



Short Stay

Heidi Cullinan

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Hot messes have a hard time with happily ever after.

Baz Acker and Elijah Prince have it all. They're engaged, and their wedding is guaranteed to be a spectacle no event will ever top. So why are they hunkered down in a quiet corner of the Acker mansion, restless and edgy while they wait out the holidays?

When Baz suggests a road trip with Walter and Kelly to Las Vegas, it sounds like an ideal escape, but it turns out Vegas only amplifies their unease. Elijah can't slough off the self-hating his parents programmed into him, and he worries how that will affect his marriage. Baz, crippled en route because of too much time spent in the car without rest, must face the truth that his wealth and influence can't always counteract the limits his disability will put on his—and Elijah's—life.

With help from their friends, a wily poker player, a take-no-prisoners drag queen, and a smooth-talking casino owner, they face the truth that happiness is a state of mind, not a destination where they book a stay. What happens in Vegas won't stay in Vegas—it will follow them all the way down the aisle.

This novella was written for and by the request of Heidi's Patreon readers. It is suggested but not required that you read at least Lonely Hearts before reading this book.

Short Stay Details

Date : Published May 24th 2016 by Heidi Cullinan

ISBN :

Author : Heidi Cullinan

Format : ebook 118 pages

Genre : Romance, M M Romance, Contemporary

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From Reader Review Short Stay for online ebook

Sandra says

In this book, the Love Lessons universe meets the Special Delivery universe, and we get to catch up with old friends, while watching Baz and Elijah fumble their way through the pitfalls of their happily ever after.

Amid the flashing lights of Las Vegas, with the help from Randy and Ethan, Mitch and Sam, and even Steve and Chenco, our two loverboys find that communication is key, and that political grandeur is overrated.

I adored this little book, primarily because it allowed me to reminisce about and catch up with the guys from Special Delivery, and reminded me why I loved that series so much, but also because Walter and Kelly are present for the fuster cluck that Baz and Elijah almost become. Almost, I say, because Heidi would never have messed up their happy - she just delays it for a while.

Elijah and Baz are still battling their respective demons, and Baz' mother's idea of what their wedding should be - a spectacle to end all spectacles - is only making things worse. Elijah feels as if he doesn't belong, and Baz is hindered by his disabilities and afraid that they will eventually lead to Elijah leaving him.

Fortunately, these two aren't only stupid when it comes to navigating their relationship, but also stupid in love, and while their communication skills need a lot of help (and, by golly, do they ever need help), throughout their struggles, their love for each other shines through. It's in the way Elijah takes care of Baz when he's hurting, and in the way Baz tries whatever he can to make Elijah's life as easy as possible, even if it's at the detriment of himself.

But fear not, wise and mostly kind Randy is there to assist these two, and Steve and Chenco also have a word to say. Or five.

See, when your birth family lets you down, like Elijah's parents did, and Randy's, and Mitch's, and Sam's horrid aunt, you make your own family. You find the fierce and loyal friends who stick with you no matter what, you seek out the ones who love you for who you are, and they become your chosen family. The ones you know you can trust and rely on, the ones who'll have your back.

And you forge your own path with those people. With your family.

And oh my gosh, the ending. It couldn't have been more perfect and more fitting for these two, and I might even have sniffled a time or five.

Beautifully written, exquisitely plotted, full of emotions, laughter, and tears, this was a perfect tribute to all those imaginary people I've come to love and adore.

And while Sam and Mitch are still my favorite Heidi Cullinan couple, Baz and Elijah trail a very close second.

Fabulous, just fabulous. Even if Randy steals the show, as usual. But then, how can you not love Randy? Ethan agrees. So does Sam. As well as Mitch.

Get your own copy as soon as you possibly can - you won't regret it.

Debra says

Release day review originally posted at Sinfully.

