



PAUL

"Will I ever be able to perform properly?"

Character

Paul

The philosopher

Age : 19

Gender : Male

Keywords: intellectual, inexperienced, idealist, humanist

Drama: Paul is inexperienced and unaware of the privileges he holds from his gender and his being part of the ruling, dominating class of the aristocracy. He ambitions to become a writer, and to have a critical look on society, but might as well get used to status and power, and simply spend his life enjoying his many advantages.

Narrative arcs: coming of age, literary aspirations, understanding the system

Story

My uncle Philippe says I know nothing of life, that he will make my education. I feel quite conflicted about the whole idea.

I grew up in a very small town. I belonged to the aristocracy, but my father lost a lot of money over the years. My mother watched in dismay as we lost more and more station and power. Her sister and my uncle Philippe still retained all of their aristocratic pride, and I know she suffered from it.

My father died when I was young, so I was mostly raised by women, my mother and my grandmother. My uncle Philippe says this education might have made me soft. But my mother was a hard woman, and she was particularly hard on her own sex, teaching me I had to be aware of other women but herself, that most women were just devilish temptresses, that I was expected to marry well, to marry a proper girl who would know how to behave.

I felt quite lonely at home, so I started to write. I wrote short satirical pieces about the small-minded society of the French province, so different from the bright culture of Paris, the capital. I started to write for a local newspaper. I hoped I could go to Paris to study, and meet

the brilliant minds of the times. My mother opposed it at first.

Then she caught me as I was flirting with one of the servants. I didn't sleep with her, but she caught us in a very compromising position. I must say that, contrary to her wishes, the attraction of women had become quite appealing to me. She was furious, of course, and only then decided that I would be better off with my uncle, in Paris. I registered to the Faculty of Law, and then left to make my way into the world.

For my uncle Philippe, of course, knowing the city is all about going to the clubs and Whorehouses, and he'll be taking me along. He is a regular patron of the Flowers of May, where Flora, the resident Favorite, has been his titular mistress in the past ten years. I feel quite excited, though I really don't know what to expect. Will I even be able to perform properly?

Past

Paul's mother was eyeing him severely.

"I am so disappointed in you. Didn't I tell you to be careful with yourself? You can't behave in such an improper way, even with a serving girl. I fired her on the spot, of course. I should have had her beaten to teach that girl her proper place."

Paul remained silent. There was no talking with his mother when she was in one of these moods.

"I was about to tell you the news. Your application has been accepted, you'll go to the university and study the law. Your uncle Philippe is willing to let you stay with him. I am hoping he will give you better manners."

Paul made a sign of acquiescence and rushed to his room, elated. He was about to see Paris, at last!

Paul was facing his editor at the newspaper:

"I read the abstract for your new project, that's quite interesting. People love to hear about the seedy places in the capital. But why brothels, especially?"

- Well, as I know my uncle, I'm sure he'll bring me there. I'm sure there'll be a lot to talk about, a lot to learn. The Whorehouse, it's like a small society of its own. I really want to delve into it.

- And aren't you afraid you might lose yourself there?

- This is a risk I'll be willing to take."

Others

Philippe (47 yrs) : my uncle. He's a bit vain and tend to focus only on his pleasure in quite a superficial way, but he's still very dear to me. But I know that my aunt is severely ill, I don't know why he doesn't take a better care of her. When will he stop running in circles, chasing one empty pleasure after the next?

André (42 yrs): he's a friend of my uncle's and the Prefect of Police in Paris, but he makes me uncomfortable. You can guess he's hiding a lot, and that he suffers from being under pressure. He wields a lot of political power in the city, but also gets by using corruption and bribe. Under his politeness lies a lot of unresolved issues.

Barthélémy (35 yrs): a social climber and self-made-man, also a successful industrialist. My uncle despises him, but I find him intriguing. Is he as completely devoid of conscious or moral as he claims?

Flora (37 yrs): my uncle's favorite and his regular mistress these past ten years. My aunt knows, of course, though she pretends to be unaware of it all. It is tolerated in society. She's impressive, and my uncle really depends on her. I wonder what he sees in her

Iris (25 yrs) : Flora's rival and the new influential courtesan of the *Flowers of May*. She's charismatic and resolute, I feel like you could write a whole novel about her alone. What could she think of me as a client?

Rose (22 yrs): a strange girl, who speaks her mind a bit too frankly, her mind being addled by the drugs and suffering. I heard she gets all the worst clients, the violent ones, Barthélémy among them. How does she survive it all?

Violette (17 yrs): a new girl, from what I heard. I wonder if she chose to be here. Probably not. I know my uncle said she could be a good first for me. I find it exciting and unsettling. Is this excitement what drives my uncle so much?

Game structure

#1 Workshops

#2 Introduction scenes

#3 Opening

#4 Act I, daytime: the New Year celebration

#5 Act I, nighttime: in the chambers

#6 Act I, remembrances: black box time

#7 Intermission

#8 Act II, daytime: Autumn Solstice

#9 Act II, nighttime: in the chambers

#10 Act II, remembrances: black box time

#11 Intermission

#12 Act III, daytime: Farewell

#13 Act III, remembrances

#14 Intermission

#15 Epilogue

