

Perfect You Study Guide

Perfect You by Elizabeth Scott

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Plot Summary

Perfect You is a novel by Elizabeth Scott. The story follows the main character, Kate, as she tries to put the pieces of her life together after her dad quits his job to sell vitamins at the mall and her best friend from childhood becomes popular and dumps her. Kate's father, Steve, quits his full-time position when he goes into work one day and finds that his desk is broken. He opens a booth at the mall to sell "Perfect You" vitamins. Kate and her college-graduate brother are forced to work at the booth with their dad. The problem is that everyone at school is making fun of Kate because of her dad. The vitamins are also not selling, which means that the family doesn't have normal income.

Kate meets Will, one of the most popular boys in school, on her first day of high school. Kate has always had a crush on Will. In light of her home life and the fact that Will is known for hooking up with girls, she is mean and sarcastic to Will. When Will gets a job working at the mall, Kate and Will start to spend more and more time together.

Kate tries to rebuild her friendship with Anna, but realizes that their relationship is beyond repair. Kate's mom and dad separate when Kate's mom says that he has to pick his family or his business. Kate and Will end up as girlfriend and boyfriend. Kate also ends up learning the most important lessons life has to offer, which is that sometimes things end, but other times, they just change and you have to live life to its fullest.



Chapter 1

Chapter 1 Summary

Kate is helping her father at their booth at the mall. Her father was working at a software company, when he went into work to find his desk broken into one day. Everything on the desk was broken, except for a bottle of "Perfect You" vitamins that he bought from a departing employee. Kate's father took this as a sign that he should be selling the vitamins and opened a booth at the mall. When Kate returns home with her father after selling two bottles of vitamins the entire day, she finds her mother frowning at the checkbook, and her wannabe actor and college-educated brother watching basketball.

Chapter 1 Analysis

Kate infers that her family is having money problems since her father quit his job to sell vitamins. She also implies that her father becomes easily obsessed with things and then drops them to move on to another obsession. Kate also discusses that her best friend is no longer her best friend, which foreshadows the unfolding of the back story of this situation as the novel develops.



Chapter 2

Chapter 2 Summary

The first person Kate sees when her dad drops her off at school the next day is her ex-best friend, Anna. Kate thinks about how nobody ever asked her why she and Anna aren't friends anymore. The only one who did, is another one of her friends, Will. While Will is talking to Kate in the hall, Anna and two of her friends walk by and ask if Will is going to go shirtless at the next pep rally. Will leans in to apologize to Kate about what happened between her and Anna, and Kate becomes slightly breathless. Kate admits to the reader that she's had some thoughts about being with Will.

Chapter 2 Analysis

Kate implies that when Anna became popular that Anna dumped Kate as a friend. Even though Will seems to be one of the popular boys in school, he seems to have a crush on Kate. Kate also has feelings for Will, but she is hiding these feelings for some reason.



Chapter 3

Chapter 3 Summary

After school, Kate's dad picks her up. They go home, so Kate can change and make dinner to take to the mall with her. Kate thinks her dad acts like a child and how her mom always allows him to do so. This includes calling in sick to his old job so he could finish a video game and quitting his job to sell infomercial vitamins. After the mall closes, they haven't sold anything and the register is missing \$20 from the night before because dad and Todd, her brother, forgot to eat breakfast before coming to the mall that morning. They arrive home to find mom on the phone with grandma and making pancakes for her father.

Chapter 3 Analysis

It appears as if Kate is more mature than her parents. She realizes that it is not a good idea to quit a paying job to sell vitamins in the mall. Kate's mom and dad seem to be ignoring the reality, however. Kate's grandmother finding out they are having money problems foreshadows grandma having to step in and loan the family money to make it.



Chapter 4

Chapter 4 Summary

Todd drives Kate to school the following day because their dad stayed up all night working on a project to sell the vitamins. One of the three Jennifers at school is freaking out over having to take the PSATs. Will implies he only did well to keep up with Kate, but Kate tells him to act like he's just kidding so Jennifer will shut up. When Kate goes to lunch, she sees Anna, who is a cheerleader now, sitting with the most popular girl in school, Tara. When the bell rings, Anna looks at Kate as she leaves the cafeteria, with a look of sadness.

Chapter 4 Analysis

Kate's dad coming up with another project foreshadows financial ruin for the family. It also foreshadows Kate having to step in to help her parents save their business and their lives. Kate wants to appear less smart than she is, which is why she tells Will to convince Jennifer that he's just kidding about Kate scoring so high on her PSATs. Anna's sadness also implies that Anna misses Kate and really wants to be her friend, but that Anna has chosen popularity over true friendship.



Chapter 5

Chapter 5 Summary

Anna and Kate were best friends starting in preschool. They continues to be best friends until ninth grade. At the time, Anna was overweight, had braces and wore glasses. When Anna's crush, Sam, bumps into her in the hall and calls her fat, Anna starts eating salads at lunch and loses 20 pounds by the end of the year. She goes away to stay with her aunt in Maine for the summer and Anna comes back without telling Kate she's back. At school, Anna pretends Kate doesn't exist and stops attending choir practice. Kate realizes their friendship is over when she goes into the bathroom to talk to Anna, Anna is there with Diane Mullins, a popular girl, and Anna pretends as if she doesn't even know who Kate is.

Chapter 5 Analysis

It seems as if Anna might have been attending fat camp, but lied to Kate about spending the summer in Maine with her aunt. This would explain why Anna never really called or emailed Kate during that summer. Anna decides that she is a different person now and along with her new life, she chooses to hang out with new friends, which excludes Kate.



Chapter 6

Chapter 6 Summary

Todd picks up Kate from school and he tells her that he's going to Andy's house for a few days. Then, he tells Kate that their dad's Perfect You Project is to throw a party at the house to try to sell the vitamins. When Kate gets to the mall, he has to break it to her dad that Todd left for Andy's house. She gets mad at him for the whole Perfect You party idea, grabs two some sample bags for kids vitamins and runs into a little boy who thinks it's candy. When giving him one of the chocolate vitamins makes the kid stop yelling, Kate convinces the mom to buy a box of the vitamins. In the meantime, Will walks up in a uniform for the mall sports store and finds out Kate works for Perfect You. When Kate's mom picks her up at the mall, Kate finds out 12 people showed up to the party. Most were from her dad's old job and two were people trying to sell timeshares. After they got the timeshare people to leave, her dad sold a couple of things. When Kate suggests her mother try to get dad to get a real job, her mom says that she has no idea about adult problems.

