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Chapter 1 : Illusions perdues - Wikipedia

A Distinguished Provincial at Paris (Un Grand homme de province a Paris) is part two of the Lost Illusions trilogy. While the storyline in this novel does stand on its own, much character background will be gained by reading part one, The Two Poets, first.

The very erudite C. Scott Moncrieff called it "the greatest novel of all time" though he never read War and Peace. Upon completion of the trilogy I will attempt to explain why I think Moncreiff said this. The task is not as daunting as it sounds as lots of the components are novellas and short stories. As *Two Poets* closes Lucian is on his way to Paris, intent on making his mark as a poet. His good friend David helped finance his move to Paris. In works of older novels you should not be too quick to see expressions of love between men as indicative of sexuality but you should likewise not repudiate it. Likewise, you have to accept that great love relationships between middle aged or older men and women in their teens were not always meant to be farcical or depraved. Maybe there are national differences in literature concerning this. In Japanese novels, for example, of the pre-world war II era girls as young as thirteen are seen as appropriate love and sexual interests for fifty year old men. In Balzac, and in Japanese literature, a nubile young daughter was an economic object of potentially high value. *A Distinguished Provincial in Paris* is a classic account of the corruption of a young poet from the provinces by the mother of all big cities, Paris. One of the great things about Balzac is about how much detail he provides about daily life. Lucien only has enough money to just get by in Paris if he lives in the cheapest of quarters and eats where poor writers dine. In Balzac the mistress of the minister of finance and a street walker are both selling themselves, one just has a better marketing scheme. He begins to become close to some of the courtesans mistresses of wealthy men and we learn a lot about the economics of being and having a mistress. The motivation for having a mistress is far from just sexual. A beautiful mistress decked out in the most expensive clothes marked her keeper as a man of wealth and taste. Of course it might also let others see him as a strutting self deluded fool. Mean while, Lucian becomes a journalist when he finds no market for his book of poems. From the bookseller he offers his poetry to he learns how book publishing and selling works in Paris. Lucian is offered a job as a journalist. Newspapers were coming into their own as a cultural and political powers and as we would expect Balzac takes us deeply into the "real world" of newspaper work in Paris. Lucian learns all sorts of ways to make extra money, from selling tickets to theatrical productions which producers give him in exchange for good reviews to taking bribes for a favorable take on a politician. Lucian loved the power this gives him and as he moves in higher realms of society he begins to feel shamed by his provincial background and his tastes become more and more expensive. There are deep issues concerning the permeation of all levels of a French society by literal and quasi-prostitutes. Of course Lucian is prostituting his literary skills. *A Distinguished Provincial in Paris* is a fascinating work and is very valuable just for the data on the French publishing industry Balzac provides. As I read it I really felt transported to Paris. There are romantic melodramas but Balzac needed to sell his books! I have begun the final work of the trilogy, *Eve and David*, and am looking forward to seeing how things turn out for Lucian.

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Chapter 2 : Full text of "A Distinguished Provincial at Paris: Lost Illusions, and Other Stories"

*A Distinguished Provincial at Paris: Lost Illusions, Part II [Honore De Balzac] on calendrierdelascience.com *FREE* shipping on qualifying offers. A Distinguished Provincial at Paris is the second volume of Honore de Balzac's Lost Illusions trilogy.*

