

## Perfectly Imperfect

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Hello everyone! Are you ready to embark on a new adventure? Are you ready to discover a story like no other?

Robert, Katie, Elie, and Addison are four friends who have grown up together ever since the age of one. Their bond is like no other, and no one could ever come in between them. Together they went through thick and thin. Now, Robert and Addison are thirteen years old, they entered the first year of the teenage year. As for Elie and Katie, both are still pre-teens, Elie being eleven years and Katie being twelve years old.

As you flip the pages of this book, you will discover the story of every single character, told from his or her point of view. You will see as you proceed that even though these four characters are close friends, yet each character has a problem that they struggle with, yet hides it from the rest of the group. Strange right? Let's see how they hide their struggles.

Enjoy your reading and have fun making predictions as you go along and finding out whether your predictions were right or wrong!

All the love, xoxo

## Chapter 1: Katie's Point of View

Hello! My name is Katie. I'm twelve years old, and I have an older sister called Kayla. I've been friend with Robert, Elie, and Addison ever since I can imagine. I love them so much! We've been through a lot together, and everything we do, we do it together! Yet, the problem is that, there is something they don't know about, something I never wanted to mention to them even though they are like my family. Do you want to know what it is? Well, I have an eating disorder. It's called anorexia nervosa. That's why I'm very skinny.

Now, if you're wondering what that is, I'll give you a small insight. Anorexia nervosa means that I eat too little and sometimes I over exercise myself. This is very dangerous and no one should ever do it since it puts your life in danger. What is also worse is that, even though everyone sees me as very thin, and even though I am quite underweight, I still see myself in the mirror as fat. It's like my mind is playing tricks on me, and I can't see the true image of myself.

I've struggled with this eating disorder for a long while, and the reason behind it is one thing: Bullying. People always bullied me when I was a young kid because I was fat. More than that, they compared me to my sister Kayla, and told me that I don't deserve to be her sister. I actually became jealous of Kayla and started to compare myself to her. I started seeing Kayla as the most gorgeous human being on Earth, and myself as the ugliest. I decided one day that I want to become thin and pretty like her. But you know what I did? Instead of going on a healthy diet, I started starving myself. I started skipping meals without anyone knowing. Bit by bit I

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started to lose huge amounts of weight and people stopped bullying me and started calling me pretty. This brought me happiness and I kept on going with losing weight and starving myself. Every time I eat, I feel guilty for eating, I feel that I shouldn't eat and that I should lose more and more weight. My mother and father are very worried about me. They are planning to take me to the family doctor. No. I don't want to be fat again. I will not go to the doctor.

Now that you've heard a good part of my story, I will go on and show you what a day in my life looks like.

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I woke up this morning, and checked my calendar. Wow! It's the day I've been waiting for, MY BIRTHDAY!

I got out of my bed, rushed to the bathroom, washed my face, and got ready to join my friends (we walk every day together to school). Before I left my mother rushed towards me, gave me a huge hug, and told me "Happy birthday Katie! I can't believe you just turned thirteen! You're a teenager now! Oh my little munchkin! I lo-". "Mom I'm sorry to cut you here, but I really need to go my friends are waiting for me outside, and I love you too!", I said. Then she handed me a bag full of sweets which she prepared for my birthday: A cupcake with blue glazing, cinnamon rolls, small heart shaped cookies coated with pink icing, and a small chocolate cake (this is the only item she didn't prepare but rather bought from the bakery nearby). I gave her a kiss on her forehead and rushed out to meet my friends.

Wait, where are R-

Surprise! Before I finished my sentence, Robert, Elie, and Addison were walking towards me with "Happy Birthday" balloons and a bouquet of sunflowers since I love this type of flower, in fact it's my favorite!

I became so emotional and started crying.

"Aw! Don't cry!", my friends said in union. This actually made me laugh, it was so funny how they said it all together.

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“GROUP HUG!”, screamed Elie, and they all started hugging me, all together. It was such a sweet surprise, I love my three friends. I wouldn’t trade them for anything or anyone else in this world!

I ran back into the house, put the balloons and flowers in my room as my friends greeted my parents and started chitchatting with them. When I came back to the living room, I grabbed Addison’s arm and started walking outside of my house towards school. Robert and Elie followed us in the back.

We reached school after ten minutes of walking, and for the first time in a long while I felt happy. I just wasn’t feeling very happy recently because my grades weren’t very satisfactory, and thus every time I went to school I was reminded of these grades in my mind and couldn’t feel happy about spending another day in school.

I entered my classroom and took my seat next to Addison. The teacher started explaining about concave and convex lenses. After 50 minutes of talking, the physics period ended and the biology period began. Hours passed so slow in school! I couldn’t wait till recess so that I can get out and sit with my friends.

TRRRRRR!

Finally, the bell rings! Recess time!!!!

I rushed out of class to meet Robert, Elie, and Addison. We sit together and they started eating what their mothers prepared for them. I didn’t want to eat, especially not today since my

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mother gave me sweets and I knew if I had eaten that I would have felt guilty and ashamed.

Remember why?

“Katie, why aren’t you eating anything? Didn’t your mother prepare the usual sweets that she prepares every year on your birthday?”, Elie asked.

“Well I don’t really feel hungry, any of you wants my sweets?”, I lie. I’ve been feeling hungry since last night because I skipped dinner, and I really want to eat those delicious sweets, but my mind won’t let me rest and eat them. I tried to sound as convincing as I could since I didn’t want any of my friends to suspect anything about anorexia.

“But you’ve been losing a lot of weight recently, are you okay?”, asked Addison.

