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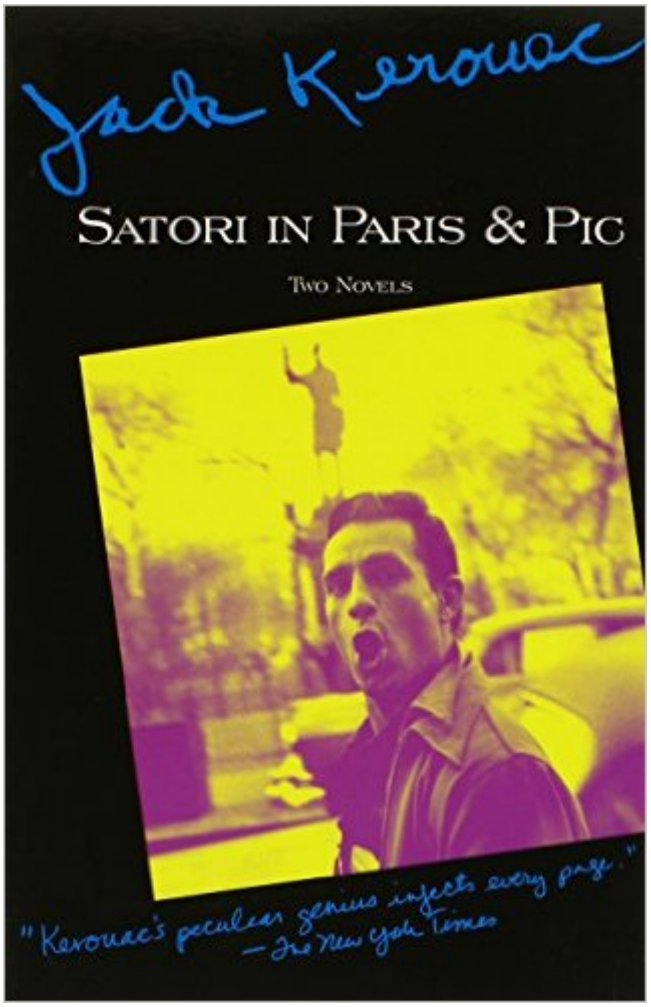
Satori In Paris & Pic



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Synopsis

Satori in Paris and Pic, two of Jack Kerouac's last novels, showcase the remarkable range and versatility of his mature talent. Satori in Paris is a rollicking autobiographical account of Kerouac's search for his heritage in France, and lands the author in his familiar milieu of seedy bars and all-night conversations. Pic is Kerouac's final novel and one of his most unusual. Narrated by ten-year-old Pictorial Review Jackson in a North Carolina vernacular, the novel charts the adventures of Pic and his brother Slim as they travel from the rural South to Harlem in the 1940s.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I'm surprised by how many reviewers have focused on Satori in Paris and neglected much a discussion of Pic, which, to my mind, is EASILY the pick of the two in this great value pack (pun unintentional).It's the last novel that Jack would ever complete. Stylistically similar to Twain and starting off with a touch of the Faulknerian southern gothic novel to boot, the story ends up becoming an energy-charged tale of two brothers escaping hard times down South as they hit the road and travel to New York and the excitement of jazz and its endless number of bars.Satori in Paris, even though it has its great moments, is not an easy read. I don't mean in a high-brow sense or that Jack loses his reader through his spontaneous prose literary excursions and scatological pile-ups of words but it's hard to read because it was at the end of his life, where Jack seems effectively at the end of his emotional and literary tether, and he is in (gradual) self-destruct mode in which he continued to drink himself to death (as he is a Catholic and does not believe in suicide per se). Satori in Paris is not nearly as bad as it has been portrayed and does not deserve the scorn

and derision of those in the anti-Kerouac crowd (who never 'got' him anyway, let's face it) and it does have its amusing parts like when Jack gets into a yelling competition with a train conductor over the correct French pronunciation of a word. (Jack was always proud of his French-Canadian heritage). Incidentally, I found it both funny and sad how Kerouac realizes in this instant that he is a 'lunatic'.He certainly knew how to put himself down...unfortunately. He once wrote 'put myself down and what have I got left?' - something heartbreakingly honest and melancholic (see Ann Charters' lectures at Naropa for more details).

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