Not one of the party who made that journey alluded to it afterwards; but it may be believed that an infatuated youth who had looked forward to the delights of an elopement, must have found the continual presence of Gentil, the man-servant, and Albertine, the maid, not a little irksome on the way. Lucien, traveling post for the first time in his life, was horrified to see pretty nearly the whole sum on which he meant to live in Paris for a twelvemonth dropped along the road. Like other men who combine great intellectual powers with the charming simplicity of childhood, he openly expressed his surprise at the new and wonderful things which he saw, and thereby made a mistake. A man should study a woman very carefully before he allows her to see his thoughts and emotions as they arise in him. A woman, whose nature is large as her heart is tender, can smile upon childishness, and make allowances; but let her have ever so small a spice of vanity herself, and she cannot forgive childishness, or littleness, or vanity in her lover. Many a woman is so extravagant a worshiper that she must always see the god in her idol; but there are yet others who love a man for his sake and not for their own, and adore his failings with his greater qualities. Lucien had not guessed as yet that Mme. Louise was sitting in the shabby inn sitting-room. Hotel accommodation is a blot on the civilization of Paris; for with all its pretensions to elegance, the city as yet does not boast a single inn where a well-to-do traveler can find the surroundings to which he is accustomed at home. Some people no longer look the same when detached from the background of faces, objects, and surroundings which serve as a setting, without which, indeed, they seem to lose something of their intrinsic worth. This is especially true of provincials. Gentil and Albertine waited upon them, and while they were present Lucien could not complain. The dinner, sent in from a neighboring restaurant, fell far below the provincial average, both in quantity and quality; the essential goodness of country fare was wanting, and in point of quantity the portions were cut with so strict an eye to business that they savored of short commons. In such small matters Paris does not show its best side to travelers of moderate fortune. Lucien waited till the meal was over. Some change had come over Louise, he thought, but he could not explain it. And a change had, in fact, taken place. Events had occurred while he slept; for reflection is an event in our inner history, and Mme. The sleeping damsel was roused, and to her he expressed his wish to speak with her mistress. The unaccountable apparition of M. But if I lose my post for it, YOU, at any rate, shall not be lost. Dear adored Nais, can you really imagine that Mme. The fact that your husband has gone to the Escarbas looks like a separation. Under such circumstances a gentleman fights first and afterwards leaves his wife at liberty. By all means, give M. If anybody here in Paris knew that you had traveled together, the whole world that you have a mind to see would point the finger at you. I mean no harm to the man you love, but you will permit me to put your own interests before his, and to beg you to study him, to be fully aware of the serious nature of this step that you are taking. And, then, if you find all doors closed against you, and that none of the women call upon you, make sure at least that you will feel no regret for all that you have renounced for him. Be very certain first that he for whom you will have given up so much will always be worthy of your sacrifices and appreciate them. You have counted upon your incognito, I see, but you are one of those women for whom an incognito is out of the question. You will meet Angouleme at every turn. There are the deputies from the Charente coming up for the opening of the session; there is the Commandant in Paris on leave. Why, the first man or woman from Angouleme who happens to see you would cut your career short in a strange fashion. I am sufficiently acquainted with the Marechale de Carigliano, Mme. So far from wishing to gain admittance to this set or that, every one will be longing to make your acquaintance. She was struck with his perspicacity. The queen of Angouleme had, in fact, counted upon preserving her incognito. You will have a home of your own; and, if you will take my advice, you will sleep in

