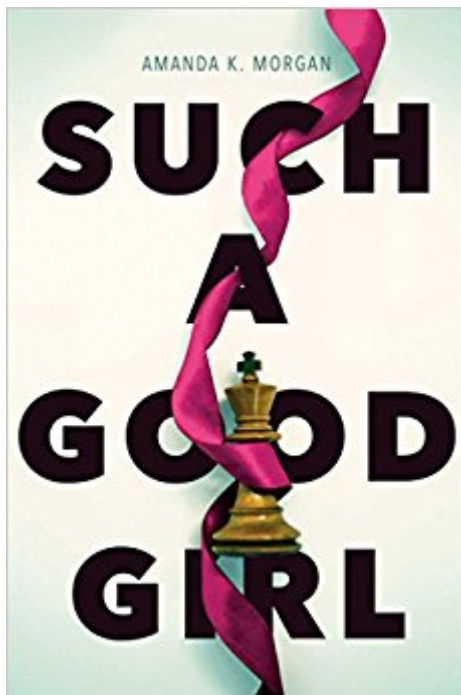


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Such A Good Girl



Synopsis

Pretty Little Liars meets Luckiest Girl Alive in this riveting novel about a practically perfect girl who is willing to do anything to make sure it stays that way. Absolutely anything. Things to know about Riley Stone: Riley Stone is just about perfect. (Ask anyone.) She has a crush on her French teacher, Alex Belrose. (And she suspects he likes her, too.) Riley has her entire life planned out. (The plan is nonnegotiable.) She's never had a secret she couldn't keep. (Not ever.) Riley is sure that her life is on the right track. (And nothing will change that.) She's nothing like a regular teenager. (But she doesn't have any problem admitting that.) Riley doesn't usually play games. (But when she does, she always wins.) She thinks a game is about to start. But Riley always has a plan. And she always wins.

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Customer Reviews

Amanda K. Morgan lives in Nashville, Tennessee. She is the author of *After Hours* under the name Claire Kennedy as well as *Secrets, Lies, and Scandals* and *Such a Good Girl*.

Such a Good Girl > > “What was it like being the homecoming queen as a freshman?” Sydnee Grace Hill, a first-semester reporter for the high school newspaper, smiles across from me at a cramped table at Hartsville High’s answer for a school cafeteria. She’s writing a student profile on me for the next issue. Each month, a senior is chosen. They asked me back in August, but I was really busy with a fund-raiser for a local no-kill animal shelter, so they scooted me back a few issues. “Oh.” I smile at the reporter, a

little impressed. She hadn't done her homework. Well, she hadn't tried, at least. "I wasn't exactly the homecoming queen, Syd." Sydnee, a freshman herself, blushes at the nickname. "Yeah, but you got the most votes, didn't you?" "Sure, but votes didn't matter. Freshmen didn't qualify. I think Madison Corrigan ended up getting it that year." I say, like I don't remember the exact moment they told me that I wouldn't be crowned homecoming queen and announced Maddie instead, a cold-hearted senior with white-blond hair who was known for publicly embarrassing freshmen in front of her senior posse. She made them hold her books outside the restroom and do her laundry (including panties and sweaty gym clothes) and even forced them to do her homework, like that was supposed to somehow increase their social standing. It was definitely a travesty. "You won this year, though," Sydnee points out. "And you've made homecoming court every single year." I nod, smiling a little. It's humbling, knowing everyone likes you that much, and that you haven't intimidated your way into it. And scary. "It's an honor," I tell her, and I mean it. I really do. She writes down my words verbatim. Her big red curls fall in her face and a couple of strands stick to her bubblegum-pink lip gloss. "Can I fact-check a couple of things for the profile?" she asks. "Just to make sure I get everything right? I mean, if you have time?" Her voice wobbles. I nod. "Sure." "You've been accepted to Yale, Stanford, and Harvard, correct?" "Almost. Not Harvard. Brown, actually." I watch as she ticks off the names of the correct colleges and scratches out Harvard. She clears her throat. "Right. And you've been captain of the cheerleading squad for three years?" "Two years now. Ever since Ilana Giavanni tore her ACL." Sydnee nods and scribbles another note. I want to ask her to use her phone to record so the interview will move more quickly, but she seems so nervous I don't want to make it worse. This is probably her first ever interview for the Harts High Beat (and yes, that is the worst name for a newspaper ever) and I don't want her to think she's doing a bad job. She's actually doing pretty well. I once was interviewed by this boy who couldn't even write because his hands were shaking so hard. Poor thing. "And you've had a 4.0 since forever?" I laugh. "I think I got a lackluster grade in handwriting once. But yeah, my grades have been pretty good since just say high school, okay?" Sydnee's brow furrows. "Okay. Now, the fun stuff. Eye color, blue. height. five seven. hair color. blond?" I fluff my hair. "Um, my hairstylist makes it look

