



The Best of Friends

Susan Mallery

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***New York Times* bestselling author Susan Mallery is at her heart-stirring best in this witty, richly layered story about friendship, love, and breaking free.**

In high school, studious Jayne Scott and wild child Rebecca Worden became unlikely best friends—a tie that endured even after Rebecca fled her family to live overseas.

After Jayne's mother passed away, she became part unpaid assistant, part surrogate daughter to the wealthy Wordens. But now, ten years later, Rebecca is coming home to L.A. to cause havoc for Elizabeth, the mother who all but rejected *her*. And Jayne finds herself pulled deeper into the Wordens' complicated family dynamics—especially when Rebecca's brother, David, returns as well.

David is the man Jayne always wanted and knew she could never have. But when he gravitates toward her in spite of Elizabeth's protests, her vow to escape the family's shadow is put to the ultimate test. And as lies are shattered and true feelings exposed, Jayne must decide where loyalty ends, and love begins. . . .

The Best of Friends Details

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From Reader Review The Best of Friends for online ebook

Christie«SHBBlogger» says

Susan Mallery is one of my new favorite authors but this is nothing like the others I've read. There just wasn't that much chemistry with the main characters and the book didn't really pull me in like it should. I started skimming towards the middle of the book trying to finish it quickly. It wasn't terrible but I wouldn't recommend it to anyone-especially if they've never read her other books.

Tina says

I *really* liked this book.

It is interesting because I don't think a lot of romance novel reading purists would actually like it as a romance novel. It borders on women's fiction even though there is a clear, centered love story with a defined H/h and a HEA. But what makes this book so darned interesting to me and probably why it might not be classified as pure romance is the weight given to all the stuff that is going on around the romance plot.

Jayne Scott is the main character and her life is inextricably entwined with the the wealthy Worden clan. Her best friend is Rebecca the rebellious daughter who has a hate/resentment relationship with her mother, Elizabeth. Jayne has always had a major crush on the eldest Worden son, Daniel. He is the super handsome golden boy who is the apple of his mother's eye. Blaine Worden is the benign head of the family. He has a soft spot for Jayne and is generally amiable. And then there is Elizabeth. She is the steely-eyed, society conscious, snobbish matriarch.

When Jayne was just a teenager, her own mother, a housekeeper to a neighbor of the Worden's died quickly and left Jayne alone, homeless and penniless. The Worden's took her in and she and Rebecca became fast friends. A lot of the texture of the book is about the shifting relationships between the Wordens themselves and with Jayne.

The book starts out very light and amusingly with both Rebecca and Daniel returning home both having lived abroad for many years. Both of them have their own reasons for coming back to LA. Jayne is just thrilled to see her best friend again and a little squirmy to know that the object of her long time unrequited lust/love is back home to stay. Their return sets off a series of family revelations.

So as I was reading I was really expecting a very simple contemporary romance. But about 2/3 of the way through a shift happens in the book. The characters, especially Rebecca, become a bit deeper, more problematic and more intriguing. The drama ratchets up. The lightness disappears. The romance has more resonance and urgency. At first I was a bit jarred, thinking it was a bit of a bait and switch. But the more I read the more I realized that the earlier, lighter tone of the book was just that.. a tone. The groundwork for the characters and their later motivations had been laid. I just hadn't been paying attention.

I liked the trajectory of the romance. Daniel finally notices Jayne. He has a lot more substance than we are first led to believe. He was a great hero and I enjoyed the way he and Jayne were able to communicate.

Elizabeth is the villain of the book. And she is the great weakness of the book because she is a bit of a cardboard. It was very easy to hate her because she had *no* redeeming. But I enjoyed the positioning of her and Jayne's relationship in the larger picture because it added to the drama in a big way.

Rebecca is probably the most fascinating character study. She, more than any other character, embodies the my feeling of the flow of the story -- starting out one way and ending up another. I really had to think about this character as I closed the book.

The ending of the book was a bit abrupt. I turned the page and expected another chapter but didn't get it. I do expect that given he ending, we may see Rebbecca's story forthcoming. I would be very interested to read it.

Sarah Eiseman says

This book was an interesting change from the typical Mallery plots. This book definitely had some nonredeemable characters, which is often a challenge to read. You want to like everyone for something, but these folks left little to work with.

Jayne Scott has lived through some tragedy in her life. Her mother died when she was young, but fortunately, Jayne was invited to stay with a wealthy family while she grew up. This family, The Wordens, helped her graduate from college and buy a small condo, but they made her pay a very different price with her life than money. The narcissistic mother and daughter have drained Jayne for years, but because of her giving nature, she doesn't realize that anything is amiss. That is, until she recognizes her love for the Worden's prodigal son, David.

