

THE UNEDITED VERSION OF **PURE PERCEPTION**

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Pure Perception (Web of Deception #2)

Michelle Watson

*To the fighters that never give up.
Your determination is awe-inspiring.*

*To the seekers who are forever curious.
Your knowledge is unlimited and knows no bounds.*

*To the compassionate ones.
Your kindness is a blessing I hope we all will learn from.*

*To the scarred ones.
You are more beautiful than you know.*

*To the lovers.
Love fiercely.*

*Just because my scars aren't visible doesn't mean I
don't have them.*

—Hunter Knight (Pure Illusion)

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CHAPTER ONE

Thank you note & About Author

Perception: the ability to see, hear, or become aware of something through the senses.

Known and unknown hazards and threats lurk within the shadows of the golden path that leads to the end of the rainbow. All that you see and don't see are set purposely to question your intuition. Remember within this world of reverie trust your two eyes and heartbeat.

Beyond the paved asphalt roads and proud American waving flags from the porches of neat rows of identical colonial brick houses and further past the lush green lawns and churches, something sinister harbors within Bayham County. The darkness may rest within the moss-covered oaks of the small southern town of Cherry Creek, North Carolina.

PROLOGUE

12:00P.M., September, 20th

Hunter age nine

Isabel age eight

Today, I am getting married. Today, I will be a changed person. Today, I will be united with my best friend forever. But, right now, I get free time with my wife-to-be. Isabel and I pick cherries off the trees by her house. Her mom will bake a cherry pie as a wedding gift for us. Her mom makes the best cherry pies.

Isabel collects a handful of red fruit and drops them in the basket, glancing at Tyler and Hero while they laugh and splash each other in the stream. "I can't believe we're getting married."

My stomach twists with disappointment and I feel my whole face frown because she says that like she doesn't want to. "You don't want to get married to me?"

She reaches down to smooth the wrinkles between my eyebrows with her fingertips. Isabel does that all the time when I pout. It makes me feel like a child, but I love it. "I do want to marry you, Hunter. I just can't believe Caleb and my parents agreed, I can't believe their throwing us a real wedding. Do you not see them assembling everything?"

I look back and notice Ivan rolling out the white aisle that Isabel will soon walk down. My dad and

Isabelle are chatting happily as they add white orchards and white roses to the bowery altar.

“It only makes sense that they’re part of this,” I say, looking back at her.

“Really? Why?”

“Because, this is special. You’re special to me. And I plan to keep you for a really long time. Forever, Isabel. You’re mine.”

Her pretty face colors red and she turns her head to hide her massive smile.

Yeah.

I’m marrying my best friend today.

I can love this girl forever.

PART I

FORGETTING THE UNFORGETTABLE

CHAPTER ONE

The Beginning

“Can we dance for a bit?”

Isabel face contorts into shock. She shouldn't look so astonished. I'll use any excuse to touch her again, feel her body rubbing against mine.

“Dance?” She's smiling, so I know she wants to.

Come on.

Get over here.

Attempting to be blasé and indifferent, I shrug. “It only seems right.” I simply open my arms and she comes right to me. Isabel isn't conscious of her decision that just ended her marriage before it begins.

She's mine.

I wrap my arms around her. She nestles into me. I breathe in her hair, her scent. My dick is instantly furious with me. We dance in small circles for a while until I accumulate a plan.

The tables have certainly turned.

If I plant the seed of doubt in her head maybe it will thrive and I'll win for once. She'll realize what's standing right in front of her face.

What else am I to do when my first love doesn't want me anymore?

MINE.

MINE.

MINE.

Here goes...

“Humor me with a short game, okay?”

She nods against my shoulder.

“What if I told you that your lips were made only to be kissed by me?”

She stiffens in my embrace. “Hunter, what kind of game is this?”

My fingers dig into her sides. “Just humor me, Isabel.”

“What if I told you that I’m happy now?”

Happy?

Yeah.

Fucking.

Right.

Isabel doesn’t do *happy*.

“What if I told you that I’m too selfish to care?” I really am. Isabel shouldn’t underestimate what I’m capable of; she’ll come out unscathed in the end for it.

Her breath hitches.

Yes, baby.

You finally comprehend what I’m doing.

I’m on a roll here. No need to stop now. “What if I told you that I’m willing to do whatever it takes to have you to myself again?”

She pushes back to look at me, her expression is wary. “Even break my heart.”

My girl gets it.

I grin so wide my cheeks hurt. “Even breaking your pretty little heart all over again.” Her eyes widen. She’s

caught in my web, and I'm closing in. "What if I told you that you belong to me and I'm willing to sabotage your future with him just to have you in my bed at night?"

Her face blanches. "Hunter, stop. I don't want to play anymore."

Taking my time, I scrutinize every feature of her face. She always gets anxious when I do this. Her chest swells and her brows always furrow like she's trying to read my thoughts. I still affect her. I hold her at arm's length, smirking and very proud of myself.

"I have a Christmas gift for you." She looks down at her closed fist.

I let her go in fear that she might slap or punch me again. No doubt that I deserve it. "Really? I feel bad. I didn't get you anything." *Yet.*

"Don't worry about it. Here..." she seems nervous as she drops three thin bands in my palm.

"Rings?"

Isabel gives me an impish smile that she has perfected. "They're for your thumb. Read them."

My eyes turn into slants as I read the fine writing, placing them on my left thumb. "Three little angels." A white-hot pain too indiscernible to explain spreads throughout my chest.

Shit!

"For the babies," she whispers as if in trouble.

"Isabel. Our dehydrated marshmallows are getting cold."

Fucking Max.

He isn't going to let her out of his sight for too long, especially with me around.

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