Chapter 6 Analysis

It seems as if Kate's parents are so preoccupied with their own problems that they don't realize Kate is having issues of her own. It also seems as there is a role reversal, where Kate is more of an adult than her father. Kate might be on to something with the kids' vitamins, so it foreshadows her coming up with a good marketing idea to get more parents to buy kids vitamins, which might help to promote Perfect You.



Chapter 7

Chapter 7 Summary

When Kate arrives at school the following day, everyone is gossiping about her dad. They are spreading rumors that her father got fired from his job and now the whole family is selling infomercial vitamins. Kate thinks it is Will that spread the rumors but it turns out to be that Diane Mullins mother was at their house the previous night and it's her that is spreading the rumors and gossip.

Chapter 7 Analysis

Diane Mullins seems to be spreading rumors about Kate to make herself feel better. It shows that Diane Mullins really has a low self-esteem. Even though she is one of the most popular girls in school, Diane is spreading rumors to make herself look bigger and better.

Chapter 8

Chapter 8 Summary

Kate notices that her mother is acting different and distant. On Saturday night, Kate's father asks Kate to work the booth at the mall on Sunday so he can give an information session at the library. At first, Kate says no, but then when she feels like she's upset her father, she says she'll work. On Sunday, she sees Will, Anna and Sam walking toward her booth, but Anna and Sam stop to canoodle with each other while Will talks to Kate. Will asks Kate if she really hates him that much, but she's interrupted from answering by a lady asking where the bathrooms are. When Kate's mother picks her up from work, her mom mentions that her father's last paycheck for unused vacation time was a lot smaller than expected, so her grandmother is coming to help them out.

Chapter 8 Analysis

Kate feels like she will never be able to bond with anyone like she did when she was friends with Anna. Kate is always hopeful that Anna and she will become friends again, but Anna keeps letting her down. Kate also realizes the level of financial trouble her family is in when her mother asks her grandmother to come stay with them and help them out.



Chapter 9

Chapter 9 Summary

Kate notices that her parents are watching TV but not talking to each other. When she goes upstairs, she finds Todd dyeing his hair. He asks about dad's party and she tells him that one of the mothers of a girl she goes to school with was there. He asks how bad it was for her at school. Then, Kate tells Todd Grandma is coming.

The next morning, Kate wakes Todd to take her to school. He drives so slow she's late. While she's in the office getting a tardy slip, Anna comes in. When Anna notices Kate, she freezes but doesn't say or do anything. Later, in the hall, Anna acts if she doesn't see Kate at all.

Chapter 9 Analysis

The downfall of the financial situation of Kate's family seems to be foreshadowing the demise of her parents' marriage. Anna notices Kate when she isn't with her friends because she feels guilty about the way she ended their friendship, but Anna doesn't know how to correct it at this point either.



Chapter 10

Chapter 10 Summary

Perfect You! Has a vitamin sale, but they only sell three bottles. Kate's dad asks her to go to the trash bin to get another box so he can load up some of the vitamins in it. She runs into the guy that works at the coffee shop. He asks her to tell her boss to stop talking about vitamins when he's in the coffee shop. Will laughs and shows Kate his has a real name tag now and not one that says "Trainee." Will says there is a sign in their store that says if her dad comes in that they have to get a manager right away. As Kate is about to yell at Will, he kisses her and it's Kate's first kiss. Then, she calls him a jackass and runs away when someone else comes out into the trash area. When dad and Kate get home, Grandma is there.

Chapter 10 Analysis

Kate really likes Will but she is trying to act like she doesn't. Kate also realizes for the first time that the reason her grandmother is coming is because she has money. While Kate is resisting letting her guard down because of how she was hurt by Anna's shunning her, it foreshadows she will let her guard down with Will.



Chapter 11

Chapter 11 Summary

Grandma is a former model. As soon as she sees Kate, she starts talking about how she needs to get her eyebrows done. Grandma also puts down dad for playing video games and quitting his job to sell vitamins. Kate's mom, Sharon, tells them that her father created medicines, but that he was also addicted to the pain killers he created, was a workaholic and not happy when he was at home.

Chapter 11 Analysis

Kate's mom comes from a family with money. The money, however, did not make them a happy family. In a twist of irony, Sharon marries a man she loves and they have two kids they love, but they don't have a lot of money. Sharon says they are happy, but it seems as if their financial troubles are getting in the way of the family's overall happiness.



Chapter 12

Chapter 12 Summary

Will notices Kate and smiles at her as soon as she comes into first period the day after their kiss. He says hey to Kate but she doesn't say anything to him. In the cafeteria, Will walks in with his friend and his friend is making a fish face puckering face. Kate gets a pass to the nurse's office last period, but instead goes to the gym to talk to Will. She runs into Anna instead, who drops a paper off a stack of papers and Kate picks it up for her. Anna speaks to her for the first time in months.

Anna starts to say she misses Kate but then says she has to go. Will emerges and Kate confronts him about telling people about their kiss. He shows her a hickie she gave him and says that's why people have been teasing him all day. He reaches over, kisses and nips her neck, and says that now they match. The coach yells for Will, so Kate decides to figure things out later.

Chapter 12 Analysis

Kate is being self-conscious. Will really likes her, but Kate is fighting her feelings for him. Kate is always making up excuses as to why Will can't possibly like her, but he really does.



Chapter 13

Chapter 13 Summary

Kate's mom visits her at the mall before she goes to a job interview for a second job, selling cosmetics in the department store where Kate's dad is banned. Kate starts to berate her father for it when he sends her on a break. Kate heads to the food court and runs into Will who is eating a cheeseburger. When Kate sees him, she puts her hand to her neck. Will smiles and they seem to have a connection. Will says hello. Kate says she has to go but she'll be in the storage area in about 10 minutes.

When Kate gets to the storage room and Will isn't there, she's disappointed. Then, Will shows up and they kiss again. Kate's dad calls for her so she says she has to go.

The next morning, Kate tries to convince that her mom she's sick. When she says Grandma will stay home with her, Kate goes to school. In first period, Will is talking to one of the Jennifers. When Will brings up last night, Kate assumes he is going to give Todd's speech about being drunk or distracted and not thinking of Kate in that way. Kate tells Will she doesn't care and then continues her conversations with one of the other Jennifers. They have to do group work in class and Will is in Kate's group. Will tells Kate on the side that she needs to work on her bullshit skills. When Will stretches and his shirt rides up showing his stomach, Kate finds herself being one of the stupid girls that Will's charms and good looks works on too.