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your new rooms this very night. At Sevres your postilion told mine that he had brought you here. Will you permit me to act as your harbinger? I will write as soon as I have found lodgings. And in those seemingly insignificant words, all was said. The Baron du Chatelet had spoken the language of worldly wisdom to a woman of the world. He had made his appearance before her in faultless dress, a neat cab was waiting for him at the door; and Mme. A few moments later Lucien appeared, half awake and hastily dressed. The eyes note and compare before the heart has time to revise the swift involuntary judgment; and the contrast between Lucien and Chatelet was so abrupt that it could not fail to strike Louise. We ought not to live together in Paris, dear boy, and we must not allow anyone to suspect that we traveled together. Your career depends so much upon my position that I ought to do nothing to spoil it. So, to-night, I am going to remove into lodgings near by. But you will stay on here, we can see each other every day, and nobody can say a word against us. He had still to learn that when a woman thinks better of her folly, she thinks better of her love; but one thing he understoodâ€”he saw that he was no longer the Lucien of Angouleme. He had no claim upon Louise thus suddenly transformed into Mme. He could not keep back the tears that filled his eyes. I thought that if you meant to make my successes yours, you would surely make my adversity yours also, and here we are going to part already. We shall both be ruined, we shall have no one to come to our aid. But when we are both equally wretched, and every one shuts their door upon us both, when failure for we must look all possibilities in the face, when failure drives us back to the Escarbas, then remember, love, that I foresaw the end, and that at the first I proposed that we should make your way by conforming to established rules. Remember that I am a child, that I have given myself up entirely to your dear will. I myself should have preferred to overcome obstacles and win my way among men by the power that is in me; but if I can reach the goal sooner through your aid, I shall be very glad to owe all my success to you. You mean so much to me that I cannot help fearing all kinds of things; and, for me, parting means that desertion is at hand, and desertion is death. All day long you will be with me, and no one can say a word. An hour later Gentil brought in a note from Chatelet. Two hours afterwards Louise stepped into the hired carriage sent by Chatelet for the removal to the new rooms. The apartments were of the class that upholsterers furnish and let to wealthy deputies and persons of consideration on a short visit to Parisâ€”showy and uncomfortable. Just as he came away the Baron du Chatelet came in, gorgeously arrayed in evening dress, fresh from the Minister for Foreign Affairs, to inquire whether Mme. 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A Distinguished Provincial at Paris is part two of a trilogy. Part one, Two Poets, begins the story of Lucien, his sister Eve, and his friend David in the provincial town of Angouleme. Part three, Eve and David, reverts to the setting of Angouleme. In many references parts one and three are combined under the title Lost Illusions and A Distinguished Provincial at Paris is given its individual title. Not one of the party who made that journey alluded to it afterwards; but it may be believed that an infatuated youth who had looked forward to the delights of an elopement, must have found the continual presence of Gentil, the man-servant, and Albertine, the maid, not a little irksome on the way. Lucien, traveling post for the first time in his life, was horrified to see pretty nearly the whole sum on which he meant to live in Paris for a twelvemonth dropped along the road. Like other men who combine great intellectual powers with the charming simplicity of childhood, he openly expressed his surprise at the new and wonderful things which he saw, and thereby made a mistake. A man should study a woman very carefully before he allows her to see his thoughts and emotions as they arise in him. A woman, whose nature is large as her heart is tender, can smile upon childishness, and make allowances; but let her have ever so small a spice of vanity herself, and she cannot forgive childishness, or littleness, or vanity in her lover. Many a woman is so extravagant a worshiper that she must always see the god in her idol; but there are yet others who love a man for his sake and not for their own, and adore his failings with his greater qualities. Lucien had not guessed as yet that Mme. Louise was sitting in the shabby inn sitting-room. Hotel accommodation is a blot on the civilization of Paris; for with all its pretensions to elegance, the city as yet does not boast a single inn where a well-to-do traveler can find the surroundings to which he is accustomed at home. Some people no longer look the same when detached from the background of faces, objects, and surroundings which serve as a setting, without which, indeed, they seem to lose something of their intrinsic worth. This is especially true of provincials. Gentil and Albertine waited upon them, and while they were present Lucien could not complain. The dinner, sent in from a neighboring restaurant, fell far below the provincial average, both in quantity and quality; the essential goodness of country fare was wanting, and in point of quantity the portions were cut with so strict an eye to business that they savored of short commons. In such small matters Paris does not show its best side to travelers of moderate fortune. Lucien waited till the meal was over. Some change had come over Louise, he thought, but he could not explain it. And a change had, in fact, taken place. Events had occurred while he slept; for reflection is an event in our inner history, and Mme. The sleeping damsel was roused, and to her he expressed his wish to speak with her mistress. The unaccountable apparition of M. But if I lose my post for it, YOU, at any rate, shall not be lost. Dear adored Nais, can you really imagine that Mme. The fact that your husband has gone to the Escarbas looks like a separation. Under such circumstances a gentleman fights first and afterwards leaves his wife at liberty. By all means, give M. If anybody here in Paris knew that you had traveled together, the whole world that you have a mind to see would point the finger at you. I mean no harm to the man you love, but you will permit me to put your own interests before his, and to beg you to study him, to be fully aware of the serious nature of this step that you are taking. And, then, if you find all doors closed against you, and that none of the women call upon you, make sure at least that you will feel no regret for all that you have renounced for him. Be very certain first that he for whom you will have given up so much will always be worthy of your sacrifices and appreciate them. You have counted upon your incognito, I see, but you are one of those women for whom an incognito is out of the question. You will meet Angouleme at every turn. There are the deputies from the Charente coming up for the opening of the session; there is the Commandant in Paris on leave. Why, the first man or woman from Angouleme who happens to see you would cut your career short

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Chapter 4 : A Distinguished Provincial at Paris: Lost Illusions, Part II by Honoré de Balzac

