Kids don't notice him. I wonder if he likes being ignored; at least he doesn't get made fun of. I wonder if anyone asks him to do their homework; I hear he's smart. I wonder if he gets A's on all his tests. I wonder if he hates his pimples, or if he's learned to love them yet.

A girl texts her girlfriend from under her desk. She dyes her hair different colors every month; this time it's bubble gum pink. She talks back to the teacher sometimes. The boys snicker when she walks by. She wears short skirts, and lets her stomach show. She has a cup cake belly ring. I wonder if she has any more piercings. I wonder if she and girlfriend lay in bed for hours on the weekends, kissing each other. I wonder if she loves her with all her heart. I wonder if she feels powerful talking back to the teacher. I wonder if she notices the boys snickering at her. I wonder if she cares what people think of her.

The bell rings, and we all separate; the girl who is perfect, the boys who snicker, the girl who wants to be beautiful, the boy who is smart, the girl who loves herself, and the girl who wants to be all of these and everything in between.ï¿½

Chapter 2: The Girl Who is Perfect

The girl who is perfect brushes my arm as we bustle down the hallway. "Sorry!" she says, grabbing my arm. I wince at the pain, but she doesn't notice. I try to speak, but my lips don't move. She gives me a strange look before walking ahead of me; her bred hair bouncing with every step. She dresses nicely every day, and wears make up. Boys tap her on the shoulder, and give her hugs. She sits with lots of people at lunch.

I stand behind her in the lunch line, and try to block out her conversation. I don't like to eavesdrop, it's rude, but I can't help it this time.

"So did you and Gregâ ¦you know?" her black haired friend asked, winking at the girl who is perfect.

She giggled, shoving her black haired friend. "Shut up! Do you want the whole lunch line to hear? And no, not yet. But I have a feeling we will soon. Things always getâ ¦heated whenever we hang out." The girl who is perfect smiled mischievously at her friend.

"You're so lucky, you know. Every girl in this school wants Greg. Girls would kill to sleep with him." Her friend retorted, placing her hands on her narrow hips.

"Well, they can have fun trying. Greg Anderson is mine." The Girl Who is Perfect said simply, grabbing a slice of pizza.

As I gather my lunch, I wonder if she and her boyfriend love each other. I wonder if he runs his hands through her hair and kisses her gently. I wonder if they go on dates and cuddle while watching movies. I wonder if she blushes when he calls her beautiful. I wonder if she grabs his hand in public. I wonder if he buys her flowers randomly. I wonder if he makes her feel perfect.

Her dark haired friend seemed to notice me staring; not on purpose of course. She glared at me, narrowing her jade-green eyes. She nudged The Girl Who is Perfect, who turned to look at me as well.

"Hey, what are you staring at?" Dark haired girl asked, her tone snotty.

I shook my head but didn't speak. I darted my eyes to the floor, feeling a blush creep up my cheeks. I didn't mean to stare; it was a bad habit. Now I would have to punish myself later.

"Hello? I asked you a question." Dark haired girl said again. She stomped over to me, her face inches from mine. "Stop staring, and cover up your arms." She sneered.

The Girl Who is Perfect came over to us. "Kelly! That's rude."

Kelly rolled her eyes. "Well it's true. She's a freak, she wouldn't stop staring." The girl named Kelly stalked off, paying for her lunch.

The Girl Who is Perfect gave me a sympathetic look. "I'm sorry. Kelly's a bitâ ¦blunt. Don't listen to her."

She didn't give me time to respond, perhaps because she knew I wouldn't. I watched her thank the old lunch lady and walk to her to table with all of her friends. Greg stood and kissed her as she stood up. I watched her open her milk, and punch Greg in the arm, as she laughed too loudly.

I tried to remember what Kelly had said about my arms, and thought about covering them up. I didn't see the point; the counselors knew, my parents knew, my therapist knew. Not to mention it was always too hot in school to wear long sleeves. I sat down at my table and picked up my fork, twirling spaghetti mindlessly. I wondered what made Kelly so outspoken. I wondered if it was her way of crying for attention. I wondered if it made her feel good, to make others feel sad.

The Girl Who is Perfect is in my math class, but she never shows up. I think she skips to be with Greg. He's a senior and they can go home after lunch. I wonder if she ever gets in trouble. I wonder if they take walks downtown and eat ice cream on park benches. I wonder if they stare at the clouds and lay in a green field of grass. Probably not.

The Girl Who is Perfect comes back for gym, and she is on my team for dodge-ball. I think she is athletic because she looks normal in her gym uniform and calf high socks while the rest of us look gawky and awkward. She frowns at Kelly, who is on the other side of the gym. I think it bothers them that they're not on the same team.

