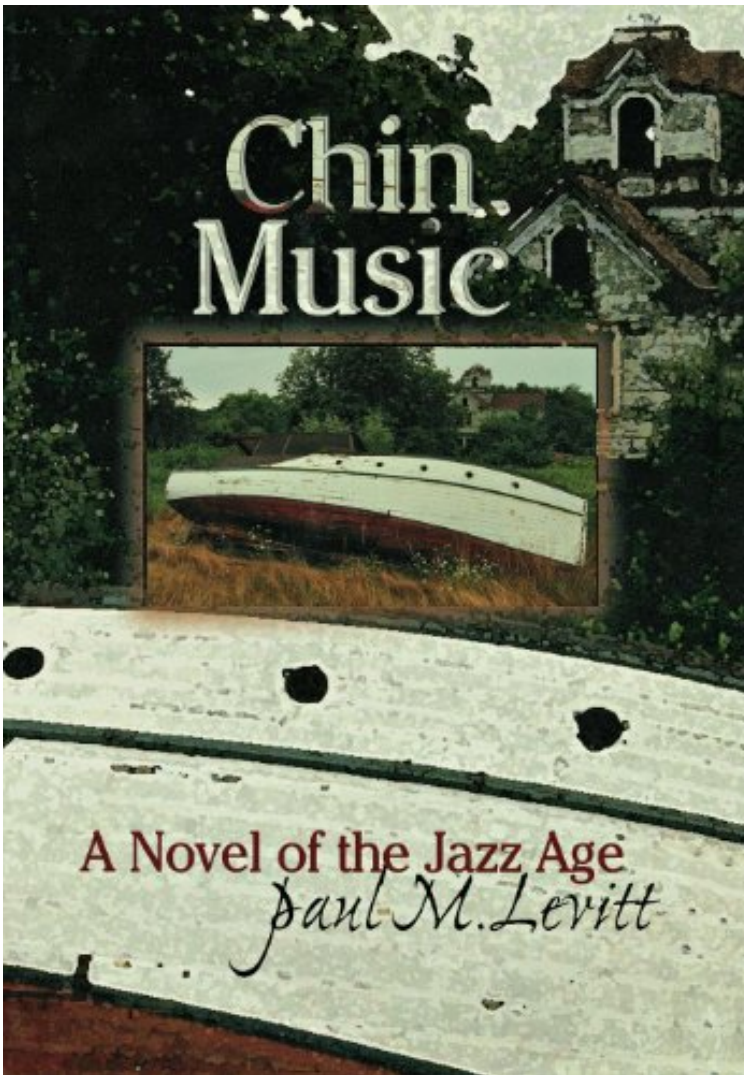


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Chin Music: A Novel of the Jazz Age



Par Paul M. Levitt

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Dtails sur le produit Publi le: 2001-04-01
Sorti le: 2012-08-07
Format: Ebook
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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurNew York City in 1922 saw showpeople like Fanny Brice and Harry Houdini rubbing shoulders with confidence men and bootleggers like Arnold Rothstein, the gambler reputed to have fixed the 1919 World Series. Henrietta Fine, a precocious sixteen-year-old apprentice locksmith, weaves in and out of this world, living by her wits and the double-cross. Her safe cracking skills make her useful to both Houdini and to the wily Rothstein, who provides cover for her after the police implicate her in a diamond heist. Her picaresque adventures take her from the woods of New Jersey, whose secret Indian trails afford escape from red-baiting anti-semitic mobs, to the coves of Long Island, where she becomes a companion of a doomed bootlegger.Drawn with exquisite detail and told in a voice Henrietta'sthat recalls the stylish gossip (or "Chin Music") of the Flapper, Paul Levitt's debut novel will entertain readers with its uncanny evocation of an era when the gangster held a place of celebrity and a teen-age girl could be his unwitting or

outwittingcollaborator.Extrait"A sudden blow. With the great hospital fans beating like a flock of swans and my father caught short by the bill, St. Barnabas Hospital told us they could no longer care for his cancer. Mom asked me to assume the power that naturally befitted my knowledge of the family's affairs. It was the spring of 1922. As my father lay dying on a gray metal bed, amid the smell of disinfectant and bedpans, a schooner carrying scotch whiskey was leaving the Firth of Forth, headed for the island of St. Pierre off the east coast of Canada, where bootleggers waited to take charge of the shipment. A short time before, in New York City, Adeela Farouk had worn a priceless diamond necklace to a party at the home of Fanny Brice, wife of con man Nicky Arnstein. Although these apparently unrelated events changed the course of my life, I waited decades to disclose them, having been deterred by scandal, and by love.I see now that a book, like a life, is a pastiche of plagiarisms. To write mine, I have borrowed and bent and followed in the footsteps of those who fancied America the golden Medina, a hope long since sterile but once fecund as the rivers Captain Smith fished. Somnambulists of a vanished dream, they would surely feel, were they to pass through the garbage-strewn streets of this country, through the hungry and tortured cries of the night, that they had wakened to a fallen world. Or would they? Perhaps despite the omens drear, the land cold from the quickening of greed, they still would hear the varied carols of America singing."Prsentation de l'diteurNew York City in 1922 saw showpeople like Fanny Brice and Harry Houdini rubbing shoulders with confidence men and bootleggers like Arnold Rothstein, the gambler reputed to have fixed the 1919 World Series. Henrietta Fine, a precocious sixteen-year-old apprentice locksmith, weaves in and out of this world, living by her wits and the double-cross. Her safe cracking skills make her useful to both Houdini and to the wily Rothstein, who provides cover for her after the police implicate her in a diamond heist. Her picaresque adventures take her from the woods of New Jersey, whose secret Indian trails afford escape from red-baiting anti-semtic mobs, to the coves of Long Island, where she becomes a companion of a doomed bootlegger.Drawn with exquisite detail and told in a voice Henrietta'sthat recalls the stylish gossip (or "Chin Music") of the Flapper, Paul Levitt's debut novel will entertain readers with its uncanny evocation of an era when the gangster held a place of celebrity and a teen-age girl could be his unwitting or outwittingcollaborator.