



# A Daughter Of Eve

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Scenes From Private Life from The Human Comedy (La Comedie Humaine). By the French author, who, along with Flaubert, is generally regarded as a founding-father of realism in European fiction. His large output of works, collectively entitled The Human Comedy (La Comedie Humaine), consists of 95 finished works (stories, novels and essays) and 48 unfinished works. His stories are an attempt to comprehend and depict the realities of life in contemporary bourgeois France. They are placed in a variety of settings, with characters reappearing in multiple stories.

## A Daughter Of Eve Details

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# From Reader Review A Daughter Of Eve for online ebook

## C. J. says

I found this book to be an interesting study of French bourgeois society and I appreciated the attention to detail that Balzac applies to both the portrayal of his characters and the settings that the characters inhabit. I found it especially interesting and revealing in the way in which education was perceived differently, depending on whether children were male or female, and the lack of expectation for females other than marriage which was often the only way that women could achieve some form of independence.

The story centres around two daughters whose upbringing and education is obsessively controlled by one parent only, the mother, who has `set ideas` of the way in which daughters should `be prepared` for their only role in society, hopefully, as wives to rich and influential men. Consequently neither daughter has any idea or expectation of society or relationships beyond their own immediate establishment, except for a private tutor who teaches them music and is a welcome relief from their tedious lifestyle.

The novel continues to explore the way in which the two daughters adapt to their new found independence in their new roles as married women after their very controlled and repressive upbringing at home, and the degree to which French bourgeois society influences them.

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## Ebru Çökmez says

Balzac'ın her bir kitabın? “İnsanlık Komedyası” adın? verdi?i anıtsal eserinin bölümleri olarak incelemek gerekiyor.

Komedyası Paris ve Fransız toplumundan yola çıkarak gerek ta?rada gerek kent hayatında insanlın?n tüm hallerinin - zenginlik, yoksulluk, güzellik, çirkinlik, a?k, nefret, kibir, düzenbazlık, erdem- hem anlatıldı? hem de analiz edildi?i bir nehir roman. Balzac, 51 ya?ında öldü?ünde eserinin 95 kitaplık parçasın? bitirebilmi?ti. Planlayıp yazamadı? 50 civar? parça oldu?u söyleniyor. Balzac, tüm romanlarında 2000 civar? karakter yaratmı? ve önemli karakterlere farklı? bir çok romanda yer vererek bir anlamda eserinin bütünlü?ünü sağlamaya çalışmı?.

İnsanlık Komedyası üç bölüm olarak kurgulanmı?ı:

Analitik Çalışmalar: birey ve toplum hayatın?n analiz edildi?i deneme türü eserler (Evlili?in Fizyolojisi, Çalışanın Fizyolojisi, Modern Uyarıcılar? Kullanma Kılavuzu)

Felsefi Çalışmalar: insan eylemlerinin nedenlerini ara?tırdı? eserler (Uzun yaşam ?siri -Can yayanlar?ndan ç?kmı?)

Toplum Görenekleri İncelemeleri: (özel yaşamdan sahneler, ta?ra yaşamından sahneler, siyasi yaşamdan sahneler, askeri yaşamdan sahneler ve k?rsal yaşamdan sahneler olarak be? bölümden meydana geliyor ve ünlü romanların?n hemen hepsi bu başlık altında planlanmı?)

Bir Havva Kız? roman? da Toplum Görenekleri İncelemeleri bölümünde Özel Yaşamdan Sahneler başlığında yer alıyor.

Anneleri taraf?ndan çok kat? bir dini e?itim verilerek, toplumsal hayattan uzak yeti?tirilen iki k?z karde?in çok genç ya?larda evlendikten sonra aristokrat s?n?f içindeki hayatlar? anlat?l?yor. Bu genç kad?nlardan biri; düzenbaz, sonradan görme banker Du Tillet ile di?eri dürüst bir kont olan Vandenesse ile evleniyor. Roman, Kontes Vandenesse'in tekdüze aile hayat?ndan s?k?l?p, aristokrat toplant?lara hasbelkader dahil olan parlak gazeteci Raoul Nathan ile ya?ad??? gönül ili?kisini anlat?yor. Kontes tutkulu bir a?k ya?ama derdindeyken i?ler ç?kmaza giriyor.