The lanky gym teacher blows his whistle, signaling the beginning of the torturous game. Boys and girls run to the center, while I stand in the back. The Girl Who is Perfect pelts a boy to the side, and he sulks to the side of the gym. She screams "Yes!" and chases after another ball. I become entranced, watching The Girl Who is Perfect flaunt around the gym, pelting people. Gym excites her. I wonder if she played sports as a kid. I wonder if she liked to get her knees dirty. I wonder if she rode her bike until sunset. I wonder if she played in dirt. I wonder if she woke early on weekends just to play outside.

A ball contacted with my head, and I stumbled backwards, reaching for the wall. High pitched laughter rang from the other side of the gym, and I looked just in time to see Kelly bent over in laughter. I knew she had been the one to hit me. I said nothing as I regained my composure, and I stood as if nothing had happened. The gym teacher signaled that I was still in the game; head shots didn't count. The Girl Who is Perfect ran over to me, out of breath.

"Are you okay?" she asked, sounding genuinely concerned.

I nodded furiously, rubbing my temple. The Girl Who is Perfect cocked her head, her pale green eyes wide. "If you're sureâ ¦" she said hesitantly before grabbing another ball.

In the locker room, I overheard The Girl Who is Perfect yelling at Kelly for hitting me in the head. Kelly was angry; she thought it was no big deal; it was dodge ball after all. I just didn't dodge. The Girl Who is Perfect insisted she apologize, and so Kelly stomped over to me, her eyebrows furrowed.

"I'm sorry I hit you in the head." She said, clearly not sorry at all.

I opened my mouth to speak but no words came out. Kelly waited for an answer that wasn't going to come. She grabbed fistfuls of her hair, and stalked off. "She doesn't even say anything!"

The Girl Who is Perfect gave me a sad smile, and went back to her locker. I wondered why two people like Kelly and The Girl Who is Perfect are friends; they seem so different. I wondered if maybe the balance each other out; sort of like Ying and Yang but in human form. I wondered if they got into fights a lot. I wondered if they treated each other well; like friends are supposed to.

The day ended and I didn't see The Girl Who is Perfect before I got on my bus. It made me kind of sad because seeing her gave me this sense of comfort. I don't know, I'm strange. More boys laughed as I walked to my seat, and one girl rolled her eyes at me. Nobody tried to talk to me, but I didn't mind.

My dad was in the kitchen when I got home, and there were cardboard boxes everywhere. No more paintings on the walls. No more knick knacks on the shelves. The TV was unplugged and packed away.

"Hey, sweetie." He called out to me.

I walked into the kitchen and blinked at him.

"Yeah, uhm, about the boxes. Weâ ¦I need to talk." He pushed out a chair and I sat down.

"So, since the divorce is finalized now, you and I are moving out." He said cautiously, as if he expected me to react.

I blinked at him, and felt my heart sink. Was this my fault too? I was already to blame for the divorce. He patted my arm, and gave me a mournful look.

"There's one more thingâ ¦" he spoke slowly, allowing me to catch every word.

I nodded, allowing him to proceed. He drew in a shaky breath and looked past me.

"We're moving in with my new girlfriend and her daughterâ ¦" This time, he spoke quickly, and my mind took a moment to register what he had just told me.

My heart didn't break, anger didn't boil. I didn't really feel much of anything. If this woman made my dad happy, well thenâ ¦fine. I just feel bad for her daughter; she's going to have a freak of a step-sister.

Dad and I loaded up the mini-moving truck, and headed towards his girlfriend's house. I was surprised when we only went fifteen minutes down the road. *At least I won't be changing schools.* A voice offered in my head. *It's not like I have friends anyway, what does that matter?* Another voice retorted. I scowled, willing them to shut up. My fingers absent mindedly ran over my scars, and goose bumps rose on my pale skin.

We pulled up in front of a mansion type house, with a large front lawn, and a half-circle drive way. There was a white wrap around porch and rockers placed strategically along the length of the porch. One, two, three, four stories I counted to the house, complete with some sort of tower on the right side. Pale blue shutters covered every window, and potted plants hung from the ceiling of the porch. It seemed like a nice place.

Dad told me to wait by the truck as he went in and got Pam, his girlfriend. I nodded and noticed all of the new gray hairs on my dad's head. I wondered if he blamed me for this still. I wondered if he just pretended to like me because my mom didn't want me. I wondered if my dad hates me as much as I hate myself.

I heard the porch door slam, and glanced up. My breath caught in my throat when I realized who was running towards me. Her red curls bounced up and down with each step and a small smile was painted on her face. The Girl Who is Perfect is my new step-sister.

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