



THE PERCY LEGACY

GEA SIMONS

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Thank you for downloading this exclusive sneak peek of *The Percy Legacy*.

I hope you'll enjoy meeting Abigail Percy and taking your first steps into her world. This preview contains the complete first chapter of the novel, giving you a taste of the story before its release.

Happy reading!

Gea Simons

1 - A gift

Richard Percy had always believed there were moments in life a person would never forget. The birth of a child was supposed to be one of them. Not because people said so, but because some events seemed too large to ever fade. Yet as he sat beside Sarah's hospital bed on the second morning after Abigail's birth, what he suspected he would remember most years from now was not the moment his daughter had entered the world. It was this.

The quiet. The stillness after two days that had felt endless.

Sunlight slipped through the half-closed blinds and stretched across the room in pale bands of gold. Sarah was asleep at last, her head turned slightly toward the tiny bundle resting against her side. The strain of the past forty-eight hours still showed in the shadows beneath her eyes, but for the first time since the labor had started, she looked peaceful. Richard found himself watching her more than the baby. After twenty years of marriage, she could still surprise him. There were moments when he caught a glimpse of the twenty-year-old woman he had fallen in love with and wondered where the years had gone.

The answer, he supposed, was sitting in a middle school classroom somewhere wondering why his parents had suddenly become emotional wrecks over a seven-pound baby.

A smile tugged at the corner of his mouth.

Owen had handled the pregnancy much as he handled everything else in life: with cautious skepticism. He had nodded politely when they told him he was going to be a big brother. He had attended doctor's appointments when asked. He had even helped assemble furniture for the nursery. But Richard had never quite been convinced that his son understood what was coming.

To be fair, neither had he.

For years, they had accepted that their family would remain exactly as it was. Not because they wanted it that way, but because life had quietly pushed them in that direction. There had been specialists and treatments, hopeful conversations and difficult silences. Every time they allowed themselves to believe it might finally happen, disappointment had followed close behind. Eventually they had stopped talking about another child altogether. The subject became one of those things couples learn to navigate without words.

Then Sarah had walked into the kitchen one Tuesday morning carrying a pregnancy test and looking as though she might either laugh or cry.

Richard still remembered staring at her long enough that she finally asked if he had forgotten how to read.

He had taken the test from her hand. He looked at it, then looked at her and finally looked back at the test again asking if she was sure. To this day she maintained it was the least romantic response in medical history. He still argued that shock should be considered a mitigating circumstance.

The soft sound of the hospital door opening pulled him from the memory. He glanced up just as Owen stepped into the room. His son immediately lowered his voice, as though crossing the threshold of the room required a different set of rules. Behind him came Sam Walker carrying a paper bag that practically advertised trouble.

Sam had been Owen's best friend for so long that Richard sometimes forgot he wasn't family. The boy spent as much time at the Percy house as he did at his own. Sarah had long ago stopped setting an extra place at the dinner table and simply assumed he would appear. Most evenings he did.

Owen approached the bed first. Richard watched as his son's attention shifted toward the sleeping baby. The expression that crossed his face was one Richard had seen several times during the past two days. Curiosity battled uncertainty. Owen wanted to be interested. He wanted to be a good big brother. The problem was that babies spent most of their time sleeping, and twelve-year-old boys were not naturally fascinated by sleeping people.

For nearly a minute he simply stood there looking down at Abigail.

Finally he said, "She still looks exactly the same."

Richard laughed softly.

"She was born two days ago."

"I know that."

"Did you expect her to come back from the nursery with a driver's license?"

Owen rolled his eyes, but Richard caught the beginning of a smile. Sam stepped closer and looked over his shoulder.

"I still think she looks like a potato."

"See?" Owen said immediately. "That's what I told you."

Richard shook his head. Neither boy noticed the movement from the hospital bed until Sarah laughed. All three turned toward her. She was awake, watching them with the kind of amusement only a mother could manage.

"There is something deeply wrong with both of you," she said.

"That's not fair," Owen replied. "I've only known her for two days."

Sarah smiled and held out her hand.

"Come here."

Neither boy ever ignored that tone. Within seconds they were standing beside the bed while she looked from one to the other. Richard had seen that look before. It appeared whenever Sarah was overwhelmed by happiness and trying very hard not to show it. Her gaze settled on Abigail. Then on Owen.

"You know," she said softly, "your father and I spent a very long time thinking she would never exist."

The room grew quieter. Even Sam stopped looking for a joke. Sarah brushed a finger across Abigail's cheek. After a minute or so she looked at the boys again.

"When we finally found out about her, it felt like someone had handed us a gift we stopped believing we'd ever receive."

Owen looked down at his sister again. This time the uncertainty seemed to fade a little. The baby shifted in her sleep and wrapped her tiny fingers around one of his.

Richard watched something change in his son's expression. For the first time since Abigail's birth, Owen wasn't looking at a baby. He was looking at his sister. And in that moment Richard was sure Owen would never allow anyone to hurt Abigail and that he would always protect her.

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About Gea

I'm Gea Simons, a Dutch romance author writing contemporary romance, romantic suspense and paranormal romance. My novels combine unforgettable characters, emotional depth, strong heroines and the kind of love stories that stay with readers long after the final page.

Whether my characters find themselves on a small-town ranch, in the boardroom of a growing business or deep within the territory of a werewolf pack, every story revolves around the same question:

What are we willing to risk for the people we love?

I believe romance is about far more than falling in love. It's about trust, healing, courage, second chances and discovering the strength we never knew we had.

When I'm creating a new story, I spend countless hours getting to know my characters before writing the first chapter. I want them to feel like real people with real dreams, flaws and fears. By the time you meet them, I hope they already feel as if they've been waiting for you.

My goal has always been simple: to write books that make readers laugh, cry, fall in love and close the final page with a smile.

If that's exactly the kind of romance you're looking for, you're in the right place.

Welcome to my world.

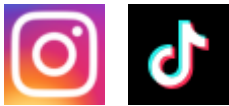




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