



# Perfect: A Novel

*By Natasha Friend*

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## Perfect: A Novel By Natasha Friend

Depicting with humor and insight the pressure to be outwardly perfect, this novel for ages 10-13 shows how one girl develops compassion for her own and others' imperfections.

For 13-year-old Isabelle Lee, whose father has recently died, everything's normal on the outside. Isabelle describes the scene at school with bemused accuracy--the self-important (but really not bad) English teacher, the boy that is constantly fixated on Ashley Barnum, the prettiest girl in class, and the dynamics of the lunchroom, where tables are turf in a all-eyes-open awareness of everybody's relative social position.

But everything is not normal, really. Since the death of her father, Isabelle's family has only functioned on the surface. Her mother, who used to take care of herself, now wears only lumpy, ill-fitting clothes, cries all night, and has taken every picture of her dead husband and put them under her bed. Isabelle tries to make light of this, but the underlying tension is expressed in overeating and then binging. As the novel opens, Isabelle's little sister, April, has told their mother about Isabelle's problem. Isabelle is enrolled in group therapy. Who should show up there, too, but Ashley Barnum, the prettiest, most together girl in class.

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## **Perfect: A Novel** By Natasha Friend Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #571135 in Books
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- 232 pages

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## Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Grade 6-9-Eighth-grader Isabelle Lee describes her not-so-perfect life. She is dealing with her father's death and her grieving mother by bingeing and purging. On the surface, everything is fine until Isabelle's younger sister catches her in the bathroom making herself throw up. "Eating Disorder and Body Image Therapy Group" is the consequence. Isabelle is amazed when she discovers that the most popular girl in her grade is also at the first session. Through encounters in Group and at school, she begins to realize that all is not fine, even for seemingly perfect people. As the book ends, she is not completely cured but is beginning to learn how to deal with her grief in a more positive way by journaling and talking about her feelings. Friend combines believable characters and real-life situations into a fine novel that addresses common adolescent issues. Teenagers, even reluctant readers, will find the outcome satisfying.—*Denise Moore, O'Gorman Junior High School, Sioux Falls, SD*

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From [Booklist](#)

Gr. 6-9. Thirteen-year-old Isabelle Lee's family is reeling from the recent death of her beloved father when little sister April (aka Ape Face) finds Isabelle purging her dinner in the bathroom. Isabelle is sent to group therapy for her eating disorder, where she is shocked to discover that her school's most "perfect" and popular girl, Ashley Barnum, is also bulimic. Ashley is delighted to find a likeminded classmate, and she takes the previously unpopular Isabelle under her wing, inviting her to the exclusive lunch table and to sleepovers where they consume and then expel mountains of food. Isabelle's grief and anger are movingly and honestly portrayed, and her eventual empathy for her mother is believable and touching. Through Isabelle's wry tone and clear eye for hypocrisy, Friend elevates what could have been just another problem novel to a truly worthwhile read of great interest to many girls. *Debbie Carton*

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## Review

"Friend combines believable characters and real-life situations into a fine novel that addresses common adolescent issues." -- *School Library Journal, December 2004*

"Friend's subtle use of language, her delicate touch brought me tears and out-loud laughter." -- *The Midwest Book Review, October 1, 2004*

"Friend's treatment of the subject is realistic, never cheesy even in its solution, funny, and just about perfect." -- *NewPages.com, September 2004*

"Girls who have enjoyed Judy Blume and similar authors will appreciate the humor and the realism in Friend's novel." -- *LMC Library Media Connection, March 2005*

"Isabelle's grief and anger are movingly and honestly portrayed. . . . a truly worthwhile read of great interest to many girls." -- *Booklist, January 15, 2005*

"Middle school girls who have enjoyed Judy Blume . . . will appreciate the humor and the realism in Friend's novel. Recommended." -- *Library Media Connection, March, 2005*

"This novel is a fairly quick-paced, absorbing story of one young woman's world." -- *VOYA, February 2005*

Reading 'Perfect' is mother-daughter time well spent. -- *Chicago Journal, June 9, 2005*

This is a very strong first novel and one that every girl should read...Mothers, read this book with your daughters. -- *Young Adult (&Kids!) Books Central*

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **David Tillery:**

Book is to be different for every grade. Book for children until finally adult are different content. We all know that that book is very important for us. The book Perfect: A Novel had been making you to know about other knowledge and of course you can take more information. It is extremely advantages for you. The e-book Perfect: A Novel is not only giving you far more new information but also to get your friend when you feel bored. You can spend your spend time to read your guide. Try to make relationship while using book Perfect: A Novel. You never experience lose out for everything should you read some books.

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#### **Edwin Ball:**

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#### **William Sanders:**

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