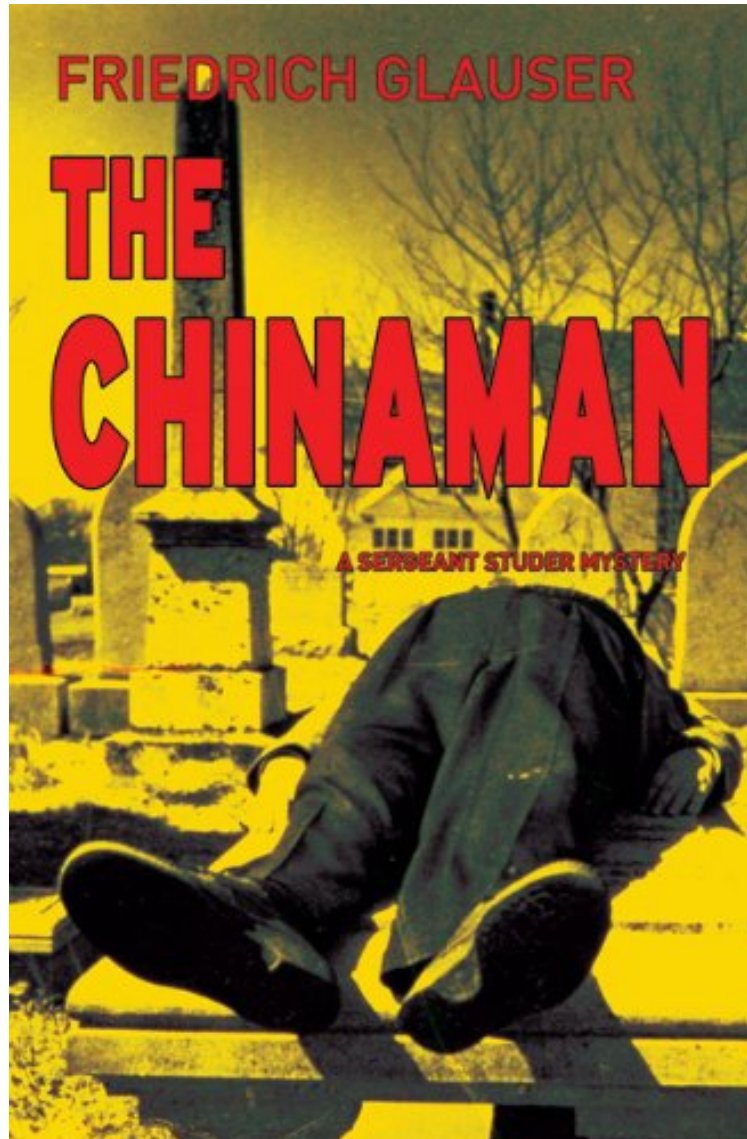


(Read ebook) The Chinaman: A Sergeant Studer Mystery

## The Chinaman: A Sergeant Studer Mystery

*Friedrich Glauser*

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**Friedrich Glauser : The Chinaman: A Sergeant Studer Mystery** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Chinaman: A Sergeant Studer Mystery:

4 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Tepid and Rather Dated Fourth Entry in the Sgt. Studer SeriesBy A. RossThis is the fourth of Swiss writer Glauser's five "Sergeant Studer" novels to appear in English (following Thumbprint, Fever, and In Matto's Realm and preceding The Spoke), some seventy or so years after their initial publication. I haven't read the others, but this one struck me as a little old-fashioned, somewhat confusing, and a bit

