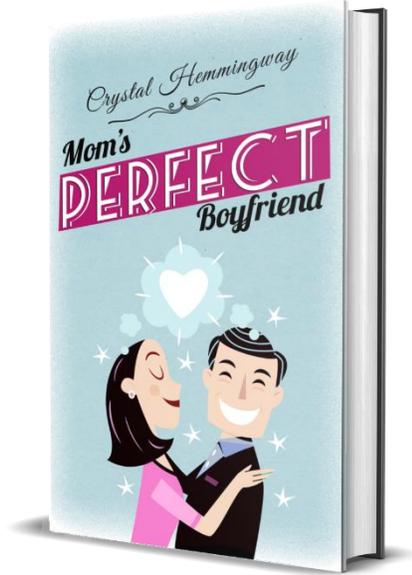


## *Mom's Perfect Boyfriend* Discussion Questions

1. This book was written entirely in an epistolary format (text messages, emails, journal entries, etc.). Why do you think the author chose to structure it this way? How did this structure affect your reading experience?
2. How similar are Crystal and Margot? In what ways do their personalities differ? Which character do you identify with?
3. David breaks up with Crystal early in the book. Who do you think is responsible: Crystal, David, or both of them?
4. How does Crystal's relationship with Lisa compare to her relationship with Margot?
5. Adam is designed to be the "perfect man" for Margot. What makes him perfect? How is he also less than perfect?
6. Did you really believe Adam was an android? What made you feel that way?
7. After buying pants with Margot, Adam says, "It is nearly impossible for her to be 100% happy with any given choice. I try to aim for 80%, which we seem to be able to achieve most days." In what ways does Margot's perfectionism lead to her unhappiness?
8. Both Crystal and Lisa lie to Margot throughout the book. Are these lies helpful or hurtful?
9. In what ways does Crystal's novel, *Return from the Tower*, reflect her relationship with Margot? Do you think she was right to abandon the novel?
10. When Adam finds out the truth about his origins, Crystal writes, "Mom had every reason to be furious and hurt and betrayed, but instead she made herself a rock for Adam, whose entire world had just been shattered." How does this moment change her perception of Margot?
11. By the end of the story, both Crystal and David have grown and changed significantly. How do these changes affect their relationship?
12. How did the book make you feel? Were there any moments that stood out to you as particularly unique or memorable?
13. Were you satisfied by the book's ending? Do you think Crystal and Lisa will continue lying to Margot or do you think their relationship will change?
14. What changes would you make to adapt this book into a film?
15. Would you read another book by this author? Did this story remind you of other books or authors?



Questions? Comments? Suggestions? Email [press@galbadiapress.com](mailto:press@galbadiapress.com) and we'd be happy to help!  
*Mom's Perfect Boyfriend*, by Crystal Hemmingway. Published 2019 by Galbadia Press.  
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## Author Q&A with Crystal Hemmingway

### **Q: Is this a true story?**

CH: It is inspired by some true events, and there are definitely elements of truth to it. However, at its heart, it's a work of fiction.

### **Q: How did you come up with the idea for the book?**

CH: I was working on another book at the time, and got stuck at about the 100,000-word mark. November was approaching, and I wanted to write something fun to reset my creative mind. I gave myself about a week to come up with something, so I consulted my running list of writing ideas. There was one on there from a manga I read, about a girl who gets a mail-order boyfriend, but I wanted to take it one step further. Instead of a young woman dating a robot boyfriend, I thought it would be funny if she gets it for her lonely single mother, without actually telling her it's a robot. And that's where it started.

### **Q: Why did you choose to write in an epistolary format (in texts, emails, and journal entries)?**

CH: When I worked at a desk job, I'd often look around and see people having dozens of conversations – with coworkers, family, significant others – in this entirely silent world online. I love to think about what stories are happening online, completely hidden beneath the surface. *Mom's Perfect Boyfriend* seemed like the perfect idea to explore this, because it examines how we, especially as women, change ourselves when we're around different people, and it's very evident in the digital trail we leave behind. Essentially, I wanted to write this almost like a historian, piecing together the narrative of Crystal's life from her digital files, trying to get an unbiased perspective.

### **Q: How long did it take to write?**

CH: The first draft took only six weeks, which is quite fast for me. Once I put together the idea of the single mother with the robot boyfriend, the idea came to me almost fully-formed. We made some revisions, but if you combined the actual writing time, it wasn't more than a few months total.

### **Q: What was your writing process like?**

CH: I wrote a rough outline in bullet points, breaking down the chapters. I wanted to make sure I foreshadowed big events like the HHA fundraiser, and had enough variety so there wasn't too much of any one character or format in a row. I completed the outline very quickly (in about a week), and then I jumped right in to the first draft. I wrote it in about six weeks, writing almost every day. It was pretty straightforward to write, as it wasn't as research-intensive as something like a historical fiction or thriller. However, I did watch a vlog from a guy who walked the PCT, as I have little to no experience camping and hiking long distances.

### **Q: Were there any moments that changed dramatically during the revision process?**

CH: Probably the biggest change came during the part where Adam finds out he's a robot. In the first draft, he saves Crystal from getting hit by a car, and realizes he has super strength. After my partner read it, he suggested the current version, which I like a lot better. Having a quieter, more heartfelt moment gives Margot a chance to shine, and I think gives a much better emotional arc to the book that better suits

the overall tone. We've gotten a lot of positive feedback about that moment in particular, so I'm really glad we changed it.

