



Gotham Diaries

Tonya Lewis Lee , Crystal McCrary-Anthony

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A hilarious first novel that provides a peek into the world of the super-rich, super-connected African Americans in Manhattan. Lauren is trying to be an independent woman, starting her own documentary film company, but it's difficult when you're married to Ed Thomas, one of the wealthiest African-American businessmen in the country--and particularly when he seems to have a roving eye. Manny is an up-and-coming gay real estate agent who arrived in Manhattan from Alabama with only the clothes on his back. He's made his way to the top of his profession--yet he still wants more. Tandy is one of the "ladies who lunch"--but she's desperate to reinvent herself and find a new source of cash flow. As we follow these three and other characters in this compelling first novel, we see the fascinating world of New York City's upper-crust African American society with all their scandals, foibles and skeletons in the closet revealed.

Gotham Diaries Details

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Author : Tonya Lewis Lee , Crystal McCrary-Anthony

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Mocha Girl says

Welcome to Manhattan and into the lives of the rich and famous. The Gotham Diaries is Tonya Lewis Lee and Crystal McCrary Anthony's debut into the "Chick Lit" genre. It is most definitely a perfect choice for a summertime getaway-a mixed blend of soap-opera type drama with a combination of middling to quite flamboyant and comical characters.

The plot mainly centers on an extremely ambitious, gay, high-end real estate broker (Manny), a recently widowed and indebted socialite (Tandy), and an "in-search-of-self" naive billionaire's wife (Lauren). Lauren believes Manny and Tandy are her friends, but each one has their own self-serving agenda. The reader is pulled into uptown living through Manny's social calendar, client drama, and his relationship with his boy-toy, supermodel lover. Manny is largely driven to keep his lover happy (usually with expensive gifts) and secure his place among Manhattan's elite regardless of the costs. Tandy's plan to remain on top of Manhattan's social circle despite being penniless involves both Manny and an unsuspecting Lauren. Lauren's desire is to pursue a career amid restlessness and aching suspicions that her husband who is thirty years her senior is having an affair.

After establishing each of the key character's history, the focus of the story is shifted to a real estate deal that reeks of betrayal and deception and will cause dissension among the "friends." The last one standing comes into their own and serves their own brand of justice - destroying the hopes and dreams of the others in the process.

This is a refreshing and often times funny novel with a strong underlying intensity that yields a page-turning reading experience. Hopefully this isn't the last we hear about the affairs of Tandy, Manny, and Lauren - I'd like to see more of them soon.

Lori says

This book was a library sale find for me. Amazing story about the rise of Harlem in New York City and a great cast of characters. Eye opening on so many levels. If we were all the same life would be so dull and predictive.

Ice says

Lauren Thomas, Wharton graduate, size-four beauty and rising director on the Style Channel, wants to be admired as herself, not just as the wife of Ed Thomas, billionaire baron of New York African-American society.

The authors know whereof they speak, being married, respectively, to filmmaker Spike Lee and former Knicks player and ESPN commentator Greg Anthony.

If Stephen Carter was the Henry James of old black money with The Emperor of Ocean Park, the Lee/Anthony team is the Edith Wharton of new black money. As Lauren rises in selfhood, her best friends

tumble: Manny Marks, the gay realtor who grew up dirt-poor, and widow Tandy Brooks, who at age 51 is dethroned as the duchess of philanthropy because her despised husband left her in debt. Vicious, funny, juicy, with lots of antic real estate scenes, the story is driven by a plot in which Manny and Tandy collude to swindle Lauren and Ed.

The dual authorship sometimes shows at the seams, with Tandy "cocoa-brown" on one page and "caramel" on another; dialogue drags, and brand names crowd the pages. But the insider authority carries the day.

L.J. says

Gotham Diaries was eloquently written. It contained some of the idiosyncratic elements of New York City's African-American elite--greed, betrayal, and a longing to be accepted and revered among their rich peers.

Lauren Thomas is married to billionaire Ed Thomas. Lauren experiences a self-discovery when she realizes the people she loves and trusts most have been back stabbing her all along.

Gay real estate broker, Manny Marks greatest desire is to parlay with the wealthy while climbing the ladder of success. He is asked to use his skills to commit an unethical and illegal business practice. His relentless craving for money and notoriety allows him to toss his morals aside.