“Yes, yes I am Addi! Don’t worry, it’s just that I lost my appetite recently with all the stress we are going through from school”, I replied.

“Makes sense, I understand you. Besides, I would love to eat those tempting sweets your mother prepared!”, said Robert.

Perfect, now I can get rid of my food without my mother knowing that I didn’t eat them and without throwing the food away. “Hahahah, of course!”, I said as I took out the bag of sweets from my school bag and handed it to Robert.

TRRRR!

Once again, the bell rings. Now I have English, my favorite class since I can make great contributions in class and I can manage to stay focused throughout the whole session.

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In English class, we take themes, under which we examine different readings. For example, one of the themes was about Values, and we took readings related to peace, love, forgiveness, and so on. Today, the teacher said that we will be introduced to a new theme that she thinks is extremely important. So, I started wondering what that theme might be about. Maybe it could be about climate change? Or maybe about respect?

My mind was rushing from one idea to another and I was trying to actually figure out what it might be. I started thinking and thinking, until my thoughts were interrupted by the following sentence that Mrs. Doris, our English teacher said: "Our theme for the coming few weeks will be about disorders! I believe this is an important topic and we need to raise awareness!". I couldn't believe what I was hearing. I couldn't breathe well, and needed some fresh air. "Mrs. Doris, I'm sorry to interrupt, but may I go to the bathroom?", I said while trying to stay as calm as possible. "But Katie, you just came back from recess, I suggest you wait a few minutes", she said. I had to find a way out; I could no longer breathe well; thoughts started rushing into my mind about my eating disorder and what I went through from bullying to starving myself to forcing myself to throw up and all the scary moments I passed through. I tried to focus on what Mrs. Doris was saying but I really couldn't hear anything. Her voice started to fade, and I felt myself lost in a world that I don't know of.

"KATIE! KATIE! WAKE UP! ARE YOU OKAY?", I don't know who was saying that but that's the last thing I heard and then silence.

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“Katie? Ka-Katie? Can you hear me?”

I opened my eyes and saw a person wearing white, I readjusted my sight and notice that it’s a doctor.

“Where am I?”, I ask.

“You’re in the hospital dear, you fainted. How are you feeling now?”, the doctor asked.

“I am feeling better, am I going to go back to school now?”, I asked.

“Yes, but first I need to ask you a few questions to check you out. What is it exactly that you felt before fainting? Are you eating well? Is there any reason that you know of that might be the reason behind what happened?”, she questioned.

“I think what was the reason is a panic attack, I read about it over the internet since I once experienced something similar. I didn’t faint at that time but this time I did”, I replied.

“Yes, this is the reason why you fainted. Now I want you to learn something for the next time you experience such. I want you to take deep breathes, inhale, hold your breath for a few seconds, then exhale, and as you are doing so try to think of a happy place or something that relaxes you, this way your whole body will relax and you would feel at ease and in control of the situation. Okay? All clear?”

“All clear doctor, thank you for the help and advice!”, I said as she helped me out of the hospital. A car was waiting there for me to take me back to school.

A while later, we reached school, I got down and thanked everyone, then headed to class.

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When my classes ended I became surrounded by my friends who wanted to know what happened. I told them it was just a panic attack and that there was nothing to be worried about.

I went back home with Robert, Elie, and Addison who kept on making sure I was feeling fine, and I kept on reassuring them that I feel great and that there is nothing to be worried about.

At home, my parents kept on asking questions about what happened, but I managed to make them believe that I was panicking about grades and school, not about my disorder that no one knew of, and told them not to worry because I felt great.

Ding dong!

“Are we expecting someone over?”, I asked. My mother shook her head to say no, so she went to the door and checked to see who it is.

“Oh!”, she said after talking with the person and then called my name.

I rushed to the door and to my surprise it was Robert. He was assigned to work with me on a new project we have in English related to the disorders theme. I pulled myself together and went upstairs to my room so that Robert and I could work peacefully without any disturbances or interruptions.

“How are you feeling? I am actually worried about you. Are you sure it is just that you were panicking about grades?”. He sounded very worried and concerned and I’ve never seen him like that before.

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“Yes, don’t worry. I am fine, besides, what is our topic for the project and what should we do?”, I asked.

“The theme is about disorders, and every pair was given to discuss one. The teacher assigned different kinds of disorders under the categories of learning and eating disorders. So...Um, Katie? Are you focused with me?”, he asked.

“My bad, I zoned out a bit. Feeling a bit tired with all the work we had for the past few days”, I said. Deep down I felt like crying, I hoped that our topic isn’t about eating disorders, I don’t want to panic and go through a panic attack once again. I tried to calm myself down and hope for the best. “So Robert, tell me, what is our topic? Is it under learning or eating disorders?”, I asked.

“Eating disorder, specifically anorexia nervosa. We have to discuss the definition, causes, symptoms, effects, and ways to solve it”, he replied.

I felt like devastated. How can I do the project on something that I only know about? (even my parents don’t know about it, I once went to the psychologist at school to ask her what was going on with me and she diagnosed with anorexia nervosa, but no one in the whole entire planet knew about it!). How will I hide it from Robert, knowing that at some point he might suspect something if I showed that I know a lot about a topic that is new to the whole classroom?

“Katie are you still with me?”

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Once again I zoned out, but I have to pull myself together so that Robert doesn't suspect anything. The last thing I want is for him to feel that something is wrong with me.

"Yes I am. When is our deadline?", I asked. Robert went on and gave me all the details I needed and we discussed which days we're available that best suits both of us to work on the project and get it done before the deadline. I am devastated, how can I get out of this project? Will everybody know? Will my secret be revealed?