Worlds collide as Baz and Elijah (the Love Lessons series) meet Randy and Ethan (the Special Delivery series) when they head to Vegas for a stay at Herod's Casino. If you're interested in this story I'm assuming you've read at least one of those two series of books, if not both. If seeing Randy Jansen's name has you expecting a wild, kinky sort of story, remember you're in the Love Lessons world, so even though Baz and Elijah have been known to enjoy a bit of kink themselves, this is a sweet story that ties a bow on Baz and Elijah's happy ending in *Lonely Hearts*, with Randy and Ethan making dreams come true as they take a special interest in the two young men.

The story picks up shortly after *Lonely Hearts*. Baz sees Elijah beginning to panic and withdraw as Baz's mother hijacks plans for their wedding. Her version of tame is still a three ring circus and Baz can't see how to rein her in. Being with Baz's family and being overwhelmed at thoughts of their upcoming New Year's gala, wedding planning and life with the brash and powerful Acker family in general, is enough to make Elijah lose it. As if that's not enough, an unexpected attempt at contact from someone in his family also has Elijah on edge. Fearing Elijah will run, Baz talks him into a road trip to Vegas with friends Walter and Kelly, to escape the madness and celebrate New Year's together. Finding a gay friendly hotel/casino, the men arrive at Herod's where they almost immediately meet Randy who insists that they get the VIP treatment, with him as their guide. Shopping, dancing, making sure Baz is comfortable in their suite, and a trip to the Stratosphere observation deck are just the start of what turns out to be an almost magical and eye-opening trip that will change both Baz and Elijah forever.

If you haven't read the Special Delivery books and haven't met Randy, you'll probably be as shell shocked as Baz and Elijah seem to be as he does everything he can to make their hotel stay beyond perfect. Why he takes such an interest is eventually revealed and it will make you love Randy even more than you probably already do.

All the Love Lessons characters back making cameos, as are all six men from Special Delivery, but this is all about Baz and Elijah. They both still struggle with feelings that they are not worthy of the other and they aren't the greatest when it comes to communicating their concerns. Elijah connects with Randy and gets some good advice from Chenco, while Baz connects with Ethan. Both Ethan and Randy act as mentors and, in Randy's case, a fairy godfather figure who seems to have all of Vegas at his command.

To me the best parts of Elijah and Baz's relationship is when they are alone together and find the courage to let their guard down, Baz taking off his sunglasses and Elijah finding the strength to open up and talk about his fears. When they do that and are vulnerable to each other, you really get a feel for how perfect they are together, despite how different they are. Of course when they're getting down and dirty is great too, but this story was more about the tender loving and their emotional sides.

As with many Heidi Cullinan stories, this one ends with a sugary sweet happily ever after that may bring a tear of joy to your eye. It also opens up some possibilities for future stories and maybe another crossing of series borders. I wouldn't recommend picking this up if you haven't yet read *Lonely Hearts*, but it's a must read for Love Lessons fans and those of you jonesing for another shot of Randy and a peek at where the men

stand since the end of Tough Love.

Maja (The Nocturnal Library) says

A perfect closure for fans of Baz and Elijah. Review to come.

? Todd says

Well, I'm definitely in the minority here, but **this one really didn't work that well for me.**

I actually **enjoyed the initial parts** of the story where Baz flees his parents' Chicago home with his fiancée Elijah in tow as **they drive the Tesla cross-country to Las Vegas**, with Walter and Kelly along for the ride.

They then meet Randy from the Special Delivery series. This was probably **my favorite part of the story**, their introduction and interactions, but shortly after that, **my annoyance began to spike.**

Baz is hurting after the trip, which is perfectly understandable given his condition, but he nearly passes out from the pain because **he refuses to talk to Elijah** and tell him that he's in severe need of rest.

Then the next several chapters are **Baz being afraid to open up to Elijah** and **Elijah being afraid to open up to Baz**. Round and round and round and round and round. I found it **a bit exhausting.**

Instead of engagement rings, these two seriously need to spend that money on **a good therapist**, one that can help them with their **communication phobia.**

If a couple can't be open and honest with one another, without it feeling like having their wisdom teeth extracted, then **the last thing they need is to get married.**

But instead of that, Baz gets the big, bright idea to (view spoiler) during the trip, even beginning preparations ***before* asking Elijah** if he actually wants the same thing.

