



## A Harlot High and Low

*By Honore de Balzac*



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Originally published between 1838-1847 "A Harlot High and Low" continues the story of Lucien de Rubempré from Honore de Balzac's preceding novel "Lost Illusions." Central to the tale is the pact made between Lucien and Vautrin in which Lucien will arrive at success in Paris if he agrees to follow Vautrin's instructions on how to do so. A love affair between the beautiful Esther van Gobseck and Lucien creates a conflict for their plans of bringing Lucien to his desired exaltation though. When Vautrin realizes that wealthy Baron de Nucingen has fallen in love with Esther he conspires to use the Baron's affection with Esther to help advance Lucien. What follows is a series of tragic consequences. Another chapter in Balzac's magnum opus, "The Human Comedy," "A Harlot High and Low" is at once a biting commentary of French aristocratic society and examination of the criminal underworld in which Vautrin is so very well at home.

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