natural, doesn't he? I laugh. "I'm kind of a dirty blond. Or a lackluster brunette." She covers her mouth, like I told her some kind of dirty secret.

"Am I allowed to publish that? That you're not a real blonde?" "You can publish where I get it done, for all I care. Maybe he'll give me a discount for the free ad space." I laugh again, and Sydnee giggles, high-pitched and eager. "Is Hartsville your hometown?" she asks. "Born and raised." "Okay. Now I need an embarrassing story." "Hmm." I tap my lips. "I once got trapped in an elevator." Sydnee's eyes widen. "What? How is that embarrassing? That sounds horrifying!" "Well, it was. Except that I had just downed, like, an entire grande caramel brulée latte before getting on the elevator, and I was in there, alone, for almost four hours." Sydnee's eyes go super wide and round. "So what happened? Did you pee your pants?" "Um, remember the empty Starbucks cup?" "You didn't." I nod, and Sydnee covers her mouth. "By the time I got rescued, I had a full coffee cup with me. I just pretended it was, like, leftover latte, but you could totally smell it. It was pretty gross. The guy who rescued me actually made a face." Sydnee chokes and then clears her throat. "Are you—are you sure you actually want this to be published in the paper, Riley?" I laugh. "I don't care. It's funny, right?" She nods. "Um, yeah. It's just crazy." "You can't take everything so seriously, Sydnee." Sydnee lifts a shoulder to her ear. I stand up from the table. "I have to meet my family for dinner, but if you have any more questions, you can text me, okay?" She blinks at me. "On your phone? I mean—you—are you sure?" I smile. "Yeah, sure. Just let me know, okay?" Sydnee unlocks her phone and hands it to me, and I enter my number as RILEY STONE !! . I try to hand it back to her, but she's just staring at me, all trembly and owl-eyed, like I'm sort of celebrity, so I swoop in and give her a hug and a pat on the shoulder and then I just leave her phone on her notepad. "Don't hesitate to text or whatever, okay, Syd?" I put my sunglasses on, sweep my (dyed) blond hair over my shoulder, and leave the freshman alone at the school café. "I can't wait to see it in the paper. You'll let me know when it runs, won't you?"

"Next . . . next week. See you later, okay, Riley Stone?" "See you, Sydnee." I smile big at her, trying to communicate that we're cool, and she's cool, and maybe she doesn't have to be so scared next time.

"This came for you," Mom says,

handing me a neat white envelope with Princeton University emblazoned on the corner.

We're all standing around in the kitchen, like we always do, but Dad's the only one really cooking. Mom's just getting things out of the refrigerator for him, setting them close by in case he needs them, like she's actually part of the process or something. She's pretty awful at it •cooking, baking, you name it. She can barely slap together a peanut butter sandwich without causing some serious damage. Dad has the talent, and right now he's stirring his signature red sauce while it simmers on the stove top, filling the kitchen with a warm, rich, garlicky scent that would put most Italian restaurants to shame. "Do you want to try it?" my dad asks absently, not really expecting anyone to take him up on it. He knows it's good already. It's always good. "Um, Mom, did you see what's on this envelope?" I wave it at her. Princeton. I didn't get accepted early decision there, but I don't really see any reason why I wouldn't have been. I know what's inside but I want her to just look at me, just for a second.

