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Sizzles And Fizzles: Stories That Fill A Midsummer Night's Dream

The nominal subject of Eric Kraft's stylishly comic serial novel, "The Personal History, Adventures, Experiences and Observations of Peter Leroy," is Peter's post-World War II childhood in fictional Babbington, Long Island, "Clam Capital of the World." But, as narrated by the adult Peter, the stories range all over, and if you came in late (Kraft published the first of his 12 installments in 1982), don't worry. You can plunge in anywhere. In the latest volume, At Home With the Glynn's (/79 pages. Crown. \$20), Peter, on the cusp of adolescence, re-encounters the Glynn twins, Margot and Martha, first met way back in the second installment, "Do Clams Bite," and now "almost thirteen." We also meet their bohemian parents, Andy the artist and Rosetta the poet, who spends most of her time entering contests requiring entries of 25 words or less. The plot fuses the pleasures of sexual initiation and going to the movies, the townspeople's memories of an old mansion that burned years before, and Peter's new career doctoring the sketches of Andy's art students. Miraculously, Kraft weaves every disparate strand into a tightly knotted yarn.

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