



Uptown

Virginia DeBerry , Donna Grant

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ENTER THE WORLD OF UPTOWN

Uptown . . . where money rules

Uptown . . . where ambition trumps tradition

Uptown . . . where politics come before everything

Uptown . . . where a family's secrets will bring them together—or down

After twenty years away, Avery Lyons returns to New York when her mother and uncle suffer a serious car accident. The tragedy brings the family together, but Avery is not happy about the impromptu reunion. She no longer recognizes the Harlem of her childhood, but the same old family dynamics and secrets are all too familiar . . .

Heir to a real estate empire, Dwight is willing to do anything to realize his aging and demanding father's dream: Dixon Plaza, a luxury high-rise development on Central Park North that will change the face of Harlem forever. There's only one thing in his way: his cousin Avery has inherited a share of the property. She's more than willing to sell until a reporter uncovers the truth behind the rumored shady dealings . . .

In *Uptown* a prominent Harlem family is strained to the breaking point by the high-stakes world of the Manhattan real estate industry, and one woman searches for her identity and the will to forgive. Steamy, provocative, and sexy, *Uptown* is a turbulent and triumphant read.

Uptown Details

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Author : Virginia DeBerry , Donna Grant

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From Reader Review Uptown for online ebook

Vacirca Vaughn says

Okay, so I'm an avid reader who reads up between 3-5 novels a week depending on my schedule. It took me several weeks to complete this one. I have to say I am surprised. I love Ms. DeBerry and Ms. Grant's work. I have read all of their previous novels. However, this one was the first novel I have read in a very long time that I was forced to put down, read something else, try again, put it back down, read another thing, than try again. I only finished it because I have never met a book I haven't conquered but this was an uphill battle. In this novel, the backstory interrupted the flow of the plot. As a former Harlem, NY resident, I was excited to find a novel, by two of my fav authors, that was going to discuss the horrifying gentrification that has priced people right out of their communities. Combine this very hot topic with a family saga, you have a winner, right? No. Unfortunately, the novel dragged...pages and pages without dialogue or action. It does not pick up until well after page 150 when Avery, our main character, falls in love with Jasper and Dwight, Avery's cousin--and arch nemesis--begins to experience the sudden downward spiral of his real estate empire. I felt this was an extremely slow read with a decent ending. Sorry ladies, I am still one of your fans though.

LaShona says

EXCELLENT!!!

Nancy says

Slow start, but finally made a point....

Natalia says

The book started out slow for me - I didn't like Dwight, I couldn't work up any sympathy for the poor little real estate developer. I started to think that if the book was about him - I was just not so interested.

Thankfully, I was more in sync with the authors than I first realized. When Avery turned up, I realized where the book was going - and it was all voracious reading from there on out. Thankfully, the book reads like water, I ripped through it in a couple of evenings (including staying up a little too late last night)

One other thing to note - This book should not be marginalized just because the authors are Black. I am white, I have never lived in New York, I am not a real estate developer, I am nothing like these characters on the surface - but the authors have captured the way people's feelings are universal.

disclosure: I got this book through the Goodreads First Reads giveaway program.

OOSA says

Greater Expectations

Sometimes our expectations of family members exceed their character and the result is disappointment and frustration. Such is the case in “Uptown.” Cousins Avery and Dwight are both interested in a piece of property but for very different reasons. Dwight wants to use the property to fulfill his father’s dream of building a high-rise development. Avery is ready to sell her portion of the property until she learns unsettling information. The old adage “blood is thicker than water” is undone when finances are put in the equation revealing some disillusionment.

DeBerry and Grant’s “Uptown” attests to the necessity to forgive for personal growth, especially when errors and disappointments are not confronted when they occur. It tells what could be an emotionally complex story in a simple, straightforward way. The writing is sometimes lax. However, the storyline holds enough intrigue to keep readers’ attention. I would recommend “Uptown” for its timeliness, content and plot development.

Reviewed by: Gail

Georgiann Hennelly says

Avery Lyons returns to New York after twenty years away. When her mother and uncle suffer a serious car accident. The tragedy brings the family together, but Avery is not happy about the last minute reunion. The Harlem of her childhood has changed. But the family dynamic and secrets are all too familiar. Dwight is heir to a real estate empire, and he is willing to do anything to realize his aging and demanding father’s dream: Dixon Plaza a luxury high-rise development on Central Park North. There’s only one thing in his way: His cousin Avery inherited a share of the property. She’s willing to sell until a reporter uncovers the truth behind the shady dealings going on. This is a steamy, provocative, and sexy story. Uptown is the story of a prominent Harlem family strained to the breaking point by the high-stakes world of the Manhattan real estate industry.

