



Déjà
Date

A Short Romance

SUSAN HATLER

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(Better Date than Never series, Book 9)

Melinda Morgan commits to running her favorite neighborhood bakery when the owner, who's like a second dad to her, falls ill. Then she finds out his adventurous son, Nate Carter, is back in town. Nate was Melinda's first kiss and greatest heartbreak all rolled into one, yet he's still as charming as ever.

When Melinda learns Nate's dad is selling his bakery, she realizes her dream to own the bakery herself. But in order to access her inheritance funds, she must first complete her father's Carpe Diem list, which challenges her to take risks she normally wouldn't—like only dating someone who leaves her breathless.

Nate wants a second chance with her and she finds him nearly impossible to resist. Could he be the key to completing her dad's list and saving the bakery? And can he help her do both without breaking her heart all over again?

Déjà Date Details

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From Reader Review Déjà Date for online ebook

Jessica says

I received this book through NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

I really enjoyed this book. It was a sweet romance between two old friends who knew they were good for one another, but one just had some barriers to overcome before their relationship could get off the ground. Nate was such a caring man in this story, I really just wanted to scoop him up! Melinda needed to deal with the grief of losing her father 14 years earlier, and in doing so, realized what it was she really wanted out of her life. I enjoyed the fact that this book focused more on the relationship building and character building than a lot of other romances did. I may have to check out some of the other books in the 'Better Date than Never' series.

Aimee (Getting Your Read On) says

I love, love, love getting a new book for review from Susan Hatler and I love the Better Date Than Never series. This is book nine in this series of short stories where Melinda finally has her story told. Yay!

The good thing about short stores is you can read them quickly and have a romantic indulgence in no time at all. The bad thing about short stories is they are over so fast it leaves you wanting more. That's how I felt about this book. Over too fast. I want more. Oh, and I want a marshmallow fudge bar too. (what? Melinda drools over them the whole book and now I want one too!) Romance and chocolate is a winning combination. :)

I love Nate and I love Nate for Melinda. This is a second chance at first love kind of book and it's clean with some happy kissing. The perfect evening getaway.

?????? ♥Team Magnus Damora FOREVER♥ says

For a short novel this story was everything I found lacking in the last two novellas I read, Every Little Secret & Every Little Dream

Melinda has been fired from her customer service job in a big software company in Sacramento. Her life has been too troubled since her father died in a hot air balloon accident. She's been living with the guilt of his death. However, hope is back in her life once she comes into Bernie's Bakery where she takes charge of running it while the old man recovers from his health problems. Then she finds out the her father has left her a will with the list of four things she needs to do in order to get her father's insurance money.

I found the characters really well-developed. Melinda has been struggling with her life and not getting over her dad's death in a proper way. She tries to get her life back in an ordered way but she finds obstacles in each turn.

I loved the list her father left her even though at first I didn't know how they'll help her. However, the story

took a really interesting turns whenever I doubted it.

Nate and Melinda's relationship was a point of conflict in the novel. Since he's an adventure seeking guy and she obviously a cautious girl, she tries to do the right thing for her by staying away from him. I get her whole point of refusing him.

My only complaint was how Nate was not really explored beyond his childhood history being taken away by his mother. His appearances are only a few for that.

Overall, great, engaging and very simple story.

Katie W says

(4.5 Stars) We have Melinda's story here, told from her point of view. Melinda is a very "perfect" character, one who used to work with Ginger, but they were both laid off at the same time. She's intimidating. Because of her past, she's very disciplined and controlled, which results in her coming off as perfect, which scares the other girls off. Her dad passed away years before in a freak accident and only now does she discover a Carpe Diem list--one that she must do before she can get her inheritance. As with the other stories, Melinda has a lot to do in order to discover herself, get over her fears, and really live life.

She goes back to the bakery where she worked when she was younger and sparks are rekindled with the owner's son, Nate. The problem is, they're too different--he's adventurous and she's boring. I loved the chemistry! Ms. Hatler is a master at weaving those clean, yet toe-tingling moments and I enjoyed every single one of them.

Content: kissing, mild innuendo. Clean!

