



Perfect

Ellen Hopkins

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Everyone has something, someone, somewhere else that they'd rather be. For four high-school seniors, their goals of perfection are just as different as the paths they take to get there.

Cara's parents' unrealistic expectations have already sent her twin brother Conner spiraling toward suicide. For her, perfect means rejecting their ideals to take a chance on a new kind of love. Kendra covets the perfect face and body—no matter what surgeries and drugs she needs to get there. To score his perfect home run—on the field and off—Sean will sacrifice more than he can ever win back. And Andre realizes that to follow his heart and achieve his perfect performance, he'll be living a life his ancestors would never understand.

Everyone wants to be perfect, but when perfection loses its meaning, how far will you go? What would you give up to be perfect?

Perfect Details

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David says

At first, I wasn't liking this one as much as the first one, but then I realized that I relate to this one more than the first one. This writing is so beautiful, it's like nothing I've read before. Ellen Hopkins has that unique style that makes you want to keep reading. I read this in a day, just like the first book of this series. It was great to see how Cara was dealing with life while Conner was in Aspen Springs. All of these characters really discovered themselves and it was great. The ending of this though broke my heart. Loved this book though!

Thomas says

In *Perfect* Ellen Hopkins tells the story of four teens trying to find their flawless selves. Cara's brother has been committed to a psychiatric hospital after a failed suicide attempt, and she is struggling to deal with their parents' overbearing expectations as well as her sexual identity. Sean utilizes steroids in order to succeed, but does not realize that the risks and the consequences may make his efforts futile. Kendra covets the perfect body, yet cannot see beyond the idea that skinny is beautiful. Andre aspires to be a dancer, although his family disapproves. These four have to fight not only with the external forces raging against them, but also with their internal demons that may be the end of them.

Staying true to her trademark, Hopkins weaves a tale of teens with issues - in this case, anorexia, homosexuality, steroids, and dance - through her pulchritudinous poetry. Her writing was wonderful and seamless, as always, and Hopkins is one of the few young-adult authors who manages to obtain that perfect balance between not enough detail and too much detail - which, considering the subject matter, is quite an accomplishment.

Like most of her characters, the protagonists of *Perfect* are flawed but relatable. Cara's strength and resolve made her my favorite, but I saw a little bit of myself in every character - even, to a small extent, Sean. Hopkins included cameos from the characters of *Impulse* smoothly, and the intertwining of the two tales by the end of the book was genius.

I vacillated between 4.5 and five stars for this one, mainly because I felt that some of the characters' story lines could have been resolved more deftly. However, I then remembered Hopkins' message conveyed through the characters and their journeys: that perfection itself is not a real thing, because it is entirely subjective and everyone has different opinions on what is and what is not perfect. While a couple of the characters in this book were left with far from perfect endings, that's just how life is. Hopkins has done a praiseworthy deed by writing this book, and I hope many teens who are plagued with these problems will reach the conclusion that there is no need to be perfect - and that, in the end, being who you are is perfect enough.

*review cross-posted on my blog, the quiet voice.

Kells Next Read says

"Fighting Depression is hard when you have no real reason to fight it."

FlimsyGlass says

I felt that this book was the best companion Impulse could have possibly had, honestly, since Impulse wasn't one of my favourites. I loved the subtle intertwining of the storylines, and I enjoyed reading this book because of the style. This can definitely be read as a stand-alone, although the cameos from Impulse add so much more depth, not only to this book, but it also helps develop some of the Impulse characters a bit more.

As expected, all the characters were plunged into endless downward spirals (except maybe Andre and Cara) and we saw them blindly following the supposed path of perfection. And I can say for sure that I know plenty of people who similarly do anything to achieve the abstract idea of perfection. I like how the characters are real, how even they are jealous and envious and bitter. Because these are emotions we don't like to admit we feel, but once again Ellen is very open and absolutely does not hold back.