The complicated relationships between Jayne and the women in this story was truly amazing to read. I'm continually impressed at Mallery's ability to keep me interested in all her books. The depth of these characters and the emotions that Jayne went through trying to understand the motivations of those around her was immense. A difficult book to read at times, I really enjoyed this book by the time I was done.

If you are looking for a more fiction-than-romance book by a romance author, this is a great book to pick up. Really interesting characters, the plot was interesting, and the relationships between all the characters was very captivating. Good stuff!

Suelibevg says

An excellent read by one of my favorite authors. Jayne Scott has been taken in by the Wordens and has been grateful forever and is still paying. Her best friend is Rebecca Worden and Jayne serves as an unpaid minion to mom Elizabeth. When she finally gets up close and personal with her longtime crush, David, Rebecca's brother, that's when the trouble starts. Would you give up your family for love? Would you be willing to walk away from your one true love because you couldn't take being in the same city as his toxic mother and sister? Read the book and find out. You won't be sorry.

Donna says

I generally liked this book. I did have a little problem with how evil Rebecca's mother was. While I'm sure there are people THAT evil in the world, I have never come across any. I also felt that Blaine lacked credibility; he just placidly tolerated all his wife's bad behavior all those years, including the 10 year estrangement from Rebecca, then he just suddenly leaves her for another woman and moves the company to Dallas so Jayne and David can be together. I did really like Jayne and David. I didn't like Rebecca as much,

but I don't think we were really supposed to. I did think she reacted true to character and liked her turn-around at the end.

Monica Gearhart says

I have loved every Susan Mallery book I've read. But the stand alones, always leave me hanging. This one left me wondering what is going to happen with Jayne and David.

Marjorie De Los Reyes says

The best of Friends. from the title itself, I think that it is somehow catchy. And so, I borrowed this book from my friend. I borrowed it yesterday and today I had finished it.

Actually, I started reading it in school, during our lunch break. As I was reading the first part, I find it somehow boring and my attention is not really in it (or maybe there's just full of noise and chit-chats in our room so I can't concentrate.) But when I got home and started reading it again, I find it interesting, that led me to sleeping late at night (or should i say very early in the morning next day).

This book is not just all about romance. It discusses also about family, career, social status, and friends. I was really amazed by how Susan Mallery came up to this kind of story. It was actually good. This is a book that I can recommend for anyone who wants to read books that is not just all about love and romances, but also about life.

:)

Janga says

I'm not sure how to grade *The Best of Friends*. If it's truly a stand-alone book, then the ending leaves me dissatisfied. In women's fiction, an HEA for a couple is not enough. I want a clearer sense of closure for the women's journeys. In this case, I particularly want to see more than just a hint of Rebecca's redemption. If this is the first of a pair or more books, on the other hand, it leaves me primed for the continuation of the story. But I haven't been able to find if there is to be another book. Thus my dilemma: if the book is a stand-alone, it's a three-star read for me—an engrossing story but one that left me feeling cheated at the end. If Rebecca's book is to follow, then it's a 4.5 star book that leaves me eager to see this character suffer and grow and to discover whether even her growth is enough to salvage the relationships she destroyed.

Cocktails and Books says

Absolutely fabulous!!!!

Francesca Marinaro says

Warm, comforting, and sweet--a mug of hot chocolate on a blustery fall afternoon. That was what I expected when I picked up this novel; that was what I got. IF you enjoy light, easy-on-the-brain romance fiction, you won't be disappointed. Susan Mallery's plot is predictable; we know precisely where and with whom the characters will wind up, but like the Jane Austen novels from which Mallery draws upon so heavily, the magic of this romantic story is not the thrill of finding out what happens in the end, but how the characters get there.

I liked the way that Mallery laid emphasis on David as the prize plumb; we're all aware--at least if we've read *Pride and Prejudice*--that "it is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife," but all too often we forget that these young men, seemingly on the hunt for rich heiresses, are frequently the pawns in the match-making games of many an ambitious mother. Mallery drives this idea home (like an icepick to the brain) through Elizabeth's character. an interesting combination of Mrs. Bennet's irritating, nosy interference and Lady Catherine DeBurgh's haughty, overinflated opinion of self-worth, Elizabeth Worden might not be charming, but she's fully alive to the fact that, whether 19th century England or 21st Century Beverly Hills, the mother pulls the strings from which her son must dangle precariously on the marriage market.