too deliberate. Set in the countryside outside Bern, the story is set in motion when Studer stops in a country inn to fill up his motorcycle. Formerly a detective in the Geneva police, he was apparently drummed out due to his inability to turn a blind eye, and is now a lowly Sergeant in the canton police. At the inn he meets the "Chinaman," who informs Studer that he expects to be killed in the next few months, and makes Studer promise to track down his killer. Moreover, he insists on introducing Studer to a group of men, one of whom he is certain will be the killer. Four months later, the man's body turns up in a nearby graveyard and Studer is called in to investigate. The story then concentrates in three places: the inn, a nearby poorhouse, and a nearby horticultural college. It also takes place across the victim's very complicated family tree. Readers are strongly advised to map out these relationships as they are introduced, as they become crucial to the solution. Despite the introduction of a rather limp locked-room second murder, and a bunch of arsenic, the story never picks up any momentum. Too much of it is markedly old-fashioned (or "classic" if you prefer): the motive is inheritance, the investigation slow (and somewhat strange to modern sensibilities), and the denouement involves gathering everyone into a drawing room for the detective to explain everything. Finally, Studer's speculative and entirely unprovable solution is supported by the sudden revelation of a letter which spells everything out. There are also small things that don't work so well: for example, much is made of the use of formal vs. informal German vs. dialect in various encounters, but these shifts have to be directly explained in the text, which is pretty clunky. There are some bright spots, such as Studer himself, who is grumpily entertaining, and the social commentary concerning the poorhouse (basically a work camp for the indigent) is interesting. However, on the whole, the story isn't particularly engaging, and is of limited appeal. Those who've read the other Studer novels, or have some particular interest in Swiss crime novels, or in older crime novels in general may find it engaging, but others probably not. It should also be noted that, throughout the book, references are made to previous cases Studer has solved -- without having read them I can't say, but they might well be spoilers for the three earlier books. 1 of 3 people found the following review helpful. fabulous Studer police procedural By A Customer In Bern, Switzerland James Farny's corpse is found lying on top of the recently buried wife of the poorhouse warden; the doctor pronounces it is suicide due to a self inflicted shot into the heart. The Bern police brass is content with supporting the "official" ruling. However, Bern Police Sergeant Jakob Studer notices some odd anomalies starting with no bullet hole torn through the victim's clothing though he is fully clad and yet shot in the heart. Studer also recognizes Farny as a person he remembers seeing several months ago in the tiny village of Pfrundisberg because the man predicted his demise to his associates. As Studer investigates while his superior fumes but knows better than to interfere with his best and most frustrating cop, clues lead Studer to realize the prime suspects in what he believes is murder reside at the poorhouse, a horticultural college, and the Sun Inn where he first "met" Farny. The latest translation of a Studer police procedural (see IN MATTO'S REALM, FEVER and THUMBPRINT) is a fabulous tale in which the intelligent dedicated cop works out the homicide by analyzing the interrelationships motives between the victim and those at the three locales and their potential motives for committing a murder. Although Studer's technique has been used quite often since THE CHINAMAN was first released in the late 1930s, the vivid look into Swiss society with Hitler beginning to spread his Third Reich vision across the continent makes the tale feel like a fresh historical whodunit. Harriet Klausner

“After reading Friedrich Glauser's dark tour de force *In Matto's Realm*, it's easy to see why the German equivalent of the Edgar Allan Poe Award is dubbed ‘The Glauser.’”—The Washington Post Praise for the Sergeant Studer series: “Thumbprint is a fine example of the craft of detective writing in a period which fans will regard as the golden age of crime fiction.”—The Sunday Telegraph “*In Matto's Realm* is a gem that contains echoes of Dürrenmatt, Fritz Lang's film *M* and Thomas Mann's *The Magic Mountain*. Both a compelling mystery and an illuminating, finely wrought mainstream novel.”—Publishers Weekly When, in later years, Sergeant Studer told the story of the Chinaman, he called it the story of three places, as the case unfolded in a Swiss country inn, in a poorhouse, and in a horticultural college. Three places and two murders. Anna Hungerlott, supposedly dead from gastric influenza, left behind handkerchiefs with traces of arsenic. One foggy November morning the enigmatic James Farny, nicknamed the Chinaman by Studer, was found lying on Anna's grave. Murdered, a single pistol shot to the heart that did not pierce his clothing. This is the fourth in the Sergeant Studer series. Friedrich Glauser is a legendary figure in European crime writing. He was a morphine and opium addict much of his life and began writing crime novels while an inmate of the Swiss asylum for the insane at Waldau.

From Publishers Weekly First published in 1938, Swiss author Glauser's fourth Jakob Studer novel to be made available in English (after *Fever*) finds the Bern police sergeant in usual form—too smart to be trusted by his superiors and too superior to be dismissed from his post. When the body of James Farny is found lying atop the grave of the recently deceased wife of the poorhouse warden, the local doctor assumes the death is a suicide. Noticing that the man's clothes are intact despite a shot through the heart, Studer suddenly realizes he met the victim some months before, and Farny predicted his own murder. Dubbing the case the story of the three locales, Studer discovers the key suspects are from the poorhouse, a horticultural school and a village inn. Slowly, he puzzles out the relationships and

the motives and reveals all in a traditional gathering of the suspects. Glauser's sharp portrayals of local institutions and customs add luster to this somewhat dated classic. (Jan.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. About the Author Diagnosed a schizophrenic, addicted to morphine and opium, Glauser spent the greater part of his life in psychiatric wards, insane asylums and prison. His Sergeant Studer novels have ensured his place as a cult figure in Europe. Mike Mitchell is a well-known translator of German works and the winner of a number of literary prizes. He has translated the other Studer novels as well.