One thing I will say though, despite its strengths, this book- as well as many of Hopkins' other works- suffers in its predictability and does not exactly explore the most original concepts. Many of the characters here are similar to characters in Hopkins' other works, and not very creatively written. But I guess the tale here is one of the average teenager being led astray, and there are limited ways that you can tell a story that hasn't already been told, though Ellen Hopkins seems to be eager to try, so points for trying?

Alex Black says

I couldn't get past the blatant victim blaming and that happened to Jenna's character. I had high hopes for this book because I loved some of Ellen Hopkins's other works, but how Jenna's character was treated made me physically ill. I had to pause for several minutes after Andre visited her in the hospital because it was too much. I couldn't believe how everyone just shrugged it off as she got what was coming to her, especially considering how much of an activist Ellen Hopkins is. Not a book I would recommend to anyone.

Melissa See says

Oh my God. As of right now, there are no words to describe how much I loved this. And I doubt there ever will be. Thank you, Ellen Hopkins. Thank you.

Jay G says

Want to see more bookish things from me? Check out my Youtube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCfer...>

Cara's parents are controlling which led to her twin brother Conner trying to commit suicide. When she discovers something about herself, she doesn't know how she can be who her parents want her to be. Kendra wants to be a runway model, but how far will she go to achieve that goal? Sean wants to play baseball for Stanford and live a happy life with Cara and will stop at nothing to get what he wants. Andre has a dream, but is afraid his parents won't approve. Four teenagers. Four different perspectives on what perfection means to them.

I really enjoyed this book! I find Ellen Hopkins writing to be both beautiful and dark at the same time. I love the verse style of writing and find her books so easy to read, I devour them every time. I really liked how Hopkins tied the characters from Impulse into Perfect and how the end of the book wrapped up perfectly with the ending of Impulse. I liked Cara and how she eventually came to terms with who she is. I hate Sean and he can go away and never come back. Kendra just made me sad and I wanted to hug her. I hate not knowing what happened with her character, her story arc seemed unfinished to me. Andre was by far my favourite character and I felt so bad for the way Jenna used him.

Mikayla_ says

I read it. It was so beautiful. More beautiful than Impulse? Maybe. I don't know. What I do know is that I fell in love with characters here more than in Impulse.

Cara, especially since I identify with her so much... (I know what you're thinking, and I don't care if you think it.)

I loved Cara/Dani. I love any gay pairing to be fair. I'm not sure why. As a huge straight against hate supporter, I guess that comes naturally.

Cara, Cara, Cara. The only one worth talking about. Perfection. I adore her character so much. I pray for a sequel, but I doubt it will come.

Melissa ♥ Dog/Wolf Lover ♥ Martin says

www.melissa413readsalot.blogspot.com

I didn't like this book as much as I did the first one, Impulse, but it's still pretty good.

You have Cara who is Conner from the first books sister. Then there is Sean, Cara's boyfriend, Andre a new character, and Kendra who used to date Conner before he dumped her.

So the story focuses on these four. There are some other characters that are involved in their stories but it's all about them from each of their perspectives.

Cara has trouble with her parents the same as Connor. She's not sure she wants to be with Sean any more and she finds out many different things about herself in her journey. She also ends up getting bullied because of

it and stalked.

Sean is a sports fanatic that has to workout constantly and be the best or better than he can be, all of this leads him to things he should never do.

Andre is just a normal guy that wants to be a dancer, but can't tell this to his parents. They already think he is gay because he wants to go to art school for goodness sake. He keeps his secret from them because they want him to be some big star in other areas.

Kendra and her mom want her to be perfect. She's constantly working out, not eating much and having cosmetic surgery to try to be the best in these beauty pageants. She has a sister too that has problems with medications who dates Andre for a little bit of time.

All of these characters go through some heart wrenching things in the book, I would say some more than others. I can't say what because that would give out some spoilers.

The end of the book brings the first book to a close and it's all so very sad and tragic.