Again, **no communication.** And **slightly exhausting.**

And from that point forward, it was all about the (view spoiler) which seems to be an *absolute must have* in lots of stories lately, but I felt that it was **extremely premature** here and, quite frankly, **made me lose interest in the story.**

The story had lots of sex, round after round, but didn't have quite the same **Baz and Elijah *spark*** that I found in their original book. I found myself **wanting to skim** once the clothes came off and it's rare that I

skim sexy scenes.

This one came in at **just under 3 stars** for level of overall enjoyment for me.

My copy of the book was provided by the publisher in exchange for a fair, unbiased review.

Meags says

4 Stars

What a fantastic addition to an already fantastic series.

I absolutely *adore* Baz and Elijah and all the other wonderful characters from the **Love Lessons** universe. This was exactly the HEA I wanted for the boys and I couldn't be happier.

Although I'm not much of a fan of the **Special Delivery** gang, I really appreciated the roles they all played here (particularly Randy) in providing Baz and Elijah with some great (often moving) experiences and valued new friendships. The two series were meshed together beautifully and this has provided me with the kick I needed to consider going back and finishing the SD books.

Elsbeth says

I've finished this series....

I've so enjoyed this. So happy to see Baz and Elijah having their HEA!!
They are so perfect for each other.

"Only you can do that to me," Elijah whispered, eyes still shut.
"You're the only place it's ever felt safe to truly let go."

Baz as Howl was beautiful. Polished and elegant and sexy. But it wasn't quite right because of the sunglasses.
He was a broken, imperfect Howl.

He was Elijah's Howl.

I couldn't resist to use the reference of the movie *Howl's Moving Castle*. One of my favorite movies that Paul has introduced me to!!

So of course I loved every reference to this movie!!

Also I couldn't have loved Randy more!! He did such a great thing for Baz.

I'll end with one of the last words. This will be my comfort-read-series forever!!

Ethan had been right. It wasn't marriage that changed everything.

It was letting love in - the love that had been beside him all along.

Ele says

DNF @ 65%

Uhhh....sorry, I tried twice but I throw in the towel now.

First, it doesn't hold my interest at all. I don't like series with the same MCs except one or two.

Second, the misunderstanding/miscommunication was pretty frustrating.

Also, at first it was swoon worthy and cute, but now it's gay marriage all the time in Cullinan's books, no matter the circumstances or how young the characters are. Why? It's still a HEA even when there's no marriage.

But it's rimming and fingering galore!

So, I'm definately the minority but I'm quitting this one, although I like the series. Sorry:(

Susan says

This book felt like coming home. I loved loved loved it! I thought I would like it, but didn't expect the actual story to be this good!

I also loved the fact that the entire crew of the Special Delivery series played such a big role in this. They were awesome.

But of course the spotlight is reserved for Baz and Elijah. So beautiful, I cried.

PS, for the people worried there will be partner swapping since the crew of Special Delivery does indeed all tend to love each other, here is what Elijah had to say about that:

“I don’t think I could do that. It sounds sexy, but I think about other guys touching you and I want to cut their heads off.”

Denise H. says

*** A wonderful love story of Baz and Elijah rising up above the family take over of their wedding.

* Wealthy "Baz", Sebastian, with his injured sight from a bashing,

and Elijah and his scars have weathered many storms. What's one more?

Elijah...

They decide to get out of town and relax, take two friends along to share the drive in the Tesla, and meet more terrific people once they arrive.

Beautiful heartfelt conversations, caring, sweet, understanding and quirky new friends, and Baz and Elijah get some needed time and space to themselves.

Super sexy times are abundant !!

Internal struggles and doubts are nearly banished. Heidi Cullinan gives us an amazing cast, with a drag queen, the casino owner and his hubby, plus the couple that completes their quatro, and many, many more. A red wedding ?? You'll see why !!

