



One Flight Up

Susan Fales-Hill

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What happens after happily-ever-after fades? Can the answer be found one flight up?

India, Abby, Esme, and Monique have all been friends since their days at Manhattan's Sibley School for Girls. From the outside, these four women—all grown up now—seem to be living ideal lives, yet each finds herself suddenly craving more.

India Chumley is a whip-smart divorce lawyer who routinely declines the marriage proposals of her charming French boyfriend, Julien. She's taking the first plunge by moving in with him, but she's keeping her own apartment—and keeping it a secret from him.

Abby Rosenfeld Adams is an irrepressibly upbeat gallery owner who married her WASP college sweet heart, a passionate but tormented sculptor. When she suspects he is cheating on her, she realizes that perhaps there's more to life than reassuring her husband of his artistic brilliance.

Esme Sarmiento Talbot is a Colombian Scarlett O'Hara, bored with her proper Connecticut life and her tame, all-American husband. In order to satisfy her sensuality, she escapes to Manhattan and distracts herself with casual encounters.

A card-carrying member of Harlem's thriving buppie-ocracy and a successful gynecologist, Monique Dawkins-Dubois is married to a powerful but dull financier who barely notices her anymore. When an attractive coworker beckons, Monique can't help but be flattered.

The most straitlaced of them all, India is dismayed by her friends' illicit activities. That is, until her ex-fiancé, the love of her life and the destroyer of her heart, reappears in New York— and she finds herself caught between the dependable man she thought was her future and the man she never quite let go of.

Dazzling and sexy, *One Flight Up* is an irresistible comedic romp through the boardrooms, bedrooms, and ballrooms of Manhattan and Paris.

One Flight Up Details

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From Reader Review One Flight Up for online ebook

Toni says

In the past year I've read a few novels that take place in modern New York City. There were a couple that tried to tackle the topics of the new generation of women struggling with career vs. staying at home, gentrification into whatever is the hot neighborhood of the moment, and celebrities wanting a "normal" life. One even tried, unsuccessfully, to take on the race question. It was laughable. The ones that turned me off the most were billed as sort of Sex and The City hybrids, where former party girls were finally settling down and having families.

So I was a bit hesitant when I saw One Flight Up, especially with the picture of the brownstone on the cover. I hadn't read any reviews and just didn't want to be disappointed again. But, on the other hand, I'm a sucker for a brownstone on the cover of a book, so I went ahead and picked it up. Glad I did.

One Flight Up follows the lives of four women (it's always four, isn't it?) in Manhattan as they work on their "happily-ever-afters". India, the mixed-race daughter of a drama queen British actress, makes her living as a divorce lawyer. She is safely ensconced in a relationship with a French chef, but her lack of faith in love as well as unfinished business with an ex, make it difficult for her to commit fully. The other three women are India's former classmates at an upscale private girls school. There's Abby, who supports the artistic dreams of her philandering husband, but struggles with her own desires. Esme is the (almost stereotypical) fiery, Brazilian heiress who finds herself married to a loving husband and living in the suburbs. But that doesn't stop her from having lots of fun on the side. And then there's Monique, an African-American gynecologist who was India's nemesis in high school. Monique married for love and security, but now finds herself needing a little more passion. During the course of the book, each woman is forced to examine and re-examine her life and priorities.

What I Liked: I liked that although these were obviously women who made lots of money and were successful in their careers, I didn't feel beaten over the head with it. Yes, they can afford lavish vacations, and pricey material objects, but compared to some other books I've read, the label- and name-dropping were pretty much kept to a minimum. In essence, the problems that these women had weren't just rich people problems, they are universal. The conversations surrounding race were interesting and sometimes uncomfortable, just as they are in real life.

What I Disliked: There were a couple passages about India's ex that were a bit redundant. It was nothing major, just an extra explanation that wasn't needed.

Kristin (Kritters Ramblings) says

Check out the full review at Kritters Ramblings

Four women who are friends and three of which find themselves in unhappy marriages, while the other is still in the dating scene are the characters in this story. For one reason or another each of these women are unhappy in their current situations and instead of working on them, would rather venture to find happiness

with someone else.

