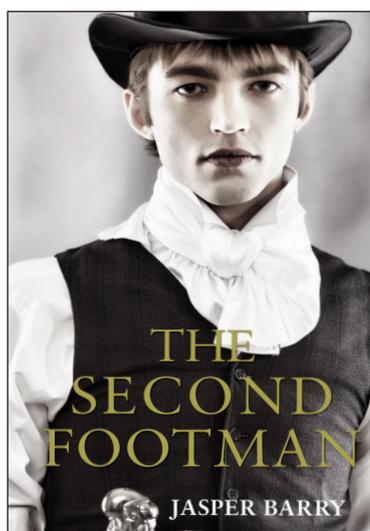




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## THE SECOND FOOTMAN

JASPER BARRY

### France, 1880

Despite nearly a century of social upheaval, the aristocracy are still firmly entrenched in their hôtels and châteaux. Nineteen year-old Max is second footman to the duchesse de Claireville. But he does not intend to endure the indignities of service for long. He has a plan – to find an aristocratic patron who will become his unwitting accomplice in a spectacular fraud.

Yet it is one thing to devise this plan and another to execute it: the noble guests who attend Mme de Claireville's Paris Thursdays or spend the summer with her in Bordeaux naturally pay little regard to the servants. But then a chance encounter with the marquis de Miremont changes Max's luck. The middle-aged marquis, who has spent the last two years struggling with the discovery that he is attracted to his own sex, is easily seduced by Max and becomes besotted with him.

A shy man, uncomfortable in society despite his distinguished lineage, Armand de Miremont is unfashionably preoccupied with honour, integrity and truth. Max, who sees himself as above conventional morality, views him as an innocent. Yet he proves far from easy to manipulate. And Max finds that obeying his own ruthless code is not so easy either.

A journalist who previously worked in advertising, JASPER BARRY lives in London, sharing a flat with one partner, three hooligan cats and too many books. *The Second Footman* is the first part of a trilogy: Barry is working on the second.

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