Narcissistic socialite Tandy Brooks is broke due to her deceased husband's misappropriation of their funds. Petrified of her mountains of debt being discovered, Tandy will manipulate friend or foe to maintain her philanthropic status among the black bourgeoisie.

Overall, this was an enjoyable and skillfully written novel. The characters were believable and I felt as if I had witnessed the events that unfolded first hand.

Wrist Decay says

This is one of the lowest ratings I've ever given a book that I've rated. I bought this book mainly because I can't resist 'diary' books. The title is misleading. It is not only not a diary, but it's not even first person perspective. And 'Gotham' just refers to NY, but not the Batman version, just the regular one. The dialogue in this book is jarring, because it flops back and forth between super ghetto and upscale, sometimes mid sentence. The characters' thoughts are written this way as well. It says something like, "I just love when he brings me Cristal and strawberries, and it's always so romantic at the Vinyard, and you just know my man is getting his b j later." It's awkward, but I read it, and even though it does have a sort of suspenseful feel, the climax does not deliver, and this b needs her a good climax, know what I'm sayin'?

Ronke says

When I interviewed author and journalist, Tia Williams a few years ago she mentioned that one thing that niggled her was that the Black middle and upper class were not portrayed in the media. I had to admit that she had a point – TV. films and books are surrounded with images of working class Blacks, single mothers and men in jail while images of high brow African Americans remain unseen. So when a fellow blogger

mentioned a book called Gotham Diaries I had to check it out on Amazon. The book is about the upper elite of Manhattan who lead very privileged lives; characters such as Tandy Brooks who is a respected socialite is admired for her refined beauty and class. Manny Marks an ambitious social climber from Alabama who is bidding his time as a real estate broker, praying that he makes that one deal which will allow him to join the upper ranks. Gorgeous, Lauren Thomas is married to billionaire, Ed Thomas and lives the life of luxury but her husband's wandering eye mars her perfect life. Together Tandy and Lauren enjoy the traps of wealth and position – with Manny riding at their coat tails – while their peers look on in admiration. However, when Tandy's husband dies suddenly her fortune takes a turn for the worse and she is forced to start selling her possessions. Tandy has worked too damn hard to give up her lifestyle and status and comes up with a cunning plan in order to get her life back on track. Unfortunately this involves ripping off Lauren and roping in Manny.

I got into this book as soon as I finished the first page. It is totally compelling and seductive to read – the style is not too different from Snapped by Tracy Brown which reviewed a few weeks back as both books possess the bling factor. Gotham Diaries portrays the haves and the trying so hard to haves; the life of Lauren who has it all, Tandy who had it and lost and Manny who is trying to get it. I also love the minor characters such as the oh so fabulous NBA player, Daryl and his delectable wife whose newly acquired millions have granted them a place in the social elite pile. After reading this book I only realised that one of the authors is Tonya Lewis Lee aka Spike Lee's wife. The other author is Crystal McCrary Anthony, former wife of NBA star Greg Anthony so if anyone knows what it is like to mix and mingle with the upper crust of African American society then it is more these two women. Interestingly enough both Tonya and Crystal are lawyers turned writers and TV producers. It makes sense now though as it is evidence that both women are taking us into their own worlds thus taking upon the best writing advice - write about what you know. Gotham Diaries is wickedly written and takes cattiness to a new level. You will really dislike all the characters but at the same time be really intrigued by them. The book was actually released back in 2006 and I am shocked that I am only hearing about it now. I really hope someone makes it into a TV series or movie one day because these are stories that need to be told. Gotham Diaries is available to buy on Amazon.

Stephanie says

A bit slow to me in the beginning, GOTHAM DIARIES picked up the pace towards the middle. The characters were very well thought out which I thought was great, being that this book had two authors.

If this is the way things really go down in the world of the African American elite, than that is a sick place to be. There were so many lies, so much invective behavior it was sickening. All of the money in the world could not get me to associate with people like that.

Manny was way passed the need to find himself. I couldn't believe how clingy and depreciated he made himself out to be.

Tandy was just an evil and heartless wench with no morale.

Ed was a cheating billionaire loser who I wasn't quite sure I wanted to end up with **Lauren**, his wife, who loved him as any wife should love her husband.

They weren't lovable by any stretch of the imagination, but for some reason I loved the way these 4 characters came together in the deceit and betrayal that made up Manhattan's upper crust. The end left a lot to be desired and for that I give it 3.5 stars.

