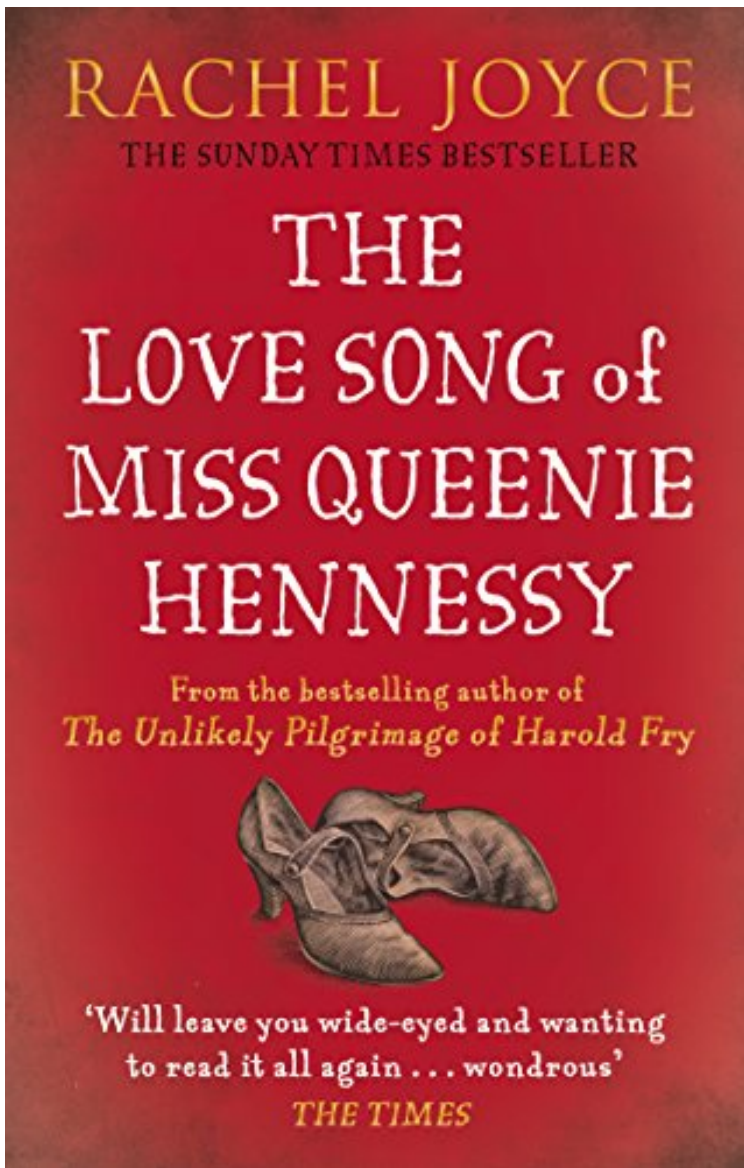


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The Love Song of Miss Queenie Hennessy



Par Rachel Joyce
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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurFrom the author of the 2 million+ copy, worldwide bestseller, *The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry*, an exquisite, funny and heartrending parallel story. When Queenie Hennessy discovers that Harold Fry is walking the length of England to save her, and all she has to do is wait, she is shocked. Her note had explained she was dying. How can she wait? A new volunteer at the hospice suggests that Queenie should write again; only this time she must tell Harold everything. In confessing to secrets she has hidden for twenty years, she will find atonement for the past. As the volunteer points out, Even though youve done your travelling, youre starting a new journey too. Queenie thought her first letter would be the end of the story. She was wrong. It was the beginning. Told in simple, emotionally-honest prose, with a mischievous

