

Susan

DAFFODIL DAYS BY MELANIE LEIVERS

Summary: Daffodil Days is the coming-of-age story of Daphne Jacobs, a recent high school graduate, still living in her hometown trying to figure out her life. The novel follows her relationships and friendships throughout her first year on her own. She begins the book lovesick over a friend and ends the book with a new understanding of herself.

She bit her bottom lip. Her eyes were watering and her hands were shaking.

"Too much damn caffeine." She exhaled, blinking through the tears.

Daphne Jacobs knew it wasn't the end of the world. It wasn't even the end of her world.

She was supposed to only have only +0-ten days with them anyway. What's +0-days? Two seconds in her life. But the little fur balls grew had grown on her fast, and she yearned for one more scratch from their needle claws.

"Stupid poop machines." She she told said to herself as she drove back from animal control. She didn't have the money or the responsibility for two kittens. She didn't even know why she'd accepted the foster kittens in the first place. Why did she keep doing this to herself? Setting herself up for heartbreak. Not even heart-break, can Can you even experience heartbreak over a creature you barely met knew?

Maybe I just like to torture myself. She didn't voice this last thought, just kept it swimming around in her brain. She seemed to find distractions from her melancholy feelings and then those distractions would result in a deeper hole of feelings. Modest Mouse pounded on the car stereo, "Everything that keeps me together is falling apart".

Comment [s1]: Okay, I'm thinking that a better opening scene would be her actually giving the kittens back. Have us be in the moment with her. Start with when she has to walk out and holds the for the last time.

Comment [s2]: You have a lot of sentences beginning with "she"; watch out for that.

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Comment [s3]: I don't know where this comes from.

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With her body on auto-pilot, she finally realized she had driven herself ~~not home but to her home away from home. She pulled in to Starbucks #53576, her Starbucks, and —~~ her embarrassingly pitiful second home. It wasn't endlessly pathetic, ~~it's~~ it's where most of her friends worked, except for ~~actually her~~. It's where they spent late night hours lounging around the parking lot long after the lights went off inside. It's where she curled up in big, expensive leather chairs and guzzled down books along with complimentary drinks. It's where she went before dates and ~~slinked to after those dates crashed and burned so that she could lick her wounds with the help of chai teas and friendly banter. It was her crew's clubhouse and she wasn't all that shocked that her car ended up driving there when her mind was miles away, even though her plans were to go home and collapse into her kitten-kitten-free bed.~~

Comment [s4]: It's obvious it's her Starbucks if she knows the identifying number for the store.

Good

~~From behind the register, Dylan was working the register and whistled when she walked in. She didn't even have the emotional energy to roll her eyes.~~

"Well, you look like shit mixed with hair balls," he said.

"Yeah, fuck you too," ~~She Daphne numbly~~ spat back at him.

"Wow. Is that any way to get a free latte?" ~~He Dylan~~ laughed.

"Just a small coffee, black," Daphne stated, not asked, ~~with her~~ eyes locking with

Stephen.

Comment [s5]: Need to introduce him; otherwise reader will think you're using the wrong name for Dylan.

"Sounds like you ~~are're~~ punishing your taste buds," Stephen ~~joined the conversation said,~~ ~~standing beside Dylan.~~

"Sounds like she ~~'s~~ is finally appreciating the decadence of our limited-time, small batch Nicaragua blend," Nate ~~energetically~~ added while passing a steaming cup over the counter.

Comment [s6]: Don't tell us he has a lot of energy; show us through his actions. Also, who's Nate? You've introduced Dylan, Stephen, and Nate within a few lines of each other. That's a lot for the beginning of a book, especially when the reader hasn't had the time to absorb the first personality/looks, etc before being introduced to the second and third.

Stephen rolled his eyes; he was an ~~extra-extra-cream-cream-and-and~~ sugar kind of coffee drinker. She grasped the ceramic mug, hoping the sudden heat would burn her, ~~that's what she~~

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deserved. Instead, it was actually soothing. Her fingers picked at one of her many hemp and leather bracelets that slinked around her wrists. She tapped her thumb ~~wring on the countertop and sighed dramatically, made from a shell, on the counter top and sighed dramatically.~~

Comment [s7]: Because she brought the kitter back?