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permit me to act as your harbinger? I will write as soon as I have found lodgings. And in those seemingly insignificant words, all was said. The Baron du Chatelet had spoken the language of worldly wisdom to a woman of the world. He had made his appearance before her in faultless dress, a neat cab was waiting for him at the door; and Mme. A few moments later Lucien appeared, half awake and hastily dressed. The eyes note and compare before the heart has time to revise the swift involuntary judgment; and the contrast between Lucien and Chatelet was so abrupt that it could not fail to strike Louise. We ought not to live together in Paris, dear boy, and we must not allow anyone to suspect that we traveled together. Your career depends so much upon my position that I ought to do nothing to spoil it. So, to-night, I am going to remove into lodgings near by. But you will stay on here, we can see each other every day, and nobody can say a word against us. He had still to learn that when a woman thinks better of her folly, she thinks better of her love; but one thing he understood — he saw that he was no longer the Lucien of Angouleme. Louise talked of herself, of her interests, her reputation, and of the world; and, to veil her egoism, she tried to make him believe that this was all on his account. He had no claim upon Louise thus suddenly transformed into Mme. He could not keep back the tears that filled his eyes. I thought that if you meant to make my successes yours, you would surely make my adversity yours also, and here we are going to part already. We shall both be ruined, we shall have no one to come to our aid. But when we are both equally wretched, and every one shuts their door upon us both, when failure for we must look all possibilities in the face, when failure drives us back to the Escarbas, then remember, love, that I foresaw the end, and that at the first I proposed that we should make your way by conforming to established rules. Remember that I am a child, that I have given myself up entirely to your dear will. I myself should have preferred to overcome obstacles and win my way among men by the power that is in me; but if I can reach the goal sooner through your aid, I shall be very glad to owe all my success to you. You mean so much to me that I cannot help fearing all kinds of things; and, for me, parting means that desertion is at hand, and desertion is death. All day long you will be with me, and no one can say a word. An hour later Gentil brought in a note from Chatelet. Two hours afterwards Louise stepped into the hired carriage sent by Chatelet for the removal to the new rooms. The apartments were of the class that upholsterers furnish and let to wealthy deputies and persons of consideration on a short visit to Paris — showy and uncomfortable. Just as he came away the Baron du Chatelet came in, gorgeously arrayed in evening dress, fresh from the Minister for Foreign Affairs, to inquire whether Mme. The splendor was alarming to her mind. Provincial life had reacted upon her; she was painfully conscientious over her accounts, and economical to a degree that is looked upon as miserly in Paris. She had brought with her twenty thousand francs in the shape of a draft on the Receiver-General, considering that the sum would more than cover the expenses of four years in Paris; she was afraid already lest she should not have enough, and should run into debt; and now Chatelet told her that her rooms would only cost six hundred francs per month. You need only think of your dress. Here, in Paris, they only give to the rich. It is most fortunate that you brought Gentil to go out with you, and Albertine for your own woman, for servants are enough to ruin you here. But with your introductions you will seldom be home to a meal. Chatelet gave her all the news of the day, the myriad nothings that you are bound to know, under penalty of being a nobody. Before very long the Baron also gave advice as to shopping, recommending Herbault for toques and Juliette for hats and bonnets; he added the address of a fashionable dressmaker to supersede Victorine. In short, he made the lady see the necessity of rubbing off Angouleme. Then he took his leave after a final flash of happy inspiration. In the month of June ministers are often puzzled to know what to do with boxes at the theatre; ministerialist deputies and their constituents are busy in their vineyards or harvest fields, and their more exacting acquaintances are in the country or traveling about; so it comes to pass that the best seats are filled at this season with heterogeneous theatre-goers, never seen at any other time of year, and the house is apt to look as if it were tapestried with very shabby material. Chatelet had thought already that this was his opportunity of giving Nais the amusements which provincials crave most eagerly, and that with very little expense. The next morning, the very first morning in Paris, Lucien went to the Rue Nueve-deLuxembourg and found that Louise had gone out. She had tact enough to know how greatly

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the relations of women among themselves depend upon first impressions; and though she felt that she was equal to taking her place at once in such a distinguished set as Mme. So she felt boundlessly thankful to Chatelet for pointing out these ways of putting herself in harmony with the fashionable world. Friendships in Paris were not so solid but that she longed to find one more to love on earth; and if this might not be, there would only be one more illusion to bury with the rest. She would have called upon her if indisposition had not kept her to the house, and she felt that she lay already under obligations to the cousin who had thought of her. The general effect of Paris is wholly engrossing at first. The wealth in the shop windows, the high houses, the streams of traffic, the contrast everywhere between the last extremes of luxury and want struck him more than anything else. In his astonishment at the crowds of strange faces, the man of imaginative temper felt as if he himself had shrunk, as it were, immensely. A man of any consequence in his native place, where he cannot go out but he meets with some recognition of his importance at every step, does not readily accustom himself to the sudden and total extinction of his consequence. You are somebody in your own country, in Paris you are nobody. The transition between the first state and the last should be made gradually, for the too abrupt fall is something like annihilation. Paris could not fail to be an appalling wilderness for a young poet, who looked for an echo for all his sentiments, a confidant for all his thoughts, a soul to share his least sensations. Lucien had not gone in search of his luggage and his best blue coat; and painfully conscious of the shabbiness, to say no worse, of his clothes, he went to Mme. He found the Baron du Chatelet, who carried them both off to dinner at the Rocher de Cancale. After dinner Chatelet took his guests to the Vaudeville. Lucien, in his heart, was not over well pleased to see Chatelet again, and cursed the chance that had brought the Baron to Paris. The Baron said that ambition had brought him to town; he had hopes of an appointment as secretary-general to a government department, and meant to take a seat in the Council of State as Master of Requests. He had come to Paris to ask for fulfilment of the promises that had been given him, for a man of his stamp could not be expected to remain a comptroller all his life; he would rather be nothing at all, and offer himself for election as deputy, or re-enter diplomacy. His horizon widened; society assumed different proportions. There were fair Parisiennes in fresh and elegant toilettes all about him; Mme. That way of arranging her hair, so bewitching in Angouleme, looked frightfully ugly here among the daintily devised coiffures which he saw in every direction.

