



His Uptown Guy

Felice Stevens

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When Jesse Grace-Martin loses his father on 9/11, his charmed life is gone forever. People look menacing, and the streets no longer seem safe. After experiencing a brutal mugging, Jesse retreats to his apartment in the landmark Dakota building. Five years later, his first attempt to walk outside those famous gates again is a disaster—except for meeting the gorgeous maintenance worker who helps him through his crushing panic attack. Jesse can't stop thinking about the guy but hesitates to reach out, knowing he has little to offer.

Dashamir Sadiko has big dreams. Money in the bank tops his list, and his glimpse into the life of the uber-wealthy at his job at the Dakota is all the incentive he needs. Struggling to work full-time and go to college, Dash desperately wants to break the cycle of poverty his parents had hoped to leave behind in Albania. When the two men become friends, Dash isn't sure what to expect but can't help his growing attraction to sweet and sexy Jesse. It's nice to see how the other side lives, but his affections can't be bought; Dash wants to be his own man.

Defying the Dakota's co-op rules, the two share lunches, their hopes and dreams, and ultimately their hearts. Jesse slowly regains his courage, but he's worried he'll never be the person he once was and that he's not good enough for Dash. And Dash isn't convinced the son of poor immigrants has a place at the table with a blue-blood, trust-fund man. Jesse needs to realize that money can't buy happiness and love, while Dash must learn to trust that what they have is real, that he's more than Jesse's walk on the wild side with an uptown guy.

His Uptown Guy Details

Date : Published January 21st 2019

ISBN :

Author : Felice Stevens

Format : Kindle Edition 300 pages

Genre : Romance, M M Romance, Contemporary, Lgbt

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From Reader Review His Uptown Guy for online ebook

Siobhan says

I've read a few Felice Stevens books and am always happy to come back for more. Therefore, I was more than willing to dive into His Uptown Guy. It sounded like another winner, and I was eager to see how things would play out.

As I'd hoped, His Uptown Guy sucked me in from the very start. It's a book that left me addicted, one I was unable to put down, and I devoured it in no time at all. There was so much to enjoy with this one – the characters, the drama, the development – ensuring I was curious about so many details.

Like always, His Uptown Guy was a sweet read from the author. Despite being a sweet read, it dealt with the topic of mental health really well. Every time I read a Felice Stevens book, I find myself amazed with how sweet the stories are even when dealing with something heavier. Without a doubt, His Uptown Guy is a prime example of such.

If you have yet to read a Felice Stevens book, then you should give this one a read. My favourite Felice Stevens is still Shape of You, but His Uptown Guy made for a fabulous read.

Tanja says

Felice Stevens is one of my favorite authors, and with this book, she managed to awe me once again. A book about grief and loss, about fears and self-doubt, but also about strength, courage, and undying love. Sad and heartbreaking, warm and uplifting, this book put me through all the emotions.

Everything about this story is just perfect. The writing is beautiful. I kept highlighting phrases that touched me deeply. Seemingly just a few words, but with so much depth and at the right time.

The characters are lovely. Everything about them felt so real. Jesse and Dash come from different backgrounds, and you would never think they work so well together, but they do. They both have their flaws and baggage and are great on their own. Together, though, they are magical. So sweet and understanding and supportive of each other. Not all the time. They have their moments of hesitation and stepping back to gather themselves, but those moments never last long. They never let disagreements fester between them. They man up and talk things out. Their meeting might have been random; their connection is anything but. They have that link that surpasses anything.

This author doesn't shy away from addressing serious issues, and she handles them with care and grace. Losing your father in the devastating events of 9/11 and then losing yourself in the aftermath and not going out of your apartment for years, it's almost too much for one man. It tore at my heart how much he struggled. And then I got all teared up by his strength and courage to face his fears and go out there. Literally. It's not a one-time cure. Every day it's a struggle to take that first step, and then two and three. With all his issues, Jesse hasn't become estranged from the world around him. He might not have been outside for a long time, but I still felt he was very much a part of our world.

Dash has his own insecurities. Being from another background than Jesse, he feels is not good enough for him. But just by being Dash, he is perfect for Jesse. He sees Jesse with his heart and his head and instinctively knows how to approach and help him.

