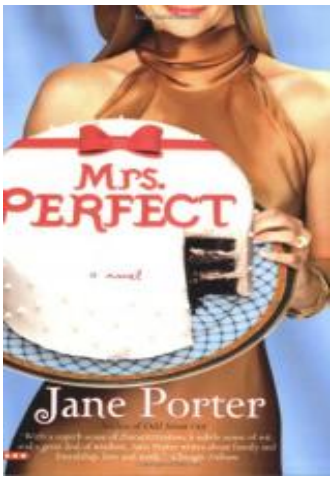
Mrs. Perfect

by Jane Porter



About the Book

For Taylor Young, life is very good. She has a handsome husband who loves her, three gorgeous children, a personally designed and decorated dream house. Suburbanite trendsetter and super mom, she reigns supreme over her perfect world. And as long as no one notices the fragile woman beneath her coiffed and polished image, things will stay that way.

Then a devastating secret bursts Taylor?s fairy-tale bubble, suddenly making her a cul-de-sac pariah and stripping her of the role that defined her. Struggling to maintain her alpha image, Taylor finds help from the unlikeliest of people, her nonconformist nemesis, Marta Zinsser. But to become the woman her family truly needs, Taylor must first believe in the person she is hardest on --- herself.

Discussion Guide

1. What were your feelings about Taylor Young? Did you like her and feel a connection with her or were you annoyed with her perceived shallowness? What were some of her traits that you either liked or disliked? If you have already read **Odd Mom Out**, Jane Porter?s previous novel, did your feelings for Taylor change?

2. What did you think of the attitude towards Lucy by the women at the country club pool? Do you think women are generally catty towards other women who are going through a tough time? Does wealth and social status have a lot to do with our outlook and attitude? Compare Nathan?s attitude towards Lucy as opposed to Taylor?s.

3. Taylor puts a lot of emphasis on what her house means to her. How do you relate to her feelings about it?

4. Have you ever been in a situation like Taylor?s where you had to let go of so much that you held dear? How did you deal with it? Or if not, how do you think you would deal with it if you were in her position? What about learning new skills late in life in order to survive and support your family? How do you think you?d fare if you had no choice but to

take a job you had no training for?

5. Discuss the relationship between Taylor and Marta. What are the major differences between their characters? Are there any similarities? Can you relate to their feelings about each other? Are there any women in your community that really grate on your nerves? Why? Do you think if you knew them better, you might actually like them?

6. What was your impression of the relationship between Taylor and Nathan as the story begins? Did your impression of each character change through the novel?

7. What was your impression of Nathan?s character? What sort of husband and father is he? What are some of his strengths that endear him as a man and what are some of his failings? Did Taylor deserve a husband like Nathan? Did he deserve a wife like Taylor?

8. Nathan sugarcoated the true nature of their finances for a while until he was forced to admit the truth to Taylor. Her reaction was a mixture of emotions. How realistic were their reactions to the situation? Should one person be solely responsible for the family finances? Was Nathan the right one to handle the finances?

9. Taylor?s friends know the truth about Nathan?s job situation before she does. How do you think you?d feel if you were in Taylor?s shoes in such a situation? What did you think about Taylor?s inability to accept the facts about their situation?

10. In Chapter 23, Taylor says, *?People with money are respected. People with money are listened to.?* Do you agree with this? How much impact does social standing have on women and mothers in today?s world? Are we, as women, guilty of letting social standing color our judgment of other women even on a subconscious level?

11. Do you volunteer at your children?s school? If so, how much does your volunteer work help in defining your own personality? How many of your own personal friends are women you?ve met and befriended through volunteering at school? If not, why do you choose not to volunteer? What are your feelings about those that do?

12. Do you belong to a book club or want to belong to one? What would you say are the main ingredients of helping to make a book club successful? Would you enjoy Taylor?s book club? Why do you think it?s so competitive? Have you experienced competition like that in your world?

13. Discuss the concept behind the book?s title --- **Mrs. Perfect**. What is your definition of being Mrs. Perfect? Do you know anyone like Taylor in real life? How often do you feel pressured about being perfect in your own world? What aspects of Taylor?s personality can you identify with in this respect?

14. Can perfectionism and happiness find a reasonable balance in life? Can a woman lead an honest life if she is always giving the illusion of being the perfect mother and perfect wife with a perfect family and home?

15. At one point in the story, Marta says, *??you can?t hinge your happiness on other people?s. It?s impossible to always make others happy. Some people just don?t want to be happy. Others are looking for someone to blame.?* Do you agree? Disagree? What?s your take on happiness?

16. What are some of the most important lessons Taylor learns along the way about herself and her attitude towards life and her marriage?

17. Discuss Taylor?s fashion sense and her addiction to retail therapy. Do you love to shop? Have you ever relied on retail therapy to get you through some emotionally tough situations in life? Should people seek help for this as a legitimate addiction?

18. What were some of the key factors that helped Nathan and Taylor pull their relationship back together? Did you have doubts they?d pull through in the end? Were you satisfied with the conclusion of the story?

19. What did you think of Taylor?s relationship with her mother? Do you like her mother? In what ways has Taylor?s childhood help shape her into the woman she is? Did you find that as you knew more about her past, you were able to be more understanding of her personality and the expectations she put on herself, her family, and anyone else in her life?

20. Discuss the role Marta plays in helping Taylor start getting her life back in control. What?s your impression of Marta?s character?

21. Taylor was really excited about meeting up with her friends on the auction committee at Tully?s but that goes horribly wrong when she gets a vote of no confidence and is booted off. How did you feel about Taylor at that point? What would your reaction have been if you?d been in her shoes? Was the committee right to remove her?

22. Who or what do you think had the biggest impact on Taylor by the end of the story? Is she a better and stronger person? Would you want her to be your friend?

23. If you read Odd Mom Out, did your impression of Marta change after reading Mrs. Perfect? Did you like her better in Odd Mom Out or in Mrs. Perfect?

24. What are the core themes of this novel for you?

Author Bio

Jane Porter, the *New York Times* and *USA Today* bestselling author of 40 romances and 11 women's fiction novels, holds an MA in Writing from the University of San Francisco and has been a finalist for the prestigious RITA award five times, with her novella, TAKE ME, COWBOY, winning the Novella Category July 2014. Jane's wildly popular novel, FLIRTING WITH FORTY, was made into a Lifetime movie starring Heather Locklear and was loosely inspired by her husband, Ty Gurney, an Oahu resident with his own surf school in Waikiki. An advocate for writers, Jane founded Tule Publishing in 2013 to give romance and women's fiction authors support and opportunities.

Critical Praise

"Mrs. Perfect is the kind of book that resonates, so that weeks later you're still thinking it over and noticing the ripple

effect it has around you. Taylor Young's quest for perfection will strike a deep chord in any woman who thinks she's not good enough, not smart enough, not thin enough, not a good enough mother, partner, or friend. Every one of us, then, should read this book."

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