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Michael Kohlhaas (The Art of the Novella)

By Heinrich Von Kleist



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Michael Kohlhaas (The Art of the Novella) By Heinrich Von Kleist

"You can send me to the scaffold, but I can make you suffer, and I mean to."

Based on actual historic events, this thrilling saga of violence and retribution bridged the gap between medieval and modern literature, and speaks so profoundly to the contemporary spirit that it has been the basis of numerous plays, movies, and novels.

It has become, in fact, a classic tale: that of the honorable man forced to take the law into his own hands. In this incendiary prototype, a minor tax dispute intensifies explosively, until the eponymous hero finds the forces of an entire kingdom, and even the great Martin Luther, gathered against him. But soon even Luther comes to echo the growing army of peasants asking, Isn't Kohlhaas right?

Widely acknowledged as one of the masterworks of German literature, *Michael Kohlhaas* is also one of the most stirring tales ever written of the quest for justice.

The Art of The Novella Series

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 practiced 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.



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Editorial Review

Review

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—**The Wall Street Journal**

About the Author

Heinrich von Kleist was born in 1777 in Frankfurt, Germany, to a Prussian military family. He was placed into military service at 15, fought against the French, and resigned his commission at 21. Unable to obtain a civil service job, he started one of Germany's first daily newspapers, which failed, and he traveled extensively through a Europe engulfed by the Napoleonic Wars. He was hospitalized for several mysterious illnesses, including surgery for an indeterminate sexual problem that led him to break off a marital engagement. Throughout, he wrote revolutionary plays and stories, such as *Penthesilea* and *The Marquise of O—*, embracing realism and rejecting the ideals of dominant German humanists such as Goethe. As part of a suicide pact, Kleist shot dead a terminally-ill friend, then himself, In 1811.

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