

Perry Synopsis

A mother and daughter from Connecticut and a victim of sex trafficking from Haiti are drawn into a dangerous web of exploitation on the streets of San Francisco.

Perry Talbot is fifteen, troubled and adrift. We learn early on that her parents are recently divorced and that something tragic happened to her favorite aunt Maddie, who was a touchstone in her life. Her mother Julia has a burgeoning career as a chef and is overwhelmed with her new life as a single mother. She and Perry are estranged and despite her love for her daughter, she is unable to connect with her meaningfully.

In an effort to repair their relationship, Julia sets up a vacation in San Francisco. Her plans are quickly overturned, however, when her plane is delayed after a business stopover in Denver and Perry is left on her own in the city. Enjoying her new-found freedom, Perry begins exploring and soon meets Bea, a captivating street teen from Haiti who, unbeknownst to her (and the audience), is the victim of sex trafficking.

As they set out on a series of adventures which are rebellious and mildly illegal, Bea shocks and charms the sheltered Perry with her bold and inventive street smarts. For perhaps the first time in her life, Perry feels she has found someone who seems as rootless and restless as she and the two begin to develop strong feelings for each other. Their romance blossoms as they share a lyrical evening on a pier overlooking the bay where street musicians sing of love and loss and Perry shares her abiding feelings of disaffection and estrangement.

Together with Bea's friend Twig, a transgender refugee from Guatemala, they stay up until dawn, dodging the police, dancing and viewing the sunrise from the industrial shore of the bay. Here we learn the back stories of our two refugees. Twig had to leave Guatemala when his father learned of his secret life as a female singer. As a girl, Bea was sent to the capital for work but was instead kept in a brothel and trafficked to the Dominican Republic. Perry, heartbroken, decides in a fateful act of love and naïve courage to stay with Bea and help her fight the ever-tightening web of danger which threatens to engulf her. Bound by this threat, they become, in many ways, mirror images: thrown together by chance and unseen forces, their fates gradually merging as the protections of Perry's class, race and gendered privilege slowly fade away.

Julia travels her own journey as her daughter pulls her out of her ordered life and into a dark and volatile one. Initially focused, she mobilizes an effort to locate Perry, working with private detective Peter Wilson. Over time, her despair grows as she haunts the city's dangerous streets, searching ever more desperately, often seeing Perry in the faces of passing teen girls. She is eventually brought to the depths of her grief as her search takes her to the backroom of a massage parlor. Throughout, a strong bond of love and resentment tie mother and daughter together even as they are threatened with permanent separation.

Peter's search reveals a complicated network of sex-trafficking, but just as he is about to solve the puzzle, Perry and Bea are abducted with dire consequences. Eventually released, the girls are separated and Perry is reunited with Julia. Together, they return to Connecticut to a life forever altered by the events of the story.