Great story !! Romantic, ending and lots of hope, makes this story near perfect. Highly recommended, ENJOY !!

=====

I loved the story Dance With Me, one of my favorites !

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Katrina Passick Lumsden says

I don't preorder books. I think I did it once before.

As soon as I read this was Elijah and Baz in Vegas and that Mitch, Sam, Randy, Ethan, Steve, and Chencho

would be making appearances, I hit that "preorder" button with the speed of a crack addict being offered a pipe.

And it didn't disappoint. I was slightly concerned that Cullinan was going to attempt to throw more people into Randy, Ethan, Sam, and Mitch's bed, but thankfully, she didn't. Can you imagine the mechanics of that?

Okay, stop drooling. It's nice to imagine every now and then, but the reality of it would've been beyond confusing.

Anyway, this is a very sweet continuation of Elijah and Baz's romance, and I won't give anything more away, but if you like Cullinan, and if you like the Love Lessons series, and if you (like me) *fucking love* the Special Delivery series, you'll dig this one.

R * A Reader Obsessed * says

Well that was just all sorts of swoony sweet.

What I love most about this series is how the love of all these guys is portrayed. Giving, attentive, supportive - and not only of their significant other but of their entire group of friends that have become a wonderful surrogate family. They may be young, but they've all been through a lot - their love is inspiring and it makes me want to roll around and cover myself up in their feels.

So despite the self doubts that Elijah and Baz have, their intentions are always motivated by the other. It just takes the men from Special Delivery to be oh-so-conveniently available to help these two achieve their happiness on their own terms. As an aside, I don't think it's necessary to have read this series to enjoy Baz and Elijah's story, but readers who have done so will no doubt like revisiting all 6 guys and seeing them happy and content.

Really, this was a fabulous visit back to this wonderful cast of characters and all the warm fuzzies I love that come with them. The gents from Special Delivery are like older brothers or buddhas on the mountaintop, lending wonderful advice and aptly titled "love lessons" that put all into reassuring perspective. Definitely a must read for fans!

Erika says

DNF at 75%

Why, you may ask? Well, besides the fact that Elijah and Baz have always annoyed me both separately and together, so I was only reading it for the glimpses of Sam, Randy and Mitch, I had the following issues with the book:

- Baz and Elijah still get on my nerves. Lots of talking to other people so they could avoid talking to each other, misunderstandings and unnecessary drama.
- Too much showing, not enough telling. Lots of glossing over of details and events.
- Boring sex is boring. I skimmed, and then skipped, all the sex scenes. A heck of a lot of (view spoiler) so if that's what you like, enjoy!
- While it was nice to catch up with some of the author's past characters, they were mostly inserted into the book in such barely there but then again unbelievably eager to help ways that it just struck me as odd instead of nice. I CAN, however, see the hotel going out of their way for someone that has as much money and visibility as Baz, but not to the super extra EXTRA extent that they did. It just came across as very Special Snowflake to me.
- Too much heteronormativity. Does every gay man have to get married? Does every gay man want to have kids? Sam, Randy and Mitch used to be my favorite characters by this author but some of their statements in this book has really made me second guess why I liked them in the past. Except Randy, he's pretty much the same.
- Why do they need to get married so soon after they got engaged? FYI, an HEA does not necessarily mean "getting married and having kids". You know what would be really interesting in an M/M Romance? If the characters got engaged and then it lasted for a year or two because they wanted to finish school or concentrate in their career, like a lot of straight and not straight people are doing these days. Or how about if they never got married and just cohabited? That would be a great HEA too. I stopped reading soon after Baz came up with the idea of (view spoiler). How unique! Not.
- This passage right here:
"Hello, darling." Caramela spoke with a slight Latin accent, which was disarming because Chenco didn't have one.

Wtf is a Latin accent? There is no random vague Latino (not Latin) accent, FYI. If Chenco is Mexican, then he might use a Mexican accent. If he's Puerto Rican, then he'd have that one. If he's Cuban or mimicking a Cubana, he'd have a Cuban accent, etc. etc. You get it now? Good.