I received a copy for an honest review

Elsy Arellano says

One word.... Lovely!!!

This story is lovely, with enough drama and romance. This is a story that portraits a young women who tries to find herself and follow her dreams before she waste more time doing something she'll regret and doesn't love. And while following her heart and dreams, falls in love with a caring, intelligent and sexy man.

You'll love this story if you're a hopeless romantic like me ^_^

Trinesha says

A quick story. Melinda is basically scared to live life. She holds on to past hurts and can't get over her hurt feelings. When she was young, she lost her father and her best friend who she was in love with left without a word. Now she's all grown up and tasked with completing a Carpe Diem list in order to get her inheritance

money and make her dreams come true. Will it finally force Melinda out of her comfort zone?

I must say this book is my least favorite of the series. Melinda is a bit annoying because she is very insecure and constantly second guesses herself. She internalizes everything and has a hard time opening up. It takes her a while to realize she has a support system available when ever she is ready to accept it.

Crystal (Books Are Sanity!!!) says

Déjà Date

Every time I pick up a book by Hatler I smile! She has a way of telling a story that sticks with you and makes you fall in love along the way. Melinda's story is a journey and part way through I wanted to shake her to wake up and get a clue! That is what makes the book great because I felt like I was a part of the story the whole way through! Realistic, engaging, with sparks flying and romance, Hatler's books keep me reading until the last page every time! I received an ARC of this book.

Coco.V says

? FREE on Amazon today (1/13/2019)! ?

Julie Witt says

My Opinion: I didn't realize when I requested this book through NetGalley that it was the ninth book in a series, but luckily, it could stand alone, too! I enjoyed it so much! I loved the characters, who were flawed and realistic. I loved watching Melinda open her heart to people, even though it seemed like it almost physically hurt sometimes. I know that feeling, and Susan Hatler captured it perfectly!

Melinda starts out getting fired from her customer service job, which she absolutely hated, and agreeing to take on the manager position at Bernie's Bakery, both to help out Bernie who is having problems with his health and needs to take a break, and also because some of her happiest teenage memories are when she worked there. Enter Nate, Bernie's drop dead gorgeous son, and Melinda's first love, and the first man to break her heart when he just disappeared when they were teenagers and she never heard from him again, until now. Unfortunately, she has completely closed off her heart to him to avoid getting hurt again and nothing Nate does can change that. She is also still grieving the loss of her father in a hot air balloon accident when she was 14, and because of that she refuses to take a chance on anything that might break her heart.

When Bernie's Bakery comes up for sale, Melinda decides to take her inheritance from her father, which she has refused until now, to buy the bakery since she realizes that would really make her happy. This is when her mother finds a letter that Melinda's father wrote to her naming the conditions that she must fulfill in order to receive her inheritance - he calls it her *Carpe Diem* list.

I loved watching Melinda make friends, even though that was scary because she always felt that she didn't measure up to the other girls, and basically just allowing herself to be happy.

In summary, even though I haven't read the other books in this series, I absolutely adored Deja Date, and I have made it my Carpe Diem list to read the other eight books in the series! This is a short story and reads very quickly. The characters grow from beginning to end and the pacing of the story is perfect. I would recommend this book enthusiastically to any lovers of contemporary romantic fiction, and give it a very happy 5 stars :D

I received a copy of this book free of charge through NetGalley in exchange for my honest opinion.

C.P. Cabaniss says

I've read almost this entire series and I'm not really sure where this one falls in my like vs dislike scale. I've enjoyed things about all of the books, this one did have some things that hugged me though.

Likes: Melinda and Nate were a really cute couple. I liked that they had a past together and the idea of second chances. I liked the message of living and enjoying life. The bakery was a nice addition. There were glimpses of some of the other characters in the series which was nice.

Dislikes: I wasn't crazy about how the past with Nate and Melinda played out. They were so young and so much time had passed. I would have liked that part to be handled a bit differently. I also wasn't crazy about Melinda's character. I could understand her insecurities, but it seemed like she would have faced more of them before this point.

It was cute and fun, but I just couldn't completely connect with the characters.