~~The whole entire Starbucks crew that worked there were extreme caffeine addicts, all having extreme preferences going along with their habit. Nate drank only coffee or espresso, always black, to appreciate the brew. Dylan preferred green tea, which ended up having more caffeine than most brews anyway. And Stephen loved all drinks, as long as he could customize them. He didn't even have a style, unless mad scientist was a culinary style when it came to being a barista. Maybe it was. The quickest way to his heart was to be a little old lady who wanted to try something new. He bent over backwards to impress those little old ladies. He said they deserved some attention and couldn't help but be impressed by an octogenarian that wanted to try a little innovation at that age. Stephen was a big guy with a big heart. He had messy, unkempt brown hair that was neither straight nor curly. However, it always curled a bit at the ends near his temples where he would sweat. Stephen was a sweaty guy. He sweat when he was working hard, he sweat when he was playing guitar, and he sweat when he got really worked up in a conversation. He always tried to cover it with nice smelling cologne and deodorants and lots of showers but he was a big guy and he lived in sunny, hot south Florida. So what could you do?~~

Comment [s8]: This shows pieces of your characters. I like your voice, but I think you need to incorporate this information into the story. It's too much of an info dump here and doesn't really add to the story. But, as I said, I do like the voice, and that's hard to nail down. Take this info-incorporate it slowly as you introduce the characters. Show, don't tell.

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Comment [s9]: Way too confusing

"What's going on, my little daffodil?" Stephen asked sweetly, in a slightly a "mama bear"-esque tone.

"Today is the 9th." ~~She Daphne~~ sighed again into her cup ~~while sliding it lazily back and forth, twisting it in the plate it sat atop of.~~

"You obviously didn't catch her snap this morning, Dylan said. Today is the day that is ~~bye-bye-kitties.~~" Dylan answered.

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“Aw, Daph, you knew this was coming,” Stephen couldn’t help but now take on a ‘I told you this would happen’ tone. ~~A ‘who said this idea would break your heart? Me, that’s who’ kind of tone. The ‘I’m the one who everyone said was being a downer, well who’s a downer now?!’ kind of tone.~~

Normally, she Daphne was quick to fall into a Stephen snuggle or breathe in his comforting words, but now she was just mad. Mad at Stephen, and mad at herself, ~~and just mad.~~

“When does Silas get here?” She wasn’t sure why she was wondering. Well she was sure, she had been avoiding most of his shifts since everything got weird. She and Silas, like the rest of the group, had been friends since her freshman year of high school. The boys had actually all been friends since 1st grade, but they went to a different elementary and middle school than her, and plus they were 2 years older. She d just graduated a few weeks earlier and was soon to be a freshman in the local community college majoring in “I don’t know what I’m doing but I’m taking a random class here and there at community college like everyone else”. Except for Stephen, he was an amazing artist, unfortunately, without any self-discipline or drive. Daphne was convinced he could be immensely successful, except he always procrastinated when any sort of job offer got serious. Even when she found art contests that were perfect for him or offered to start an Etsy account for the work he had completed, he just found a way to change the conversation.

Comment [s10]: ?

“He called out, said he was spewing chunks,” Nate said.

“Ew, gross Nate!” Daphne exclaimed. She while launching-launched a straw across the espresso machine, hitting him directly between the eyes. His easy smile smeared across his face, and they all chuckled.

Comment [s11]: You’re having a paragraph devoted to someone who hasn’t entered the scene yet. Wait until he arrives and try to introduce as much of this as possible through dialogue.

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“Uh oh, you fucked up Daph’s sulky, pathetic vibe she was **roekingrockin’**.” Dylan jabbed Nate playfully, but Nate was quick with a gentle kick to his shin.

“Fuck you, I am sad. I fell in love, I was in love! My heart feels shattered. I am numb.”

“Well, are you sad or numb? I don’t think you can be both ‘cause they kind of contradict each other. I mean, I know I’ve been out of school for a bit, but I’m pretty sure those are two different emotions that don’t mix.” Dylan mused while continuing to play karate fight Nate. His messy hair **heavily** swayed every time he **dramatically** dodged an oncoming swing...karate chop? Dylan was one of those brooding, tall, and handsome guys who looked like he belonged in Seattle and not sunny Florida. His father was Norwegian and his mother was Cuban and Dylan won the genetic lottery. Those two could’ve produced a funky looking offspring, but no, Dylan was gorgeous. He had wavy brown hair with natural honey highlights, a strong jaw, pale blue eyes, and muscular arms. **Plus** **o** On top of looks, he rocked a local vibe via the Cuban side and the foreigner mystique via the Nordic roots as well. On the other hand, there’s Nate, who was the most quintessential beachy South Florida kid there could be. His hair was short and mousy brown, his skin was perpetually **sun-sun**-kissed and freckled from practically living at the beach. He manage**d** to surf almost every morning, and his days off were spent driving up the coast to catch better breaks. Surfing in Florida was nothing like California, but it was still a lifestyle. And once or twice a year his dad, himself, his brother, and his cousins would go to Costa Rica for a week or two for real **waves**.

