



## Take Me to Paris, Johnny (Text Classics)

*John Foster*

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*Take Me to Paris, Johnny* is John Foster's moving yet unsentimental account of the life of his partner, Juan Céspedes. It traces Juan's youth in Cuba and his move to New York, where he struggles to make it as a dancer. There, in 1981—in 'a chance encounter, much like any other'—he meets John, an Australian historian.

What begins as just a fling becomes a dazzling six-year affair. The two travel between New York, Berlin and Melbourne, struggling with bureaucracy in their quest to gain Juan residency in Australia, then with the disease taking the lives of gay men around the globe. To the end, Juan—'an exotic bird, the only one of his kind' in Melbourne—is captivating, witty, headstrong.

First published in 1993, not long before John Foster's death, *Take Me to Paris, Johnny* is brilliant and unflinching, at once controlled and impassioned: a love story told with humour and unerring skill. This edition includes an introduction by Peter Craven and an expanded biographical portrait of the author by John Rickard.

**John Foster** was born in Melbourne in 1944. He studied at the University of Melbourne, then in Germany and the United Kingdom. In 1971 he returned to the University of Melbourne, where for many years he lectured in the Department of History. He edited the collections *Community of Fate: Memoirs of German Jews in Melbourne* (1986) and *Victorian Picturesque: The Colonial Gardens of William Sangster* (1989). *Take Me to Paris, Johnny* was Foster's tribute to his lover, Juan Céspedes, a Cuban dancer who died of AIDS in 1987. The memoir was published in 1993 and shortlisted for the Age Book of the Year award; within a year, John Foster himself was dead.

'[A] literary masterpiece...Unparalleled in Australian letters...Makes most fiction, here or elsewhere, look paltry by comparison.' Peter Craven, from the Introduction

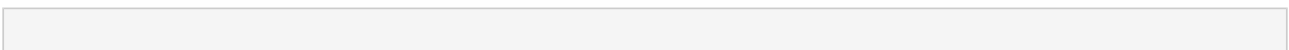
'A superbly crafted memoir...[A] subtle balance of formality and intimacy, of rationality and passion.' John Rickard, from the Afterword

'Brilliantly accomplished use of language...Few other books documenting this illness rumble and resonate with such sustained power.' Robert Dessaix

'[*Take Me to Paris, Johnny*] reminds us of the complexity of relationships...of the simultaneous strength and fragility of love.' Denis Altman

'A remarkable, beautifully written memoir that captures and preserves the jittery zeitgeist among active gay men moving around the globe in the early '80s.' Gail Bell, *Monthly*

'Finely written...Foster deftly recounted his "cross-colour, cross-class" relationship, and brought his lover back to life on the page.' Steve Dow, *Age*



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