"Mom. I ease my finger under the envelope. "Just a minute, honey." She's turned away and already talking to Ethan, my brother, and smiling down on him with her hands on her svelte hips. He's gotten into the garlic bread and has crumbs in the scraggly beard he's trying to grow. He brushes at them with the back of his hand, and they fall into his lap. "How is she?" my mom is asking in a low voice, like the whole family doesn't already know that his girlfriend is six months knocked up. With another man's child. So scandalous. I tear off a piece of the garlic bread for myself. "Yeah, how is she?" I ask, not because I'm being nasty or anything. . . but because I really want to know. His girlfriend's name is Esther and she's Mother Teresa, except six months pregnant, because she fell in love with the wrong guy, which was Not Ethan, before she fell in love with the right guy, which is Hopefully Ethan. "She's good," Ethan says. "I'm going with her to her next doctor's appointment." Mom glows at him. "That's sweet of you, honey." I feel a little twinge beneath my breastbone. Here I am, getting greasy garlic-bread hands all over my letter from Princeton, and Mom doesn't really care. But get my brother to go to his pregnant girlfriend's doctor's appointment, and she's practically a living, breathing parental seal of approval. I bite back my disappointment. Maybe all I need for some attention is something growing in utero. I sit down at the kitchen table across from my brother while Dad takes the sauce off the stove and pours it into a white serving bowl. I stuff the garlic bread in my mouth all at once •Sydnee and everyone at school would so disapprove •and

open my Princeton letter. "Dear Riley E. Stone, I say through the mouthful of bread. I take a big drink of water and swallow it down. "We are pleased to inform you that you have been accepted into Princeton University's 2022 freshman class. Dad turns toward me and favors me with a smile. "That's great, sweetie. He turns back to his spaghetti, takes it off the burner, and begins to drain the noodles. The hot water hisses as it hits the stainless steel of the sink. Mom pats me on the shoulder sort of halfheartedly and Ethan fist-bumps me. "Is Esther coming over for dinner, Ethan darling? Mom asks my brother. "She can invite her family, Dad says from the stove. "I've made plenty. Can you ask them to pick up wine, though, if her parents do come? I think a nice red could go well with this, but I haven't bought any in ages. "Probably not. Her dad's on a business trip, Ethan says. "Dunno about her mom and sisters. He gives me a little smile. I think he feels bad. He's always stealing my thunder a little bit, without even meaning to. He's just that sort of person. Magnetic. Even when he's doing something utterly without merit. He's the type of man who could lead an entire army into a meaningless battle and they'd fight with fervor. In fact, in high school, he got suspended for two weeks when his Spanish teacher realized he was cutting class to host a twenty-man Call of Duty tournament (pay to play with a cash prize) in the school auditorium, and even after ten of the twenty players joined him (in less-serious punishments, obviously, as Ethan was found to be the ringleader) he still made out with, like, a thousand dollars. And then he just moved the tournaments to our basement when our parents weren't home. My father sets the noodles in the middle of the table and follows it with the bowl of rich sauce, steaming from the stove. "I hear Purdue is really great, he tells me. "You're very lucky to be accepted. I look down at the Princeton letter. I've left buttery yellow smudges all over it. "Purdue is really great, I repeat. No one bothers to correct my father, but I'm not entirely sure they know he was wrong to start with. They start passing around the noodles. Mom wants Parmesan cheese, so I run to the refrigerator and grate a little into a tiny red bowl. "Food's perfect, Dad, I tell him.

GRADE: A-4.5 STARS Riley Stone is perfect. Just ask her. Shoo-in for valedictorian, cheerleader captain, volunteer. She's even kind to her classmates. Not wanting to lose focus, she's never been on a date, by choice, although she has a crush on her Alex Belrose, her French teacher. When her older brother suggests Riley let loose, she embarks on a dangerous game of cat and mouse. Riley plays to win. And when she doesn't win, bad things happen. Riley is SUCH A GOOD GIRL. Or is

she? My opinion about her shifted throughout the book. As narrator, she initially seemed like the annoying perfect girl in high school bordering between confident and cocky. She had a sense she of entitlement or maybe she just worked hard and wanted what she earned. My thoughts changed. Amanda K Morgan built the character and plot with expert precision. Every few chapters was a page Facts on Riley Stone, interesting omniscient tidbits about Riley she hadn't mentioned and subtle clues. Saying anything more would be spoilerish. I had an inkling of the twist and enjoyed the execution. I will have to reread to see all the clues I missed!

