



All I Want for Christmas Is the Girl Next Door

Chelsea Bobulski

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Infused with humor, heartache, and holiday cheer, Chelsea Bobulski's *All I Want for Christmas is the Girl Next Door* explores the dangers of getting exactly what one wishes for.

Graham knows he is supposed to be with Sarah, the girl next door. But Sarah has been dating Graham's best friend, Jeremy, for two years. Desperate to be with Sarah, Graham makes a wish. He wakes up to a world in which he is dating Sarah—but now he is not sure that this is the way things are supposed to be. His feelings bloom for a new girl, Piper, and he determines that, if he doesn't right these circumstances, love—and a life—will hang in the balance.

Graham narrates, and is a humorous and poignant storyteller. He's sarcastic in presenting himself, and remarks on the sexiness of feeling like a ninety-year-old in a sixteen-year-old's body. His growth is centered, but tough-but-lovable Piper, confident Sarah, and kindhearted Jeremy are also developed alongside him. Graham proves to be a loyal friend: he's supportive of Sarah and Jeremy's relationship, even when he yearns to be with her. Throughout the story, he wrestles with whether he cares more about his friends' desires, or the dream that he has always been sure would be good for them all.

The importance of taking responsibility for one's actions is a central theme: Graham realizes that he is hurting Sarah and Piper, and works to right the mistakes he's made. The conclusion is delightful, and includes a glimpse into the results of Graham's efforts.

All I Want for Christmas is the Girl Next Door is a charming holiday novel in which a romance goes wrong—though one teenager may be able to set it right.

VIVIAN TURNBULL (November / December 2021)

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