If we're going to read this as a contemporary retelling of *Pride and Prejudice*, that's probably Mallery's strongest selling point; aside from that, between the frequent mentions of Austen, the teasing jab at the "long version of *Pride and Prejudice*...the Colin Firth version," and the Lifetime movie comparisons, I felt like I was being beaten over the head with cliches, though admittedly, I should have expected nothing less and only have myself to blame for not wearing my chicklit armor. I don't know whether Mallery was intending to convince her readers that her novel isn't just another retelling of Jane Austen or if she was trying to carve a creative niche for herself within that sub-genre; if the former, methinks the lady doth protest too much. IF the latter, the novel doesn't strike me as any better or worse than similar stories. Fans of Helen Fielding's *Bridget Jones* novels might appreciate the sexual tension (not to mention the wink and nudge in the direction of the "long version" of *Pride and Prejudice* that inspired the creation of Mark Darcy, but they'll miss the tongue-in-cheek

British humor and colorful pros that make Fielding's novels the perfect blend of hilarious and heartwarming.

About the characters: I found them to be simply-rendered, but convincing. We have no problem cheering for Jane as she transforms from a shy, unassuming girl into a strong, self-assertive woman; we fall, with very little pushing, into David's open arms; we're alternately irritated with and sorry for Rebecca--I've-got-everything glamor girl on the outside, insecure child on the inside; we feel a savage pleasure as we witness Elizabeth's downfall.

Altogether not one of my personal favorites, but like that cup of hot chocolate, it hits the spot if you're in the mood for something warm and fluffy.

Duffy Pearce says

Kinda Harlequin Romance — which lord knows I used to read. I didn't give them up not for shame (because I have none) but because I'm too old to think that finding your soul mate is life's great quest.

I seem to need more suspense and dead bodies in my trashy reading now

Marcia Haskell says

Really good book! Interesting characters, interesting dynamics between all of the characters, interesting variety of personalities and backgrounds. The fascinating feature of this book is the way each of the characters views the world when the book starts and the way most of them are changed by the dynamics of the interactions. I found myself disliking, but understanding the reasons for the mother and daughter's actions and view of Jayne, David and Blaine. The behavior of Jayne, David and Blaine was less comprehensible to me. I loved each of them as individuals, but found their inability to understand and correct the things that were wrong a little contrived. In the end it all comes right, but they had to run away to do so. In my mind a confrontation would have been more satisfying.

Aisa says

The Best of Friends is not a romance story. While Jayne and Daniel has their own love story, Rebecca with her torrid affairs, and the rest of the Wordens with their own romance lapses, this is definitely not a romance story. Like its title, it tells us about the friendship between two very different woman, Jayne and Rebecca. Each comes from a very different society but incidentally becomes friends. At the beginning, I believe Rebecca has a heart under her facade. Yes, Rebecca is a selfish person. I don't expect her to turn angelic but the story's progress drives her character worse. She becomes the ultimate bitch in the story (if not her mother – which I am totally alright with her being so superficial – considering she is a secondary character). The men do not really have their own substance. I mean, now and then, we get a glimpse of what they are thinking, but that's it. It just comes and goes. Jayne is a push-over, goody-two-shoes, with a specific allergy to the riches. I like Jayne and Rebecca and when they're together as friends, great. Both of them are not perfect and the dynamics between the characters (all of them) are quite interesting. The ending seems loose. It leaves us the question about the outcome. Will Rebecca get Jayne's forgiveness or not? Since it is a stand-alone book, we'll never get the question answered. It will depend on the reader. The upside is it is a unique book with not-oh-so-perfect characters. Real characters. I just wish the author will give a little heart for Rebecca's mother and a little substance to the male counterparts.

Darcy says

I can't believe how much I hated each member of the Warden family, except Blaine, at one point or another in this one. Elizabeth was a given and she was such a great villain you couldn't help but to hate her and feel good about it. I felt sorry for her family for having to deal with her. I was very sympathetic with Rebecca, until she showed how she really did learn the lessons her mother taught her and she learned them well. Even her big act at the end didn't make me like her. David even had moments where I was cussing him out, mostly because he was so clueless and didn't get was a drain his family was on Jane. Once his eyes were opened to that loved his actions at the end of this. I was happy with Blaine's bold move at the end, he deserved some happiness. I really loved how he counseled David without telling him what to do or revealing his unhappy situation.

Jane was definitely too good for this family. I hated how they all seemed to put her down at one point or another. I also got why the move was something that she needed, the physical distance just as important as a

mental one. I have hope that Texas will be a place where happiness finds her.

Luisa Rivas says

Loved this book. It not only had a lovely love story, but a story of a friendship that deteriorated into enmity, another friendship that suffered through selfishness. It had funny moments and sad moments. There was more darkness than in other previous novels, so it was very interesting. As always, her novels are a great and entertaining read.