Comment [s12]: Who’s speaking?

Daphne sighed and nestled down into her favorite leather armchair. The rest of the afternoon was spent with Daphne reading, Nate and Stephen trying to write song lyrics, and Dylan texting with some new girl he **d** met the week before. A slow trickle of customers flowed in and out, but it was a pretty quiet day. **The** sunshine blasted through the window at a certain

Comment [s13]: Again, some good info, but this is an info dump. You want to incorporate this into the story. For example, you can have them talk about surfing in the conversation and then use the conversation to bring out what they look like, how they talk, their personalities...

Comment [s14]: None of them had to work?

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part of the every evening, even with the blinds pulled shut. This evening, the sudden blast of light woke Daphne with a jump and she squeaked. Nate and Dylan cracked up; they told her she looked like a hobo all passed out on one of the chairs.

"I know ma'am, you just wanted to charge your phone. But no bathing in that bathroom, ok?" Dylan sternly ~~told her~~ said, before cracking a smile.

"Hey, I've had a long day. Be nice. I'm emotionally exhausted."

"Which you did to yourself?" Stephen called from across the room as he wiped down tables.

"I'm gonna go home and grab some dinner. Wash the cat off of me too. Be back around closing?" She asked the last part as a question but it wasn't really. As usual, she'd come back to hang with the guys. Whether they ended up in their little town's downtown area, or at the beach, or just waste hours in the parking lot. She'd end up back with her guys.

JULIE

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Where is this in the book? Is this the beginning?
Set the scene. Place her in the car in the Animal Shelter parking lot.

Daphne Jacobs

She bit her bottom lip. Her eyes were watering and her hands were shaking

on the steering wheel

"Too much damn caffeine" She exhaled, blinking through the tears.

italicize?

Daphne Jacobs knew it wasn't the end of the world. It wasn't even the end of her world.

She was supposed to only have 10 days with them anyway. What's 10 days? Two seconds in her life. But the little fur balls grew on her fast and she yearned for one more scratch from their needle claws.

"Stupid poop machines" She told herself as she drove back from Animal Control. She didn't have the money or the responsibility for two kittens. She didn't even know why she accepted the foster kittens in the first place. Why did she keep doing this to herself? Setting herself up for heartbreak. Not even heart break, can you even experience heartbreak over a creature you barely met? Maybe I just like to torture myself. She didn't voice this last thought, just kept it swimming around in her brain. She seemed to find distractions from her melancholy feelings and then those distractions would result in a deeper hole of feelings. Modest Mouse pounded on the car stereo, "Everything that keeps me together is falling apart".

With her body on auto-pilot she finally realized she had driven herself not home but to her home away from home. She pulled in to Starbucks #53576, her Starbucks, and her

Placement of "only"

Tighten up these thoughts
inward

Prompts went parallel.

She didn't voice ANY THOUGHTS except for coffee and pot m2chi

line of lyrics not song title

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Why didn't she work there?

~~embarrassingly pitiful second home. It wasn't endlessly pathetic, it's where most of her friends worked, except for actually her. It's where they spent late night hours lounging around the parking lot long after the lights went off inside. It's where she curled up in big expensive leather chairs and guzzled down books along with complimentary drinks. It's where she went before dates, and slinked to after those dates crashed and burned so that she could lick her wounds with the help of chai teas and friendly banter. It was her crew's clubhouse and she wasn't all that shocked that her car ended up driving there when her mind was miles away, even though her plans were to go home and collapse into her kitten-free bed.~~

From behind the register, Dylan was working the register and whistled when she walked in. She didn't even have the emotional energy to roll her eyes.

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"Yeah, fuck you, too" She numbly spat back at him.

"Wow. Is that anyway to get a free latte?" He laughed.

"Just a small coffee, black," Daphne stated, ~~not asked~~, with eyes locking with Stephen.

"Sounds like you are punishing your taste buds," Stephen joined the conversation.

"Sounds like she is finally appreciating the decadence of our limited-time, small batch Nicaragua blend" Nate energetically added while passing a steaming cup over the counter.

Stephen rolled his eyes; he was an extra cream and sugar kind of coffee drinker. She grasped the ceramic mug, hoping the sudden heat would burn her, ^{as} that's what she deserved.

Instead, it was actually soothing. Her fingers picked at one of her many hemp and leather bracelets that ^{wrapped} slinked around her wrists. She tapped her thumb ^{wring}, made from a shell, on the counter top and sighed dramatically.