Stacey says

Won this in the first reads giveaway. I was really up in the air on this book. It started out really slow and I had no idea where this was going. I had a hard time reading it. The more I read the more I liked it. It was very different from any of the books that I have read lately, but I was pleasantly surprised by the end. I would give it a 3.5, but since I can’t I will give it the benefit.

First of all the authors impressed me. Gotta stick with my fellow plus sized girls. They both signed the book for me. So few authors do that for the giveaways and it is always appreciated.

My one complaint about the content was that I have never been to New York City. I was a little lost in the geography of the story. I felt like something should have been important to me and because I was not familiar with the area I missed it.

Yolo says

BFF's for more than 25 years and New York Times bestselling author Virginia DeBerry and Donna Grant have graciously brought us another authentic and heart-wrenching novel filled with truth, lies, demons, secrets and family. Uptown, their seventh novel will be available for purchase March 2nd and is sure to be a New York Times bestseller and at the top of many wish lists.

Uptown tells the story of Dwight Dixon, the perfect man for any woman or so she thinks. On first look, Dwight fits the bill. He has an Ivy League education, a beautiful wife and daughter, is a former city councilman and U.S. Congressman and is now making a name for himself in the real estate realm as a power broker and heir of The Dixon Group. What many won't see at first sight is his constant battle to Trump his father's legacy, the self-named King, or his struggle to discontinue living in his father's shadow. Unfortunately, Dwight will do anything to get where he deserves to be, at the top, looking down on the Trumps, the Kennedys and King.

Then there is Dwight's cousin, Ms. Avery Lyons and his former BFF. For those on the outside looking in, Avery appears to have it all together and is living the life. She has no children, no husband and her boyfriend Van plays on her terms. Traveling from continent to continent tending to world peace, Avery also thinks she has it all together but when she returns to New York after 20 years she is forced to face the demons and juggle around with truth, forgiveness and love.

After reading this novel all I can say is, "Ladies (DeBerry & Grant) take a bow because you have done it again!" The author never fails to bring "real" issues that "real" people can relate to. They also introduce the world to the "new-Harlem." I appreciate how the author strategically uses Harlem and Manhattan as the setting for Uptown, but unfortunately, they address issues facing so many Americans around the country. Again and again, media outlets cover the stories of so many people that have been hit hard by the recession resulting in foreclosures that force many to bring up the g-word, gentrification. Gentrification usually takes place in downtown and uptown areas in cities throughout the country that were once homes of African Americans and other economically disadvantaged people that can no longer afford to live in their homes. This conversation is continually leading to debates in cities all around the country including Harlem, which is known for its rich African American culture and history that opened doors for authors, musicians and artists.

My favorite character:

My favorite character is Dwight. Yea I know what you are going to think and say after you read this novel, "Why Dwight?" Well I will tell you now. In most cases, I always cheer for the underdog. I like Dwight because like so many of us we are our parent's children. No matter whether we love or hate them we want them to acknowledge and love us and most of all be proud of us. In spite of Dwight wanting to out-do his dad, he wanted his dad's love and acceptance. So no matter what you think of Dwight after you read this novel, he is my favorite character, yep, my guy. I must add, we all have that piece of us that wants to succeed by any means necessary and some of us may even be willing to go to the extremes like he did. The only difference between him, you and me is that his transgressions are in black and white for the world to see and ours are hid away in a little box that we hide when company comes. Ha Ha Ha. :)

Efundunke says

Pretty friggin amazing like everything else from these authors. Wow.

Dionna Johnson says

Confusing from the start and I didnt have the time to figure it out or keep going.

Chevonne says

Better than I expected. Really good read.

Amanda Morgan says

Dwight Dixon is on the verge of making a life-altering business deal that will please his overbearing father for once in his life. The only thing stopping him is the sale of a piece of crucial property owned by his aunt. He finally gets her to agree to a price, then days later she dies suddenly, in "Uptown."

Dixon has spent his life being criticized by his father, "King" who made a name for himself in the Harlem real estate community, and King expects Dwight to be as successful, or more so, than he has been. With a wife, a teenage daughter, numerous rental properties, and a successful real estate business to his name, Dwight is ready to step to the next level with the development of Dixon Plaza, once the last remaining rental building, owned by his aunt, is demolished.

His cousin Avery inherits the property and agrees to the sale terms her mother and Dwight had negotiated, until she finds out the Dwight has a shady deal going on with a man who attempted to rape her 20 years ago. Old feelings come in to play and Avery backs out of the deal just to spite Dwight, but when she repeatedly visits her newly acquired rental property she gets to know some of the tenants, and decides she cares more about their fate than she does about Dwight's.