Chapter 13 Analysis

Kate walks away from Will first because she is trying to remain in control of the situation. She wants to be the first one to leave so that Will isn't the one leaving, such as when Anna walked away from their friendship. Again, Kate is trying to convince Will that she doesn't care about what happens between them because she doesn't care. This is her defense mechanism against getting hurt.



Chapter 14

Chapter 14 Summary

Kate wakes up to her mother and grandmother arguing. Kate's mom agrees to take money from her mother, if she allows grandma to stay for the month. Kate's mom believes Grandma ignored her while she was growing up, including shipping her off to boarding school. Grandma says she did it to be unselfish toward Sharon because of her father being addicted to medication.

When Kate gets to first period, Will isn't there. One of the Jennifers tells Kate it's because Monica, Will's ex, is upset because when she went to the mall to see him the night before, Will had a hickey from another girl. In the girls' bathroom, Kate walks in on a conversation between, Tara, Diane and Anna. When Tara and Diane leave, Anna talks to Kate again.

Chapter 14 Analysis

Anna wants to be friends with Kate again because Kate is the only one that truly understands her and knows everything about her. Anna is trading true friendship for her popularity though. Kate is getting her hopes up that she will be able to rekindle her relationship with Anna.



Chapter 15

Chapter 15 Summary

When Kate arrives at the booth, her dad and Todd go off to a movie. When they get back, her dad says he wants to place an ad for the booth in the movies. He starts sketching the ad and Kate goes on break. She runs into Will in the food court. When she's leaving, he comes after her and asks her to meet him in their spot by the trash at 9. They start making out immediately. Kate says something about her not liking him and him not liking her. They continue to make out.

Chapter 15 Analysis

Will likes Kate. He has liked her since the first day they met. It is Kate that has always been rather harsh in her interactions with Will.



Chapter 16

Chapter 16 Summary

Kate and Will start to meet every night at some place in the mall to make out. The following day at school, it's as if nothing has happened. Every night when Kate and Steve, Kate's dad, get home from the mall, Grandma is arriving from her daily shopping routine at a mall an hour's drive away. tonight, she gives Todd a suit and Sharon a formal red gown—neither of which they will be able to use. When Steve mentions the ad for the vitamin booth, Grandma asks him about it, but Kate distracts Grandma by asking where her present is. That night, Kate overhears her father telling her mom that he placed the ad already and split the cost between the two credit cards because there wasn't enough room on one card. Sharon starts to get mad and then apologizes saying she's acting Kate's age.

Chapter 16 Analysis

It's as if Kate and Will are living split lives. they have their life when they are alone and their life when they are at school. It seems as if keeping them a secret is all one-sided though—on Kate's part. It seems as if Will is willing not to keep it a secret, but Kate keeps putting him in his place. The ironic part is that Kate isn't even acting Kate's age. Kate is dealing with the burden that her parents feel about not having enough money, but her parents are not making responsible decisions about the way they spend their money. For the first time, however, Kate realizes the pressure her mother is under, and realizes that the problems Kate has to deal with are not as bad as the ones her mother has to deal with.



Chapter 17

Chapter 17 Summary

Kate sees Sarah flirting with Will. When Will sees Kate, he calls after her and tells her to wait up a second for him. Will infers that Kate should come by and see him at work so he can buy her a slice of pizza when Anna walks by and smiles at Kate, which throws Kate off and causes her not to respond to Will.

Anna approaches Kate at the mall. She admits that she misses Kate. She says she saw Kate talking to Will and wants to know if she's still crazy about him like she used to be. Anna says Kate is the only that still sees the person she is, even though her appearance has changed.

Chapter 17 Analysis

Anna believes that changing her appearance is what changed her life. In spite of this, however, she also realizes that the only person who truly knows her is Kate. Anna has the misconception that Kate has this perfect life, which might be perfect in some ways, but is lacking in other ways.



Chapter 18

Chapter 18 Summary

Kate and Anna agree to meet at 9 pm that night. As Kate unpacks her food at the food court, Will walks up to her. When Will hints they should meet while he's breaking down boxes at 9, Kate tells him she can't because she's meeting someone. Will mentions the weekend and Kate says she probably has to work. As they walking back to work together, Will brings up the weekend again, but Kate cuts Will off with a kiss. When Kate goes to meet Anna, she finds Anna in a store with Diane. Anna steps away and apologizes to Kate—saying she ran into Diane after they talked. Anna says she has to go because she forgot to go home to hear about her mom's job hunt before coming back to meet Kate. Anna leaves. Kate follows Diane out the same door Anna left out of and hears Diane asking who Kate assumes is Anna why she was acting so strange.

Chapter 18 Analysis

Will assumes that Kate is meeting another guy. Will is trying to ask Kate out on a date, but Kate assumes he's just trying to see if she is working so they can make out again. It seems as if Anna is pretending to be friends with Kate again. It is either for Anna's own selfish reasons of having someone to talk to about her problems with her mother, or Anna is setting Kate up for something.



Chapter 19

Chapter 19 Summary

The next afternoon, after school, Will asks Kate if she's going one of the Jennifers' party. Kate says she might and Will says he might go too. For a moment, Kate wants to tell Will about what happened the night before, but she doesn't. When she gets in the car, Kate asks her dad for the night off so she can go to the party. Kate spends so much time getting ready and thinking about potential conversations with Will at the party that she forgets she doesn't have a ride to the party. Todd walks in and she convinces him to take her. When Kate arrives at the party, Will isn't there. Kate calls home for a ride and then she sees Will.

Chapter 19 Analysis

Kate feels a connection with Will that appears to be mutual. She isn't letting her guard though, for fear that she might get hurt.



Chapter 20

Chapter 20 Summary

Will is wearing his work uniform and is with Sam. Anna isn't with them though, and this isn't the type of party that Sam usually goes to. Will makes a joke to a group that his uniform drives some girls crazy, like make out with him behind the mall crazy. Some of the girls at the party connect the dots and realize that the girl Will is talking about is Kate. When Will offers Kate a slice of pizza, she throws her shoe and hits him in the head with it. Will picks up Kate's shoe and tosses it out the window. Will follows Kate outside. They start to argue, but end up making out in the bushes, where the Jennifers find them. She has Kate's shoe in her hand says Todd is there to pick her up. When Kate gets home, she waits for her grandmother to comment on her disheveled look. Grandma says she assumes it has something to do with the young man, Will, who called and said he has Kate's shoe and that Kate's shirt on backwards.

