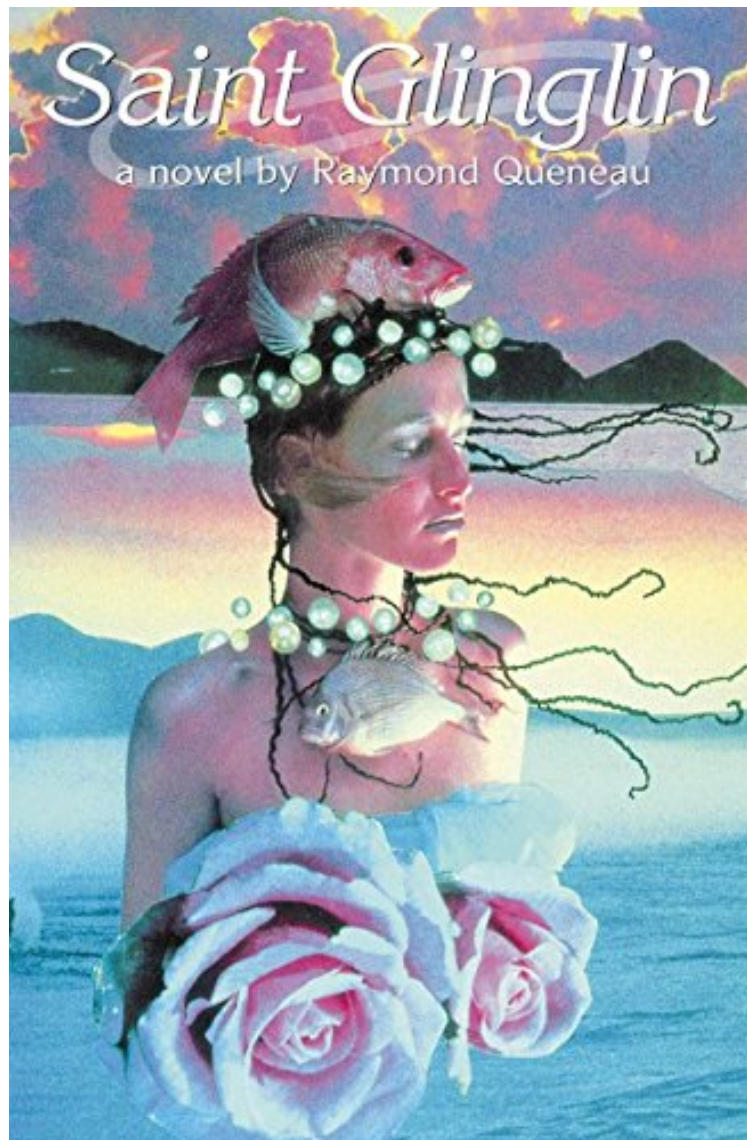


(Read now) Saint Glinglin (French Literature Series)

Saint Glinglin (French Literature Series)

Raymond Queneau

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Raymond Queneau : Saint Glinglin (French Literature Series) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Saint Glinglin (French Literature Series):

Queneau's tragicomic masterpiece which retells in an array of styles the primal Freudian myth of sons killing the father.Queneau satirizes anthropology, folklore, philosophy, and epistemology while spinning a story as appealing as a

fairy tale about a land where it never rains and a bizarre festival is held every Saint Glinglin's Day.

From Publishers Weekly For readers willing to relax demands for credibility and logic, Queneau's funny, philosophical nonsense is addictive. Here, Queneau (*Zazie dans le metro*) has created a world, starting with its banalities: the clichés, the tired small talk, the outdated prejudices, the little points of pride. This world, Home Town, is settled in its ways under perpetually blue skies and under the guidance of Nabonidus, its proud mayor. But the mayor's children, all corrupted by influences from Foreign Town, turn against both their father and the traditional ways. To say any more about the plot is to imply that there really is one. Like all of Queneau's books, this is much about language, both dry experimentation (the entire book is a lipogram--there are no Xs) and full of neologisms and quirky style, which are meant simply to amuse ("Pierre went back down the three steps, paused by his father without turning his head, put his hat atop his head where it belonged, bent to pick up his suitcase and left"). But Saint Glinglin also has a distinctly mystical bent with its (often obscure) musings on life and fish, alienation and verdancy, sacrifice and eel-baskets. Described in brief, Queneau may seem a fearsome read, but in situ he is a gentle, playful guide. Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal The novels of Queneau (1903-76) were forerunners of *le nouveau roman* (the "new novel"), which rejected traditional methods of plotting and characterization and instead created fantastical fictional worlds replete with "new" languages. This novel suggests that fear binds all living beings together, but readers won't be able to dwell on that emotion, busy as they are trying to follow a bizarre plot replete with characters just this side of lunacy yet touchingly human. The liberal use of phonetic spelling (existence translates to eksistence, aiguesistence, orgresistence, eggsistence, or algae sistence, if its fish) keeps us alert and amused. Queneau's riveting language provides an entree to complex existentialist meditations on the alienation of both fish and humans from nature and to brilliantly inventive discourses on insects. The plot is fantastical but interwoven with enough threads of reality to keep the reader turning pages. A fine rendition of one of Queneau's most important novels; essential for academic and large public libraries. - Olivia Opello, Onondaga Cty. P.L., Syracuse, N.Y. Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Kirkus s Queneau (*The Last Days*, etc.), who died in 1976, is best known as a precursor of postmodernism, and this inventive fiction, published in French in 1948, has a wonderful time playing with itself: it's as though Garcia Marquez and Beckett met in a dark alley and sat down drunk to collaborate. Ostensibly a series of improvisations on the theme of sons killing fathers, the book becomes both a great deal more and a great deal less than that. Queneau's home-grown myth focuses on the denizens of Home Town, specifically exile Pierre, who's absconded to Foreign Town to partake of "legends and far-off hearsay." Soon enough the reader is plunged into a menagerie of eccentricities, including names (Zostril, Nostrademus, etc.), styles (parodies of anthropologists and any number of literary luminaries), and events: it never rains in Home Town, and there are no fish until it rains for a year, and the fish are everywhere, even in the taverns where people try to escape from the rain. After Pierre has his say, brother Paul's interior monologue concerns the countryside "in all its horror," and sister Helene's autistic soliloquy is plaintive: "I never cried. Did they cry, my companions?" Queneau assiduously avoids the letter x until the last word of the novel ("excellence," if you must know): the author of *Exercises in Style* is nothing if not versed in word-games. At one point in this marvelous game, the Grand Prize is given for "the finesse and subtleties of play." As Sallis points out in his introduction, both science and literature were "games offering marvelous opportunities...." As a result, endless plot and language mutations provide the sophisticated reader with a carnival ride of surprises and pleasures. -- Copyright ©1993, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.