‘LOVE UNDER THE STARS’
SYNOPSIS

30-year-old graduate student Becca Howard hasn’t quite grown up yet. She is perpetually late to class, a little bit of a mess, always changes her major, never stays in a relationship for more than six months, and regularly dodges questions from her advisor, Walt, about her yet-to-be-started graduation thesis.

On the opposite end of the spectrum is Nate Williams. Nate, a widow, is meticulous and organized about his daily routines and taking care of his daughter, Emily. He is an accomplished cartographer, and uses mapmaking to try to get Emily to come out of the shell she has been in since her mother passed away.

Becca crosses paths with Emily while assisting with her fourth grade class in hopes of thesis inspiration. She notices Emily keeping to herself, and hears from another student that Emily has been very quiet ever since her mom died. Becca uses her young-at-heart attitude to relate with Emily, and to help her open up.

After school, Emily takes Becca’s advice to give her dad an interesting description about her day, so instead of answering, “fine,” she describes her day as, “a sunny day at the beach.” She tells her dad she has a new friend, and Nate suggests she ask Becca over for a play date.

Nate is surprised when Becca – a grown (and beautiful) woman – arrives to the play date at the ice cream parlor. He is happy, though, that his daughter is more talkative and lively around Becca. All three have a great time at the ice cream parlor play date, and there is even a bit of chemistry developing between Becca and Nate. Even Becca’s neighbor, Amber, can sense the spark between Becca and Nate just in the way Becca talks about him.

A few days later, Becca sees Nate on her college campus. She nervously rambles, and skips her class to show Nate around. Nate asks Becca to play miniature golf – as part of a play date with Emily, of course!

The chemistry between Becca and Nate continues to develop at mini-golf. When they take a break in the action, Nate tells Becca that he worries about Emily, and hasn’t even seen her cry since her mom died of leukemia. This hits home with Becca, who lost her own mother when she was very young – something she doesn’t like to talk about with most people.

Later that week, Becca and Emily have their first solo play date at the planetarium. Though Emily is at first nervous to leave her dad, she has fun spending time with Becca. The fun quickly fades, though, when Becca loses Emily in the crowd. When Becca eventually finds Emily, both are shaken from the experience. Becca confesses what happens to Nate, and he assures her it was a mistake that could happen to anyone.

For their next play date, Emily takes Becca to get a pretty princess makeover. Emily enjoys this
girl time with Becca, who fills the female figure role Emily has been lacking. Emily confesses to Becca that she took her mom’s necklace against her dad’s wishes. With Becca’s help, Emily tells Nate that she feels ready to keep her mom’s necklace safe, and Nate lets Emily have it.

Becca joins Nate and Emily for dinner that night. While Nate makes dinner, Becca reads part of The Velveteen Rabbit, to Emily, and starts to cry. She tells Emily that her mom used to read her the book, and that her mom passed away. Even more importantly, Becca tells Emily that it’s ok to be sad. Nate observes all of this, and is overwhelmed with emotion.

Over dinner, Emily invites Becca to join them to visit her grandparents’ cabin. After a little coaxing from Emily, both Nate and Becca agree. After Emily goes to bed that night, Nate tells Becca that sometimes it feels like they are on a date. Becca opens up to Nate that she has trouble committing to things — including relationships — because life is so unpredictable. Their potentially romantic moment is interrupted, though, when Emily has a nightmare.

The next day, Walt is shocked to learn that Becca has finally chosen a thesis topic: how adults can give children better tools to deal with grief. Though he is happy that she’s found a topic, Walt warns her not to let a relationship with Nate prevent her from finishing her thesis. Becca continues to help in Emily’s class while working on her thesis, and is thrilled to see Emily finally play along with the other kids at school.

Becca offers to cook Nate dinner, and quickly panics over her lack of homemaking skills! Thanks to some help from Amber, though, she cleans her apartment, and serves a lasagna. Nate finally asks Becca on a real date, and they end the evening with an awkward kiss that Becca accidentally plants right on Nate’s ear!

On their weekend away at the cabin, Becca immediately fits in with Nate’s parents – Essie and Chuck – and tells them about how she grew up with her grandparents after her mother died. Nate and Becca take an evening stroll, but promise Emily they’ll be back by nine to look at the shooting stars. Distracted by their romantic stroll and a kiss, though, Becca and Nate return home late. Emily is disappointed in them, and mad at Nate for stealing her friend. To protect Emily’s feelings, Nate and Becca decide not to see each other for awhile.

After some time passes, Emily tells her dad that she misses both her mom and Becca, and wants Becca to be friends with both her and Nate again. Becca rejoins their play date trio, and sets up a star lamp projector in Emily’s room. She tells Emily to think of her mom in the stars looking down on her when she feels sad. Emily tells her dad in French – their secret language – that it’s ok if he marries Becca.
Becca becomes fully focused on her thesis, more organized, and doesn't shy away from a real relationship with Nate. On Nate and Becca's official first date, they go to the same miniature golf course where they once went with Emily, and beats him – literally – blindfolded.

Nate tells Becca that he needs to know if she's going to run away from their relationship for no reason after six months – her typical expiration date. She contemplates the question while she tucks Emily into bed. When Emily tells Becca she's her best friend, Emily's decision is clear: She wants to join their family. While Becca was with Emily, however, Nate, caught a glimpse of her thesis, and saw that she had been studying Emily. Feeling that she used Emily, he asks her to leave. Nate tells Emily that Becca won't be coming around anymore.

Becca, Nate, and Emily are all deeply saddened. Becca wants to quit before presenting her thesis, but Walt urges her to deliver her thesis presentation. Before he leaves, he takes one of Emily's drawings. Walt brings the drawing to Nate, and tries to convince him how much Becca has helped Emily. He shows Nate the picture, which depicts Nate, Becca and Emily holding hands, with both Becca's mom and Emily's mom watching from the stars.

When Becca delivers her presentation, she sees Nate and Emily in the audience. She reveals that the thesis was, in fact, about herself, and how making friends with Emily helped her cope with her mother's loss. She talks about how they both helped one another. Emily interrupts her presentation to ask a question: Can they have more play dates? Becca promises to keep having play dates with her if it's ok with her dad. Nate agrees, and kisses Becca right in the middle of the college auditorium.

--HALLMARK MOVIES & MYSTERIES--