Chapter 20 Analysis

Will and Kate have different points of the view of the same conversations and the same events. Will says he was hinting that he wants Kate to leave the party with him, but she instead takes what he says as an insult.



Chapter 21

Chapter 21 Summary

Kate wakes up the next morning at 10. She doesn't think this is right because dad always wakes her and Todd up at 8 for work. When she goes to Todd's room, her grandmother isn't there or in the bathroom. Todd's blankets from the couch are folded. Todd sees her and asks her to please come into the dining room. Kate finds her mom in there crying that they have to sell the house so they can catch up on their bills. When Kate says she should ask Grandma for the money, Sharon says she gave them the money for Todd's college, but that they spent it when times got tough so that they can't ask her for money now. Kate refuses to help clean the house for the real estate agent that's coming, but Todd tells her to stop being selfish and to grow up and help.

Chapter 21 Analysis

Kate is being a little selfish. She is only thinking about how all of the family problems are affecting her. She doesn't realize that they are affecting everyone, even Todd.



Chapter 22

Chapter 22 Summary

Kate and Sharon clean the house. The real estate agent comes. Kate is on the couch depressed when she thinks that she can call Will because he called her and he has her shoe. Grandma comes home from shopping and starts to talk with Kate. Kate's mom overhears Grandma telling Kate not define herself by someone else. She starts to say like her mom does with her dad when Sharon interrupts. Grandma and Sharon get into an argument and Sharon tells her that they are selling the house.

That night, Grandma goes to bed early and dad comes home from the mall late. Todd comes home with news he got a job at the coffee place at another mall.

Chapter 22 Analysis

Sharon perpetuates the problem with Steve, Kate's dad, by not making him face up to the facts of the situation. Steve acts like a child and Sharon allows him to do so. They even avoid talking about having to sell the house and where they are going to live when Steve gets home from work that night. Steve doesn't like confrontation, so he has a grin and bear it mentality, which is avoidance rather than dealing with the issue at hand.



Chapter 23

Chapter 23 Summary

The next morning, Kate uses her day off to take a walk. She ends up in front of Anna's house and when Anna sees her, she invites Kate in. They talk about her relationship with Sam and her plans to move to NY with Diane so Diane can go to NYU and Anna can get a singing job. Kate asks if Anna was at the party with Sam on Friday because she didn't see her. Anna says she wasn't there, but was glad to hear that it was one of Jennifer's party and not Tara's party. Kate asks if something is wrong with Anna and Sam but Anna says no. Then, Anna goes on to say that all of the rumors about Sam hooking up with other girls is because he hangs out with Will because Will hooks up with anyone that breathes. When Kate gets home, Will hasn't called and she realizes that soon the private thing between she and Will is going to be public.

Chapter 23 Analysis

Ironically, it is going to be Anna that is heartbroken over Sam and not Kate over Will. It seems as if Sam is moving on to another girl but Will is going to be with Kate. It also foreshadows the rumors about Will are really rumors about Sam, but Will is covering for Sam since Sam is supposed to be Anna's boyfriend.



Chapter 24

Chapter 24 Summary

Anna ignores Kate at school at first. Later, Anna apologizes to Kate. She says she misses her old life but is afraid if Sam finds out who she really is he won't like her. Anna asks if what she heard about Kate and Will is true.

Chapter 24 Analysis

Kate is getting her hopes up about rekindling her friendship with Anna. Kate thinks everything is turning back to normal, but it foreshadows that Anna is simply using Kate for her own emotional needs. It's ironic that Kate isn't popular and she's causing rumors to fly about Will, one of the most popular boys in school.



Chapter 25

Chapter 25 Summary

Will is cornered by the Jennifers on Kate's way into class. They leave when they see Kate. Will says hi to Kate and asks if she's ready for the test. Will runs into and talks to Kate several more times throughout the day. Sarah offers Kate her brush in the bathroom and says Will is acting strange. At the end of the day and with half the school watching, Will asks Kate out, but she says no.

Chapter 25 Analysis

It's ironic that Sarah starts talking to and even knows Kate exists after people at school find out she has been hooking up with Will. Kate comes out and tells Will that she won't go out without him because he humiliated her and she's ending it before he can end it. The problem is that Will really likes Kate.



Chapter 26

Chapter 26 Summary

Kate doesn't see Will at work. That night, she calls Anna to talk. Anna says Kate destroyed Will in front of half the school when she turned him down for a date. She says Will wouldn't even hook up with Sarah when she went to the mall to see him.

Anna admits Sam cheated on her with Tara. She says she needs Kate but that she has to spend time with Sam, Sarah and Diane too.

Chapter 26 Analysis

Will is avoiding Kate because he really likes her and she hurt him by saying the things she said to him. Will's not hooking up with Sarah is further evidence that he really likes Kate, coupled with the fact that Will hooks up with lots of girls but never asks them out on a date. Anna is using Kate's friendship when it is convenient for Anna.



Chapter 27

Chapter 27 Summary

Will doesn't talk to Kate at school, not even when the Jennifers are talking about the PSATs again. Sharon continues to clean up after Steve so the house stays clean for potential buyers. Todd always smells like coffee and is always complaining about being tried now. Todd tells Kate that Grandma gave mom money so she could quit her second job, but only if Sharon promised not to give it to Steve. Kate calls Anna and they talk. Anna tells Kate Sam took Tara home after school. Kate says Anna should confront him since Anna thinks they hooked up again.

Chapter 27 Analysis

Anna is very selfish. She is using Kate as her sounding board, but she doesn't want to jeopardize her status with her popular friends by admitting that she is friends with Kate again. Kate's parents' marriage is deteriorating. Sharon is starting to see more clearly that all her husband does is run the vitamin booth, take breaks at work, spend money he shouldn't and play video games, while she is trying to save the family from financial ruin and being homeless. Sharon is even starting to take help from her mother.