And as great Dash and Jesse are, there is a special place for Miranda, Jesse's PA, and Dash's mother. Both women are wonderful secondary characters that make this book that extra special.

Debra says

On the surface this is a sweet, slow burn, opposites attract romance, but it's got so much more within the pages.

Jesse meets Dash the first time he leaves his apartment in years, and under less than ideal circumstances. This is a huge step for Jesse, and something that's been coming for the past year. His agoraphobia has kept him prisoner in his luxury apartment in the Dakota for the past five years, but he is finally ready, with the help of both his therapist and his PA/friend, to push back and try to regain control. Dash, the new porter in the building, strikes up a friendship with Jesse after helping him out. Dash knows it's against co-op rules to fraternize with the residents, but he and Jesse click so well he's willing to take the risk. This is a big risk too as Dash needs the money to finish school and help support his mother.

The story builds slowly as the men get to know each other as friends. The attraction is there from the start. The two have great chemistry and even after they give in to it, they keep the friendship front and center. There isn't much outside pressure on their romance; most of what they need to overcome is internalized pressure, misconceptions and, in Jesse's case, the need to work through his anxiety and fears.

One thing that really got me invested early was realizing that this wasn't going to be one of those "get better for the guy" stories. Jesse is already working on conquering his agoraphobia before Dash comes along. While his desire to enjoy time with Dash is definitely a factor in him finding the strength to get out of his apartment more and more, Jesse is doing it for his own well-being, not to satisfy someone else and he isn't miraculously cured.

Jesse and Dash are both such likable characters. Even with Jesse's money and condition, he is so much a regular guy and Dash is a sweetheart, not seeing himself as a relationship guy, but easily falling into one with Jesse. We get to know both men well, learning how their different upbringings shaped them into the men they are today and meeting their families. The imaginings of the interiors of the shrouded in secrecy Dakota, as well as Dash's childhood home and apartment, added to that as well. Felice Stevens always excels in this area and it's no exception here.

Another wonderful story from Felice Stevens. I would love to get a look at these men again, sometime in the future, just to see where their relationship goes.

Cadiva says

So far my 2019 romance reading has been a joy, filled with stories which don't follow a traditional contemporary path to love.

Felice Stevens' latest is no exception and in this she gives us what seems like a bit of a Cinderella style relationship until you realise that it's the handsome prince who is in need of help, not our erstwhile Albanian porter.

Jesse has suffered a slow decline since his world was ended so abruptly - like so many others - when his father was killed in the 9/11 attack.

His anxieties worsened until he ended up with agoraphobia in his late 20s and he's not left his apartment in the famous Dakota Building in New York for the last five years.

Now, it'd be easy to say Dash saves him, but really he doesn't, he just gives Jesse another foundation stone to rely on.

They're such wonderfully drawn characters, the Dakota Building as much as the rest bringing a unique strand to this lovely romance.

One of the best from this author imho and a real delight. I can't wait to see what Landmark comes next and find out which men will be finding love around it!

#ARC kindly received from the author in return for an honest and unbiased review.

Tracy Perry says

An amazing read, I so loved this book! I loved Jesse & Dash too. I love Felice's books because they always end with a HFN or HEA, sometimes you have to work to get through the book to get it with all the ugly crying sometimes. This book had very low angst & it was late in the book when I had a little cry, but it worked out in the end, phew... I was hooked lined & sinker reading this because it reeled me in & I didn't want to stop reading to sleep but sleep won over, but I got it finished the next day. A Wonderful Must Read of 2019!!

Joscelyn Smith says

"Don't ever think you're something less because of what you went through. I love you because of who you are, and that includes your pain." - Dash

Dash and Jesse were such amazingly complex characters, their meeting was so random. The day Jesse decides to break down the walls of his prison he finds Dash on the other side. I loved everything about this book, this is most definitely going on my keeper-shelf.

Mia Sciberras says

Another wonderful #MMRomance from Felice.