Bu romanda Balzac, karakterlerin geni? geni? serimini yapm??. K?zlar?n anne ve babas?n?n ki?ilikleri, damatlar?n seceresi, Kont'un erdemi, gazetecinin ahlaki ç?kmazlar? mükemmel analizler ve mekân tasvirleri e?li?inde anlat?lm??. Kan?mca bu kitap daha çok Raoul nezdinde dönemin gazete sahiplerini yermek için yaz?lm??.

Romanda en sevdi?im karakterlerden biri Raoul'ün aktris sevgilisi Florine oldu. Balzac, o dönemde aristokrat kad?nlarla ili?kiler kurarak onlar?n ortam?na dâhil olmaya çal???rken, bir yandan da ipliklerini pazara ç?kart?yordu. ?lk ve en sad?k okuyucular? da bu aristokrat kad?nlard?. Böyle bir ortamda, görece a?a?? s?n?fıtan olan Florine kendi ayaklar? üstünde duran, güçlü bir karakter olarak parl?yor romanda. Balzac'ın okumad???m di?er romanlar?ndaki orta ve alt s?n?f kad?n karakterleri merak ettim do?rusu.

Balzac'ın romanlar? için 21. yüzyıl?n birikimli okurlar? ele?tirecek çok ?ey bulabilirler ku?kusuz. (Mesela, Kont Vandenesse'i ben Michel Zevaco'nun orta ça? ?övalyesi Pardayan'a benzettim. Öylesi kusursuz bir karakter yani) Klasiklerin hepsi için geçerli bu. Onlar? kendi dönemi içinde roman sanat?na katkılar? aç?s?ndan de?erlendirmek gerekiyor.

Klasikleri çok seven ben ise Balzac'ın bu çok renkli, çok katmanlı dünyas?na girdi?im için memnunum. Bu sene bol bol okumay? planlıyorum.

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## Dagny says

Ferdinand du Tillet, one of the richest bankers in Paris but a man of no family, married the much younger Marie-Eugenie de Granville, daughter of a peer of France. Du Tillet is unscrupulous in both his business and his private life.

Marie-Eugenie's sister is Angeliqne-Marie de Granville, now Madame de Vandenesse. Angeliqne-Marie is rather fearfully in awe of her husband due to his past but takes notice of the writer Raoul Nathan. Nathan determines to make the most of her interest.

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## James F says

One of the most interesting short novels of the *Comédie humaine*, this is the story of two girls raised by a religious mother, who marry as soon as possible to escape. One marries a rich banker, who is corrupt and tyrannical; the other marries a count. The story is largely about the count's wife and her love affair with a political journalist. The novel depicts the political situation in the first years after the July Revolution (i.e. under Louis-Philippe).

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## Jim says

Honore de Balzac's work bears a certain Jekyll & Hyde quality: Either he is slipshod and rushed (the classic example is *A Woman of Thirty*), or he is in complete command of himself and takes the time and trouble to tie up all the loose ends. Fortunately, *A Daughter of Eve* is one of these latter. It is unfortunate that it is not better known, as it is, to my mind, a good book to start reading the *Human Comedy*.

Like many of Balzac's novels, the characters in **A Daughter of Eve** have a past: Felix de Vandenesse was one of the stars of *The Lily of the Valley*; and we have also seen his wife Marie, Eugene de Rastignac, the bankers du Tillet and Nucingen, the money-lender Gigonnet, and even up-and-coming litterateur Raoul Nathan in other novels. That is one of the wonderful things about Balzac: To commit oneself to reading the entire oeuvre, one is always running into old friends.

**A Daughter of Eve** is one of those stories in which people get themselves into terrible trouble, whose ripples spread until they seem to be stuck in some ghastly maelstrom of their own making. The Countess Marie de Vandenesse, out of boredom at being married to a good man, decides to take a lover, one Raoul Nathan. Thinking that his fortune is made, Nathan quickly finds himself in deep water until he is rescued by the efforts of the Countess, who in turn is rescued ... but I will not divulge how. Suffice it to say that this is one of Balzac's more gentle and delightful tales. In it, we do not sup with horrors, as in *Pere Goriot* or *Cousin Bette*: *Poor Relations*, Part One.

I hope that some talented translator will bring **A Daughter of Eve** from out of its Victorian cerements and into the light of the 21st century. Reading Balzac is not only good for your soul, but also will help you live without dangerous illusions.

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## Filippo says

In questo racconto Balzac usa il suo tipico stile. Lunghe descrizioni ed un linguaggio non immediato, per immergerci nella quotidianità della Francia post Napoleonica.