Chapter 28

Chapter 28 Summary

All day at school and alone at work, Kate is depressed over Will not speaking to her and the things Anna said to her the night before. While their dad is at the department store handing out free samples, Todd stops by the booth. He tells Kate to stop moping and to get out and let people know whom she really is. It's something similar to what their grandmother had told Kate the night before.

Kate walks to Sports Shack, where Will works. When he sees her, she turns and walks away. Kate asks one of the two guys Will was talking with to go get home. She mentions telling Will that when her sister has the baby and it has Will's webbed feet that they won't have to get a paternity test. This makes Will laugh from across the store, so he talks to Kate. She accuses him of fake asking her out and he insists it was real. Will kisses her and they make a date for Saturday.

Chapter 28 Analysis

Kate finally lets her guard down enough to find out the truth from Will. Kate is always trying to be sarcastic, which is her way of protecting herself. This gets in the way of finding out the truth sometimes though. When she finally stops acting like she doesn't care and asks Will of his true intentions, she realizes that he really does like her.



Chapter 29

Chapter 29 Summary

Kate avoids Will at school and work. Will comes by the vitamin booth and when Steve walks up, Will introduces himself to Kate's dad. He asks if Kate can walk him back to work. On the way there, Kate thinks Will is going to break the date because of her dad, but they both admit that they want to go out with each other. Kate's dad calls for her before they can kiss and he questions Kate as to whether she and Will are an item and Kate says they have a date on Saturday night.

Chapter 29 Analysis

Kate is starting to relate to Will on a normal teenage boy and girl level. Rather than always being on the defensive, Kate is learning to be a little more trusting of Will and his intentions. Even though Kate sometimes thinks of herself as the adult and her father as the child, Kate's dad starts to realize that something is going on between Kate and Will.



Chapter 30

Chapter 30 Summary

When Kate and her dad get home from work, her mom says someone is interested in buying the house. Kate realizes that her mom is nervous. Saturday morning, Kate takes the trash out and the bags break. She leaves a note for her mom asking her to pick her up from the mall at 5. Kate's mom calls the booth and whatever she says visibly affects her father. Kate calls home to remind her mother to pick her up at 5, but Grandma answers the phone, saying her mother's in the car honking at it and says they'll see about picking her up. Kate finds her grandmother there to pick her up instead of her mom. When Kate mentions telling her mom about going out, Grandma says she needs some rest and she'll tell her for Kate later. When they arrive home, Kate gets ready for her date. She can hear her mom behind her closed bedroom door opening and closing drawers. Will comes to pick Kate up for their date.

Chapter 30 Analysis

Kate hopes that the way her day of her date starts with the garbage bags breaking isn't an indication of how the rest of her day is going to go. It seems as if the relationship between Kate's parents is going downhill.



Chapter 31

Chapter 31 Summary

Will makes it a point to show Kate how you can't listen to the gossip at school because it's not accurate. Will asks Kate why she always thinks the worst about him but also still likes him. Will admits to Kate that his father left his mom for a girl that is only five years older than Will. His dad lives in Alaska now and has a new child.

Will says that he and Sam were friends until their mothers became business partners. His mother creates the catering menus and then Will's mother has to figure out how to fulfill the menu. Will says Sam usually uses Will as a cover story when he wants to cheat on Anna. Kate also finds out that Will is working at the Sports Shack to help his mother pay the rent. They end up ordering tacos and eating them while talking at the park. They kiss. When Will drives Kate home, they kiss some more, and he asks if he can come see her on his break tomorrow. They continue kissing until Will's mom texts him and Kate's grandmother keeps peering at them out the window.

Chapter 31 Analysis

Kate doesn't realize that Will has problems of his own. Kate realizes that she and Will are living parallel lives. His own father acts if he doesn't exist anymore. Anna acted as if Kate didn't exist anymore when they stopped being friends. Kate always thought that Will was shallow, popular, and that everything came to him so easily. On their date, she finds out he has problems and family problems just like she does.



Chapter 32

Chapter 32 Summary

Kate wakes up the next morning before her alarm goes off. She hears her brother and father bump into each other in the hallway and then shouting coming from the living room. Her father says something about her mother saying that he isn't fit to live with anymore. Grandma says he knows about the credit card debt. Sharon is screaming about how she begged him not to do all of things he's done and he did them anyway.

Steve mentions Todd giving them his paychecks to pay off their debt. Sharon says no and Todd too says he wants to help but that he plans on saving his money to move out on his own. Sharon tells Steve that she's hoping their time apart will give him the opportunity he needs to grow up. Kate tells them all to stop it, grabs her shoes and heads out the front door.

Chapter 32 Analysis

It seems as if Kate's parents are separating and possibly heading toward a divorce. When Kate leaves, it foreshadows her going to Will to tell him what happened and for his support.



Chapter 33

Chapter 33 Summary

Kate winds up at Anna's house. Kate tells Anna what's going on. Anna tells Kate to call her mom to let her know where she is. Grandma answers. Kate hears her mother crying in the background. When she hangs up, Kate tells Anna everything. When Anna tells Kate Sam flirted with a freshman right in front of her last night, Kate says she deserves better than Sam. When Anna finds out Kate went out on a date last night, she wants to know everything. When Anna finds out Kate's date was with Will, she puts Will down and tries to convince Kate that it wasn't a real date. When Anna's phone rings, Kate thinks she won't answer it because they are having a serious talk, but Anna does.

Chapter 33 Analysis

Anna is only concerned about her own feelings. She is also interested in making herself feel better. Anna makes herself feel better, detracting attention away from her own problems, by putting Anna down all the time.



Chapter 34

Chapter 34 Summary

Anna heads toward her room talking on the phone. Kate knows she's talking to Diane. When she hangs up, Kate accuses Anna of turning into all of those people she always hated before. The girls get into a little argument. In the end, though, Anna says she can always count on Kate and Kate says she'll always be Anna's friend.

When Kate realizes that Anna has never apologized to her for everything that happened, Kate turns around and heads back toward Anna's house. She finds Anna and Diane sitting in lawn chairs on Anna's front lawn. Diane says something mean to Kate about her father and Perfect You. Anna laughs.

Chapter 34 Analysis

Kate realizes who the real Anna is. She realizes that Anna will do anything and say anything to make herself feel better. When Anna doesn't defend Kate against Diane's tirade. Kate knows that their friendship is over.