2nd use of "slinking"

Don't go these ver equal way

Why? (Should HAVE specified kind Starbucks)

sounding commercial

Can't be Starbucks He serve her to quick

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long!

crew again

with individual

The whole crew that worked there were extreme caffeine addicts, all having extreme preferences going along with their habit. Nate drank only coffee or espresso, always black, to appreciate the brew. Dylan preferred green tea, which ended up having more caffeine than most brews anyway. And Stephen loved all drinks, as long as he could customize them. He didn't even have a style, unless mad scientist was a culinary style when it came to being a barista.

Stephen has no extreme preferences

Maybe it was. The quickest way to his heart was to be a little old lady who wanted to try something new. ~~He bent over backwards to impress those little old ladies. He said they deserved some attention and couldn't help but be~~ impressed by ~~an~~ ^{he was} octogenarian ^{who} that wanted to try a little

innovation at that age. Stephen was a big guy with a big heart. He had messy, unkempt brown hair that was neither straight nor curly. However, it always curled a bit at the ends near his temples where he would sweat. Stephen was a sweaty guy. He sweat when he was working hard, he sweat when he was playing guitar, and he sweat when he got really worked up in a conversation. He always tried to cover it with nice smelling cologne and deodorants and lots of showers but he was a big guy and he lived in sunny, hot south Florida. ~~So what could you do?~~

Maybe describe him in such detail LATER too much here

redundant

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kind of tone. The 'I'm the one who everyone said was being a downer, well who's a downer now?!' kind of tone.

Normally she was quick to fall into a Stephen snuggle or breathe in his comforting words, but now she was just mad. Mad at Stephen, mad at herself, and just mad.

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"Fuck you, I am sad. I fell in love, I was in love! My heart feels shattered. I am numb."

too many tones. Choose one.

Do these details really matter?

not frag/noun

Explz

Again! Move these details to later. Maybe I can doodle no sketch behind counter.

in side

word choice

spread?

JULIE

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long #

“Well, are you sad or numb? I don’t think you can be both ‘cause they kind of contradict each other. I mean I know I’ve been out of school for a bit but I’m pretty sure those are two different emotions that don’t mix.” Dylan mused while continuing to play karate fight Nate. (His

Ambiguous Dylan or Nate

messy hair heavily swayed every time he dramatically dodged an oncoming swing...karate chop? Dylan was one of those brooding, tall, and handsome guys who looked like he belonged in Seattle and not sunny Florida. His father was Norwegian and his mother was Cuban and Dylan won the genetic lottery. Those two could’ve produced a funky looking offspring but no, Dylan was gorgeous. He had wavy brown hair with natural honey highlights, a strong jaw, pale blue eyes, and muscular arms. Plus on top of looks, he rocked a local vibe via the Cuban side and the foreigner mystique via the Nordic roots as well. On the other hand, there’s Nate who was the most quintessential beachy South Florida kid there could be. His hair was short and mousy brown, his skin was perpetually sun-kissed and freckled from practically living at the beach. He manage to surf almost every morning, and his days off were spent driving up the coast to catch better breaks. Surfing in Florida was nothing like California but it was still a lifestyle. And once or twice a year his dad, himself, his brother, and his cousins, would go to Costa Rica for a week or two for real waves.

As more description to later

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Are their activities important to plot here?

word choice streams shot shore x 2

Would they really have allowed her to remain like that for too long — with other customers coming in? — with other customers

JULIE

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OK
ok?" Dylan sternly told her before cracking a smile.

"Hey, I've had a long day. Be nice. I'm emotionally exhausted."

"Which you did to yourself!" Stephen called from across the room as he wiped down tables.

"I'm gonna go home and grab some dinner. Wash the cat off of me too. Be back around closing?" She asked the last part as a question but it wasn't really. As usual, she'd come back to hang with the guys. Whether they ended up in their little town's downtown area, or at the beach, or just waste hours in the parking lot, she'd end up back with her guys.

NOTHING REALLY HAPPENED HERE.
IT LOOKS LIKE YOU PAINTED A 2-DIMENSIONAL PICTURE.
CUT SOME OF THE DESCRIPTION OR SAVE FOR LATER.
INFUSE THE SCENE WITH MEANINGFUL DIALOGUE.
EXPLAIN WHY DAPHNE TOOK IN THE FOSTER KITTENS IN THE FIRST PLACE.
WAS SHE A VETERINARY MAJOR?
DOES SHE HAVE A FRIEND WHO WORKS THERE?
WHY DOESN'T SHE WORK AT STARBUCK'S?
DOES SHE HAVE A JOB?
DOES SHE HAVE FEMALE FRIENDS, A ROOMMATE - TO CONVERSE WITH,
GET SYMPATHY FROM - OR JUST THE "CREW" OF GUYS.
YOU SPENT SO MUCH TIME DESCRIBING THE BOYS' APPEARANCES
AND INTERESTS.
WHAT ABOUT DAPHNE?
CAN THE CHARACTERS USE THE "F" WORD LESS AND
STILL REMAIN AUTHENTIC?
THIS HAS POTENTIAL, BUT I'D BE INTRIGUED TO READ
MORE ONLY IF I KNEW MORE AND THEREFORE
CARED MORE ABOUT DAPHNE.