bite, this is a novel about the journey we all must take to learn who we are; it is about loving and letting go. And most of all it is about finding joy in unexpected places and at times we least expect. Extrait All you have to do is wait! Your letter arrived this morning. We were in the dayroom for morning activities. Everyone was asleep. Sister Lucy, who is the youngest nun volunteering in the hospice, asked if anyone would like to help with her new jigsaw. Nobody answered. Scrabble? she said. Nobody stirred. How about Mousetrap? said Sister Lucy. Thats a lovely game. I was in a chair by the window. Outside, the winter evergreens flapped and shivered. One lone seagull balanced in the sky. Hangman? said Sister Lucy. Anyone? A patient nodded, and Sister Lucy fetched paper. By the time shed got sorted, pens and a glass of water and so on, he was dozing again. Life is different for me at the hospice. The colors, the smells, the way a day passes. But I close my eyes and I pretend that the heat of the radiator is the sun on my hands and the smell of lunch is salt in the air. I hear the patients cough, and it is only the wind in my garden by the sea. I can imagine all sorts of things, Harold, if I put my mind to it. Sister Catherine strode in with the morning delivery. Post! she sang. Full volume. Look what I have here! Oh, oh, oh, went everyone, sitting up. Sister Catherine passed several brown envelopes, forwarded, to a Scotsman known as Mr. Henderson. There was a card for the new young woman. (She arrived yesterday. I dont know her name.) There is a big man they call the Pearly King, and he had another parcel though I have been here a week and I havent yet seen him open one. The blind lady, Barbara, received a note from her neighbor. Sister Catherine read it outspring is coming, it said. The loud woman called Finty opened a letter informing her that if she scratched off the foil window, she would discover that shed won an exciting prize. And, Queenie, something for you. Sister Catherine crossed the room, holding out an envelope. Dont look so frightened. I knew your writing. One glance and my pulse was flapping. Great, I thought. I dont hear from the man in twenty years, and then he sends a letter and gives me a heart attack. I stared at the postmark. Kingsbridge. Straight away I could picture the muddy blue of the estuary, the little boats moored to the quay. I heard the slapping of water against the plastic buoys and the clack of rigging against the masts. I didnt dare open the envelope. I just kept looking and looking and remembering. Sister Lucy rushed to my aid. She tucked her childlike finger under the flap and wiggled it along the fold to tear the envelope open. Shall I read it out for you, Queenie? I tried to say no, but the no came out as a funny noise she mistook for a yes. She unfolded the page, and her face seeped with pink. Then she began to read. Its from someone called Harold Fry. She went as slowly as she could, but there were a few words only. I am very sorry. Best wishes. Oh, but theres a P.S. too, said Sister Lucy. He says, Wait for me. She gave an optimistic shrug. Well, thats nice. Wait for him? I suppose hes going to make a visit. Sister Lucy folded the letter carefully and tucked it back inside the envelope. Then she placed my post in my lap, as if that were the end of it. A warm tear slipped down the side of my nose. I hadnt heard your name spoken for twenty years. I had held the words only inside my head. Aw, said Sister Lucy. Dont be upset, Queenie. Its all right. She pulled a tissue from the family-size box on the coffee table and carefully wiped the corner of my closed-up eye, my stretched mouth, even the thing that is on the side of my face. She held my hand, and all I could think of was my hand in yours, long ago, in a stationery cupboard. Maybe Harold Fry will come tomorrow, said Sister Lucy. At the coffee table, Finty still scratched away at the foil window on her letter. Come on, you little bugger, she grunted. Did you say Harold Fry? Sister Catherine jumped to her feet and clapped her hands as if she was trapping an insect. It was the loudest thing that had happened all morning, and everyone murmured Oh, oh, oh again. How could I have forgotten? He rang yesterday. Yes. He rang from a phone box. She spoke in small broken sentences, the way you do when youre trying to make sense of something that essentially doesnt. The line was bad and he kept laughing. I couldnt understand a word. Now I think about it, he was saying the same thing. About waiting. He said to tell you he was walking. She slipped a yellow Post-it note from her pocket and quickly unfolded it. Walking? said Sister Lucy, suggesting this was not something shed tried before. I assumed he wanted directions from the bus station. I told him to turn left and keep going. A few of the volunteers laughed, and I nodded as if they were right, they were right to laugh, because it was too much, you see, to show the consternation inside me. My body felt both weak and hot. Sister Catherine studied her yellow note. He said to tell you that as long as he walks, you must wait. He also said hes setting off from Kingsbridge. She turned to the other nuns and volunteers. Kingsbridge? Does anyone know where that is? Sister Lucy said maybe she did but she was pretty sure she didnt. Someone told us hed had an old aunt who lived there once. And one of the volunteers said, Oh, I know Kingsbridge. Its in South Devon. South Devon? Sister Catherine paled. Do you think he meant hes walking to Northumberland from all the way down there? She was not laughing anymore, and neither was anyone else. They were only looking at me and looking at your letter and seeming rather anxious and lost. Sister Catherine folded her

Post-it note and disappeared it into the side pocket of her robe. Bulls-eye! shouted Finty. I've won a luxury cruise! It's a fourteen-night adventure, all expenses paid, on the Princess Emerald! You have not read the small print, grumbled Mr. Henderson. And then, louder: The woman has not read the small print. I closed my eyes. A little later I felt the sisters hook their arms beneath me and lift my body into the wheelchair. It was like the way my father carried me when I was a girl and I had fallen asleep in front of the range. Stille, stille, my mother would say. I held tight on to your envelope, along with my notebook. I saw the dancing of crimson light beyond my eyelids as we moved from the dayroom to the corridor and then past the windows. I kept my eyes shut all the way, even as I was lowered onto the bed, even as the curtains were drawn with a whoosh against the pole, even as I heard the click of the door, afraid that if I opened my eyes the wash of tears would never stop. Harold Fry is coming, I thought. I have waited twenty years, and now he is coming. Revue de presse "5 stars" (The Telegraph) "Touching ... a quiet, gentle, moving novel. Joyce's writing has a simplicity that sings and she captures hope best of all." (The Observer) "If you loved The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry, you'll be thrilled with this sequel." (The Sun) "Invest in a box of Kleenex before you start this tear-jerker - [one of] this month's big reads." (Women Home) "A beautiful story which will grip you, make you laugh and cry, uplift your spirit and leave you feeling profoundly grateful and changed by the reading experience ... This is a wonderful book about loss, redemption and joy and I give it my own prize." (Bel Mooney The Daily Mail)