Chapter 35

Chapter 35 Summary

Kate goes home to an empty house. She goes to her room and rips up the picture of her and Anna and tries to tear apart the stuffed monkey Anna gave her. She cries for everything that has happened to her in the past year. She hates herself for thinking that she's never known Anna at all, but that she wishes Anna would call her now to apologize. When Sharon gets home and goes into Kate's room, her eyes are red and swollen too. Kate tells her mom that Anna doesn't like her anymore. Kate and Sharon hear footsteps and Sharon thinks it's Steve. Grandma appears and suggests Sharon rest for a while. Sharon says her marriage will never be like Grandma's because Steve respects her. Grandma says she wants nothing more than that for her, while she tries to hold back her own tears. Sharon goes to get ready for Steve coming home, promising Kate they'll talk about what happened to Kate later. Kate tells her grandmother that she can fix it by buying the house so everything can go back to normal. Grandma says she can't and leaves. Steve doesn't come home, but Todd does. Todd says he's moving out and then tells Kate that Anna pretended like she didn't know him when she came into the coffee shop with Diane today.

When Sharon realizes Steve isn't coming home, she breaks down and Grandma comforts her. Sharon tells the kids the house sold to a family with three boys and they have to move in about a month.

Chapter 35 Analysis

Grandma is trying to tell Kate that money doesn't fix everything. She's also inferring that even if she does fix the monetary problems for Sharon and Steve, that it will not fix the problem forever. Anna always assumes the worst is going to happen because the worst has continuously happened to her over and over again for the last year.



Chapter 36

Chapter 36 Summary

Todd is telling Kate that her attitude sucks and that she isn't the only that is hurting in all of this when the phone rings. Todd hands Kate the phone thinking it's Will. When he finds out it's his dad, he grabs the phone back from Kate, raves at his dad and then hangs up. He tells Kate that Dad says he can't pick her up after school tomorrow and she doesn't have to work because he doesn't want to burden her.

Todd gives Kate the number where he's staying and leaves. Grandma comes to talk to Kate. Grandma tells Kate that the best way to be happy is to think positive. She also says that things change, people leave and life goes on. That bad things have to happen so you recognize the good things.

Kate realizes Todd and her grandmother are right about her attitude. She picks up the phone and calls Will. He says he knows it's her and sounds happy to hear from her.

Chapter 36 Analysis

Kate's negative outlook on everything happening in her life is perpetuating the negativity. She realizes that even Perfect You, which she hates, led to her spending time with Will. She thinks about her approach to everything negative that has happened to her over the past year and concludes that her bad attitude played a part in the negativity continuing. This is a transition point for Kate. She can now learn to move on from the good and the bad things that happen to her so she can live a normal life.



Chapter 37

Chapter 37 Summary

Kate stops trying to be friends with Anna again. Her parents are officially separated. She lives in an apartment with Grandma and her mom. Her dad lost his booth at the mall because he couldn't pay rent. He works now for another Perfect You representative at another mall. Todd lives with a girl that works at the movie theater. Todd wants to be a photographer and she wants to be a director. Kate and Will have been dating for six months.

Chapter 37 Analysis

Kate realizes that her life didn't end because of all of the things that happened to her in the last year. She realizes that her life has just changed.



Characters

Kate

Kate is a 16-year-old girl. She lives with her mom, dad, and college-educated brother. She has been experiencing some tough times in the last year. Her best friend since childhood, Anna, decided that they weren't friends anymore when Anna lost weight and became popular. Kate also has to work the Perfect You vitamin booth at the mall, which her dad started after quitting his full-time job.

Kate is often the parent in the situation, while her father is the child. She seems to see the realistic side of things, while her father is a dreamer. Kate is struggling with many normal teenage battles, such as first kisses, boyfriends, and having problems with kids making fun of her at school.

Additionally, Kate is burdened with the financial troubles that her family is experiencing. Eventually, this leads to her parents separating and she and her mother move into an apartment with her grandmother. By the end of the novel, Kate learns that it's not just her that is experiencing life's difficulties and that everyone does. She also learns that it's how you handle these difficulties that counts.

Will

Will is a 16-year-old boy. He goes to school with Kate. Kate thinks that Will is cute and has always had a crush on him. Will is famous for hooking up with girls at school. When he shows interest in Kate, she blows it off as just another one of Will's hookups. Will is also a high school athlete.

Even though Will is popular and always seems happy, Kate finds out later that his life has its ups and downs too. Will's father left him and his mother to move to Alaska. His dad has a new wife that is only about five years older than Will, and a new baby. While his dad never contacts him, Will notices that his father built a new website to share photos of his new family online.

Will also starts to work at Sports Shack at the mall. It turns out he had to start working to help his mom pay the rent. Will really likes Kate but has a hard time figuring Kate out because Kate seems to have a wall up around her and has a hard time letting people in. Eventually, Will is able to get through to Kate and they start dating.

Todd

Todd is Kate's older brother. He graduated from college, is 23 years old and is living at home again. Todd is working for his father at the Perfect You booth. When finances get tough for the family, Todd starts working at the coffee shop at the mall. Eventually, Todd



moves out of the house and starts living with Wendy, a girl that works at the movie theater at the mall.

Anna

Anna is Kate's best friend since preschool. Anna was overweight up until she went away the summer before freshman year of high school. When Anna comes home, she's skinny, tan, blonde and beautiful. Anna becomes popular and stops being friends with Kate. Anna is always dealing with her mom's issues too. Her mom seems to be depressed because Anna's father left and her mom cannot get a job. Anna tries to be friends with Kate again, but only when the popular girls are not around.

Steve

Steve is Kate's dad. He is more like a child than he is like an adult. Steve loves to play video games. He often leaves his booth at the mall to go to the video game store, grab coffee, go to the movies or any other excuses he can think of. He is always thinking up new ways to try to promote the vitamin booth, but none of them seem to work. Because there is not enough money coming in from the vitamin booth and because Steve refuses to get a job, the family is forced to sell their home and Steve separates from his wife.

Sharon

Sharon is Kate's mom. She is always very supportive of Steve and his dream of running the booth at the mall. She pretends as if everything is going to be fine. Eventually, however, she realizes that Steve is spending their money and doing whatever he wants, no matter what she says. This forces Sharon to wake up and finally become the adult in the situation. When she realizes that Steve is not going to be an adult about the situation, she tells him he has to choose between Perfect You and his family. They end up separating. Sharon sells the family home and moves into an apartment with her mother and Kate.