Ed

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Daphne

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So why does she go to movie?

Daphne Jacobs knew it wasn't the end of the world. It wasn't even the end of her world.

She was supposed to only have 10 days with them anyway. What's 10 days? [Two seconds in her life.] But the little fur balls grew on her fast and she yearned for one more scratch from their needle claws. ^{hard to believe}

"Stupid poop machines" She told herself as she drove back from animal control. She didn't have the money or the responsibility for two kittens. She didn't even know why she'd accepted the foster kittens in the first place. Why did she keep doing this to herself? Setting herself up for heartbreak. Not even heart break, can you even experience heartbreak over a creature you barely met? ^{we} Maybe I just like to torture myself. She didn't voice this last thought, just kept it swimming around in her brain. She seemed to find distractions from her melancholy feelings and then those distractions would result in a deeper hole of feelings. ^{bad} Modest Mouse pounded [on the car stereo, "Everything that keeps me together is falling apart".]

With her body on auto-pilot she finally realized she had driven herself not home but to her home away from home. She pulled in to Starbucks #53576, her Starbucks, and her

- look at a book + see how dialog works
 - nothing happens: the kitten situation could be a good setup for her, her life, her plans, etc. instead, we get hammy les.

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pick one
 embarrassing pitiful second home. It wasn't endlessly pathetic; it's where most of her friends worked, except for ~~actually~~ her. It's where they spent late-night hours lounging around the parking lot long after the lights went off inside. It's where she curled up in big expensive leather chairs and guzzled down books along with complimentary drinks. It's where she went before dates and slinked to after those dates crashed and burned so that she could lick her wounds with the help of chai teas and friendly banter. It was her crew's clubhouse and she wasn't all that shocked that ~~her car~~ she ended up driving there when her mind was miles away, even though her plans were to go home and collapse into her kitten-free bed.

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does he do this with everyone doesn't everyone's drink

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"What's going on my little daffodil?" Stephen asked sweetly in slightly a "mama bear" ^{esque} tone.

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kind of tone. The 'I'm the one who everyone said was being a downer, well who's a downer now?!' kind of tone. *3 tones necessary?*

Normally ⁽¹⁾ she was quick to fall into a Stephen snuggle or breathe in his comforting words, but now she was just mad. Mad at Stephen, mad at herself, and just mad.

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of the group, had been friends since her freshman year of high school. The boys had actually all been friends since 1st grade, but they went to a different elementary and middle school than ^{she did,} her

^{and} plus they were 2 years older. She just graduated a few weeks earlier and was soon to be a

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who says this? "He called out, said he was spewing chunks." ⁽¹⁾

"Ew, gross Nate!" Daphne exclaimed while launching a straw across the espresso machine ⁽¹⁾ hitting him directly between the eyes. His easy smile ⁽¹⁾ smeared across his face [and they all chuckled.

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DAFFODIL DAYS BY MELANIE LEIVERS

Who says this?
“Well are you sad or numb? I don’t think you can be both ‘cause they kind of contradict each other. I mean I know I’ve been out of school for a bit but I’m pretty sure those are two different emotions that don’t mix.” Dylan mused while continuing to play karate fight Nate. His messy hair heavily swayed every time he dramatically dodged an oncoming swing...karate chop? Dylan was one of those brooding, tall, and handsome guys who looked like he belonged in Seattle and not sunny Florida. His father was Norwegian and his mother was Cuban and Dylan won the genetic lottery. Those two could’ve produced a funky looking offspring but no, Dylan was gorgeous. He had wavy brown hair with natural honey highlights, a strong jaw, pale blue eyes, and muscular arms. Plus on top of looks, he rocked a local vibe via the Cuban side and the foreigner mystique via the Nordic roots as well. On the other hand, there was Nate who was the most quintessential beachy South Florida kid there could be. His hair was short and mousy brown, his skin was perpetually sun-kissed and freckled from practically living at the beach. He managed to surf almost every morning, and his days off were spent driving up the coast to catch better breaks. Surfing in Florida was nothing like California but it was still a lifestyle. And once or twice a year his dad, himself, his brother, and his cousins would go to Costa Rica for a week or two for real waves. and himself

too much

Daphne sighed and nestled down into her favorite leather armchair. The rest of the afternoon was spent with Daphne reading, Nate and Stephen trying to write song lyrics, and Dylan texting with some new girl he met the week before. A slow trickle of customers flowed in and out but it was a pretty quiet day. The sunshine blasted through the window at a certain part of the every evening, even with the blinds pulled shut. This evening, the sudden blast of light woke Daphne with a jump and she squeaked. Nate and Dylan cracked up, they told her she looked like a hobo all passed out on one of the chairs.