Muse says

[But as Tony began his eulogy holy crap I died. It was so beautiful and so perfect and oh my god. I wish Conner was still alive. Conner would've been amazing for who he really was. I wish someone would've known a

Madison Fitzgerald says

Whether its getting good grades in school, getting the girl or guy, or if its just meeting expectations, we all strive to be perfect. Ellen Hopkins best selling book "Perfect" tells about four strangers aim to be perfect sets them into a downward spiral.

Ellen Hopkins, a poet, freelance writer, and the award-winning author of twenty nonfiction titles and five NY Times Bestselling novels-in-verse, draws in her readers by her style of writing and presenting powerful themes of lost love, betrayal, fear of failure, temptation, pride and downfall.

"Perfect" tells the dramatic story of four seniors who have to face everything life has, even the kitchen sink. Cara Sykes is the daughter of the top two graduates at Princeton and the twin sister of Conner Sykes, who not only has a fetish for women twice his age but is suicidal. Now Cara must give in to her downfalls, heartbreak, and the journey to finding herself.

Kendra Matheson is the pretty girl who wants a little more and a little less. She wants more fame, more attention, and more Conner Sykes. She wants less stomach, less thighs, and less nose. Throughout the whole book it is evident that Kendra, in my opinion, is the one with the most insecurities.

Sean Terrence is the star baseball player at school and has muscles bigger than a gorilla on steroids. Which is ironic due to the fact Sean does take steroids, anything to be on top. Sean has to have a plan for everything,

and lately his plans have been revolving around his girlfriend, Cara Sykes. Sean must figure out if his life with Cara is worth losing her and his dreams.

Andre Markus is, how his lady friends may say, the bomb. He is the son of two credible plastic surgeons and his future is heading in that same directions. But not on his will, Andre wants to be a dancer. His future is all about rebelling against his parents and doing his own thing. Until he meets Jenna Matheson, Kendras busty sister. Andre has to make the decision of if having an alcoholic lustful girlfriend is better than his own happiness.

This book is an insight to all the aspects of life and how people cope with their aim at being perfect. We all have our little temptations that make us want to be perfect. But ultimately only you can decide what's perfect.

Sesana says

Well, this was a big improvement over Impulse for me. I do think that Hopkins's writing has steadily improved over the course of her writing, a little better with each book. The thread that tied all of these stories together is a little thinner than in some of her other books, but certainly closer than in Tilt. The one thing all four of her viewpoint characters have in common is that they're being pressured to be perfect, by their parents, by themselves, or both. We have two guys and two girls, Cara, Sean, Kendra, and Andre.

I wasn't surprised to find myself most riveted by Cara and Kendra. Cara is the one that I have the most hope for. Watching her break out of the shell her parents (especially her mother) have built for her was really nice to see, and I liked her romance with Dani. Kendra's story was sort of like watching a car crash in slow motion. And I think the worst of it was that the crash isn't over at the end of the book. Kendra hasn't entirely faced that she has an eating disorder, and neither has her family. And she hasn't yet realized that her new agent is taking advantage of her. I wish at least some of this had happened in the book, even if the dust hadn't entirely settled. I just hated putting the book down with Kendra still where she was. Cara isn't optimistic about her future, and neither am I, but I still would have liked to have a better idea.

Sean's narration could be tough to read, because we're watching him on a serious downward spiral. Andre, though... Well, I liked him, and I could understand him. But his story was less about him and more about his relationship with Jenna, Kendra's self-destructive sister. And I didn't at all enjoy watching Jenna implode. Still, I can't really complain about their voices, or the believability of their stories. I just didn't really care for following them.

This isn't the best thing that Hopkins has ever put out. But it is an improvement over Impulse, and it's a good sequel to that book. I get the feeling that there could be yet another book in this series, and I don't know how I feel about that. Maybe if Hopkins would stick to fewer viewpoints, it would be easier for her to finish out a story in one book.

Elizabeth says

I've read almost all of Ellen Hopkins' books besides Fallout, I think. I absolutely adore them. She is one of my favorite authors. I love how she writes, it's so artistic and beautiful. She really makes you connect to her

characters, and I love how she normally always has more than one main character to follow, and you can always at least relate to one.