Grandma

Grandma is Sharon's mother. Grandma has money and often bails the family out with the money. Grandma loves to shop and is often arguing with Sharon about the way Steve leads his life. Grandma also spends a lot of time in the bathroom that she shares with Todd and Kate when she comes to stay with the family for a month. Grandma is a pain and gets on everyone's nerves, but in the end, she gets through to Kate about the good and the bad things to happen to people in life.



Diane

Diane is one of the most popular girls in school. She is also Anna's new best friend. Diane is very mean to Kate, always saying negative things to Kate about her father. Diane is also the one that spreads the rumor around school about a home party that Kate's father throws to try to sell vitamins.

Sam

Sam is Anna's boyfriend. He is always cheating on Anna. Anna puts up with it because she has always liked Sam and thinks that if she acts jealous that he will break up with her. Sam is friends with Will, but their friendship wanes when Sam and Will's mothers start a business together. Sam often uses Will as his cover when he wants to cheat on Anna.

Jennifers

The Jennifers are three girls at school that all have the same first name. The Jennifers are in first period with Will and Kate, so they are often talking about the PSATs and gossiping with Will and Kate. It is at Jennifers' party that Will and Kate get caught making out in the bushes.



Objects/Places

Perfect You Vitamins

Perfect You vitamins are the infomercial vitamins that Kate's dad quits his job in order to start selling. The vitamins come in a variety of flavors. They are also made for different ages and purposes. Kate and her father are often building displays, packing, unpacking, and storing the various vitamin bottles.

Perfect You Booth

The Perfect You booth is a kiosk at the mall. It's the space Steve rents to sell the "Perfect You" vitamins. It is also the booth where Kate and Todd work to help their father try to sell the vitamins.

Mall Trash Bin

The mall trash bin is located behind the mall. Kate and Will are throwing boxes and trash away in the bin when they meet up and share their first kiss. The two often meet by the trash bin for their make-out sessions while they are working or on breaks.

Park

When Will and Kate go on their first date, they buy tacos and head to the park. The park is also where Will used to bring the girls before Kate so he could make out with them. At the park, Kate and Will really get to know each other for the first time because they really talk to one another. This is where Kate finds out about Will's father and home life situation.

Stuffed Monkey

The stuffed monkey is a stuffed animal that Anna gave Kate. Kate usually keeps it on her bed. When Kate realizes that her friendship with Kate is really over, Kate rips the monkey's arms off and stuffs it in her closet.

Picture of Anna and Kate

Kate used to keep a picture of Anna and Kate taped to the back of Kate's bedroom door. This way she could see it every night before she went to sleep. When Anna stops talking to Kate, Kate takes the picture off her door and moves it into her desk drawer. When Kate realizes that her friendship with Anna is over, Kate rips the photo apart.



Pen

A pen is how Kate and Will meet and talk for the first time. On the first day of high school, Will asks Kate if he can borrow a pen. Later, she sarcastically asks for her pen back.

Shoe

Kate throws her shoe at Will at a party. Will picks up the shoe and throws it out the window. Kate goes to look for the shoe and Will follows her. This is when they end up making out in the bushes and getting caught by partygoers. Will calls Kate's house later and leaves a message with Grandma that he has Kate's shoe.

Mall

The mall is where the Perfect You vitamin booth is. The mall is also a common hangout spot for the teenagers that Kate goes to school with. She often sees Anna at the mall shopping with her new friends. Anna even approaches Kate one day at the mall and makes plans to meet her there again later.

Sports Shack

Sports Shack is the athletic store in the mall. It is the store where Will works. It is also the store that Steve gets kicked out of for trying to sell Perfect You vitamins to the store customers. When Kate goes to confront Will about his reasons for asking her on a date, she does it in the Sports Shack while Will is working.



Themes

Relationships

One of the primary themes running through the novel is relationships. The novel reveals that even the individuals that make up a family have different relationships among the family members. For example, Todd and his father have a closer relationship than Todd and his mother. Kate doesn't seem to be close with either of her parents or her brother.

Friendship is another type of relationship the novel tackles. First, Anna and Kate are best friends. When Anna loses weight and becomes popular, however, she ignores Kate and their friendship fades. Kate tries to be friends with the Jennifers, but realizes that she really doesn't have anything in common with them. Kate continuously tries to mend her friendship with Anna, but eventually realizes that Anna is not a true friend.

Romantic relationships are also tackled in the novel. Kate has a crush on Will and Will has a crush on Kate, but Kate thinks that Will is just interested in hooking up and not a relationship. In the end, Will and Kate become boyfriend and girlfriend. Anna and Sam are also boyfriend and girlfriend. Anna has always had a crush on Sam, but Sam didn't want anything to do with Anna until she lost all of the weight, dyes her hair blonde, and becomes popular. Sam is always cheating on Anna but Anna tries to ignore it because she doesn't want to lose Sam.

Coming of Age

One of the primary themes that run throughout the novel is growing up and coming of age, even against adversity. Kate struggles with the fact that her coming of age includes having to make new friends and start a new life after she loses Anna and her father starts selling infomercial vitamins, which makes Kate a social outcast. Kate deals with the responsibilities in life of having parents that seem to act more like children at times. She's also dealing with figuring out her feelings for Will and his feeling for her and trying to find out who she is as a person.

Kate also faces the rite of passage of having her first boyfriend and her first kiss. Kate especially struggles with her feelings about herself as a person without having Anna in her life.

Family

Family is the central theme throughout the entire novel. This is because the storyline is about the lives of this particular family - Kate's family. While every family has their trials and tribulations, Kate's family has its own family dynamics that are the same and that are different from those of other families. In the end though, they are a family and they will get through it together, one way or the other. Even though Kate's parents end up

separating, she still has a relationship with both of them and her brother. Additionally, she forms a new kind of relationship with her grandmother since Kate sees her grandmother in a new light.

Style

Point of View

The novel is written in the first-person point of view from the perspective of main character, Kate. The novel swings back and forth between the present and the past. The present represents the time after Kate and Anna stop being friends. The past represents the time when Kate and Anna were still friends.

The point of view of this novel is intimate, allowing a reader to connect closely with the main character, Kate. The book written in this manner allows the reader to get inside Kate's head, thoughts and inner struggles. The reader cares what happens to the narrator. The point of view also allows the author to inject her own opinions into the narration and to expand on the events taking place around the other characters and the occurrences taking place.

