



## That Perfect Someone: A Malory Novel (Malory-Anderson Family)

By Johanna Lindsey

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#1 *New York Times* bestselling author Johanna Lindsey sweeps readers away on a seductive adventure with the “wickedly witty, lusciously sensual” (*Booklist*) Malory family when a detested marriage contract turns childhood enemies into passionate lovers.

Nine years ago, Richard Allen fled England and his controlling father. Determined to live his own life, he took to the sea and settled in the Caribbean, joining a band of treasure-hunting pirates and adopting the persona of a carefree, seductive Frenchman named Jean Paul to guard the secrets of his past. When he slips back into England to carry out an urgent task, Richard becomes infatuated with a married woman, Georgina Malory. But his reckless attempt to woo Georgina at a masked ball turns out to be the worst mistake of his life because it brings him face to face with another beautiful woman.

Thrilled that her solicitors have finally come up with a way to free her from her betrothal contract to the Earl of Manford’s son who abandoned her years ago, heiress Julia Miller is ready for the marriage mart and hopes to find that perfect someone at her friend Georgina’s ball. Charmed by a masked Frenchman who gives her her first kiss, she can’t help but pursue this mysterious man—until she makes a shocking discovery. Now, to avoid falling into a ruthless nobleman’s trap, Julia must enter a risky, intimate charade with a man she never believed she could love.

With a little help from the lucky-in-love Malory family, will Richard and Julia discover in each other that perfect someone?

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## **Editorial Review**

### Review

"The Malorys are the family everyone wishes they had, so returning to their world is like entering a bit of heaven. The way Lindsey expertly writes a seductive battle of wills loves story is magic; love, laughter, adventure and passion collide as childhood foes become lovers."

--"Romantic Times" Top Pick (4 1/2 stars)

### About the Author

Johanna Lindsey is world-renowned for her "mastery of historical romance" (*Entertainment Weekly*), with more than sixty million copies of her novels sold. She is the author of fifty-two previous national bestselling novels, many of which reached the #1 spot on the *New York Times* bestseller list. Lindsey lives in New Hampshire with her family.

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## **Chapter One**

IT MIGHT SEEM ODD to consider Hyde Park your own backyard, but Julia Miller did. Growing up in London, she'd ridden there almost daily for as long as she could remember, from her very first pony when she was a child to the thoroughbred mares that followed. People waved at her whether they knew her or not, simply because they were so used to seeing her there. The *ton*, shop clerks cutting across the park on their way to work, gardeners, they all noticed Julia and treated her like one of their own.

Tall, blond-haired, and fashionably dressed, she always returned the smiles and waves. She was generally a friendly sort and people tended to respond to that in kind.

Even more odd than Julia's considering such a mammoth park her personal riding grounds were her circumstances. She'd grown up in the upper-crust end of town but her family wasn't upper-crust at all. She lived in one of the larger town houses in Berkeley Square, because it wasn't only the nobility who could afford those town houses. In fact, her family, who acquired their surname in the Middle Ages when a craftsman took on the name of his trade, had been among the first to buy and build in Berkeley Square back in the mid-1700s when the square was first laid out, so Millers had been living there for many generations now.

Julia was well-known and well liked in the neighborhood. Her closest friend, Carol Roberts, was a daughter of the nobility, and other young women of the *ton* who knew her through Carol, or from the private finishing school she'd attended, liked her as well and invited her to their parties. They weren't the least bit threatened by her pretty looks or deep pockets because she was already engaged to be married. She'd been engaged nearly since birth.

"Fancy meeting you here," a female voice said behind her. Carol Roberts rode up, and her mare fell into an easy trot beside Julia's.

Julia chuckled at her petite, black-haired friend. "That should have been my remark. You rarely ride anymore."

Carol sighed. "I know. Harry frowns on it, especially since we're trying to have our first child. He doesn't want me to take any chance of losing it before we even know it's been conceived."

Julia knew that horseback riding could indeed cause miscarriages. "Then why are you taking that risk?"

"Because a baby didn't get conceived this month," Carol said with a disappointed pursing of her lips.

Julia nodded sympathetically.

"Besides," Carol added, "I have so missed our rides together, I'm willing to defy Harry for these few days when I'm having my monthlies and we won't be trying to conceive."

"He wasn't home to find out, was he?" Julia guessed.

Carol laughed, her blue eyes sparkling mischievously. "No indeed and I'll be home before he is."

Julia didn't worry that her friend would get into trouble with her husband. Harold Roberts adored his wife. They'd known and liked each other before Carol's first season three years ago, so no one had been surprised when they got engaged within weeks of Carol's debut and married a few months later.

Carol and Julia had been neighbors their whole lives, both living in Berkeley Square, their respective town houses side by side with no more than a narrow alley separating them. Even their bedroom windows had been directly across from each other—they'd arranged that!—so even when they weren't in the same house together visiting, they could talk from their windows without raising their voices. It was no wonder they'd become the best of friends.

