



The Dating Game

Jay Northcote

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Five sex-free dates—how hard can it be?

When they were at uni, Owen always had a bit of a crush on Nathan. But Nathan was apparently straight, and Owen was too busy with other guys to take his crush seriously.

When Nathan moves back to Bristol after a year away, Owen hears that Nathan has come out of the closet, and he propositions him. Nathan doesn't want to be just another notch on Owen's bedpost, though, so he challenges Owen to prove he can be serious: five dates before they have sex.

Owen doesn't think that sounds too difficult. He's expecting Nathan to find his charms irresistible anyway. But as they grow closer, Owen begins to care more about proving himself to Nathan than he does about getting him into bed.

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The Dating Game Details

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From Reader Review The Dating Game for online ebook

Sheziss says

*****DNF page 76 of 193*****

I'm making too much of an effort to read this so I think it's time to quit.

The book is boring and uninteresting. The MCs are flat and shallow. The plot line is hollow and unsurprising. Owen is a "manizer" who runs into his crush from uni. Nathan was in the closet during uni and now he wants a meaningful relationship with a guy. Nathan challenges Owen to date five times with the no-sex condition, and Owen accepts. Both are 23 years old but they act and think as if they were 40. They felt old (and odd).

I liked Passing Through quite a lot but this one ended up being a disappointment.

.Lili. says

This was short and sweet. Great for a lazy rainy day with a cup of hot chocolate. 3.5 Stars

~☆~Dαni(ela) ♥ ?? love & semi-colons~☆~ says

4.25 stars

Five dates, no sex.

That's Nathan's proposal to Owen, who's always been a bit of a tart. Nathan doesn't want to be just another notch on Owen's bedpost. Owen accepts the challenge, hoping he can change Nathan's mind. But it's Nathan who makes Owen realize that five dates may not be enough.

Cuteness and sweetness abound in this novella! Northcote's book are warm and light, and this one's no exception. I love easy, get-lost-in-the-moment stories.

Each of the five dates was a smile, a wink, a moment of connection. The banter was easy; the chemistry definitely there. **And the no-orgasm rule fueled plenty of smoldering tension, lots of hot kisses, and naughty teasing.**

There's some brief angst at the end, mostly because both MCs want more but aren't sure how to ask for it. I really liked the setting and Owen's roommates, who were a couple.

And no worries: there's still steamy action on page.

Do Owen and Nathan make it five dates? Read the story to find out.

Heidi says

The experience I had when listening to this audio version was unique. Whilst I have listened to narrators I have really enjoyed, like Jack LaFleur, Jim Frangione or my favourite Greg Tremblay, this narrator unfortunately ruined the enjoyment of the story for me.

You get this perceived notion of characters from the narrator and how you think they're going to behave. Are they a poncy upperclass git or a hard working class punter?

So as the story started, immediately this image pops into my brain.

I keep trying to put this image to the side and finally I do, when then next image is there....

and the thing is, I'm not listening to or watching a children's TV program, but that is what my brain is hearing!

Thinking Thomas is saying to Percy.....

"Oh, yeah, you look so good. I wanna taste you. Is that okay?"

in that British accent just sounded weird.

It did my head in and affected the way I engaged with the book and the two main characters. I spent the first few chapters trying to work out which TV show the narrator's voice was from, and I'm afraid to admit that I even Googled his past works!

The story itself was ok, light romance and holding out for five dates etc, etc.... but unfortunately it became a bit of a train wreck (pardon the pun)!

***J* Too Many Books Too Little Time says**

4.5--**Sex-Free**--Stars!!

This was a really cute, fun read! Pretty quick, coming in at just around 100 pages! It really had a great story!

Owen the playboy who crushed on Nathan, who just recently came out of the closet. They originally met in college and both unknowingly crushed on either. But Owen thought Nathan was straight.

Nathan returns to town and Owen wants him in his bed. But Nathan doesn't want to be just another notch so he proposes a challenge....5 sex-free dates to get to know each other!

I really enjoyed the development of Nathan and Owen's relationship. Owen trying to get Nathan to cave. And Nathan seeing that there's more to Owen than his playboy ways!

Despite the sex-free premise there was some good steam. And I LOL several times at the banter.

I would definitely recommend this one, especially if you're looking for something light and easy, with little to no angst!

Susan says

3.5 stars

Awww...this book was super sweet and entertaining!

Secret college crush. Meeting up after a few years separation.

One a notorious player, one a newly out active-type looking for a relationship. How to bridge the gap? FIVE DATES...five dates with no sex. Five dates to see if something might happen.