**Q: There is very little description involving any character's appearance. Was this a deliberate choice?**

CH: It wasn't intentional. When I realized it, however, I also didn't want to change it. I wanted to leave it up to the reader's imagination.

**Q: What was your journey to publication?**

CH: I'd written a few novels before this one, all in prose, but this was the first one that my partner encouraged me to publish. I knew it was quirky, being on the short side (around 65,000 words) and in epistolary format, so I didn't have high expectations. I sent out 100 queries, and it took a full year for every single one to reject me. It was demoralizing, but eventually I realized that I didn't need an agent to publish, and decided to go with an indie press instead. So far, it's been a much faster process, and I have a lot more creative control, which I really enjoy.

**Q: Any advice for aspiring writers?**

CH: My partner likes to say, "Don't let the magic out." Basically, when you're in the early stages of a book, and you're really excited about an idea, it's often best to keep it to yourself. The more you talk about it with others, the more you're asked to explain it and rationalize it, the more likely you are to lose your excitement. I used this method when I was writing this story, and sometimes I wanted to share it so badly that I felt as if I would burst. But that desire to share was a great motivator to keep writing, and I think it was part of the reason why I got this book done so quickly.

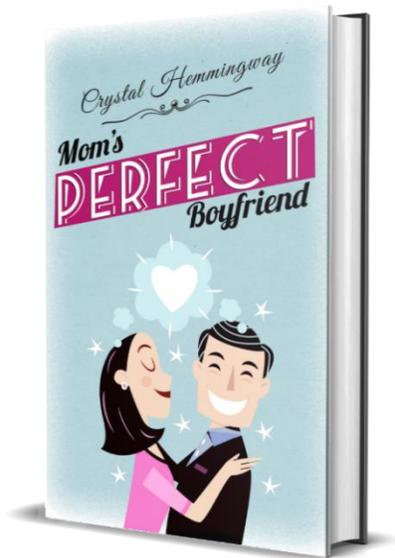
*Thanks for reading! Do you have other questions for Crystal? Would you like to set up a phone interview with your book club? Email us at [press@galbadiapress.com](mailto:press@galbadiapress.com).*

# Mom's **PERFECT** Boyfriend

"Mom's Perfect Boyfriend is a modern must-read." — San Francisco Book Review

"Fans of **Bridget Jones** and **Sophie Kinsella** will love this fresh, original story...I couldn't put it down." — Reader's Favorite

"A funny, poignant debut." — IndieReader



**Perfect for fans of Sophie Kinsella and Maria Semple, a smart romantic comedy about mothers and daughters, told in an addicting, fast-paced style.**

Crystal has trouble saying no to her lonely, single mother. For 25 years, it wasn't a problem. But when one small mistake leaves Crystal jilted, homeless, and unemployed, she has to move back in with the person who caused it all: her mother.

Soon Crystal is sucked into her mother's vortex, partying with boomers and hawking homemade marshmallows. Desperate for some independence, she hatches a foolproof plan: get an experimental android to play her mom's "perfect" boyfriend. It's only a matter of time before her mom finds out, and Crystal will never live down the hilarious and disastrous consequences.

A story told through emails, texts, and journal entries, *Mom's Perfect Boyfriend* is a humorous yet deeply honest portrayal of

the complicated friendship between mothers and daughters. Sometimes the people we want to rely upon the least are those who can help us the most.

## **About the Author**

Crystal Hemmingway is a corporate washout and novelist. She lives in Los Angeles with her favorite person and two cats. In her spare time, Crystal enjoys binge-watching TV shows, eating sugary cereals, and pretending to write at coffee shops.

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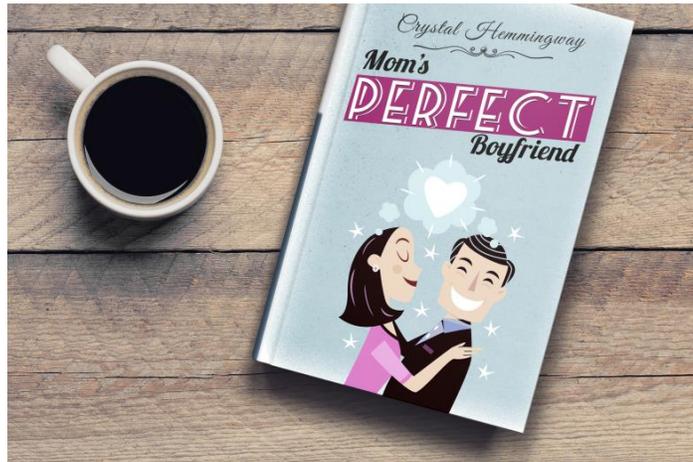
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- **Soap-making party** – Try your hand at making homemade soap like Grace and Alice. Use goats' milk or coconut milk as your base, pour them into molds, and wrap with raffia or ribbons.
- **HHHA-themed wine tasting** – Have a wine tasting or just enjoy some wine with your book discussion! Place some stuffed animals around for a San Diego zoo theme or use swanky decorations to make Grace proud.
- **Write your own PCT love letter/postcard** – Bring or print your own set of postcards using wildlife such as the cows and pikas David sees on the PCT. Have members write their own letters to loved ones – as themselves or “from the trail.” Send them out months later for a fun reminder of your party.



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