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Perfected (Entangled Teen)

kate jarvik birch



Perfection comes at a price.



Synopsis

Perfection comes at a price. As soon as the government passed legislation allowing humans to be genetically engineered and sold as pets, the rich and powerful rushed to own beautiful girls like Ella. Trained from birth to be graceful, demure, and above all, perfect, these "family companions" enter their masters' homes prepared to live a life of idle luxury. Ella is happy with her new role as playmate for a congressman's bubbly young daughter, but she doesn't expect Penn, the congressman's handsome and rebellious son. He's the only person who sees beyond the perfect exterior to the girl within. Falling for him goes against every rule she knows—and the freedom she finds with him is intoxicating. But when Ella is kidnapped and thrust into the dark underworld lurking beneath her pampered life, she's faced with an unthinkable choice. Because the only thing more dangerous than staying with Penn's family is leaving—and if she's unsuccessful, she'll face a fate far worse than death. For fans of Keira Cass's Selection series and Lauren DeStefano's Chemical Garden series, Perfected by Kate Jarvik Birch is a chilling look at what it means to be human, and a stunning celebration of the power of love to set us free, wrapped in a glamorous—and dangerous—bow.

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Customer Reviews

Perfected for me was a bit mind blowing in the sense that it just felt wrong versus actually being a book that blew me away. And, of course, that's the whole point to the book. Perfected centers on the concept of human pets, and opens with Ella, a young female that has been genetically bred to be the perfect companion for any family that can afford the cost of one. She's been taught from birth not to read and write, but how to sit quietly, how to aptly pay attention when one of her masters speak, how to be a living doll for their daughters, and basically to do whatever her masters wish. Ella believed herself and others like her to be important, but little did she realize that once at her new home of a distinguished congressman that she truly was little more than an actual pet. And her role in her new master's home is starting to feel highly wrong. The little touches of the congressman's hand on her cheek or shoulder is starting to give her the most horrible feeling. But the one feeling that does make her heart bloom is in the friendship of the congressman's son, Penn. He makes her skin tingle, her pulse flutter in happiness, but it's a feeling that is only short lived as Ella finally realizes the full implications of her situation. And in order to let herself truly feel, she must first be free. Perfected, and I realize I am so in the minority on this one, just didn't cut it for me. It made my skin crawl when Ella had to sit on someone's lap, and I kept waiting for someone to fully attack her. Luckily, that did not happen, but still the imagery and the want of some corrupt individuals intent was there, and that was enough for me to truly want to shut the book for good. I persisted though, and found a romance that I seriously couldn't get into, and a plot that was at once creepy, but yet still held my attention enough to want to see what would occur in the end. I pretty much ended up speed reading through this and skimming a lot of the romance part, and at the end, it just felt anticlimactic to me. Perfected is definitely a light read, and it just wasn't something I was into.

As a fan of dystopian fiction, I found the concept of this story very intriguing; unfortunately, it did not live up to its full potential as the author was seemingly unwilling to delve into the true darkness that lurks behind the story concept. Set in a future democratic America where genetically altered teenaged girls are cloned in "kennels" and sold as "pets" to the very wealthy, the story begins from