I expected this book to be AMAZING, and I even bought it the day it came out. I've been waiting for it to come out, and I'm not gonna lie, I was really quite disappointed. I thought it would be so relatable because I'm very self conscious, and I thought that I would for sure relate to some of the characters, if not all of them. I did relate to some of them, but I never felt THAT connected to them. I feel like a couple of them are just randomly placed in there just so that she had more to write about and to make the book longer.

Just because this book wasn't one of my favorites of hers, I still love her, and she will always be one of my favorite authors (especially after *Identical* and *Tricks*). I just wasn't as impressed with this book as I thought I would be. And if anything, the end kind of confused me... I'm gonna have to ask my friend who has read it about the end, because it didn't feel like everything came together, like most of Ellen Hopkins' books do at the end. I give *Perfect* 2/5 stars, and maybe if I ever read it again, everything might come together better and I might enjoy it better.

Sammi says

I've read enough Ellen Hopkins books to have an idea of her average character. Addicted to something, self-destructive, beautiful, liable to fall in love over the course of the book. And at the beginning of *Perfect* I thought that was exactly what I got. It followed the structure perfectly; multiple intertwined lives meshing to prove the same point. It's the point that made on the very first page: perfect is an illusion.

I guess I was a bit disappointed.

There was alcoholism and pill-popping and steroids and anorexia. There was love and lust and unhealthy obsession. It wasn't until the end pulled it all together with a final note of tragedy that I fell in love with this book. Paired with *Impulse* it highlights the subtle difference between what one will suffer through, and what one will die for.

Spencer says

Without a doubt, *Perfect* is my new favorite book.

Perfect tells the story about four teens: **Cara**, whose parents demand that she be perfect in everything she does, and her parents' drive for perfection have already landed her brother in Aspen Springs, after he tried to commit suicide. **Kendra**, who desperately wants to model, and she wants the perfect model body, no matter how many pills and plastic surgeries she needs to get her there. **Sean**, who is obsessed with having muscles on top of muscles. He uses steroids to try to make him get as strong as he can be. Then we have **Andre**, who wants to be a dancer and follow his dreams, but his parents won't let him.

This book follows around the time of *Impulse* with different point of views but it ends in the same way. Also, I knew the ending, but I still sobbed at the ending. I never really cry in books, didn't cry in *The Fault in Our Stars* or *Allegiant*, but this book and all other Ellen Hopkins books, I sobbed. It was perfect.

This book was incredibly relatable, and it shows what people will do for perfection and the stress of being perfect that teenagers go through. It was one of the most amazing books that I've ever read, and I recommend that everyone read it.

Elise (TheBookishActress) says

1.5 stars. This book had some really good stuff going for it, which was ruined by some really horrible treatment of rape victims and lgbt people.

The writing style is good, as long as you like Ellen Hopkin's writing. I happen to find it easy to devour. Usually, her verse style gives good character insight, but I didn't totally feel that here. Now, the characters themselves were not as much a strength as I usually find they are.

~ Kendra's character spent 600 pages in the throes of anorexia, and **did not develop at all**. Sure, people do sometimes not conquer anorexia. But her ending was 1) too open, and 2) her character ended up being kind of a pointless inclusion in this book. What impact does she have on this story? Why is her non-arc there at all?

~ Cara's character is... hmm. I went in really expecting to love her, and I just... didn't. She's supposedly trying to live a perfect life, but I didn't feel that. I didn't connect to her on any level, despite the fact that her character's situation should have felt relatable. Her relationship with Dani is also pretty instalove and I never felt for them.

~ Andre's character was better. The connection between his character and the others is not well built. Three of them make sense: Cara is dating Sean, who used to be dating Kendra, who used to be dating Cara's brother. Andre's connection to the group is that he dates Kendra's sister for a little while. Andre is very disconnected from the other three characters, which was a bit frustrating. Overall though, I could tolerate this because his arc was compelling and he got a great ending.

