



Upper East Side Girl

Bernard F. Connors

British American Publishing (Dec 1, 2016)

Hardcover \$16.95 (128pp)

978-0-945167-58-7

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Is there any creature on earth more hopeful, neurotic, and capricious than a first-time novelist? Parker Livingstone, the feckless hero of Bernard F. Connors's *Upper East Side Girl*, stumbles into a time-traveling elevator and back out into the arms of a mystery blond. Will he finish his manuscript before history subsumes him?

Parker is a plummy, stuffy young man—certainly an anachronism in the modern publishing world. Employed at a boutique literary agency in New York City by a “Mafioso in drag” named Candida Jones, he’s already jaded about the industry and his role at the agency. Parker, naive and out of place, is the last one to realize that he’s in the wrong gig—and maybe even the wrong decade.

Parker's escape is in his manuscript, a novel-in-progress that his money-hungry boss keeps eying. He hopes to create something meaningful in the sea of self-help and senseless trash that regularly climbs the bestseller list. However, a few chance encounters with Sarah, an enigmatic, timeless beauty, throws him off kilter. Although he hoped to write a highbrow metaphysical treatise, his writing veers into Harlequin territory. Obsessed with learning more about Sarah, he finally throws caution to the winds.

Connors, a seasoned writer and the former publisher of *The Paris Review*, offers keen insights into the publishing industry and brings the New York scene to life with verve and wit. Parker, whose voice dominates the novel, is the perfect observer to conjure New York scenes, such as of the “cheerful area where strolling urbanites sought relief in the 843 pastoral acres at the center of Manhattan’s throbbing metropolis.” His innocence adds a wonderful element of tension that keeps pages turning.

With a strong magical realism element, *Upper East Side Girl* is a delightful distraction.

CLAIRE FOSTER (March/April 2017)

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