the first person POV of pet Eight, later dubbed Ella, who is very excited to use her extensive training in her first home. Their training is similar to the way rich young ladies of the 17th century were taught--arts, music, poise, dance, decorum, beauty, history, etc--they do not teach them to read, I assume because it would make it easier to function if they were to escape. Strangely, they teach them nothing about kissing or sexuality, which was the first thing I found difficult to believe considering that whatever Congress may have claimed when they passed a law to allow the ownership of these not-quite-humans, there is only ONE reason that people would pay over two-hundred-thousand dollars to legally own a beautiful teenaged girl raised to be utterly submissive in every way and it is NOT so she can play the piano for them. Though the story hints at the truth behind this through mentions of hair-tossing and lap-sitting, the topic, which is so very blatant and ultimately central to the theme of the story, is mostly avoided in preference of discussing the cutesy crush going on between Ella and Penn, the owner's rebellious teenaged son who spends much time teaching sweet Ella how to kiss in a secret garden behind their house. In avoiding these darker depths, the author was left with characters who came across as shallow and underdeveloped since avoiding such obvious moral qualms made them look as though they were walking through life with a blindfold on. Slavery has not been a staple in this world for long, and many people protest it, including all of Canada, where one can seek asylum... and yet every single person in the house where Ella was taken honestly treats her like a pet... except when they want to make kissy face. By avoiding any conflicting views on this practice, the author avoids giving these characters any depth. In fact, the author herself seems unsure whether she wanted this to be a tale that truly delved into a possible future where human beings are enslaved with the excuse of being genetically altered or a fairy tale world where rich men would actually purchase beautiful young girls who must bend to their every will and NOT attempt to abuse them terribly, just treat them poorly so they feel they need to escape. Though their last pet was obviously impregnated by the owner, the owner's wife makes only rudimentary protests to Ella being there, making it seem as though either she doesn't give a darn about life or she's perfectly happy that her husband seems to be collecting sex slaves. Of course, she's not really a sex slave, right? Except he keeps touching her and the wife keeps getting prickly about it. It swings back and forth, back and forth, but she never faces the kind of real danger a young girl in her position would face (the danger that the last slave obviously did face). Also, the entire family (including the son who falls in love with Ella) seems very quick to blame the last slave for the pregnancy... something that would be more realistic if they weren't also acting as if the slaves have minds of dogs. It is never addressed that there might be some consensuality issues there. Ella is actually the deepest character, simply because she has been sheltered and the

shallowness comes across as her learning about the world. Penn, on the other hand, is like a rebellious Ken doll with hormones. His naivete about "pets" is simply repellent considering that he quickly falls in love with one--you love her yet you still don't question slavery? The fact that Penn is also mostly oblivious to the horrors that come with this new form of slavery seems unbelievable unless he is extremely twisted. IF this were set in a world where slavery is common, this would be understandable. However, in the book it is implied that this is a relatively new law and it is confirmed that Canada, at least, finds it absolutely terrible. Yet another plot hole I attribute to poor world building. It seems like another case of the author avoiding real depth in this novel. The love story is as shallow as the characters, but that can be forgiven, despite it being "instant love," because I can see how a teen girl who has never seen a boy before could feel lust and "fall in love," and heaven knows that teen boys "fall in love" all the time (yay hormones). It is certainly a very teenagery love, and there is a big SURPRISE moment that you would never guess at the end (which I won't spoil), but I will say this: there is NO foreshadowing which makes it seem lame rather than fantastic. Those kind of big reveals are only good if you can look back at the story and see it building up and wonder how you didn't figure that out. Overall, I found the story enjoyable, but that is what it is: a short story, not a fully built novel with a strong foundation. It is very short (I read it in two hours), and it stops with the kind of cliffhanger that tries to force you to read the next book rather than giving true resolution. Unless the price lowers greatly, I will not waste my money on the second book--I think it would be a fun read, but it's too much money for a two hour read with little depth to it.

The book was well written, but there was so much unmet potential. It is almost frustrating. I feel like she moved way to quickly with the "fall in love" and "escape" plot lines (if they could even be called that) when so much more character development could have been made while she was still in the house. Probably the most irritating part was the instant falling in love plot line that started way to early. She literally sees him on the porch in the first three chapters, and BAM, true love. The rest of the plot simply bowed down to the romantic spot light and took a back seat, like character development and relationship development, particularly with the younger girl and even with the other pet would have been some much needed relief from the hum drum romantic story plot. The most interesting part of the book was the last few pages of the last chapter, which had some much needed intensity I feel the rest of the story was lacking. I actually wanted to know what was going to happen to them and if the rest of the story, even the forbidden love parts, had shown that level of intensity, panic, and actual need not to be caught, I would have had many more nice things to say about it. I also found the book incredibly short. There was one part where the author simply said

something along the lines of "that went on for a few months." Instead of skipping about, writing those few months out would have added much needed character development, and probably made the whole thing a good 100 pages longer. Over all, the idea is solid, but the worn out romance ruins the whole plot and I would have much rather spent more time getting to know the protagonist and her thought process rather than her piggy-backing off of everyone else and developing with the plot rather than the plot developing through her own changing state of mind.

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