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“I know ma’am, you just wanted to charge your phone. But no bathing in that bathroom, ok?” Dylan sternly told her before cracking a smile.

“Hey, I’ve had a long day. Be nice. I’m emotionally exhausted.”

“Which you did to yourself!” Stephen called from across the room as he wiped down tables.

“I’m gonna go home and grab some dinner. Wash the cat off of me too. Be back around closing?” She asked the last part as a question but it wasn’t really. As usual, she’d come back to hang with the guys. Whether they ended up in their little town’s downtown area, or at the beach, or just wasted hours in the parking lot. She’d end up back with her guys.

↑
missing the rest of the sentence

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After reading the summary and before reading the piece, I have to wonder what will make this coming of age story special. How is it different from every other coming of age genre story out there? We'll see.

*

*

*

The story here has two elements that you can use to great success. First is the setting. You seem to know the ins and outs of the Starbucks that is the main setting here. It is common and recognizable, like the restaurant in Seinfeld. Who can't relate to that?

The second advantage you gave yourself is a recognizable cast of characters. Ninety percent of sit-coms have such a cast.

Now, what you have to do to make the first two elements work is a central story for the first two elements to hang on to. There is no story here, so far, and you have to have one and right up front to gain the reader's interest. It reads as though you're still trying to get the story down on paper and then to edit it. I'd guess, many of these first pages will be edited way down to let the story come through.

You have a good start, and with some careful editing, you'll find the story will shine.

Good luck

Dave

Summary: Daffodil Days is the coming-of-age story of Daphne Jacobs, a recent high school graduate, still living in her hometown trying to figure out her life. The novel follows her relationships and friendships throughout her first year on her own. She begins the book lovesick over a friend and ends the book with a new understanding of herself.

She bit her bottom lip. Her eyes were watering and her hands were shaking.

"Too much damn caffeine" She exhaled, blinking through the tears.

Daphne Jacobs knew it wasn't the end of the world. It wasn't even the end of her world.

She was supposed to only have 10 days with them (*Don't be coy. Tell who she's supposed to be*

with.) anyway. What's 10 days? Two seconds in her life. **But the little fur balls grew on her**

fast and she yearned for one more scratch from their needle claws. (*Sorry. Don't understand the reference.*)

DAFFODIL DAYS BY MELANIE LEIVERS

“Stupid poop machines” She *machines*,” she told herself as she drove back from animal control. She didn’t have the money or the responsibility for two kittens. She didn’t even know why she accepted the foster kittens in the first place. Why did she keep doing this to herself? Setting herself up for heartbreak. Not even heart break, can you *(changing perspective)* even experience heartbreak over a creature you barely met? Maybe I just like to torture myself. She *(you need to figure out who is telling the story. First person? Third person?)* didn’t voice this last thought, just kept it swimming around in her brain. She seemed to find distractions from her melancholy feelings and then those distractions would result in a deeper hole of feelings. Modest Mouse pounded on the car stereo, “Everything that keeps me together is falling apart”.

With her body on auto-pilot(,) she finally realized she had driven herself not home but to her home away from home. She pulled in to Starbucks #53576, her Starbucks, and her embarrassingly pitiful second home. *(Second reference to second home. Once is enough if you word it properly.)* ~~It wasn't~~ *This choice wasn't* endlessly pathetic, it’s where most of her friends worked, except for ~~actually~~ her. *It's where they spent late night hours lounging around the parking lot long after the lights went off inside. It's where she curled up in big expensive leather chairs and guzzled down books along with complimentary drinks. It's where she went before dates and slinked to after those dates crashed and burned so that she could lick her wounds with the help of chai teas and friendly banter. It was her crew's clubhouse and she wasn't all that shocked that her car ended up driving there when her mind was miles away, even though her plans were to go home and collapse into her kitten free bed. (This is a well-conceived paragraph. It sets the scene as well as the tone. Good.)*

Dylan was working the register and whistled when she walked in. She didn’t even have the emotional energy to roll her eyes.

DAFFODIL DAYS BY MELANIE LEIVERS

“Well you look like shit mixed with hair balls,” he said.

