



Wieland; or, the Transformation: An American Tale

Charles Brockden Brown

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Based on a terrifying real-life incident, this tale of seduction, insanity, and murder is one of America's earliest novels. It unfolds in rural Pennsylvania of the 1760s, where a religious fanatic massacres several members of his family. Part thriller and part psychological drama, it explores the corruption of law and order within a small community.

The American Gothic style of author Charles Brockden Brown combines intellectual and supernatural elements — a literary mode that influenced later authors such as Poe and Hawthorne. Wieland, his bestknown work, was acclaimed by John Keats as "very powerful" and by John Greenleaf Whittier as "a remarkable story." Interpreted variously as a historical parable, an allegorical view of the writing process, and a cautionary tale of unbridled religious fervor, this novel reflects the colonial era's social and political anxieties and offers intriguing glimpses of the American mood at the close of the eighteenth century.



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