



# GEEK GIRL

PICTURE  
PERFECT

*For my dad.  
My rock. My hero. My Richard.*



**PICTURE  
PERFECT**

**HOLLY  
SMALE**



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**model** [mod-l] noun, adjective, verb

- 1 A standard or example for imitation or comparison
- 2 A representation, generally in miniature
- 3 An image to be reproduced
- 4 A person whose profession is posing for artists or photographers
- 5 To fashion something to be like something else.

**ORIGIN** from the Latin *modulus*: ‘absolute value’





**M**y name is Harriet Manners, and I am a girlfriend.

I know I'm a girlfriend because I can't stop beaming. Apparently the average girl smiles sixty-two times a day, so I must be statistically stealing somebody else's happiness. I'm grinning every thirty or forty seconds, *minimum*.

I know I'm a girlfriend because I'm giggling at my own jokes, singing songs I don't know the words to, hugging any animal within a hundred-metre radius and twirling round in circles with my hands stretched out every time I see a small patch of sunshine. Thanks to my brain drowning in the love chemicals *phenylethylamine*, *dopamine* and *oxytocin*, I've basically morphed into a cartoon princess.

Except one with an astronomically high phone bill and a tendency to look up 'symptoms of being in love' online when her boyfriend isn't looking.

Anyway, the final reason I know I'm a girlfriend is this, written on the inside back page of my new bright



purple diary:

## GIRLFRIEND

I did it, obviously. It would be a really weird thing to doodle on someone else's private stationery. There's a sketch of me and it's timed and dated to commemorate the precise moment – four weeks and two days ago – that Lion Boy and I became an official item.

That's right: Nick and I are finally a proper duo.

A couplet. A twosome never to be divided, like salt and pepper or cheese and tomato. We are the human versions of seahorses, who swim snout to snout and change colour to demonstrate how much they like each other, or Great Hornbills, who sing in duets together to show the world how utterly in tune they are.

And it's changed everything.

After the Most Romantic Summer Ever together (MRSE™), all that's left are rainbows and sunsets and good-morning texts and good-night phone calls and somebody to tell me when I've got chewing gum stuck to the back of my hair and I'm gummed to the bus seat behind me.

For the first time in my entire life, I wouldn't change



a single thing. There are 170 billion galaxies in the observable universe, and I wouldn't alter a jot of any of them. My life is exactly as I want it to be.

Everything is perfect.