“Yeah, fuck you ~~too~~” She *too, she* numbly spat back at him.

“Wow. Is that anyway to get a free latte?” He laughed.

“Just a small coffee, black” Daphne stated, not asked, with eyes locking with Stephen.

“Sounds like you are punishing your taste buds,” Stephen *said, joining* joined the conversation.

“Sounds like she is finally appreciating the decadence of our limited-time, small batch Nicaragua blend(,)” Nate energetically added(,) while passing a steaming cup over the counter.

Stephen rolled his eyes; he was an extra cream and sugar kind of coffee drinker. She grasped the ceramic mug, hoping the sudden heat would burn her, that’s what she deserved. Instead, it was actually soothing. Her fingers picked at one of her many hemp and leather bracelets that slinked around her wrists. She tapped her thumb wring, made from a shell, on the counter top and sighed dramatically.

The whole crew that worked there were extreme caffeine addicts, all having extreme preferences going along with their habit. Nate drank only coffee or espresso, always black, to appreciate the brew. Dylan preferred green tea, which ended up having more caffeine than most brews anyway. And Stephen loved all drinks, as long as he could customize them. He didn’t even have a style, unless mad scientist was a culinary style when it came to being a barista. Maybe it was. *(This is a list. Nothing puts a reader to sleep quicker than a list.)* The quickest way to his heart was to be a little old lady who wanted to try something new. He bent over backwards to impress those little old ladies. He said they deserved some attention and couldn’t help but be impressed by an octogenarian that wanted to try a little innovation at that age. Stephen was a big guy with a big heart. He had messy, unkempt brown hair that was neither straight nor curly.

DAFFODIL DAYS BY MELANIE LEIVERS

However, it always curled a bit at the ends near his temples where he would sweat. Stephen was a sweaty guy. He sweat when he was working hard, he sweat when he was playing guitar, and he sweat when he got really worked up in a conversation. He always tried to cover it with nice smelling cologne and deodorants and lots of showers but he was a big guy and he lived in sunny, hot south Florida. So what could you do?

(Half way into the reading there is no story. A description of aimless teenagers can't hold the reader's attention.)

“What’s going on my little daffodil?” Stephen asked sweetly in slightly a “mama bear”-esque tone.

“Today is the 9th(.)” She sighed into her cup while sliding it lazily back and forth, twisting it in the plate it sat atop of.

“You obviously didn’t catch her snap this morning, today is the day that is bye bye kitties” Dylan answered.

“Aw Daph, you knew this was coming”, Stephen couldn’t help but now take on a ‘I told you this would happen’ tone. A ‘who said this idea would break your heart? Me, that’s who’ kind of tone. The ‘I’m the one who everyone said was being a downer, well who’s a downer now?!’ kind of tone.

Normally she was quick to fall into a Stephen snuggle or breathe in his comforting words, but now she was just mad. Mad at Stephen, mad at herself, and just mad. *(I’m having a difficult time supporting the main character.)*

“When does Silas get here?” She wasn’t sure why she was wondering. Well she was sure, she had been avoiding most of his shifts since everything got weird. She and Silas, like the rest of the group, had been friends since her freshman year of high school. The boys had actually all

DAFFODIL DAYS BY MELANIE LEIVERS

been friends since 1st grade, but they went to a different elementary and middle school than ~~her~~ *she did* and ~~plus~~ they were 2 years older. She just graduated a few weeks earlier and was soon to be a freshman in the local community college majoring in “I don’t know what I’m doing but I’m taking a random class here and there at community college like everyone else(.)”. Except for Stephen, he was an amazing artist, unfortunately, without any self-discipline or drive. Daphne was convinced he could be immensely successful, except he always procrastinated when any sort of job offer got serious. Even when she found art contests that were perfect for him or offered to start an Etsy account for the work he had completed, he just found a way to change the conversation.

“He called out, said he was spewing chunks”

“Ew, gross Nate!” Daphne exclaimed while launching a straw across the espresso machine hitting him directly between the eyes. His easy smile smeared across his face and they all chuckled.

“Uh oh, you fucked up Daph’s sulky, pathetic vibe she was rocking,(.)” Dylan jabbed Nate playfully, but Nate was quick with a gentle kick to his shin.

“Fuck you, I am sad. I fell in love, I was in love! My heart feels shattered. I am numb.”

