



# Loving Donovan

By Bernice L. McFadden

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Despite being born to a broken-hearted mother and a faithless father, Campbell still believes in the power of love...if she can ever find it. Living in the same neighborhood, but unknown to Campbell until a chance meeting brings them together, is Donovan, the "little man" of a shattered home—a family torn apart by anger and bitterness. In the face of these daunting obstacles, Donovan dreams of someday marrying, raising a family, and playing for the NBA. But, deep inside Campbell and Donovan live the histories that have shaped their lives. What they discover—together and apart—forms the basis of this compelling, sensual, and surprising novel.

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## **Loving Donovan** By Bernice L. McFadden Bibliography

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## Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

This bittersweet fourth novel by McFadden (Sugar) traces the lives of two damaged but resolute people destined for an ill-fated love affair. The reader meets protagonist Campbell as a sensitive eight-year-old living in a Brooklyn housing project. As she watches her mother weep and rant at her feckless, philandering father, Campbell promises herself that "ain't no man ever going to break my heart." At age 15, however, that promise is broken when she gets pregnant by a high school boyfriend who skips town. Donovan, meanwhile, also grows up listening to his parents' violent quarrels. When he's nine years old, he is assaulted by a pedophile in his building, an experience that impairs his future relationships with women. As an adult, he takes a city transit job and becomes a workaholic. The two meet when Campbell is a single mother in her 30s and a talented fledgling artist. She bumps into Donovan at an art show and promptly falls in love. But Donovan is threatened by Campbell's money and success. He brutally rejects her, leaving her to play out the scenes of bitter anguish she observed so often while growing up. McFadden's latest is heartfelt and competently written, with her usual flair for dialogue and well-paced narrative. Yet Campbell and Donovan respond predictably to their traumas, and Campbell is not as vivid as some of McFadden's earlier heroines. In spite of her worldly success, Campbell is an archetypal female victim, too thinly drawn to carry the melodramatic scenes of despair that cap the book.

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From [Booklist](#)

McFadden separately introduces Campbell and Donovan and their early lives of family tragedy and disappointment lived within the same gritty urban neighborhood. She ultimately brings these two wounded people together in a bittersweet story that shows the limitations of love and fate. Campbell is raised by a mother who has trapped her husband in a bitter and loveless marriage. Campbell gets her first lessons about longing and passion from the gay tenants who live in the apartment below, the sounds of their lovemaking and fighting drifting up through the vents. Teenaged motherhood from a hasty sexual encounter seems to seal Campbell's fate. Donovan is also the product of a troubled marriage--abandoned by his mother and raised by a father who is overly controlled by his overbearing mother. Donovan is introduced to sex by a charming hustler who lives in his grandmother's basement and seduces children. By the time Donovan and Campbell meet, they've both recovered enough to know what they want in an adult relationship, but have they healed enough to make it last? *Vanessa Bush*

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Review

*Loving Donovan* firmly establishes [McFadden] among the ranks of those few writers of whom you constantly beg for more. -- *Black Issues Book Review*

An entertaining read, with just enough twists to keep you turning the pages. -- *QBR*

## Users Review

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**Alvin Shaw:**

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