



The Lesson of the Master (The Art of the Novella)

Henry James

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"You know as well as you sit there that you'd put a pistol-ball into your brain if you had written my books!"

Exemplifying Henry James's famous belief that "Art makes life," *The Lesson of the Master* is a piercing study of the life that art makes. When the tale's protagonist—a gifted young writer—meets and befriends a famous author he has long idolized, he is both repelled by and attracted to the artist's great secret: the emotional costs of a life dedicated to art.

With extraordinary psychological insight and devastating wit, the novella asks the question of whether art is, ultimately, demeaning or ennobling for the artist, while capturing the ambiguities of a life devoted to art, and the choices artists must make. The expatriate James knew these choice well by the time he published the novella in the *Universal Review* in 1888, and the work reveals him at the height of his powers.

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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