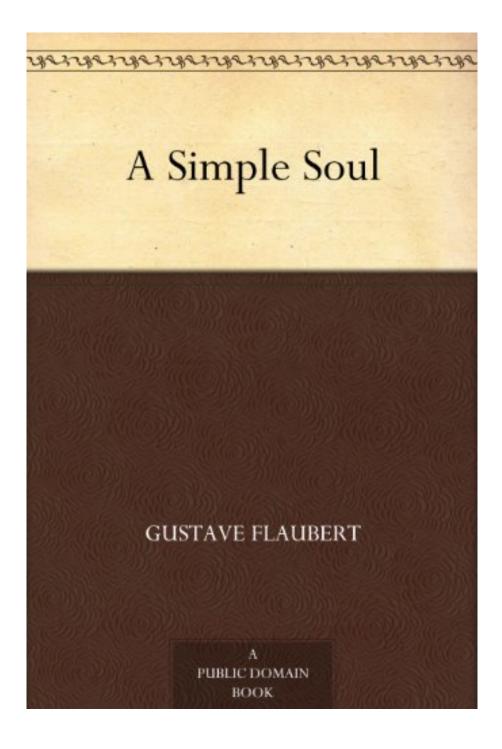


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#### Review

"A Simple Heart" ("Un Coeur Simple"), by French writer Gustave Flaubert, is one of the stories in his Three Tales (Trois Contes), published in 1877. It received admiring reviews at the time and has continued to be second only to his novel Madame Bovary (1857) in recognition and acclaim.

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Most helpful customer reviews

20 of 22 people found the following review helpful. Short But Powerful and Impressive By Jack Ridley Gustave Flaubert (1821 to 1880) was a French writer who is still considered to be among the greatest western novelists. He authored Madama Bovary which is considered to be the perfectly balanced modern novel. That novel and the author's style and approach has been hailed by a range of writers and critics including, for example, Saul Bellow, who modeled his own novels from Flaubert's works. Fluabert's writings have been referenced by Nabokov and many others as being an inspiration to a whole century of Western writers, and helped to launch the age of realism in novels.

The present story comes from the 1877 publication Three Tales (Trois Contes. It consists of the short stories: Simple Heart, Saint Julian, and Herodias. Dance of Death is another story sometimes grouped with Simple Heart and Saint Julian as Three Short Works.

A Simple Heart was inspired by biographical events in Flaubert's own life: he lived in rural Normandy, he had problems with his studies similar to the character Paul, and he was prone to epileptic seizures similar to the protagonist Felicite.

I read the story first without looking at any analysis, made up my own mind, then read the analysis. What struck me was that Flaubert had crammed a whole lifetime of human emotions into a single very short story. That all by itself was impressive. How could someone come up with that idea? Amazing.

A Simple Heart, also called A Simple Soul or Un Coeur Simple, in French, is a story about a girl named Felicité. She is a servant who has lived with the same family ever since she was betrayed by her lover. She has a strong sense of loyalty and self sacrifice: she lives to help others.

This short story has been admired by many critics over the years and used as a basis or a source of inspiration for other stories.

This takes only an hour or so to read and is highly recommended.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Short and simple tale

By Leapin' Literary Lurkers

Flaubert has always been one of my favorite authors. This brief glimpse of a servant's dedicated life demonstrates the closed world in which she lived illuminated by her mistress' children and a beloved parrot. It deals with the pangs of loyalty and death in a soul of limited compass. A simple life in all regards.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Truly a Simple Tale of a Simple but Strong Woman By Patricia

A very brief little book - and it is hard to imagine that it is from the author of Madame Bovary! It traces the life of an uneducated, ignorant but strong and faithful French country woman who spent her life in service, both as a maid to the woman she worked for over many decades, and to the relative that she loved and finally even to her pet parrot. Her uneducated faith was her guiding principle and she was always an untiring worker. It will probably make you think of someone you have known - if you are lucky enough to have known such a person.

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