Pam says

Deja Date is book nine in the Better Date than Never series by Susan Hatler. It is still predictable but that is just fine. It makes it easy to read and enjoy rather than trying to figure everything out. It is how the problems are solved that makes the difference. It is a really good little book. I thoroughly enjoyed it.

Melinda Morgan lost her job the same time and from the same company as Ginger Neilson. When Ginger had her sister Mary Ann move out, she asked Melinda to move in as her roommate. It turned out to be a great decision except for Ginger's cats and their hair. Since being laid off, she has been looking for jobs but when she finds something, she has too much experience. The temp jobs just do not pay enough. She is on her way to her Mother's house to finally accept a portion of the inheritance her Father had left her. He had been an adventurer and was killed in a hot air balloon accident. Melinda still had problems accepting it; but her Mother had even more. It was enough stress for Melinda to stop at the neighborhood icon, Bernie's Bakery, for a chocolate marshmallow fudge bar. It has been years since she had one; but if ever there was a time, it was now. Especially since Mary Ann had invited herself along and was to meet her there.

While they were drinking their coffee and eating their muffins (no bar), a hot looking guy drove up on a motorcycle and stood there taking his helmet off. Mary Ann nearly swooned and even Melinda was interested in this "bad guy" for an instant. However, she had her own experience with a "bad guy" when she was only fourteen. He was her first crush and her biggest heartbreak. Her thoughts were jerked back to the present when Bernie entered and promptly fell on the floor at her feet with papers flying. After making sure Bernie was all right, she asked about his papers as she saw they were resumes. Bernie told her he was sick and the doctor told him to get immediate rest for at least two weeks or he could have a heart attack. Since she owed Bernie for his being there for her over the years, she told him she would run the bakery for two weeks.

Bernie told her she had the job and that working with Nate would not be a problem. Nate, Bernie's son and Melinda's best friend, had moved with his mother to Paris after the divorce. He had not told Melinda goodbye nor had written. However, when Bernie told him he was ill, Nate left his job as a photographer of extreme adventures to be here for his dad. Bernie assured her Nate was not interested in the bakery and did not have any experience whereas she had worked for Bernie while in college. Then Nate walks in and she discovers he is the "hottie" Mary Ann was admiring.

After his father left, Nate told Melinda that Bernie was selling the bakery. Once sold, the new owner could do anything he wanted to with the business. Melinda was devastated at the thought of no Bernie's Bakery and on the way to her Mother's house, Melinda made the decision to use the entire inheritance to purchase the bakery. After making the decision, she felt like it was meant to be. However, when she talked to her Mother, she found that she could not get the inheritance unless she did the tasks her Father had set for her in his final letter. Needless to say, the letter was thirteen years too late. Could she do the tasks in time to purchase the bakery from Bernie? She was crushed when she read the letter with the tasks. What else would happen? This was just in chapter one!

Claire - The Coffeeholic Bookworm says

If there's one thing I learned about this book, it is to seize whatever opportunity that come your way so as not to regret it for the rest of your life. Melinda's life had been a boring routine, never took chances at anything unexpected. She'd been afraid to take risks ever since her father died. And that meant not trusting her heart to fall in love again with Nate.

Nate came back to her life when his father Benny fell ill and needed someone to manage his bakery. Melinda wanted to purchase the bakery, but lacked the money. When she asked for her inheritance from her dad, she was given a *Carpe Diem* list instead. Tasks that she needed to fulfill in order to get what she wanted.

But the question is, what was it that she really wanted?

Déjà Date had been really a romantic read. Although I had a hard time liking Melinda. I thought she was really boring and insensitive. She's too weak and afraid of everything. It was a struggle reading her thoughts and all the negative energy that emanated from her. She didn't want to complicate life. While Nate was the adventurous one - enjoying his escapades on the ocean to hiking the mountains in Peru - this guy never ceased to amaze me. I thought Nate and Melinda's relationship wouldn't work on me, but like what most people say, opposites attract.

At the end of the day, I found myself pining for them and wishing them a happy ever after. Sweet! Susan Hatler has made me a happy girl once again!

