



# Kaspar

*Diane Obomsawin*

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**Kaspar** Diane Obomsawin

A sad and cautionary tale of mystery, fame, murder, and innocence

May 28, 1828, marked the beginning of the official life of Kaspar Hauser, a young man who appeared mysteriously in the streets of Nuremberg and died of knife wounds five years later under equally mysterious circumstances. "Europe's child," as pamphleteers referred to him, captured the imagination of salon society. Allegedly raised in a dark cellar and deprived of human contact until the age of sixteen, he became the proof of a concept for theories about natural man, original sin, and the civilizing mission of culture. Rightful heir to the throne of Baden or a fraud? Redeemer of man's sins or "ambulatory automatist"? The curious circumstances and significance of his life have been disputed ever since.

In *Kaspar*, Quebec cartoonist Diane Obomsawin draws on Hauser's own writings, and contemporary accounts, to tell the foundling's strange story. Minimalist grayscale panels and the simplest of line work register the wonder and bewilderment of a trusting and sensitive soul emerging into a fickle society. Gentle and poetic, naïve and profound, Obomsawin's first book to appear in English translation has a quiet and compelling charm.

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