I enjoyed Dash and Jesse's love story - from the original chance encounter, through to their upstairs/downstairs situation, Jesse's agoraphobia, Dash's employment, and the unique setting within the Dakota building. With this author, you're guaranteed a sweet, sexy story with an HEA that'll leave you satisfied that the couple will make it beyond this story, and you'll definitely feel this way about the MCs in this book.

Funzee Shu says

He was a porter, a poor kid from the Bronx, from an immigrant family...

And I'm the guy who can't leave his apartment without having a panic attack...

"I thought I'd never get put back together. But I must've been waiting for you to find my pieces."

???

It a very sweet, heartwarming story about two men from two different world who meet by fate. And like long lost pieces of puzzles, they perfectly fit for each others.

This book gave me strong emotional feelings when I read it. The story sounds a bit cliché at first but it gave deep impact in me and touch to the deepest of my heart. Seeing how the two main characters who come from two different social status trying to fit to each others life with all conflicts and all those egos they must faced before finally find their happiness (like always) was written in such beautiful way in Felice's hands.

9/11 had put Jesse's life upside down. He the 'lock' himself in his apartment for years and must deal with his anxiety and panic attacks each time he's going outside or meet a lot of people. But then come Dash...

He came to Jesse life and brought back the spark to his lonely life. Their friendship start to grow intensely day by day. Dash with his kindness warm heart had made Jesse feels alive again. It's like Dash had found him and brought him back home. And with Dash help...Jesse then fight his fear that had imprisoned for years him and ready to fly...

The two main characters are very sweet and lovable. Their story successfully warmed my heart to the fullest and yes, I love both Jesse and Dash equally.

There's also some secondary characters that I love and successfully stole the spotlight like Jesse's assistant, Miranda. She's like a mother figure to Jesse for five years when he's struggling with his anxiety and panic attacks while 'trapped' in his self-made prison that made him feels like a prisoner in a multimillion-dollar jail.

And I was like Miranda when I'm reading this book and have this constant urge to hugs both Jesse and Dash and engulfed them with love. The other character that I love is Dash's mother, she's a very lovely and brave woman with so much love in her heart. She successfully made my mouth watering with ALL the food she's cooked for Jesse almost the entire reading!!!! (Thanks to Felice!)

His Uptown Guy successfully leave deep impression in me. It's beautiful story about loss and trauma and the journey to finding life again...

“You could have anyone, and yet you want me.”

“You’re not anyone. You’re the only one. My one. The only one I see.”

Highly recommended!

ARC is kindly provided by the Author in exchange of a fair, unbiased and honest review

Susan says

DNF at 7%

“Why? Why am I like this? I want to be normal. I want to go and do and see everything, but every time I think about doing it, I choke and can’t move.” Jesse set the coffee on the table with a bang. “I don’t want to be like this.” His words echoed against the walls.

Oh no, a woe is me character. Victimizing yourself has never helped anybody.

***“That man had no feelings whatsoever. You’re better off without him.”
Easier said than done when you’d been with someone for three years and they dumped you.
“He had a right to have a boyfriend who wanted to leave the house. To be with a man who could go out and have fun and do everything couples do.”
“There’s more to a relationship than going out clubbing and having a good time.”
The steeliness of her voice surprised him.
“I know, but it was my fault we couldn’t do those things.”
“You had a problem, and he should’ve tried to help you work through it instead of running away like he did.”
“Have. I still have the problem.” He grabbed his plastic cup and sucked down the coffee.
“My point is that when you care about someone, you stay with them and try to help them get through their tough times.” A bit softer now, she gave his arm a squeeze and returned to the sofa. “Sean didn’t love you enough, and you deserve to have someone who does. Simple as that.”***

This really didn’t sit well with me. I lived with someone with depression for 10 years and I can honestly say that sometimes love is not enough. I gave my ex-husband my all, and when I was slowly being consumed by his depression, it was time for me to admit that I was too much of a crutch for him and choose my own happiness. (And can I say that our divorce it the best thing that happened to him. We’re still best friends, but he has learned to do things on his own now, instead of leaning on me.)

Not the book for me.

Dawn Nicole Costiera says

My First Top Pick for 2019!