Setting

The novel unfolds during the 21st century. It never mentions the specific town or city where the novel is set. The main characters are involved in the daily home life of living with the daily tribulations of managing household finances, rites of passage, and relationship problems. Kate is constantly trying to figure out how to be friends with Anna again, but ends up learning that Anna isn't a true friend.

The setting of this novel works well with the plot. At first, the reader is not aware that the character is perpetuating her own problems by focusing on all of the negatives in her life. However, as events unfold, Kate's problems are a constant part of the plot, the lives of the characters, and even the outcome of the novel.

Language and Meaning

The language of this novel is relatively simple and easy to read. The language is from the 21st century, which is when the novel is set. The language is descriptive enough that it helps to explain the situations and is detailed enough for the reader to truly understand.

Structure

The novel is divided into 37 chapters. Each chapter ranges from two pages to 20 pages long. The chapters tell the story primarily in exposition and with some dialogue. The narrator injects her own voice and thoughts throughout the book, providing her opinions and feelings of the events unfolding in the novel.

The novel contains one main plot and several subplots. The main plot surrounds human relationships such as friendship and romantic relationships. One subplot is the coming of age of the characters, primarily that of Kate. Another subplot is family relationships.



Quotes

"Todd and I sold one bottle of B Buzz! In the morning, and I bet those two women come back tomorrow" (Chapter 1, p. 3).

"Seriously, I'm sorry about everything with Anna" (Chapter 2, p. 9).

"No, really, please forget what I said before. We'll get by" (Chapter 3, p. 13).

"Kate, I thought you said you just did okay" (Chapter 4, p. 16).

"Wow, you look different" (Chapter 5, p. 24).

"Wait, you work at the Perfect You store" (Chapter 6, p. 32).

"I figured your heart wouldn't be breaking over that" (Chapter 7, p. 38).

"Really? Grandma" (Chapter 8, p. 46).

"Hey, how bad do you think things are, money-wise" (Chapter 9, p. 50).

"Jackass? You shoved your tongue down my throat and now you're calling me names" (Chapter 10, p. 60).

"No shopping vacations with Kate, Mother" (Chapter 11, p. 67).

"Now we match" (Chapter 12, p. 75).

"So you're saying you're immune to the Will Miller charm" (Chapter 13, p. 85).

"But Will hasn't been with hardly anyone this year" (Chapter 14, p. 91).



"You're the one who called me an illiterate jackass and then practically spit on me if I so much as looked at you after that" (Chapter 15, p. 102).

"You just went ahead and did what you wanted, just like always, you selfish" (Chapter 16, p. 110).

"That's just it. I'm still me. You see it, don't you? See me" (Chapter 17, p. 118).

"Okay, why were you acting so weird before? And where did you run off to" (Chapter 18, p. 128).

"Whichever one will let me use the bathroom" (Chapter 19, p. 134).

"You are the strangest girl I know. You won't even talk to me for more than ten seconds unless we're at the mall, so how could I ever kiss you anywhere else? And who do you think I was talking about when I said I wanted to talk someone into leaving with me" (Chapter 20, p. 142).

"This isn't about me and, believe it or not, it isn't even about you" (Chapter 21, p. 152).

"So, I guess you two know about the house" (Chapter 22, p. 159).

"You know how sometimes there are stupid rumors about Sam hooking up with random girls? It's all because Will hooks up with anything that breathes, and it's so annoying because it's obvious Sam has actual standards, you know" (Chapter 23, p. 167).

"Did you and Will really get caught" (Chapter 24, p. 170).

"I don't want to go out with you. I don't want anything to do with you. You hook up with me, then humiliate me. I've had more than enough of you" (Chapter 25, p. 179).

"Come on, Kate. He asked you out in front of half the school, and you destroyed him" (Chapter 26, p. 184).

"But did Will say anything" (Chapter 27, p. 131).



"I'm sorry I didn't ask you out in a more Kate-approved manner, but I did mean it" (Chapter 28, p. 206).

"I want to go out with you" (Chapter 29, p. 213).

"The thing is, darling, your mother isn't feeling so well, and I think it's best if you let her rest. I'll talk to her for you later, okay" (Chapter 30, p. 220).

"You're so cute when you're trying to be mean. I used to say stuff just to get you to look at me like you are now" (Chapter 31, p. 234).

"No, but I...I need you to grow up. And I hope that time apart will" (Chapter 32, p. 241).

"So now Sam and Will are in the same category" (Chapter 33, p. 252).

"Anna" (Chapter 34, p. 259).

"The house has been sold" (Chapter 35, p. 270).

"Things end. People leave. And you know what? Life goes on. Besides, if bad things didn't happen, how would you be able to feel the good ones" (Chapter 36, p. 277).

"So what happened in there" (Chapter 37, p. 282).

Topics for Discussion

Who is the true Kate? Do you think she knows her parents are heading toward separation or is she in denial? When Kate has a chance to date Will, why does she decide to turn him down publicly? When Kate confesses her problems to Anna, does she do it out of a feeling of desperation or for another reason? What does Kate ultimately realize about her relationship with Anna?

Discuss the relationship between Kate and Anna. Are they schoolmates, foes or somewhere in between? Is there true competition in their relationship? How does Kate feel about Anna? How does Anna feel about Kate? How do Kate's feelings change after Anna doesn't stick up for Kate when Diane makes fun of Kate? What does Kate do about it? What happens to Anna?

Discuss the relationship between Anna and Diane. Are they friends, foes or somewhere in between? Is there true competition in their relationship? How does Anna feel about Diane before they become friends? How does Anna feel about Diane after they become friends? What happens to Diane?

Discuss the relationship between Will and Kate. Are they friends, foes, girlfriend and boyfriend, or somewhere in between? Is there true competition in their relationship? How does Kate feel about Will? How does Will feel about Kate? How do Kate's feelings? What does she do about it? What happens to Will?

Discuss the relationship between Todd and Kate. Do they have a typical brother and sister relationship? Do you think they annoy each other on purpose? Do you think they really understand each other?

Who is Will? Is he a tortured soul or simply a normal teenager going through a difficult time? Why do you think Will takes Kate to the park? What role does Will play in Kate healing from all of the bad things that have happened in the past year?

Discuss Kate's attitude. What impact does it have on the characters of the novel? How does it motivate them and how does it derail their lives?