~ **Sean's character is just a complete mess**, and that's the main reason this book is getting only two stars. After his girlfriend Cara says she wants to sleep with him, partially to convince herself she's not gay, she realizes that she does not want to and says no at the last second. He then rapes her. She, obviously, freaks out and breaks up with him. He then stalks her, going so far as to peek into a window to watch her have sex with her girlfriend and compare it to pornography. (Yes, she cheated on him, which I do not condone, but that does not even come close to justifying these actions). He then takes photos of them having sex and spreads them around the school, outing her and also putting her in an incredibly horrible position. And Sean did not develop at all. At the end of the book, he is still going to Stanford and has suffered no consequences for being such a shitstain on the face of humanity. He wasn't even outed about his damn steroid usage. And to be quite honest, his narrative has nothing to do with trying to be perfect. He doesn't belong in this book and frankly, he deserved to fall off a cliff.

This book also utilizes some minor problematic tropes. For example: **the rapist was the representation of mental illness**, which I really didn't expect from Hopkins. Jenna (Kendra's sister) dates Andre to make her racist father angry, and he doesn't mind. How does he not mind? How would anyone not mind that?

Lastly, this book had some **issues with biphobia** — the exact same issues that Impulse had, and now the You I've Never Known As Well. (More on these two books [here](#) and [here](#).) Cara does not once bring up the

option of being bi, and her girlfriend immediately calls her a "a full-out dyke" despite the fact she's still questioning, as well as implying being bi would make her lesser. Again, this is never called out. I am so confused as to how Ellen Hopkins wrote such good bi representation in *Tricks*, and then proceeded to perpetrate biphobia in so many other series.

I'm not planning on picking up any more of her books after this. I enjoyed two of her books, but given that I've now hated two more, I don't think continuing to read her books is a good decision.

Kelly says

Of the Hopkins books I've read, this one is her weakest. The idea of perfection actually gets lost in a smorgasbord of other issues, especially at the end when the catalyst for all of the characters waking up comes through a character who never got caught up in this very issue (I realize that statement is debatable but since we never see Conner on page, I won't buy it).

The other issue I have with this one is that verse novels are hard. Hopkins is, however, a master. There is no question she can spin verse novels better than almost anyone else doing them. However, when more than a couple of characters are brought into a story line, it's tough to give them their own voice within a verse novel, and *Perfect* suffers from this. I am not convinced any of the characters had a voice, but rather, they were differentiated via their problems. Take out the sexting, the prescription abuse, the eating disorders, etc., and you're left with 5 characters who all sound exactly the same. That is the weakness with the verse here. It stands as the character when the characters needed to stand for themselves.

Abbie says

I've been waiting to read this book for a year ever since I read *Impulse*, and now that I've finished all I can say is **Oh my gosh!** I can't even explain all the emotions I'm going through after reading this book; and since I'm not very good at making reviews, I'll make this short and sweet.

Obviously, it was beautiful. The novel talks about how individuals (particularly teenagers) are so focused on achieving perfect standards that are superficial and unrealistic that they lose their identity in the process because the price is too extreme. They're not content with themselves and struggle for improvements that only lead to misery and regret.

Let's start with Cara. I was a little disappointed by the fact that Cara turned out to be a lesbian (although I can't say I hadn't thought of that conclusion from the beginning), I thought she'd eventually become the perfect child Conner hadn't been. But with parents like hers I probably would've developed a problem or two.

Then there's Kendra. She had family problems, Conner broke her heart, and she had low self-esteem. For me it was really painful to read about her distorted perception of her body; among all the characters she was the one who needed help the most. I don't even know if she did get over her anorexia or not because her ending was quite vague. It's just so sad because what she went through is really happening in reality and so many beautiful girls (and boys) are starving themselves to reach an ideal that makes them feel good about being

unhealthy. A hundred years ago, plump girls were considered beautiful because their bodies presented health and wellness. But nowadays the media bombards us with ideas that look down on voluptuous bodies and gives praise to rail-thin models. It's just so sad...