Felice Stevens continues to blow me away! I have always been a huge fan, but her writing seems to get better and better with each book. All of her books are unique, vivid and totally in depth....

This one is about a rich uptown guy with agoraphobia, who collects precious stones and a poor Albanian porter from the Bronx, who is a college student. See what I mean? Felice puts unlikely people together and they just work... beautifully! She researches everything and gives us multiple facts... In *His Uptown Guy*, I learned about the fabulous Dakota Building, various precious stones and delicious Albanian food! It was all fascinating and contributed so much to the storyline.

His Uptown Guy was pure romance with minimal angst. It was soooo freaking sweet, it made my teeth ache! A story about hope, strength and the power of love....

Jesse Grace-Martin and Dash Sadiko were wonderfully complex characters. The type of characters that will stay with you long after you finish the book. Both were flawed but perfect for each other. Poor Jesse my heart broke for him. He may be a trust fund baby and seem to have everything... But after some tragic events, his mind has made him a prisoner in his own home. He so badly wanted his life back. The day he finally decides to help himself, he meets Dash. This encounter is the catalyst to a beautiful friendship...

Dash has his own demons. He's insecure about his background and where he's from. He doesn't feel good enough. His pride and stubbornness often gets in his way. With patience and compassion, both guys brought out the best in each other. While they encouraged and supported one another. I loved how their relationship transformed and bloomed into something worth fighting for.... Overcoming their fears together! I loved these boys so much. I couldn't get enough of them. Besides their sweetness, they had some pretty steamy scenes too.

All the supporting characters were just as wonderful. Miranda and Mrs. Sadiko made me smile throughout! I just loved everything about *His Uptown Guy*! I hope Felice eventually gives us more of Jesse and Dash. I have such a craving for Baklava now!

Guilty Pleasures Book Reviews says

4.5 stars

An agoraphobic blue blood and an Armenian porter meet in an unusual way and form a friendship that turns into more in author Felice Stevens insightful, intelligent and wonderfully sexy story, *His Uptown Guy*.

Events in his life have left Jesse Grace-Martin paralyzed in fear and a prisoner in his own home, yet lately he is feeling the need to go outside, wants to enjoy the wind on his face and the sun on his skin. With the help of his assistant, Miranda, he heads to the interior courtyard of the historic Dakota where he lives. A panic attack has him weakening in the knees and being helped by one of the Dakota's porters, Dashamir (Dash) Sadiko who stirs something in him he hasn't felt in years and makes him determined to live again.

While it is true that Jesse grew up in a wealthy family that didn't stop bad things happening in his world

causing him to retreat from life 5 years ago. He still works remotely, but his assistant Miranda handles anything for him that needs to be done outside his apartment. His therapist and other people he interacts with come to him at his apartment. Despite having money and living in a multi-million dollar apartment, Jesse isn't a snob; he is actually quite kind and treats everyone who works at the Dakota with respect. I liked Jesse although at times he seemed to not quite understand why people would be uncomfortable with lavish gifts.

Dash is a hard working man who has plans to finish his college degree and take the CPA exam. His dream is to make enough money to be comfortable and to help his mother and sister. His father while in their lives seems to think his work and his friends are more important than his family and Dash while out to his mother and sister, is not to his father.

I enjoyed the friendship that started between Jesse and Dash and the sizzling chemistry between them from the start. I appreciated that Dash understood something was going on with Jesse, but didn't push him to tell him everything. Dash also tried to make Jesse understand the difference between his lifestyle and his own. They became fast friends and eventually lovers even knowing that if they were found out it would be the end of Dash's job at the Dakota. Jesse had a strained relationship with his mother which both Miranda and Dash encouraged him to work towards repairing. Given Dash's closeness with his mom and his mom's need to feed not only him but Jesse, it was easy to see why it was important for Dash to help Jesse in this part of his life.

Engaging from start to finish with well rounded characters and an interesting plot, I loved His Uptown Guy.

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

Damn but this book has potential: diverse representation, mental illness, comfort/healing ... it's all there. Sort of.

The problem is that it's all surface. The dialogue is wooden and scripted. The MCs are super awkward and talk like angsty teenagers.