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Chapter 5 : A Distinguished Provincial at Paris, by Honore de Balzac

In many references parts one and three are combined under the title Lost Illusions and A Distinguished Provincial at Paris is given its individual title. Following this trilogy Lucien's story is continued in another book, Scenes from a Courtesan's Life.

To make sense of what follows you need to read my summary of Part 1. My Eve, I am writing this letter for your eyes only. I cannot tell any one else all that has happened to me, good and bad, blushing for both, as I write, for good here is as rare as evil ought to be. You shall have a great piece of news in a very few words. She saw me in the street and looked another way; when, simply to follow her into the society to which she meant to introduce me, I had spent seventeen hundred and sixty francs out of the two thousand I brought from Angouleme, the money so hardly scraped together. Paris is a strange bottomless gulf, my poor sister; you can dine here for less than a franc, yet the simplest dinner at a fashionable restaurant costs fifty francs; there are waistcoats and trousers to be had for four francs and two francs each; but a fashionable tailor never charges less than a hundred francs. You pay for everything; you pay a halfpenny to cross the kennel in the street when it rains; you cannot go the least little way in a cab for less than thirty-two sous. Lost Illusions Kindle Locations At first, Lucien is prudent. The gift that is in you, like an existence in the physical world, passes through childhood and its maladies. Nature sweeps away sickly or deformed creatures, and Society rejects an imperfectly developed talent. Any man who means to rise above the rest must make ready for a struggle and be undaunted by difficulties. A great writer is a martyr who does not die; that is all. He, too proud to ask for help from his friends, had already written to his family, and both David and Eve "each unknown to the other" send him money they can ill afford. The story begins in optimism, and it ends in deep despair. At the Wooden Galleries, two booksellers jostle for custom opposite one another: Yes, it is here that Lucien wises up about the true state of affairs for an author in Paris: The provincial took a terrible lesson to heart. That was the key to every enigma. Lucien realized the fact that he was unknown and alone, and that the fragile clue of an uncertain friendship was his sole guide to success and fortune. He blamed the kind and loyal little circle for painting the world for him in false colors, for preventing him from plunging into the arena, pen in hand. You find your subject, you wear out your wits over it with toiling at night, you throw your very life into it: Your work will sell or it will not sell; and therein, for them, lies the whole question. A book means so much capital to risk, and the better the book, the less likely it is to sell. A man of talent rises above the level of ordinary heads; his success varies in direct ratio with the time required for his work to be appreciated. And no publisher wants to wait. Acting on this system, publishers and booksellers do not care to take real literature, books that call for the high praise that comes slowly. Lucien remonstrates and is very smartly told that actually the deal benefits everyone: When he and Coraline become lovers he is only too easily persuaded not to upset the arrangements with Camusot. Things start to get out of hand when Coraline impulsively confesses her love for him to Camusot. They end up in debt, and worse, they both become victims of professional jealousy which ruins them both. Unaware until too late that there are plots to destroy him everywhere, he is hopeless at detecting insincerity, and he has no idea how to manage the complicated business of borrowing money in Paris when his debts get out of hand. He swings from one side to another in politics and of course ends up disastrously choosing the wrong side. It ends badly for Lucien as we always knew it would. On to Part 3!

Chapter 6 : A Distinguished Provincial at Paris

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A Distinguished Provincial at Paris. Honore de Balzac (Lost Illusions, Part II) The smile was like a stab to the distinguished provincial. Felix de Vandenesse.