Now we go on to Sean. I hated the fact that he couldn't handle the break-up, but I did feel sorry for him knowing that he lost his prime motivation for performing well. But his ending was good because he came to a realization that a person shouldn't put all his heart and energy in just one human being when he doesn't have enough to fuel his self-love. If you want to be loved for who you are, you have to love yourself first. Because no one on this earth (except God) will be able to accept you and understand you but yourself.

And lastly, there's Andre. His problem was his lack of ambition and initiative. He didn't have the courage to stand up for what he loved (dance), and he didn't know how to help his beloved Jenna. I got bored at times when it was his turn to narrate because he didn't have that much of a problem. But in the end he too got his happy ending. It required sacrifice and encourage but it all worked out for him in the end.

Well that's the end, I'm sure I'll be re-reading this novel for many years to come. :)

Thomas says

DECEMBER 2014:

WOW. THAT WAS PERFECT.

THIS. I CAN'T EVEN.

This book takes place during the events of impulse (the 1st book in the duology) and is from Cara's POV (Connor's sister) & 3 of her "friends".

While Impulse concentrated on suicide & the meaning of life etc, Perfect is all about Perfection and what it is to achieve "perfect".

But this book is so powerful! It deals with sexuality, substance abuse e.g. drugs & alcohol, body image, eating disorders, relationships, abuse, rape, parental & sibling relationships, death & bereavement, racism, sexism & so so so much more!

The characters are all so different, in various & numerous ways. All with their own strengths & flaws. Every character has so much backstory & complexity to why they are how they are!

The writing is beyond beautiful! The free verse style adds so much more emotion & subtext to every line, it's captivating!

This series has made realistic fiction one of my favourite genres!

I honestly love this duology so much!

I can't recommend it enough!

If you want something that'll really make you think & question, pick this series up!

Rhyanne says

Rhyanne Lynch

January 23, 2012

Period 2

“Perfect” Review

Sex. Sexuality. Deprivation. Desperation. Abuse. Abandonment. The pursuit of complete and utter perfection is a very messy one with many turns and tricks. Hopkins positively describes the true emotions and feelings of confused individuals and explaining perfect as an expectation you hold to yourself, not one someone holds for you. The saying “Went looking for perfection, got lost.” comes to mind when reading Ellen Hopkins enthralling book, “Perfect”. in her book, Hopkins does a great job of explaining the thought process of a confused, unappreciated teenager.

Many people go searching for perfection, and in that frantic search completely lose themselves. This happens to be the case for Kendra, who's light blond hair and crystal blue eyes have gotten her everywhere she's wanted to go, so far. Competing in beauty pageants since she was a little girl, she has always been aware of the way she looks; but her mirror no longer suits her expectations. Too fat at 5'10 and 120 pounds, Kendra is constantly dieting (a.k.a not eating).

Cara to all of her friends at school, is the popular “it” girl. With a great body, pretty face, and hot boyfriend, you would think she had everything. But she would argue she has the exact opposite. Never really understanding what love is has frustrated her entire life- having a boyfriend who “loves you” can only mean so much to a girl who was raised by a mother who never even smiled in her direction; a cold woman with no compassion for anyone, only selfishness. As if these challenges aren't enough for one girl to handle, Cara is faced with another when meeting an amazing girl and begins to question her sexual preferences.

Sean has got it all- a pretty girlfriend, Cara, who he loves, nice guardians, and since starting steroids, an awesome bod. But without realizing, Sean's life had actually begun to spiral. Cara was distant and hanging out with a girl more than him, his uncle kept saying he was worried about him, and he began needing more and more steroids to keep up with his expectations.

Andre, an extremely wealthy black guy, has the whole world going for him. Connections to all colleges, creativity, smarts, and experienced. But what he really wants in life is to not be a banker, or a doctor, politician, or a broker, but an artist. Andre must decide whether to follow his dreams and face his parents, or do as he's been told.

Though none of these teenagers had very similar lives, they all learned important life lessons in what the true definition of perfect is- perfect through their own eyes and no one else's.