Tadiana ☆Night Owl? says

Kindle freebie romance of the week! In this novella, we have Melinda, a laid-off customer service rep who's locked away her feelings and willingness to take risks and open herself up in life. Her equilibrium is upset when Nate, the boy she loved when she was 14, comes back into town after 13 years away, now a really hot guy. Nate gave her a "perfect kiss" when they were young teens and then suddenly moved away without ever

contacting her again, and Melinda still carries deep resentment about that. (Seriously?? She was **fourteen**. Get over it!)

The plot: Melinda wants to buy a bakery where she used to work, and which she's now temporarily managing while the owner/baker is recuperating from health problems. She has enough money from a life insurance policy payout from her father's death, but her mother has finally opened a letter from her father, which tells her not to give Melinda the money until she's completed a mini-bucket list her father left Melinda in another letter. Now she's in a race to complete the list -- which includes "fix your biggest regret" and "only date someone who leaves you breathless" -- before the bakery is sold to someone else.

The plot is implausible but charming, and the "take some risks in life" message was well-handled, if not subtle in the least. I had issues with Melinda's longstanding resentment against Nate, but I guess some reason was necessary to keep them from falling into each other's arms too quickly. The part that really drove me batty was Melinda's reason for INSISTING that no one let the bakery owner, her good friend, know that she was interested in buying his bakery, while she is completely stressing out over whether she can get the money in just a few days. That was just not believable to me. I think I even yelled at the book at one point (the words "Oh, come ON!" may or may not have come out of my mouth).

There are some grammar/punctuation glitches, but not enough to really distract me. It's definitely brain candy, but it's a cute contemporary romance if you're not inclined to be critical and are more into reading it for the feelz.

Marsha Spohn says

First reviewed at Keeper Bookshelf

Every now and then a second chance will come along. The trouble with second chances is usually there is a reason we didn't grab it the first time – and often we need to be just a bit braver than before to not miss an opportunity dropped right in front of us.

And then there are those times when we get a gentle push into those second chances ... even from beyond the grave.

Melinda's life has been – well, let's just say it out loud – kinda a hot mess lately. Still recovering from her father's death, she's out of one job and on to running the bakery of the man she considers a second dad during his recovery of some health problems. What she didn't expect was for his son, Nate, to come back to town and want the bakery too.

Nate could be Melinda's second chance – if she'll let him. Once Nate and Melinda shared a kiss, and for Melinda a lot of dreams. But that was years ago, they were kids and Nate left town without a word. That still hurt.

Melissa wants to buy the bakery, and she would if she could just access her inheritance from her father – but there is a bucket list that she must complete before those funds are turned over to her. Even beyond life her dad wants the best in life for her. For the most part, Melinda lives life on the safe side. If one doesn't take

risks no one gets hurt. But is that truly living? Or merely existing? Good old dearly departed Dad wants her to live – and he's going to make sure she at least gives it her best shot.

...and since this is a short story, it's up to you to discover the rest of the story. :)

I will confess this is the first in the Better Date Than Never romantic comedy series that I have read – it will not be the last, I can guarantee that. In my opinion, it can be read as a stand alone, I had no difficulty at all by not having read any of the other novels.

I really enjoyed this novella. It was light, fun and an enjoyable time spent with two people who really need a break, need to fall in love and need each other – if they are willing to take the risk of a second chance.

I recommend it for anyone who simply loves to fall in love and believes in second chances. This one gets a 4 outta 5 on my rating scale. Indulge yourself in a really good story.

I received an e-ARC of Deja Date from the publisher and NetGalley in exchange for an honest review. That does not change what I think of this novel.

Christina says

Deja Date was as sweet as chocolate marshmallow fudge bar! I really liked how the story focused on Melinda improving as a person. Her father's Carpe Diem list was exactly what she needed to LIVE her life to the fullest. She always played it safe. When Nate, now a photographer of "extreme adventures", waltzes back into her life after disappearing on her all those years ago, she can't deny the feelings are still there but she'd have to take a leap. I enjoyed how each item on the list was completed, from adopting a dog to fill the hole of losing Checkers, her childhood dog, to dating a man that leaves her breathless. It was great that her mother had a list to complete as well! Wonderful feel-good story.
