



A Simple Heart (The Art of the Novella)

By Gustave Flaubert, Charlotte Mandell



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Too short to be a novel, too long to be a short story, the novella is generally unrecognized by academics and publishers. Nonetheless, it is a form beloved and practice by literature's greatest writers. In the ART OF THE NOVELLA series, Melville House celebrates this renegade art form and its practitioners with titles that are, in many instances, presented in book form for the first time.

With an attention to the details of bourgeois life considered almost scandalous at the time, *A Simple Heart* will remind many why Gustave Flaubert was acclaimed as the first great master of realism. But this heart-breaking tale of a simple servant woman and her life-long search for love meant something else to Flaubert. Written near the end of his life, the work was meant to be a tribute to George Sand—who died before it was finished—and was written in answer to an argument the two were having over the importance of realism. Although the tale displays his virtuosic gift for telling detail, and is based on one of his actual servants, Flaubert said it exemplified his belief that "Beauty is the object of all my efforts." This sparkling new translation by Charlotte Mandell shows how impeccably Flaubert achieved his goal.



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Editorial Review

Review

"Small wonders"

—*Time Out London*

"I wanted them all, even those I'd already read."

—Ron Rosenbaum, *The New York Observer*

About the Author

GUSTAVE FLAUBERT was born in 1821 in Rouen, France, the son of a surgeon. He studied law but failed his exams and, after experiencing his first attack of what is thought to have been epilepsy—a condition he kept secret—he devoted himself to writing. His first novel, *Madame Bovary*, was published in 1857. It caused a scandal and led to Flaubert's prosecution on charges of immorality, but he was exonerated. His meticulous and realistic writing brought him continued recognition and esteem, although his subsequent books, such as *A Sentimental Education* and *Salammbô*, did not fare as well as *Bovary*, and he died in near-poverty in 1880.

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