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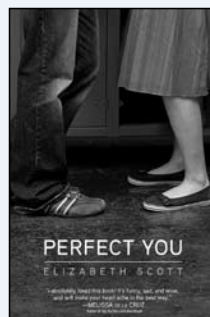
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To learn more, please visit author's website at
elizabethwrites.com

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Elizabeth

SCOTT



**"Writing was—and is—
a joyous surprise."**

—Elizabeth Scott

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riting came to me by accident.

Growing up, I viewed “creative writing” assignments with dread, the same way I viewed anything that was supposed to encourage my artistic side. For you see, I didn’t have one. I couldn’t stay within the lines when I colored. When I cut snowflakes, they inevitably had holes where they shouldn’t, and sometimes fell apart in my hands. And my handwriting—well, that in and of itself gave my teachers fits. So the idea that I was not only supposed to write, but to somehow invent something that would “express my thoughts” sent me into a state of withdrawal, of tossed-off words scribbled out and turned in.

I didn’t understand the most important thing about writing then.

I didn’t understand it for a long time.

Though I ran from anything and everything having to do with writing, I didn’t run from books. From the moment I learned to read, I was never far from a book, and I loved them with an intensity that persists till this day. I love the smell of books, the weight of them, the dizzying anticipation of opening one and looking at the words that hold

out their hands, beckoning you into another world, into someone else’s life, or new ideas.

And then, when I was twenty-seven, I finally learned what writing is.

Writing isn’t about you. It’s about the story.

I had just started a new job and one day during a meeting, instead of taking notes, I began to write about a girl. To this day, I don’t know exactly why I did it, what led me to put those first few words on the page. I may never know.

“Writing isn’t about you. It’s about the story.”

But I do know this. That girl—she wasn’t me. She wasn’t anything like me, and as the meeting continued, I kept writing.

And before I knew it, I’d written my first story. It was terrible, of course, as most first stories usually are, but I had finally discovered writing, and I was hooked.

Writing let me imagine people, let me into their lives and gave me a way to share their stories. I discovered stories I’d always longed to read were inside me, waiting to come out. Writing made me think about things like family, friends, and love

in new ways. It made me think about how we create ourselves, and what happens when that construction unravels.

I kept writing and I learned more. I still have so much to understand, and that’s something else about writing. No matter what, you’re never done. There is always room to get better. There is always more to discover.

With words, I can talk in a way that I’ll never be able to. When I write, whatever I’m thinking

about, whatever I’m feeling—it all goes away. Like reading, writing pulls me into another world, one where there are people I don’t know waiting to tell me a story.

All I had to do was learn to listen.

Writing was—and is—a joyous surprise. It has made my life broader, stronger. It lifts me up and out of myself, and lets me see things I’ve never seen before. It has made me ask questions I can answer, as well as ones I can’t. It shows me things I don’t understand, and makes me see the truth of them.

It sets me free. ■