Joe says

I appreciate a couple of things captured by Susan Fales-Hill with this book: A story about affluent African-Americans; a REALISTIC story that shows different facets of "love"; and last but certainly not least, the fact that WOMEN DO CHEAT!!!! Fales-Hill delivers a very intelligently written account of 4 VERY different women. Despite their differences, their friendships never falter through all the madness. It was nice to see that true sisterhood. It was also nice to see the multicultural themes within the story. The outcome and shenanigans of the women are completely realistic and fun to read about. This book does fall a little bit short with me in some areas. For example, putting the book down and picking it back up was a little daunting as it was hard to remember which character is which (among the 4 women) and what was actually happening when you last put it down. Also, everybody in the book is EXTREMELY attractive, bi-racial, blue eyes, green eyes, gray eyes, dressed immaculately, etc...etc...it was all just a little too "perfect" for me as far as aesthetics. Also affluent should not equal BOURGEOIS-NESS by EVERYBODY. Too much designer name dropping and lavish lifestyles and profiling by all the characters. This doesn't really allow anyone to stand out much. Other than that, I do recommend the book to others and appreciate the overall story!!! I would read another novel from Ms. Fales-Hill in future!

Hope says

Great read.

Kelly says

Hmmm, well then. I have to say I sure am glad none of these women are my friends. It was interesting & had a few characters I was really pulling for which kept me reading on but geesh, what a bunch of cheating, lying, awful people. A "sassy summer beach read?" Yeah, no.

DLova says

a good, lightweight read...

Kristine says

I felt like this book was written with the intention that it would be adapted into a movie and not as a piece of literary work.

Chrystal says

Susan Fales-Hill is an award winning television writer and producer who has worked on shows ranging from *The Cosby Show* to *Suddenly Susan*. She is the author of the critically acclaimed *Always Wear Joy*. And now, Susan Fales-Hill has written a fun, New York story that has all the elements a good novel should have, love, lies, lust, betrayal and perhaps hope - readers won't want to put it down, not until the very end! *One Flight Up* is a dramatic-comedic romp through the boardrooms, and bedrooms of Manhattan and Paris.

Atlanta, New Jersey and New York housewives meet the wives in, *One Flight Up*. India, Abby, Esme, and Monique this intelligent spirited foursome have been friends since their days at Manhattan's Sibley School for Girls. All grown up now—they seem to be living ideal lives, until the happily ever after fades and they find themselves at the crossroads of their lives, each with her own set of troubles, and suddenly craving more.

It's not a throw your head back and laugh until you get a cramp in your side, nor is it a grab the box of tissues and boo-whoo type of story - what it is, [Read More](#) or [Read Here](#)

Ari says

IQ "In terms of both Keith and Julien, she needed never utter the words 'It might have been.' That was more than many people could say, for that she reminded herself to be grateful" (312)

My issue with this is not because the characters were all rich. In the author's first novel she sticks to what she knows and rich people have their own problems too. Furthermore I understand the temptation of cheating and I never thought that went away with marriage. I think the author expertly and eloquently examines the many ways people cheat or the issues that drive them to cheating. I was more so constantly thrown off kilter by the awkward stream of consciousness. The writing also had a constant dramatic tone to it, everything was always a crisis with Irina. I'm also running out of patience with the "tragic mulatto" tale, she obsesses over feeling out of place but I'm hoping that the next generation of writers will not have this problem (for example I did not go to a super fancy school but there are a number of biracial/multiracial families in existence so I found it hard to understand why her classmates were so baffled by her. Maybe I just don't get it because I'm mixed). It was distracting. Furthermore having the judge-y main character (Irina) as the main narrator made it even more annoying. I was also under the impression that the characters would alternate telling the story since there were four of them but the other three characters are mostly neglected. Esme's back story is well crafted but I wanted to know a lot more about Monique. I guess I'm not mature enough yet but she and Irina made up super fast considering how awful Monique was to Irina as a child.

Ironically the biggest takeaway from this novel for me were the feminist reasons Irina became a divorce attorney, it was actually very inspiring. But although I understood why the four women were inclined to cheat what I did not understand was why/how the majority of them chose awful men. They also seemed to forget that cell phones had texting capabilities and would end up in scrapes that could easily have been avoided. I ended up only liking and fully understanding Esme but I think that was simply because the author spent the most time developing her character aside from Irina. But this was a frothy read that I read in one day and it's always nice to see upper class Black men and women portrayed in novels having ordinary wealthy problems. Unfortunately I did not feel the author successfully answered the question of if it's possible to have love and security but perhaps her non answer is the answer.

