

A red ribbon with a bow, set against a pink background. The ribbon is tied in a large, elegant bow in the center of the cover. The background is a solid, light pink color. The text is overlaid on the ribbon and background.

FINDING PERFECT

a novella

COLLEEN
HOOVER

#1 *NEW YORK TIMES* BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF
IT ENDS WITH US

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A NOVELLA

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Note to the reader: This short story focuses on characters in both Finding Cinderella and All Your Perfects. This will make more sense once you've read both of the novels that this short story ties together. Thank you and happy reading!

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FINDING PERFECT

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Chapter One

“That’s three for me,” Breckin says, dropping his Xbox controller. “I really need to go home now.”

I pick up the controller and try to hand it back to him. “Just one more,” I say. Or *beg*, really. But Breckin already has on his ridiculous puffy jacket and is making his way to my bedroom door.

“Call Holder if you’re this bored,” he says.

“He had Thanksgiving dinner at his dad’s house yesterday. They won’t be back until tonight.”

“Then ask Six to come over. I’ve hung out with you enough today to last me until Christmas break. I have family shit tonight.”

That makes me laugh. “You said shit.”

Breckin shrugs. “Yeah. It’s Thanksgiving. I have family shit.”

“I thought Mormons couldn’t swear.”

Breckin rolls his eyes and opens my bedroom door. “Bye, Daniel.”

“Wait. You coming Saturday?” On our drive home from school a couple days ago, Holder suggested we do a friendsgiving while we’re home on Thanksgiving break. Sky and Six are going to cook. *Which means we’ll probably end up ordering pizza.*

“Yeah, I’ll be there. But only if you stop pointing out my religious flaws.”

“Deal. And I’ll never call you Powder Puff again if you stay and play one more game with me.”

Breckin looks bored with me. I don’t blame him. I’m bored with myself.

“You need to go somewhere,” he says. “You’ve been playing video games for twelve hours. It’s starting to smell like a waffle cone in here.”

“Why do you say that like it’s a bad thing?”

“I meant it in a bad way.” Breckin closes my door and I’m alone again.
So alone.

I fall back onto my bedroom floor and stare up at the ceiling for a while. Then I look at my phone and there’s nothing. Six hasn’t texted me at all today. I haven’t texted her either, but I’m waiting for her to text me first. Things have been weird between us for the past couple months now. I was hoping it was because we were in a new setting, both in our first semesters of college, but she was quiet on the drive home two days ago. She had *family shit* yesterday and hasn’t even invited me over today.

I feel like she’s about to break up with me.

I don’t know why. I’ve never had a girl break up with me. I’m the one who broke up with Val. But I would think this is what it’s like just before a breakup. Less communication. Less making time for each other. Less making out.

Maybe she does want to break up with me, but she knows it would hurt the awesome foursome we’ve got going on. We do everything with Sky and Holder now that we’re all in college together. Breaking up with me would make it awkward for all three of them.

Maybe I’m overthinking things. Maybe it is college that’s stressing her out.

My bedroom door opens and Chunk leans against the doorframe, arms folded. “Why are you on the floor?”

“Why are you in my room?”

She takes a step back so that she’s technically in the hallway. “It’s your turn to do dishes.”

“I don’t even live here anymore.”

“But you’re home for Thanksgiving,” she says. “Which means you’re eating our food and using our dishes and sleeping under our roof, so go do the chores.”

“You haven’t changed at all.”

“You moved out three months ago, Daniel. No one changes in the span of three months.” Chunk walks back down the hallway without closing my door.

I have the urge to run after her and disagree with her about people not changing in just three months, because Six changed in that short of a time span. But if I disagreed with her, I'd have to back it up with an example, and I'm not talking to Chunk about my girlfriend.

I check my phone one more time for a text from Six and then push off the floor. On my way to the kitchen, I pause at the doorway to Hannah's bedroom. She doesn't come home as often as I do because she goes to college in South Texas and has a full-time job.

I haven't found a job yet. That's not surprising, though. I haven't filled out a single application.

Hannah is sitting up in bed with her laptop. Probably doing homework for med school or something equally responsible. "Do they still make you do dishes when you come home?" I ask her.

She glances up at me before looking back down at her computer screen. "No. I don't live here anymore."

I knew she was the favorite. "Then why do I have to do chores?"

"Mom and Dad still support you financially. You owe them."

That's a fair point. I remain in her doorway, stalling the inevitable. "What are you doing?"

"Homework," she says.

"Want to take a break and play video games with me?"

