



Nobody's Perfect

By Marlee Matlin, Doug Cooney

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Megan has spent forever planning her positively purple birthday sleepover. She's even made glittery purple invitations for every girl in her class. Then a new girl, Alexis Powell, joins their class. Alexis seems perfect: She's smart, pretty, and rules the soccer games on the playground. But no matter how hard Megan tries to be a friend to Alexis, the new girl is aloof or rude. At first Megan thinks Alexis is shy. Then Megan starts to fear that Alexis is treating her differently because she's deaf. When the girls are forced to collaborate on a science fair project, Megan learns the truth -- and realizes that nobody's perfect.

Once again Marlee Matlin draws on experiences from her own childhood to tell Megan's story. In this funny, poignant book, readers will root for Megan, a spirited young girl who doesn't let anything stand in her way.

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Grade 4-6—This sometimes-tedious sequel to Matlin's *Deaf Child Crossing* (S & S, 2002) focuses on Megan, a deaf girl whose speechreading and signing skills allow her to thrive in the hearing world. Megan can't wait for her positively purple birthday party, but her perfect plans get derailed when a new girl, Alexis, joins her class and rebuffs Megan's invitation. Alexis seems to be smart, athletic, and pretty, but she brushes off all of Megan's attempts to be friendly. Not until the two girls are paired up for a science project does Megan find out the reason behind Alexis's behavior. She's ashamed of her autistic brother and is afraid that her new classmates will find out about him. When Megan teaches him some basic sign language, it opens up communication with both him and Alexis. As in the first book, every character except Megan is sketchy at best, and the plot hangs on the flawed, funny forcefulness of the protagonist's giant personality. Information about Megan's school days, though often clunkily inserted into the story, provides interest. Readers unfamiliar with deafness will be fascinated by the descriptions of how she studies for a spelling bee and her interactions with her American Sign Language interpreter in the classroom (though actual interpreters will be appalled at the woman's use of bright red nail polish, an extreme no-no). Illustrations showing the manual alphabet are appended.—Kathleen Kelly MacMillan, Carroll County Public Library, MD

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From Booklist

Gr. 4-6. In this sequel to *Deaf Child Crossing* (2002), fourth-grader Megan Merrill is caught off guard when the new girl at school rebuffs her gestures of friendship. Alexis Powell is pretty, smart, and a great soccer player, and she seems intent on ignoring Megan. Is Alexis shy, or is it because Megan is deaf? Megan gains some insight when the girls are assigned as partners for the science fair. Alexis' behavior around people who are "different" seems to be related to having an autistic brother. This surprises Megan, whose family and friends accept her deafness as part of their everyday lives. As Megan's dad reassures her, "Perfect isn't such a problem in the Merrill family." Some readers might roll their eyes at the lengths to which this story chronicles Megan's dramas; however, for the target audience, this book perfectly captures the intensity of a young girl's life, when even glitter and feathers on party invitations can generate high excitement. Nancy Kim

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About the Author

Marlee Matlin, deaf since she was eighteen months old, won the Academy Award and the Golden Globe for Best Actress for her role in *Children of a Lesser God*. She was nominated for Emmy Awards for her performances in *Seinfeld*, *Picket Fences*, *The Practice*, and *Law & Order: SVU*. Her film credits include *It's My Party* and *What the Bleep Do We Know!*? She is the author of *Deaf Child Crossing*. She has made numerous television appearances and currently appears on *The L Word*. Marlee Matlin lives in Los Angeles with her husband and four children. Visit her at www.marleeonline.com.

Doug Cooney is the author of the middle-grade novels *The Beloved Dearly* and *I Know Who Likes You*. His musical adaptation of George Saunders's *The Very Persistent Gappers of Frip* recently premiered at the Kirk Douglas Theatre in Los Angeles,

produced by the Mark Taper Forum P.L.A.Y. Cooney also teaches songwriting and collaboration for Voices Within, an educational outreach program of the Los Angeles Master Chorale. He divides his time between Los Angeles and South Florida. You can visit him at www.dougcooney.com.

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