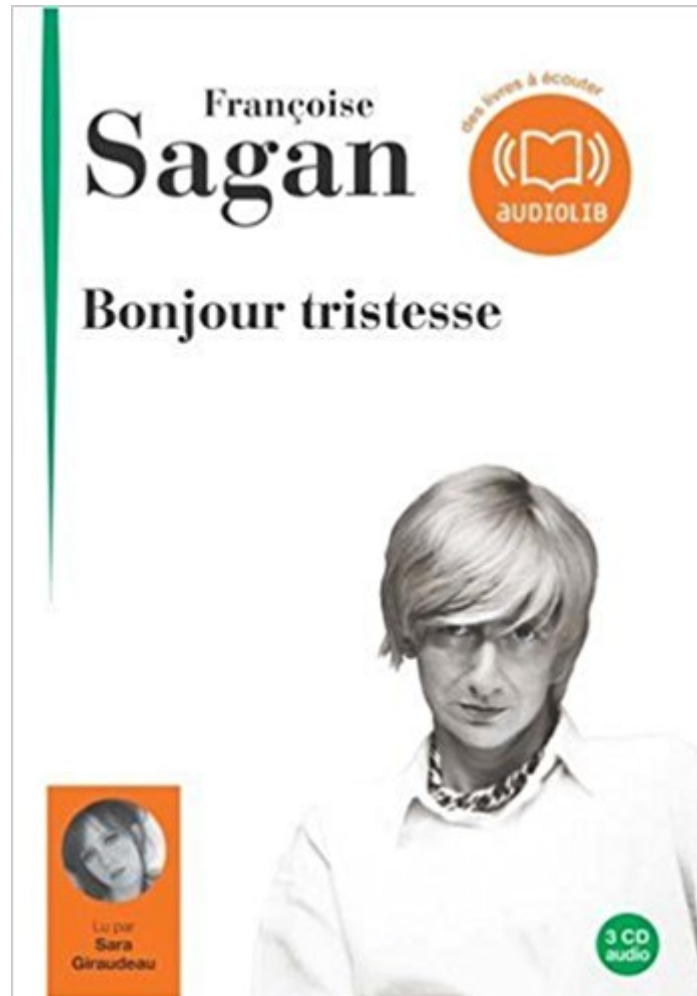




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Bonjour Tristesse



Synopsis

Publisher's Summary: "Sur ce sentiment inconnu dont l'ennui, la douceur m'obsède, j'hésite à apposer le nom, le beau nom grave de tristesse. C'est un sentiment si complet, si égoïste que j'en ai presque honte alors que la tristesse m'a toujours paru honorable. Je ne la connaissais pas, elle, mais l'ennui, le regret, plus rarement le remords. Aujourd'hui, quelque chose se replie sur moi comme une soie, étonnante et douce, et me semble pareille aux autres." L'auteure De son vrai nom Françoise Quoirez, Françoise Sagan est née à Cajarc, dans le Lot, en 1935. Son premier livre, Bonjour tristesse, publié en 1954 et qui remporte le Prix des Critiques, la rend immédiatement célèbre. L'immense succès de ses romans est encore confirmé par celui de plusieurs de ses autres ouvrages. Elle s'est également exercée à l'art de la nouvelle. Elle a livré des souvenirs et témoignages dans Avec mon meilleur souvenir, recueil que complètera ... Et toute ma sympathie. Elle a également écrit une biographie personnelle de Sarah Bernhardt : Sarah Bernhardt, le rire incassable. Françoise Sagan a reçu le prix Prince Pierre 1er de Monaco pour l'ensemble de son oeuvre en 1985. La narratrice Lauréate du Molière de la Révélation féminine Thérèse Fassinale 2007 et du Prix Raimu de la Révélation féminine 2007 pour La valse des Pingouins , cette jeune comédienne aguerrie a joué sous la direction d'Eric-Emmanuel Schmitt dans La tectonique des Sentiments et d'Isabelle Ratier dans Monologues du vagin .

Â© Editions Julliard, Paris, 1954, 2008

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This is a remarkable debut novel. The English translation is good and the writing is tight. But what makes it remarkable is Sagan's ability to see clearly and write well about a transitional phase in the lives of almost all young girls when she herself was quite possibly still in the middle of it. It is that phase when girls realize that they have sexual power and start to see the possibilities that has - both as a tool on their own behalf and as a force in the world. Maybe I am attributing too much self reference to Sagan, but there is a reason that this neat little book is a classic. The book is heavy with all the power, sensuality and danger of sex as a tool. It captures both a time of awakening and serves as a heady remind of the dangers of such power when wielded by the immature and

inexperienced. The contrast between Cecile and Anne and their views on love and sex just highlights how transitory such power is and that ultimately the recognition of this power in oneself signals a loss of innocence. Quick, clever read.

I was disappointed but not greatly surprised. One has to keep in mind this was published in 1954 and for the times it was probably shocking and offensive to some. I grew up in France, my stepmother who is the most voracious book monster loved Sagan and talked about her often so out of fealty to her I felt it was time to see what the fuss was about. From the opening pages I knew what it was and that it was not my kind of literature. It vaguely reminded me of the "Magus" which I loved so I persevered knowing I was deluding myself. It's a story that needs early fifties French mores to sustain it if one wants to take it seriously. My stepmother was 29 with a petit bourgeois background when she read it and she must have found it liberating as well as titillating. For me it was just a slightly interesting bit of nostalgia, I was only 3 at the time, about a very elite and rare set of people but at least I think I understand why she found Francois Sagan so special.

A classic book but I didn't really enjoy it. Well-written, but not personally interested in the sophisticated characters. Apparently this book was super popular back in the day. The setting is in the south of France in the 1950's. The bohemian Parisian family (very intelligent and gifted daughter and playboy dad) are on holiday with his current girl-friend. An old female friend visits and the daughter becomes very jealous of a developing romance that occurs. At the same time she has met a boy and is conducting a romance with him. It did help me to understand the meaning of bohemian and sophistication-as well as what bourgeois really means. And Sagan was obviously a very intelligent and gifted young writer when she wrote this book.

The complicated, back-and-forth emotions between the narrator and her relationships with the people around her astutely mimic adolescent insecurity and unawareness. Written when she was only eighteen, Sagan's novel of the destructiveness of ennui and naivete thus easily gets into the mind of a teenager. The thoughts written down are so commonplace to youth, that one will find themselves underlining whole passages due to their precise accuracy. Indeed, *Bonjour Tristesse* is more philosophical and devastating than many coming-of-age stories. Unsentimental, although sometimes laborious and heavy-handed, especially in Part One, the novel reveals the despair of wanting another to know one's thoughts, and the anguish of realizing the consequences of one's actions in the world of adult theatrics. The lyricism of the prose is ethereal and is eerily reminiscent

of the work of fellow French writer Albert Camus. Simple stylistically yet complex in symbolism, Sagan has penned a tome that would make any psychologist tremble at the amount of material present to analyze and dissect.

I'd describe this more of a (long) short story than a novel. It's a little funny, a little sad, and very french. tongue-in-cheek and nostalgic for a time when the word "mistress" was still in circulation, although already only in use in *some* social circles. when "40" was old, but wit and personality ruled. I am actually surprised that it's taken me this long to discover Sagan, seeing as how I'm really into french 20th century literature, all of it. If you are, too, then certainly have a go. Very fun hour or two.

Not the novel of the century, but the French is fairly elementary, and that's what I was looking for. Great for practice at reading French, but the story will not change your life.

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