Hannah looks up at me like I've suggested she murder someone. "Have I ever wanted to play video games with you?"

I groan. "Ugh." This is going to be a long week.

Holder and Sky get back tonight, but they're busy until Saturday. Breckin has *family shit*. I can already feel the unavoidable heartbreak coming from Six, which is why I've avoided her all day. I really don't want to be dumped over Thanksgiving break. Or at all. Maybe if I never text or call or speak to Six again, she'll never be able to break up with me and then I can continue to live in my blissful ignorance.

I push off Hannah's door and head toward the kitchen when she calls for me to come back. I turn around in the hallway, my whole body floppy and defeated when I reappear in her doorway.

“What’s wrong with you?” she asks.

My shoulders are sagging and I’m in the midst of feeling really sorry for myself, so I sigh dramatically. “Everything.”

Hannah motions toward the beanbag chair across the bedroom. I walk over to it and plop down. I don’t know why I’m allowing her to summon me into her room, because she’s just going to ask questions I’m not going to answer. But it makes me a little less bored than I’ve been all day. And also, it beats doing the dishes.

“Why are you moping? Did you and Six break up?” she asks.

“Not yet, but it feels imminent.”

“Why? What’d you do wrong?”

“Nothing,” I say defensively. “At least, I don’t remember doing anything. I don’t know, it’s complicated. Our whole relationship is complicated.”

Hannah laughs and closes her laptop. “*Med school* is complicated. Relationships are easy. You love a person, they love you back. If that’s not how your relationship is, you end it. Simple.”

I shake my head in disagreement. “But I do love Six and she does love me and it’s still very, very complicated.”

Sometimes Hannah gets this look of excitement in her eyes, but it seems to happen at the worst moments. Like right now, as I tell her my relationship may be doomed.

That shouldn’t excite her.

“Maybe I can help,” she says.

“You can’t help.”

Hannah tosses her covers aside and then walks to her bedroom door and shuts it. She turns around and faces me, her eyebrows narrowed, the excitement in her expression gone. “You haven’t made me laugh since I got home. Something is changing you, and as your big sister, I want to know what it is. And if you don’t tell me, I’ll call a Wesley family meeting.”

“You wouldn’t.” I hate those meetings. They always seem to be an intervention for me and my behavior, when they’re supposed to be about the entire family.

“Try me,” Hannah says.

I groan and cover my face with both hands as I bury myself deeper into the beanbag. In all honesty, Hannah is the best voice of reason in our whole family. She might even be the *only* voice of reason. Chunk is too young to understand these issues. My father is too immature, like me. And my mother would flip out if I told her Six and my truth.

I do want to talk about it, and Hannah is probably the only person in the world besides Sky and Holder who I would trust with this. But Sky and Holder don't talk about it because we made them pinky swear they'd never bring it up.

I'm scared if I don't talk to someone about it, Six and I will be over. And I can't imagine a life without Six in it now that I've had a life with Six in it.

I blow out a conceding breath. “Okay. But sit down first.”

The excitement in her expression returns. She doesn't just sit down on her bed. She hops onto her bed, next to a lump of covers, and sits cross-legged, eager to hear what I'm about to tell her. She rests her chin in her hand, waiting.

I take a moment to figure out how to start the conversation. How to summarize it without going into too much detail.

“This sounds crazy,” I say, “but I had sex with a girl in the maintenance closet during junior year of high school. I didn't know who she was or what she looked like because it was dark.”

“That doesn't sound crazy,” Hannah interjects. “That sounds exactly like something you would do.”

“No, that's not the crazy part. The crazy part is that after I got with Six, I found out *she* was the girl I had sex with the year before. And...well...I got her pregnant. And because she didn't know who I was, she put the baby up for adoption. A closed adoption. So I'm a dad, but I'm not. And Six is a mom, but she's not. And we thought it would be okay and we'd be able to move past it, but we can't. She's sad all the time. And because she's sad all the time, *I'm* sad all the time. And when we're together, we're double sad, so we don't even really hang out all that much anymore. Now I think she's about to break up with me.”

I feel protected by the beanbag right now because my gaze is on the ceiling and not on Hannah. I don't want to look at her after vomiting all that. But an entire minute goes by and neither of us says anything, so I finally lift my head.

Hannah is sitting as still as a statue, staring at me in shock like I've just told her I got someone pregnant. Because I did. And that's apparently very shocking, which is why she's looking at me like this.

I give her another moment to let it sink in. I know she wasn't expecting to find out she's sort of an aunt with a nephew she'll never meet during a conversation she probably expected to be about something a lot more trivial, like miscommunication with my girlfriend.