Julia sorely missed Carol. While they still visited often when Carol was in London, she no longer lived next door. When she married, she'd moved into her husband's house, many blocks away, and every few months she and Harold spent weeks at his family's ancestral estate in the country. He was hoping they'd stay there permanently. Carol was still resisting that idea. Fortunately, Harold wasn't the sort of overbearing husband who made all the decisions without considering his wife's wishes.

They continued to ride side by side for a few minutes, but Julia had already been in the park for a hour, so she suggested, "Want to stop by the teahouse for ices on the way home?"

"It's too early in the morning and not warm enough yet for ices. I am famished though and have truly missed Mrs. Cables's morning pastries. Do you still have a breakfast buffet laid out in the mornings?"

"Of course. Why would that change just because *you* got married?"

"Harold refuses to steal your cook, you know. I've nagged and nagged him to at least try."

Julia burst out laughing. "He knows he can't afford her. Every time someone tries to hire her away, she comes to me and I raise her wages. She knows where her bread is buttered."

Julia had been making decisions of that sort because her father, Gerald, could no longer make them. Her mother had never made them when she was alive. Helene Miller had never taken control of anything in her life, not even the household. She had been a timid woman afraid of offending anyone, even the servants. Five years ago she'd died in the carriage accident that had rendered Gerald Miller an invalid.

"How is your father?" Carol asked.

“The same.”

Carol always asked and Julia’s reply was rarely any different. He’s lucky to be alive, the doctors had told her after they had shocked her with their prognosis that Gerald would never again be himself. His head had suffered too much trauma in the accident. While his bones, seven of which had been broken that day, had mended, his mind would not recover. The doctors had been blunt. They’d given her no hope. Her father would sleep and wake up normally, he could even eat if hand-fed, but he would never speak anything other than gibberish again. Lucky to be alive? Julia had often cried herself to sleep recalling that phrase.

And yet Gerald had defied his doctors’ predictions. One time that first year after the accident, and then every few months after that, he would know, however briefly, who he was, where he was, and what had happened to him. So much rage and anguish had filled him the first few times this had occurred that his lucidity couldn’t really be called a blessing. And he remembered! Each time he regained lucidity he was able to remember his prior periods of mental clarity. For a few minutes, a few hours, he was himself again—but it never lasted for long. And he never remembered anything of the dead time in between.

His doctors couldn’t explain it. They’d never expected him to have coherent thoughts again. They still wouldn’t give Julia any hope that he might someday fully recover. They called his moments of clarity a fluke. Such an occurrence was undocumented, never known to happen before, and they warned Julia not to expect it to happen again. But it did.

It broke her heart the third time her father was himself, when he asked her, “Where’s your mother?”

She’d been warned to keep him calm if he ever “woke” again, and that meant not telling him his wife had died in the accident. “She’s gone shopping today. You—you know how she loves to shop.”

He’d laughed. It was one of the few things her mother had been decisive about, buying things she didn’t really need. But Julia had still been in mourning herself, and it had been one of the hardest things she’d ever done, to smile that day and keep her tears at bay until her father slipped away again into that gray realm of nothingness.

Of course she’d consulted different doctors. And every time one of them told her that her father was never going to recover, she’d dismiss him and find a new doctor. She stopped doing that after a while. She’d kept the last one, Dr. Andrew, because he’d been honest enough to admit that her father’s case was unique.

A little while later in the Millers’ breakfast room, Carol was carrying her filled plate *and* the large basket of pastries to the table when she stopped in her tracks, having finally noticed the new addition to the room.

“Oh, good Lord, when did you do that?” Carol exclaimed, turning around to stare wide-eyed at Julia.

Julia glanced at the ornate box on top of the china cabinet that had caught Carol’s attention. It was lined in blue satin and edged in jewels, and behind its glass cover sat a lovely doll. Julia took her seat at the table and managed not to blush.

“A few weeks ago,” she replied, and motioned Carol to take a seat at the table. “I came upon this fellow who’d just opened a shop near one of ours. He makes these beautiful boxes for items people want to preserve, and that doll is one thing I don’t ever want to fall apart due to old age, so I commissioned that box for her. I just haven’t decided yet where to place her, since my room is so cluttered. But I’m getting used to her being in here.”

“I didn’t know you still had that old doll I gave you,” Carol said in wonder.

“Of course I do. She’s still my prized possession.”

It was true, not because Julia valued the doll so much, but because she valued the friendship it represented. Carol might not have given up the doll when they first met, but when she got a new one, instead of putting the old doll away in the attic, never to be seen again, she’d remembered that Julia had wanted it and had shyly offered it to her.

Carol blushed as they both remembered that day, but she finally chuckled. “You were such a little monster back then.”

“I was never that bad,”

## **Users Review**

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#### **Carolyn Hoffman:**

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