One of the MCs is Albanian, but all we learn about his culture is the food, which is basically a five-minute Wiki special.

Ditto the agoraphobia. Compare this book to Nicky James's brilliant *Trials of Fear* series, and it pales in comparison.

The romance is lackluster; the steam is predictable and sparse; and the ending is a reluctant HFN.

I got so bored by 40%, I wanted to DNF.

booklover says

****ARC RECEIVED FOR HONEST REVIEW****

"People with the loudest bark are often the ones you want to hear the least..."

In the case of Jesse & Dash, neither are loud, the only "Loudness" is Jesse's demons and Dash's insecurities. While Jesse's main demon is fear due partially to the September 11th terrorist attack, that's not what changed him the most. Yes, it made him a lot more wary but, an event after that is what really brought out his anxiety and fear.

Dash feels that due to his background and upbringing being so different to Jesse's, that he's not good enough for Jesse, that he has nothing to bring to the relationship. What he doesn't realise is he brings more to the relationship than he could ever realise, he brings support, love and understanding.

"When you've lived only in darkness, you could choose to fear the light or embrace it...."

For Jesse, Dash truly is his light but again, due to his own anxiety and fears, embracing the light, Dash, is a scary prospect. For Dash, he feels that embracing the light, Jesse, would be dismissing his upbringing, he doesn't realise that by embracing Jesse he's not dismissing it and everything he's worked so hard for, instead he's taking the opportunity to not only help Jesse reach the light at the end of the tunnel but also being the man he never thought he'd be able to be, too.

This story was so powerful on so many levels. Both Jesse and Dash were complicated and stubborn characters, Jesse more complicated due to his issues. I also absolutely loved Miranda and Dash's mum and thought they were great supporting characters!!

I thought the storyline, why Jesse is the way he is, etc, was absolutely superbly written with so much emotion that you can't help but shed a few tears, not just because of Jesse but also in remembrance of those who were affected by the 9/11 attacks.

I would, however, like to see more of Jesse & Dash, to catch up with Jesse's progress.

An absolutely phenomenal, MUST READ!!!

Lelyana says

There's a reason why Felice Steven is hands down my favorite author right from the first time I read her first book. She provided what I craved in a book, a little angst blended with with sweetness and a guaranteed happy ending.

His Uptown Guy is a no exception. Jesse is the sweetest man Dash has ever met, Dash couldn't ask for better man than him. But Jesse has flaws himself that from the first time they met, Dash knew something was wrong with Jesse.

Along the way, Dash become what Jesse need for a very long lonely life he had been through.

Though Dash never realized that he's one very important person in Jesse's life, didn't see what Jesse sees in him. But Jesse is one determine guy, and I loved him for that.

Despite of his fear of (view spoiler), he knew what he wanted in his life, and it's included Dash in it.

This is a low angst sweet adorable heartwarming story, and I couldn't ask for a better story for Jesse and Dash.

I cannot wait for the next installment.

Felice Steven outdid herself of being my favorite story teller. His Uptown Guy hopefully is a start of an amazing series just like her other previous series. And I am absolutely will devour the series in the near future!

As a fan of a dreamy, sweet and happy ending, I recommend you this book!

kathleen says

His Uptown Guy is an amazing story of loss, despair, hope, strength and love. Jesse has experienced the unimaginable pain when he lost his father in the 9/11 attacks. His world keeps shrinking until he is locked into his home by extreme fear. He is so isolated and lonely. Just as he begins to hope for more a chance meeting with Dash gives him the drive to keep pushing forward.

Dash is full of ambition and hope for a better future. The son of immigrants he will be the first person in his family to receive a college education.

As their unlikely friendship grows into something beautiful and unexpected they each deal with insecurities and doubts. I loved seeing how Jesse opened himself up to life's possibilities. He took ownership of his recovery and challenged himself. Seeing Dash accept his own worth isn't defined by wealth but by his strength and integrity was beautiful.

The secondary characters add so much depth and dimension to this amazing story, especially the Dakota, the location where most of this story takes place. I really got a feel for this historic building.