The attraction between Owen and Nathan was palpable and I LOVED the slow build of their feelings towards one another. And the dates...well they made the romantic in me swoon. And the big pot-o-gold at the end of it all? Totally worth it...hubba hubba.

I enjoyed this. I think that sometimes the author gets caught up in lots of overly-detailed writing and I, at times, felt myself tempted to not skim, but um...glide over some of the text. But, I still found this to be a fun read and enjoyed it.

Amy says

What a refreshing story! These boys didn't jump in to bed together the first time they went out :) I love reading about new relationships... flirting, stomach butterflies, first kisses, talking on the phone until the wee hours of the morning getting to know each other. Dreamy sigh. Loved it!!

Heather K (dentist in my spare time) says

****2.5 stars****

This was my first read from the much loved Jay Northcote, and I think I picked a bad one to start with. Now, keep in mind that I listened to the audio edition, and much of my overall opinion will stem from my personal feelings about the narration.

Let's talk about the narrator. Now, I have very particular tastes when it comes to a narrator, and of primary importance to me is a narrator that can do separate voices for each character. I tend to strongly dislike audiobooks where all the voices sound the same, mostly because it makes for a confusing listening experience. That happened to be the case here. Matthew Lloyd Davies did the same (or virtually indistinguishable) voices for all the characters, main and secondary, and I often was confused as to who was talking. It all started to blend together for me, and I had trouble staying engaged with the story.

My other issue with the narrator was his overall reading voice. It was very... theater-y. It sounded sort of like he was narrating a children's book, with his cadence rising and peaking with each sentence, giving it that singsongy feel that I associate with story time at the library. It didn't sound like a person just *speaking*, which is more how I like my audiobooks to be. If you listen to my all time favorite narrators (James Marsters, Greg Tremblay, Chris Patton (Adrien English series), if we are just talking male narrators), you'd notice that they all give different flavors to their characters. I wish I got more of that here.

In terms of the story, I thought it was cute but I felt my attention wavering at times. It wasn't a high energy story, and combined with a narration that wasn't working for me, I feel like I wasn't able to grasp what everyone else loves about this book.

I have another Jay Northcote audiobook ready to roll, so I hope with a different narration style I'll be able to see what all the fuss is about. However, this one felt lackluster for me.

****Copy provided by the author in exchange for an honest review****

Gigi says

Wish I could say I enjoyed the fire and passion and UST with Owen and Nathan, but I really can't. This one didn't grab and delight me. I'm hoping the sequel will show some Owen/Nathan emotion. I'm starting it now.

Renée says

What can I say? Owen and Nathan's story is completely predictable, but I love it anyway. Five sex-free

dates. Two men who crushed on each other for a while. Of course we knew how that would go.

Northcote just does it for me. I adore her writing style. On to the next in this series!

Katrina Passick Lumsden says

I would like Jay Northcote's writing a whole hell of a lot more if it were just a little more interesting. His stories are sweet and simple, but they're so simple it's hard to remain interested. He takes the idea of formulaic romance to an unheard of level. I've read three books by him and the tenor is the same in every single one. They're just so predictable and bland. I actually found myself daydreaming in spots, coming up with better scenes in my head to help keep my mind engaged...which isn't a compliment.

◆*Arianna◆* says

Owen had a crush on Nathan for pretty much forever. He's happy when he finds out Nathan is back in town for good and he just started a job with the Environment Agency and he's more than happy when he finds out Nathan came out last year. Owen wants to hook up with Nathan, but Nathan is not interested just in a hookup. He wants the real thing, he wants to date, he wants something more serious. So he proposes a challenge - five dates to get to know each other.

This was a cute, sweet and easy to read novel and I really enjoyed it. Overall it was a light read with just a little angst through the end, which I liked.

I liked Owen and Nathan individually and together. They for sure made a cute couple. I also liked they are so different from each other. They banter was pretty good and their connection was great and palpable. The steam was not necessarily high, but I wasn't bothered.

Their moments together were adorable and fun and I liked their dates weren't repetitive or boring. I also enjoyed how their relationship developed.

Overall, this was an enjoyable read, that made me smile and if you're looking for something nice and light I really recommend it!

R * A Reader Obsessed * says

3.5 Stars

I pretty much know what I'm going to get when I read one of Northcote's books and I'm *so* okay with that.

The premise is predictable but I liked watching serial-one-night-stand(er) Owen succumb to lurve. Who knew he had it in him?? He sure didn't.