Jasmine Harris says

I am so unbelievably tired of reading and hearing about the "problems" of rich people; fiction or nonfiction.

This book presents four well-educated, seemingly intelligent, multicultural women. However, with their fabulous wardrobe and desirable residence in the poshest neighborhoods in New York city, they are ALL unfulfilled and quite lonely. What?! So to fill that void, and the time on their hands, they all decide to cheat on their others. Brilliant! These spoiled brats step out on their relationships, instead of confronting the issues, because they can't get what they want. Find a hobby! Volunteer or something because sleeping around is certainly not productive, or safe.

Anywhoville, I had high hopes for the book because the author wrote for The Cosby Show and A Different World. And I LOVE those shows. But the storyline of this fell short and the writing became annoying with the author's injections of her own knowledge of "fashion" and "high culture." So what! And to appease the humanitarians like me the author throws in a few pompous "charity" shindigs to flaunt the wealth. When these events only highlighted the girls' outfits and the communities' economical hierarchy.

Reading this book was not completely agonizing. I did have a good laugh at the characters' fall and eventually being humbled under their stupidity, oh the joy!

Nicole McLaren says

A little disappointed with this one. The women did not have many redeemable qualities and I don't know that they learned their lesson in the end. Plus the brand name dropping was a bit too much for me. It was a quick read, but I was not 100% satisfied.

Rena says

I talked about **One Flight Up** in a recent instagram post, stating that I call this *Black & Bougie lit*, novels that follow well-to-do blacks who have more issues than *People* magazine. This fits very neatly in the genre. These women - India, Abby, Esme, and Monique - have known each other since their days at an all-girls prep school, but now they're grown and trying to handle their business in the most messy of ways. While I think things wrapped up too nicely, and some plot points were the tiniest bit cliché, I enjoyed this book a lot, the drama was delicious.

Lauren says

3.5

As of lately, I have really started to love the chick-lit genre. The books always tend to be fun, light reads for the most part and sometimes that's just what I need in a book. Therefore, when I was offered the chance to read and review Susan Fales-Hill's *One Flight Up*, I jumped at the chance. However, while I found the book

to be well written and the storylines to be enticing and intriguing, I wasn't always the biggest fan of the characters presented.

One Flight Up tells the story of longtime friends India, Abby, Esme, and Monique, four girls who have stuck through it all since their past school days at the elite Manhattan's Sibley School for Girls. However, as of lately, everything is starting to become a bit chaotic. India is attempting to decide between two very different men, the kind and sweet Julian or the broody, sexy Keith. Bored in her own marriage, Esme has taken to stepping out on her husband to gain the thrill and suspense she craves, while sweet and timid Abby is dealing with her husband's long-time infidelity and her own feelings for a new man. Last but not least, Monique, a recent addition to the girl's inner circle, is dealing with her own seemingly disastrous marriage, hoping that a fling may provoke the feelings she's been craving. Jumping into their own affairs and deceit, all four women begin to see the pros and, most importantly, the cons of their infidelity. However, will they be able to save their marriages as well as their own wellbeing and reputation before it's too late? Only more time and pages will tell in this scandalous new read!

First, I have to say that I was quite impressed with Susan Fales-Hill's writing and overall storytelling in this. She did a fantastic job of switching between narrators in a way that allowed each woman's story to be developed thoroughly even with the limited page time. I also enjoyed how she took the reader on a ride through New York as well as Paris in this, allowing the setting to develop as the story continued to build as well.

However, I have to admit out right, I barely liked the characters in this one, and that's where One Flight Up began to fail in my eyes. Esme, Abby, Monique, and India are all very interesting and diverse woman, but their actions as well as decisions were disastrous and not very likable. You see, all four woman to do one thing that annoyed and irritated me to one end: instead of communicating with their spouse/partner about their worries and concerns about their relationship/marriage, they took to using affairs as a quick and easy alternative. That just struck a point in me, because while I wanted to like these women, I had one little problem: I didn't truly respect them. Sure, they had glamorous and admirable lives and jobs, but at the end of the day they were lost in a way that really didn't make me feel for them; sometimes I didn't even really want to root for them to overcome their troubles. While they did face the music eventually and become a little more likable (especially Abby), in some ways I felt it was a bit too late.

