

**B**EFORE she moved from Austin to Rhode Island, everybody knew Lacey as one half of an inseparable duo: Lacey-and-Grace, best friends since they were toddlers. But at school, being lumped together with overeager, worm-obsessed, crushes-on-everyone Grace meant Lacey never quite fit in—and that’s why at her new middle school, Lacey plans to reinvent herself.

At first, everything seems to go as planned. Lacey makes new friends right away, she finds a rabbi to help her prepare for her bat mitzvah, and she even gets cast as a lead in the eighth-grade musical. Which is when things start to get stressful, because it turns out the students at her new school have a long-standing, un-official tradition: No matter what the show is, in the final performance, the leads always kiss for real.

Lacey’s never kissed anyone before—she’s not even sure she’s ever had a crush. But while her new friends create elaborate schemes to help her decide which co-lead to choose, Lacey realizes she might want something totally different than what anyone expected. With the final performance approaching and big decisions looming, Lacey must determine if she’s brave enough to be who she really is in front of the person who matters most.

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READ BY GAIL SHALAN



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