This was fun with excellent UST, flirty banter, and just the right touch of not too angsty feels. Cap it off with

some sexy smex and most will enjoy this easy read. I sure did.

Lori says

Owen has a well earned reputation for being a bed-hopper. Wham, bam, thank you Stan is his style - not dating. When Nathan, the 'straight' guy he fancied at university, moves back to Bristol and Owen hears that he's not so straight these days, he tries it on. Nathan is interested in Owen - just not in becoming another notch on Owen's bedpost. Five dates is the challenge he sets Owen, one a week, before they get down and dirty. Owen accepts, certain Nathan will give in to his charms before five weeks is up.

I liked this book, it made me smile. Although Owen has a reputation as a bed-hopper (and yes, it was earned) he really does like Nathan as more than just a potential shag. Owen was actually very endearing. He joked with Nathan but he didn't push him, he accepted the parameters of the bet, even though he longed for more. Nathan was lovely. Shy, slower at recognising/admitting that his feelings tended more to men than women, he was a really nice bloke. Nice can sometimes be a bit of a death-word when describing a character, yet it wasn't. He wasn't bland or boring, he was sweet and considerate.

The dates were fun. From that slightly awkward first date with all it's questions (am I over/under dressed? Am I boring? Where should we go? Do we kiss? etc. etc.) to the well planned, personalised second, third, fourth & fifth dates. I enjoyed them all.

It's quite a skill describing five dates and not have them become repetitive and boring. I loved the hill walking. That Owen had thought about what Nathan would like and taken him 'home' to Wales. I liked the fact that it was reciprocated with the indoor wall climbing. This wasn't just a quick meal and visit to the pictures, these guys thought about each other when planning these dates. Thoughtful dates were thoughtful and I dug that a lot. I very much like Jay Northcote's descriptions in the climbing date...made me think I might need to take it up as a hobby. (Or some kind of climbing *pervert* observer, you know to check the ropes were all fitted properly and stuff)...but I digress.

The only thing that kind of irked me was the disagreement the MC's had. Although it was sorted quickly and remained relatively angst free, it was the only part that I got a bit annoyed with. I know some conflict was needed, but miscommunication is a trope I generally find irritating. That said, it didn't bother me enough to stop reading or give it a low rating.

I think, when you pick up a Jay Northcote book you know you are in for a world of sweet fun. A couple of hours of wonderful escapism, with characters that are just lovely. If you're looking for a simple, fun, and happy read, then this is the one for you.

A copy of this book was provided by the author in exchange for an honest review

Review previously shown at Boy Meets Boy Reviews

Sara says

Have I said how much I love Jay's boys? I know I have but I have to say it again. I adore the bloody hell out

of them. I know when I read one of her books I am going to get a rush of emotions that always end with me in a puddle of goo... and goo is good.

Let me first say; I had a massive crush on my husband when we were young, and nothing ever happened until almost ten years later when we met up again. So, the premise behind this story, the story of Owen and Nathan who both fancied one another in Uni and now have a chance at a relationship... pulled at my heart strings and memories.

With that personal confession out of the way, this book was a brilliant read. I loved how Owen was so shocked to not only see Nathan again but to learn that the straight boy he crushed on at Uni was now not straight and out. I grinned from ear to ear as Owen made his play, and then he set the deal for the five sexless dates. Getting the dual POV is always a plus for me and being with Owen and Nathan as they navigated their new feelings and shortcomings glued me to the page. I mean, I read the last bit while doing exercises on the floor to strengthen my hip flexors... that should give you a hint that I didn't and couldn't stop reading.

The dates; I found them adorable, imaginative, fun and so thoughtful. Both boys put so much... heart into the dates that I was a goner. I knew I would be a goner before I started the book, and my track record with Ms. Northcote is solid. She writes the best stories with low angst that even this self-proclaimed angst whore can cuddle up with and get lost in.

Nathan, I want to hug you and give you a high five for your choice in cars as I share your views on classic Beetles. Owen, good lord boy! You are such the dirty talker, and I like that about you, but the vulnerability you showed just about did in my poor romantic heart. Simon, Jack and Kristy were wonderful side characters. I would love to read how Simon and Jack met and fell in love. I can hear the sweetness and playful arguing now.

Yeah, I liked *The Dating Game*, but as I said, I didn't have a doubt that I would love the story and fall in love with the boys.

Fall in love I did and though I swear, I was getting a bit of reader blue balls reading these boys. *The UST* was off the charts with them and played out perfectly; just so well done that my Sunday is complete and cozy after finishing their story.
