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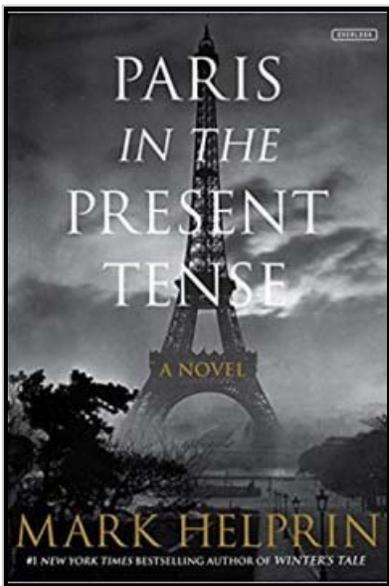


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Paris in the Present Tense

by Mark Helprin

Price: \$28.95 (Hardcover)

Published: October 03, 2017



Rating: 0.0/5 (0 votes cast)

From the Publisher: The magnificent new novel by the gifted, singular #1 New York Times bestselling author of *Winter's Tale* and *A Soldier of the Great War* Mark Helprin's powerful, rapturous new novel is set in a present-day Paris caught between violent unrest and its well-known, inescapable glories. Seventy-four-year-old Jules Lacour—a maître at Paris-Sorbonne, cellist, widower, veteran of the war in Algeria, and child of the Holocaust—must find a balance between his strong obligations to the past and the attractions and beauties of life and love in the present. In the midst of what should be an effulgent time of life—days bright with music, family, rowing on the Seine—Jules is confronted headlong and all at once by a series of challenges to his principles, livelihood, and home, forcing him to grapple with his complex past and find a way forward. He risks fraud to save his terminally ill infant grandson, matches wits with a renegade insurance investigator, is drawn into an act of savage violence, and falls deeply, excitingly in love with a young cellist a third his age. Against the backdrop of an exquisite and knowing vision of Paris and the way it can uniquely shape a life, he forges a denouement that is staggering in its humanity, elegance, and truth. In the intoxicating beauty of its prose and emotional amplitude of its storytelling, Mark Helprin's *Paris in the Present Tense* is a soaring achievement, a deep, dizzying look at a life through the purifying lenses of art and memory.

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About The Author

Mark Helprin

Mark Helprin is the acclaimed, bestselling author of *Winter's Tale*, *In Sunlight and in Shadow*, *A Soldier of the Great War*, *Freddy and Fredericka*, *The Pacific*, *Ellis Island*, *Memoir from Antproof Case*, and numerous other works. His novels are translated into more than twenty languages and read around the world. He lives in Virginia.

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What We Say

As a long-time fan of Mark Helprin, I hoped his new novel would be a return to form. Not quite. Perhaps it's unfair but the romantic style he typically employs on novels just isn't suited to stories set in the present. (In contrast, his short stories are often diamond-sharp and quite distinct from the sprawling, 19th century richness of his full-length works.) Unfortunately,

despite some flashbacks to WW II, this novel is set in contemporary France and ultimately devolves into an insurance scam, of all things. When tinged with fantasy and set in an alternate NYC, I can savor Helprin's grand passion, where every hero is brave and true and smart and stoic and pure of heart while the women they love are invariably angels that glow with purity and grace and joy and lightness. But when you're stuck in the present and talking about a cellist and his late wife or one of his students -- the routine people of today -- it feels absurd. I can't help resisting, when one of the strengths of his writing has been the pleasure of giving in to old-fashioned plotting and a high-blown style perfect for knights and days of yore. Here, I kept thinking of Ayn Rand or Nietzsche's superman, and not in a good way. Moment to moment, this story of a musician forced into desperate action when his grandchild is stricken with a dreadful disease has insight, humor and lovely passages. Yet instead of being elevated by the prose, ultimately the story is weighed down. TV philosophers, multi-national conglomerates, email -- it all feels far too pedestrian a setting for his concerns. I prefer Helprin in the past tense. -- Michael Giltz

What Others Say

"A modern-day story of love, music, and death . . . A masterpiece filled with compassion and humanity. Perfect for the pure pleasure of reading." - Kirkus, starred review "The fluidity of Helprin's prose . . . makes this novel of ideas so utterly captivating." - Booklist, starred review

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