Ciana says

When I picked this book up to read I was hoping for a sexy and drama filled quick read. What I got was a boring mild depiction of upper class black society in New York. The characters are superficial and lack any true substance, the action was not climatic and totally contrived, and the ending left me wishing I had never picked the book up in the first place. I do not recommend this book!

Erica says

This book was entirely too slow....boring and couldn't even get through it all

Jacques says

This was my second time reading this novel, my first being when I was a sophomore in high school. I loved it when I was 15, but now as an adult I definitely can understand why the reviews were slightly on the dismal side. The writing was excellent, but the story was rather dull and the climax left you feeling unfulfilled, almost as if there was no climax at all. Very descriptive read, loved all the NYC characterizations, but not something to go crazy over.

Kellea says

I loved this book. Sophisticated and sassy, co-authored by Spike Lee's wife, Tonya Lewis Lee. A must read, scandalous, but well written.

Jay Fingers says

When it comes to contemporary Black literature not written by the likes of Toni Morrison or Colson Whitehead or Zadie Smith, the expectation is that these tales will be filled with vulgarity, violence, and gratuitously graphic sex. That was certainly what I expected when cracking open *Gotham Diaries*, a story about “Manhattan’s [African-American] upper crust packed with sex, lies, and backstabbing” written by Tonya Lewis Lee (wife of filmmaker Spike Lee) and Crystal McCrary Anthony.

Thankfully, I was pleasantly surprised to find the novel wasn’t as salacious as the back-of-the-book blurbs led me to believe. Instead, it was a standard issue yet still very engrossing story of New York City’s so-called Black elite, the (fictional) moneyed movers and shakers who populate magazine covers, gossip columns, and many a fantasy.

The novel focuses on three main characters: Manny Marks, a social climbing real estate agent who seeks to be among the city’s privileged and influential; Tandy Brooks, an again socialite struggling to maintain

appearances after the untimely death of her millionaire husband; and Lauren Thomas, the trophy wife of one of America's few Black billionaire businessmen. Through these three characters and their relationships to each other, we get a glimpse of the shenanigans that take place amongst a social set that should really fucking know better.

All the tropes are present: lovers cheat, connivers connive, and the wealthy prove to be certifiably insane. Once the players are introduced, we are given a plot that revolves around an unscrupulous real estate scheme. Will the conspirators get away with their nefarious plan? Will the victims realize they're being played like fast-food side dishes? You already know the answer to these questions, but the fun is in seeing how it all plays out.

The novel only gives you one character to truly root for, one who, at the outset, seems genuinely nice and innocent. It isn't until you come to the story's conclusion that you begin to question this character's naïveté. And I'll be very honest, these characters are well off financially. That made it a bit difficult to really sympathize with their various plights.

Still, Lewis and Anthony have concocted a breezy, entertaining read that breaks away from what one would normally expect out of this type of tale. It's often very funny, especially in its examination of the nouveau riche, celebrity worship, and race and class among Black people.

If you're looking for sweaty sex scenes and super spicy revelations, I suggest you talk to the bootleg book man in Fulton Mall. Gotham Diaries is not the tome for you. But if you're looking for a quick, well-written, and satisfying read, go ahead and pick this one up.

Patricia Ann says

This was a very good read! The long descriptives at the beginning thoroughly introduced readers to the characters and their lives. I enjoyed the weaving of the storyline. I could hardly wait to turn the page to find out what was happening next. The ending did not disappoint. I hated to come to the end. I was very sad that the sequel has not been published. Yet?. I will be waiting!

Georgiann Hennelly says

Manny Marksreinvented himself from his humble beginnings to become a vibrant real estate broker in New York. Now he's learning the hard way that everything has a price tag, even his soul. Tandy Brooks is a fading society queen who loves the high life. Her friends Ed and Lauren Thomas have everything she needs to stay afloat in Manhattan. Manny is her partner in deception and betrayal.

Ed Thomas is a self-made man of power and prestige, but his roguish ways could mean facing his own demons, and he might lose his wife.

Lauren Thomas believed in the fairy tale when she married Ed. But is love enough to sustain her marriage and protect her from the vultures of New York City.

K says

This book was.... Interesting I guess ? Lol I had almost put it back, but the name caught me. All things Batman are intriguing. However, this book contained none of that. It also wasn't a diary. I did want to know how it ended. Shocked me ? No. I just am happy I'm done.