In all, I'm undecided about it, because while the writing and world building was fabulous, the characters weren't always my favorite. However, I still will be reading more by Susan based on her writing alone and I highly recommend this one to fans of the chick-lit genre, specifically ones who enjoy shows like Gossip Girl and Sex and the City.

Grade: B

Samantha March says

One Flight Up by Susan Fales-Hill circles around four married friends, each at a different stage in their life, each unhappy in their own ways. India Chumley, our main gal, is a biracial, high powered divorce lawyer, whose clients and her own mother's marriage keeps her from saying "yes" to all the proposals her hunky French boyfriend keeps bestowing on her. That, and the fact that she is still in love with Keith, her ex-fiancée who cheated on her weeks before their wedding date. Abby Rosenfeld Adams discovers her husband Nathaniel is having an affair, quite possibly multiple affairs, and is devastated that her high school sweetheart would throw away their years of marriage for a younger protocol. Esme Sarmiento Talbot is a spicy Colombian that has become bored of her suburban ways and too sweet husband Tim. She finds

excitement with the waiter, and the bartender, and the doorman, etc. Monique Dawkins-Dubois is a successful gynecologist who married her husband mostly for his checkbook, and now is finding comfort in the arms of another employee. All friends have dived into affairs, but when their adulterous actions come back to haunt them, they must ask themselves- was it all worth it in the end?

I had a fabulous time reading *One Flight Up*. All the characters were similar with their unhappiness about where their life was, but all had different approaches on how to make it better. While I don't typically like reading about affairs and cheating (I'm still a young gun that believes marriage is forever) I couldn't help but get sucked into their world. The writing was flawless, and once I hit the middle of the novel, I really couldn't put it down. I had to see what would happen to each woman, how she would come out of her particular situation. There really wasn't a character I disliked, though I didn't approve their choices, but as a reader, I could easily understand how they were feeling and why they were making their mistakes. I realized towards the end that maybe this is a little too much like my beloved *Sex and the City*. I saw Carrie and her Big issues with India and ex-fiancée Keith, Abby has the art loving, WASPy-like Charlotte, and Esme as a married Samantha. But that didn't necessarily detract from my liking the book, because I'm still giving it five stars. A great book that I think chick lit fans will enjoy as well.

Diane says

Four friends who met at the elite Manhattan Sibley School for Girls are at a crossroads of life and love in Susan Fales-Hill's novel *One Flight Up*.

India is a hard-charging divorce attorney with a high maintenance actress mother, an addiction to chocolate, and a loving French chef boyfriend. When the man she left at the altar years ago for cheating on her comes back into her life, she is torn between her strong attraction to the "bad boy" and her understanding, caring boyfriend.

Abby has a artist husband and two children whom she adores, but soon she is forced to face the fact that her husband is a cheater when she sees him kissing a gorgeous younger woman. When her son's music teacher shows romantic interest in her, she is tempted to find happiness for herself.

Monique is a doctor, who has been married for many years to a man with a time-consuming financial career. Like many long-married couples with dual careers and children, the spark has gone out of their marriage, and when a sexy young EMT shows her some attention, she makes a mistake that could endanger everything for which she has worked.

Esme is described as a "Columbian Scarlett O'Hara", a woman who enjoys receiving all the male attention from the moment she walks into a room. Esme frequently cheats on her nice-guy husband, just as her father cheats on her mother.

The author does a wonderful job creating characters with lives that the reader would envy- wealthy, smart, beautiful- and yet she gives them problems that face most women. How do you balance work, family, and love?

She understands the realities of long-term monogamy, and how hard it is to work at staying happy in a marriage. I liked that while she showed the excitement of a new sexual relationship, she also showed the consequences. If you are thinking about straying, this novel will give you something to think about.

The setting of Manhattan is a great character too. I enjoyed recognizing the various landmarks Fales-Hill uses, and the reader will feel like a real Upper East Sider as she reads. I also loved the mental pictures the author creates of the gorgeous dresses the ladies wear to their many social events.

Lifetime TV would be wise to option this book as a movie- and hire Sophia Vergara of TV's "Modern Family" as Esme, she'd be perfect!

One Flight Up has interesting characters, sex, fabulous clothes and Manhattan- it's Sex and the City for married women.