"Wow," she says. "That's...*wow*. That's really complicated, Daniel."

"Told you so."

The room is silent. Hannah shakes her head in disbelief. She opens her mouth a couple of times to speak, but then shuts it.

"So what do I do?" I ask.

"I have no idea."

I throw my hands up in defeat. "I thought you were going to *help* me. That's why I told you all that."

"Well, I was wrong. This is like...*severe* adult shit. I'm not there yet."

I drop my head back against the beanbag. "You suck as a big sister."

"Not as much as you suck at being a boyfriend."

Why does any of that make me suck? I sit up straight now and scoot to the edge of the beanbag. "Why? What did I do wrong?"

She waves her hand at me. "*This*. You're avoiding her."

"I'm giving her space. That's different."

"How long have things been weird between y'all?"

I think back on the months we've been together. "It was great when we first got together. But when I found out what happened, it got weird for like a day, but we moved past it. Or I *thought* we did. But she always has this sadness about her. I see it a lot. Like she's forcing herself to pretend to be happy. It's just getting worse, though, and I don't know if it's college or me or everything she went through. But I noticed in October she started making

more and more excuses not to hang out. She had a test, or a paper, or she was tired. So then *I* started making excuses because if she doesn't want to hang out with me, I don't want to force her."

Hannah is listening intently to every word I say. "When was the last time you kissed her?" she asks.

"Yesterday. I still kiss her and treat her the same when we're together. It's just...different. We're hardly together."

She lifts a shoulder. "Maybe she feels guilty."

"I know she does, and I've tried to tell her she made the right choice."

"Then maybe she just wants to forget it ever happened, but you ask her too many questions about it."

"I don't ask her *any*. I never ask her. She doesn't seem to want to talk about it, so we don't."

Hannah tilts her head. "She carried your child for nine months and then put it up for adoption and you haven't asked her questions about it?"

I shrug. "I *want* to. I just...don't want her to feel pressured to relive it."

Hannah makes a groaning sound like I just said something that disappoints her.

"*What?*"

She looks at me pointedly. "I have never liked a single girl you've dated until Six. Please go fix this."

"How?"

"*Talk* to her. Be there for her. Ask her questions. Ask her what you can do to make it better for her. Ask her if it would help her to talk about it with you."

I chew on that suggestion. It's good advice. I don't know why I haven't just straight-up asked her how I can help make it better for her. "I don't know why I haven't done that yet," I admit.

"Because you're a guy and that's not your fault. It's Dad's fault."

Hannah might actually be right. Maybe the only problem between Six and me right now is that I'm a guy and guys are dumb. I push myself out of the beanbag. "I'm gonna go over there."

"Don't get her fucking pregnant again, you idiot."

I nod, but I don't go into detail with Hannah about the fact that Six and I haven't had sex since we've officially been a couple. That's no one's business but ours.

I didn't think about that. The one time we had sex was honestly the greatest sex I've ever had. If she breaks up with me, we won't get to experience that again. I've thought about what it'll be like so much, in such extensive detail, I'm confident it would be damn near perfect. Now I'm even more bummed by our prospective breakup. Not only will I have to spend my life without Six, I'll also spend the rest of my life never being interested in sex again, since it won't be with Six. Sex with Six is the only sex I'm willing to entertain. She's ruined me forever.

I open Hannah's door to leave.

"Do the dishes first," Chunk says with a muffled voice.

Chunk?

I turn around, inspecting Hannah's room, looking for where Chunk might be hiding. I walk over to the pile of covers on Hannah's bed and pull them back. Chunk is lying with her head muffled by a pillow.

What in the hell? I point to Chunk while looking at Hannah. "She's been here this whole time?"

"Yeah," Hannah says with a careless shrug. "I thought you knew."

I run my hands over my face. "Christ. Mom and Dad are gonna *kill* me."

Chunk tosses the pillow aside and rolls over to look up at me. "I can keep a secret, you know. I've matured since you moved out."

"You literally just told me ten minutes ago that no one can change in a span of three months."

"That was ten minutes ago," she says. "People can change in a span of three months

and ten minutes."

There's no way she's going to be able to keep this quiet. I should have never said

anything to either of them. I throw the covers back over Chunk and make my way to the door. "If either of you tell them about this, I'll never speak to you again."

“That’s an incentive, not a threat,” Chunk says.

“Then I’ll move back home if you tell them!”

“My lips are sealed,” she says.