After living her entire adult life abroad, Avery comes home to Harlem to face demons she put out of her mind long ago. Never telling her mother why she fled after the attempted rape, Avery finds her mother realized there was something wrong with Avery, and yearned to make it better. Realizing this, Avery decides she needs to get past her own past, and begin living her life for real. She puts her job on hold, begins to be more social, and tackles everything entailed in settling her mother's sizeable assets.

Meanwhile, Dwight's deal falling through turns out to be the least of his worries when a sex scandal breaks out with his name tied to it. It takes Dwight losing virtually everything he has to realize what is important to him.

The writing is not as tight as it could be, the story drags on with far too much time spent on the real estate storyline. I would much rather have more time spent on Avery's romantic developments after her mother's death than on Dwight's business. Dwight starts out a character the reader can root for, but ends up so despicable, the reader does not care what happens to him. And Avery enters the novel way too far in for the reader to realize that she is the main character of the story.

The book is too long and the story rambles. It's a tale of you reap what you sow and it's nice to see both main characters get what they deserve in the end.

TinaMarie says

Not really a romance, more about family dynamics and watching a man's world disintegrate. I was glad when it was over.

Tracy Darity says

Great writing doesn't always equate to a great story. Authors Virginia DeBerry and Donna Grant, no doubt, are at the top of the list when it comes to their craft. *Uptown*, simply fell short for me in terms of being a great story. I must say, it was refreshing to read because unlike some stories of late, it actually aroused my senses and made me realize I need to challenge my reading acumen, a little more. The book was given to me and since I had not read anything by the DeBerry/Grant team in quite a while, I was excited when I opened the envelope and saw it was their latest.

Uptown, a story about family, honor, commitment, tradition, and secrets, deals with re-gentrification in Harlem. The story centers around two estranged cousins, Dwight and Avery. Dwight heads the Dixon Group, a black-owned development firm looking to build a multi-use complex that will displace many low-income residents. It would also be the first of its kind, spear-headed by a black-owned firm. Avery, who disappeared fresh out of college to pursue a career in Foreign Affairs, and escape a traumatic incident involving Dwight, holds the key that will either open the door for the Dixon Group, or permanently lock it.

I often wonder how Virginia DeBerry and Donna Grant collaborate on their stories. After reading *Uptown*, I think I have a good idea...or maybe not. *Uptown*, read as if two different people were writing the story. When the narrator focused on Dwight the story moved at a fast pace, my interest was peaked, and I felt connected to the outcome. But when the focus turned to Avery, it became bogged down with detail, and at times moved at a snails pace. A trip to the ladies room took almost three pages to describe, followed by an entire chapter that only covered a trip to the Jersey shore (the same night) and ended with breakfast and a nap. Descriptive detail only bothers me when it serves no purpose, and a lot of Avery's story was useless information that felt like filler. Eventually I began to loathe Avery, and sympathize with Dwight who was annihilated more and more with the turn of each page.

There were moments in the story that were truly relatable, like the aftermath of an accident involving Avery's mother. Those chapters were so well written I found myself looking for tissue. But as quickly as I would become engulfed in a part of the story, the direction would turn and my interest waned. Some would have given up on the story but I wanted to see it through to the end. Unfortunately, the ending had no aha lesson, no surprises, and nothing really that warranted my willingness to stay committed to finishing the book.

Although I wasn't able to fall in love with *Uptown*, I still have much love and respect for the dynamic duo, and look forward to their future writings. All things considered, *Uptown*, gets a 3 star rating.

Much Love,

Tracy

Tracy L. Darity is the author of *He Loves Me He Loves Me Not!* and *Love...Like Snow In Florida on a Hot Summer Day*. She is currently working on her 3rd novel, *The Red Bear Society*, scheduled for release in late 2011. For more information, visit www.TracyLDarity.com.

Toni says

Sometimes when you've been reading an author for awhile, you start to know their formula, and although they don't do anything groundbreaking, you stay with them just because. This is not true for these two ladies. That isn't true in this case. DeBerry and Grant aren't cookie cutter writers and their story telling gets better and better with each book (if that is even possible). Uptown is a story of family, and power, and community. Dwight Dixon, a well known politician and developer in Harlem wants to take advantage of the trend toward gentrification and plans a luxury complex to be marketed as Central Park North. This will be the shining moment of his father's dream and will rival anything that the Trump's have done. But he can't move forward without the help of his estranged cousin, Avery Lyons, who has almost nothing to do with the family. This is a perfectly crafted novel with twists and turns that had me staying up way too late reading! And the scenes early in the book describing a painful situation (another family tragedy!) were so well written, that it reminded me of when I was in a similar position and I had to put it down to cry. Go get this book now!