So yeah, another one bites the dust. On to the next!

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

It's Elijah and Baz. In VEGAS, baby!

The whole gang is here: Walter and Kelly, Randy and Ethan, Sam and Mitch, and Steve and Chenco. And if you have no idea who these couples are, don't read this book.

Short Stay is for fans of both the *Love Lessons* and *Special Delivery* series. While the book focuses on Elijah and Baz, their hopes and fears, Randy plays a big role in the story. He becomes the flirty fairy godmother,

making wishes come true.

So maybe the final celebration seemed too good to be true, but I like to believe that Randy worked his magic.

We don't see the other couples interact much, but they're together, and that made me happy.

Includes: Baz as Howl, Kelly as Rapunzel, one cameo appearance by Crabtree, one hot tub put to good use, Dirty Whiskey, a Tesla joy ride, and a (reluctant) hat-shopping expedition.

There's a drop of angst here, but it's mostly love, friendship & wedding vows. What's not to love?

Kaje Harper says

A sweet coda for all the guys from both Love Lessons and Special Delivery. Elijah and Baz's relationship is solid at its core, but at the moment it's difficult, because neither one is quite sure what the other wants or needs. Elijah's self-doubts and his inability to deal with Baz's overpowering mother come up against Baz's frustration with his own limitations. They want to support the other, sometimes bending themselves out of shape to do so.

They're each heading for a melt-down when Baz proposes a spur-of-the-moment trip to Vegas, drafting Walter and Kelly for the road trip. There, the guys meet up with Randy and Ethan, and to a lesser degree Mitch and Sam. Randy effectively becomes their fairy godfather, showing them Vegas and mentoring, as they work out what really matters. There's a bit of repetition to the issues and angst that arises, and Randy is almost supernatural, but especially when Elijah and Baz are alone together, there are moments of lovely emotion and growth and connection. There are also moments of pure fun. I enjoyed this look at a bunch of guys I have become very attached to. The resolution was sweet and solid, and I finished with a happy sigh.

Susan says

As much as I really do love all the books and ALL the characters in the Love Lessons series, Baz and Elijah, for some reason, have my heart. Maybe it's because they're both a bit unconventional and have pasts lined with hurt. Maybe it's because it's that hurt, and the walls they built around themselves for protection, that made me want so badly for them to find love. Whatever it is...Baz & Elijah as a couple are EVERYTHING. I love them fiercely.

I pretty much set the highest expectations ever when it came to their book, "Lonely Hearts". And because of these possibly unreachable hopes, the book itself left me feeling slightly unfulfilled. And I FINALLY understand why. It's because I wanted more. And what started out by the author just being a short story to say thank you to her supporters, turned into EXACTLY what Baz & Elijah needed...what I needed. It was that MORE. And then some!

I loved every page of this story. If you are a Heidi Cullinan fan, than this book is your reward. It has all the characters of her Love Lessons series. It has all the characters of her Special Delivery series. TOGETHER. In VEGAS. Being...themselves and being so awesome...I could hardly contain myself. But, what is MY

treat...it had Baz & Elijah being so brokenly in love...and it had (my) RANDY doing what needed to be done to bring them together...making it special.

And there's a wedding.

PERFECTION.

I am one HAPPY reader.

What's to Like:

I love when authors cross over characters in books and even moreso in series. Heidi Cullinan did this in such a smooth and "yes, this makes sense!" way. It was FUN and it was SPECIAL.

What's to Love:

Baz. Elijah. Randy. ...I could throw in Walter and Kelly, Sam, Mitch, Ethan, Chenco, Steve...the Ambassadors...and more. But really, Baz, Elijah, Randy...that's ALL I needed to make my heart swell.

Beware of:

This is not a standalone. And to get the FULL appreciation of what's happening here and how amazing it is, you really should read both the Love Lessons series and the Special Delivery series. Sounds like a lot...but it'll be worth it!

This Book is For:

Well, it's for the fans, really. Right? This feels like a letter from an author to her fans. What a treat.