“Well are you sad or numb? I don’t think you can be both ‘cause they kind of contradict each other. I mean I know I’ve been out of school for a bit but I’m pretty sure those are two different emotions that don’t mix;” Dylan mused, while continuing to play karate fight Nate. His messy hair heavily swayed every time he dramatically dodged an oncoming swing... karate chop? Dylan was one of those brooding, tall, and handsome guys who looked like he belonged in Seattle and not sunny Florida. His father was Norwegian and his mother was Cuban and Dylan won the genetic lottery. Those two could’ve produced a funky looking offspring but no, Dylan

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Daphne sighed and nestled down into her favorite leather armchair. The rest of the afternoon was spent with Daphne reading, Nate and Stephen trying to write song lyrics, and Dylan texting with some new girl he met the week before. A slow trickle of customers flowed in and out but it was a pretty quiet day. The sunshine blasted through the window at a certain part of the every evening, even with the blinds pulled shut. This evening, the sudden blast of light woke Daphne with a jump and she squeaked. Nate and Dylan cracked up, they told her she looked like a hobo all passed out on one of the chairs.

"I know ma'am, you just wanted to charge your phone. But no bathing in that bathroom, ok?" Dylan sternly told her before cracking a smile.

"Hey, I've had a long day. Be nice. I'm emotionally exhausted."

"Which you did to yourself!" Stephen called from across the room as he wiped down tables.

DAFFODIL DAYS BY MELANIE LEIVERS

“I’m gonna go home and grab some dinner. Wash the cat off of me too. Be back around closing?” She asked the last part as a question but it wasn’t really. As usual, she’d come back to hang with the guys. **Whether they ended up in their little town’s downtown area, or at the beach, or just waste hours in the parking lot. She’d end up back with her guys.** *(This vague aimlessness, I hope, is what drives her on to come of age. She needs guidance and a shove.)*

Jani's Comments

DAFFODIL DAYS BY MELANIE LEIVERS

Summary: *Daffodil Days is the coming-of-age story of Daphne Jacobs, a recent high school graduate, still living in her hometown trying to figure out her life. The novel follows her relationships and friendships throughout her first year on her own. She begins the book lovesick over a friend and ends the book with a new understanding of herself.*

She bit her bottom lip. Her eyes ~~watered~~ were watering and her hands ~~shook~~ were shaking.

“Too much damn caffeine.” She exhaled, blinking through the tears.

Daphne Jacobs knew it wasn’t the end of the world. It wasn’t even the end of her world.

She was only supposed to ~~only~~ have ~~ten+0~~ days with ~~the kittens~~ ~~them~~ anyway. What’s ~~ten+0~~ days? Two seconds in her life. But the little fur balls grew on her fast, and she yearned for one more scratch from their needle claws.

“Stupid poop machines.” ~~She~~ she told herself as she drove back from animal control. She didn’t have the money or the responsibility for two kittens. She didn’t even know why she accepted the foster kittens in the first place. Why did she keep doing this to herself? Setting herself up for heartbreak. Not even heart-break, can you even experience heartbreak over a creature you barely met? ~~Maybe I just like to torture myself.~~ She didn’t voice this last thought, just kept it swimming ~~around~~ in her brain. She ~~seemed to find~~ always found distractions from her melancholy ~~feelings~~. and then those distractions would result in a deeper hole of feelings.

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With her body on auto-pilot she finally realized she had driven herself not home but to her home away from home. She pulled in to Starbucks #53576, her Starbucks, and her

Comment [PHS IS1]: You are referring to her as “she” then you switch to “I”. Stay consistent. If this is internal thought then put it on a new line and italicize it.

DAFFODIL DAYS BY MELANIE LEIVERS

embarrassingly pitiful second home. It wasn't endlessly ~~pathetic, pathetic~~; it's where most of her friends worked, except for actually her. It's where they spent late night hours lounging around the parking lot long after the lights went off inside. It's where she curled up in big expensive leather chairs and guzzled down books along with complimentary drinks. It's where she went before dates and slinked to after those dates crashed and burned so that she could lick her wounds with the help of chai teas and friendly banter. It was her crew's clubhouse and she wasn't all that shocked that her car ended up driving there when her mind was miles away, even though her plans were to go home and collapse into her kitten free bed.

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Comment [PHS IS2]: Who is Stephen? I thought she was talking to Dylan.

Comment [PHS IS3]: Use contractions.

Comment [PHS IS4]: You're introducing a lot of new characters at once. Gets confusing.

Comment [PHS IS5]: Why does she deserve it? Is she feeling guilty about the kittens?

I liked this paragraph.

DAFFODIL DAYS BY MELANIE LEIVERS

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“He called out, said he was spewing chunks.”

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another character

Does she like Stephen more than friendship?

DAFFODIL DAYS BY MELANIE LEIVERS

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Comment [PHS 156]: Quiet days are boring to read about. I'm on page 6 and nothing has happened. You're starting your story too early.

↓
every writer does
this 😊