



The Prince's Boy

Paul Bailey

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In May 1927, nineteen-year-old Dinu Grigorescu, a skinny boy with literary ambitions, is newly arrived in Paris. He has been sent from Bucharest, the city of his childhood, by his wealthy father to embark upon a bohemian adventure and relish the unique pleasures of Parisian life.

An innocent in a new city, still grieving the sudden loss of his beloved mother Elena seven years earlier, Dinu is encouraged to enjoy *la vie de Bohème* by his distant cousin, Eduard. But tentatively, secretly, Dinu is drawn to the Bains du Ballon d'Alsace, a notorious establishment rumoured to offer the men of Paris, married or otherwise, who enjoy something different, everything they crave. It is here that he meets Razvan, a fellow Romanian, the adopted child of a man of refinement – a prince's boy – whose stories of Proust and other artists entrance Dinu, and who will become the young man's teacher in the ways of the world.

At a distance of forty years, and written in London, his refuge from the horrors of Europe's early twentieth-century history, Dinu's memoir of his brief spell in Paris is one of exploration and rediscovery. The love that blossomed that sunlit day in such inauspicious and unromantic surroundings would transcend lust, separation, despair and even death to endure a lifetime. This is a work of extraordinary sensual delicacy, an exquisite novel from one of our most celebrated writers.

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