Riley is perfect. She's got awesome grades, stellar resume, great friends. She's one of the It Girls at school and could have any boy she wants. But she likes the attractive French teacher, not one of the silly teens at her high school. Too bad he's off limits. She is, after all, a good girl. Wow. There's not much I can say about this book without giving everything away. I'm still blown away by the ending. It throws everything off to where I'm wondering what actually happened. Riley is one seriously unreliable narrator. And here I thought she was just seriously uppity and proud. Should have seen that coming. Then again, some of the foreshadowing that would make the ending make more sense was missing. I put the story together with clues that were never fully fleshed out. The how and when don't completely add up. But then, the narrator is unreliable. The whole book was told from her perspective, which means what we read is diluted by her perception of how things occurred. Is this her explanation of events? Or what she really believes happened? Or what? On the one hand, Such a Good Girl is beautifully crafted to keep readers intrigued and guessing. It reminds me of Edgar Allen Poe's works and left me seriously creeped out. So many unanswered questions that lead me to create conjectures, like a great piece of literature should. On the other hand, there are way too many holes. I still don't know what actually happened. The book has potential, but there needs to be a little something more in order to make me satisfied with it. On a completely different note, I was a bit uncomfortable with the romantic relationship between the married teacher and the underage student. I don't like reading books in which the characters go against the regular ethical codes. I couldn't cheer on the romance at the beginning, and certainly not at the end. The intrigue and mystery made up for it, but it still isn't going to make it to my favorites list. I did enjoy Such a Good Girl. It kept me reading to the end and surprised me. I recommend it to fans of Pretty Little Liars. I received a complimentary copy of this book from Net

Galley. I received no compensation. And all my thoughts are entirely my own.

I've never watched *Pretty Little Liars* so I really can't compare the book to the television show. This book is about Riley...a girl with what we think is a perfect life. She's the perfect student, perfect daughter, perfect friend...or maybe not. I did have ideas throughout the book that maybe she wasn't as perfect as portrayed. I did like the fact sheets throughout the book of glimpses of who Riley is. This book kept me intrigued. Once I started I did not want to put it down. I wished I could just continue reading at my desk at work! The ending totally shocked me. It was unexpected and I wonder if I may have missed some clues along the way. This is a book that I would definitely read again! This is a young adult book and I'm not a young adult but I loved it! Looking for a great beach read check out Amanda Morgan's book *Such a Good Girl*!! You won't be disappointed!

This book is fantastically written. The characters are well rounded and the story keeps you tied up until the end. I read it in two days because I was sucked in, then I loaned it to my 16 year old daughter and she finished it in a day. Highly recommend this book!!!

This book was an extraordinary book. Every page held a new surprise. Perhaps too many surprises for me. It did find indeed keep me on the edge of my seat the whole time. If your somebody who is interested in surprise, twists and turns, eagerness, slight mystery, etc this is the book for you,

Glad to read a book so well written, you don't want to put it down. I also like when I don't figure out the ending!

I am not sure how to feel about this book. To be clear, I am 100% on board with unreliable narrators and the synopsis gave off that vibe. Riley was an interesting MC. She's smart and driven and I liked that she was more focused on school and getting into college. There were several times Riley wondered why it was important and expected for her to have a boyfriend and that really stood out to me. Plot wise, I sort of don't have words. It was pretty clear from the start that something was off. There was a weird, creepy feeling and I kept trying to guess what was going to happen. There are a few revelations and some things I definitely didn't see coming, but I had my WTF face on through pretty much the entire book. For several reasons. Overall, it was a quick read with some interesting threads. I would have liked just a little bit more explanation at the ending, but it all worked. **Huge thanks to Simon Pulse for providing the arc free of charge**

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