La dettagliata ambientazione è forse sia il punto di forza che quello più debole del racconto. Lo stile adottato non fluisce rapido e non è facile immedesimarsi con le situazioni descritte. Allo stesso tempo lo spaccato dell'epoca risulta interessante e a tratti appassionante.

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## Laura says

*A Daughter of Eve* is a novel by Honoré de Balzac appeared serialized in December 1838 and January 1839, published in volume at *Souverain* in August 1839 and then in the edition of *Furne* in 1842. It takes place in *Études de moeurs: Scènes de la vie privée*.

It is in this short novel Felix de Vandenesse, the future hero of *The Lily of the Valley*, made ??a first appearance.

It is also the first appearance of Ferdinand du Tillet, which is found in *Cesar Birotteau*. In *A Daughter of Eve*, Du Tillet married the daughter of the Earl of Granville, sister of the Countess Marie-Angélique Vandenesse.

The English version can be found at Project Gutenberg.

The original French text at La Bibliothèque électronique du Québec.

- 3\* La maison du Chat-qui-pelote (1830)
  - 3\* Le bal de Sceaux (1830)
  - 3\* La Bourse (1830)
  - 4\* La Vendetta (1830)
  - 3\* Madame Firmiani (1832)
  - 3\* Une Double Famille (1830)
  - 4\* La paix du ménage (1830)
  - 3\* La Fausse Maîtresse (1842)
  - 3\* Étude de femme (1830)
  - 4\* Albert Savarus (1842)
  - 4\* Mémoires de Deux Jeunes Mariées (1841)
  - 3\* Le Colonel Chabert (1844, first published as La transaction, 1832)
  - 4\* Une fille d'Eve (1839)
- 

## Linda says

<http://www.love-coffeeandbooks.pl/201...>

Ciesz się, że w końcu udało mi się sięgnąć po dzieło Balzaca. Czytajcie współczesne powieści, gdzie najczęściej akcja musi być pośpieszna, a tempo stale utrzymujcie się na wysokim poziomie, "Córka Ewy" była zupełnie nowym doświadczeniem, którego na pewno potrzebowałam, by odetchnąć, by spojrzeć na pięknie odmalowany portret ludzkiej duszy. Balzac po mistrzowsku, ale także z uczuciem i ogromnym szacunkiem stworzył kobiece postacie. Przy tym jest daleki od subiektywnych, wzniosłych obrazów. Ukazuje kobiety w taki sposób, w jaki jest prawdziwa - wspaniała w swej wielkości, przekonaniach i pragnieniach, naturalna w swych słabościach, kłamstwach i potknięciach.

Jeśli podobnie, jak ja nie mieliście okazji spotkać się z twórczością francuskiego powieściopisarza to słońce, że "Córka Ewy" będzie doskonała na początek, by nadrobić zaległości.

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## Valentin says

The first part of the book introduces Marie-Angélique and Marie-Eugénie and how were they brought up by a religious mother Comtesse de Granville as they grew up little educated but somehow well-mannered, with good values. The mother and their father live separately but the father manages to intervene as to allow the girls to have one grand joy where to escape their mother's rigidity: having a music teacher, Schmucke. There

are impressions about a grand motif within the Comedie about young girls being raised in an innocent fashion because men prefer them this way. Eugenie marries Felix de Vandenesse and Angelique marries du Tillet and the latter is some sort of ornament in her marriage, du Tillet is a man who wants to become noble at court so he steps on dead bodies. Angelique is bored within her happiness with Felix who is a decent man. At the salon of Comtesse de Montcornet some women introduce a young man Raoul Nathan to Angelique because they plot to ruin her happy marriage out of envy. Nathan was a writer, tall and skinny, dressed with large clothes with whom Angelique falls in love because of this poetry. Nathan is married for a long time with Florine an actress who slowly becomes famous and Nathan's sole income is for writing plays. Nathan and Angelique plan to meet whenever they can but Nathan does not have access to some salons so they meet in Bois de Boulogne several times where one sunny day they kiss. In order for Nathan to raise his hopes at having now Comtesse de Vandenesse enters business with du Tillet and another guy to buy a typography while Florine supports him financially as she can with her earnings as a good actress. Balzacian monde Marsay is in his last months of life during those days and other characters like Rastignac and madame Nucingen appear. Also Lady Dudley and bad-woman madame d'Espard. du Tillet plots to ruin Nathan and in-debts him 40k to moneylender Gobseck here (called other names in other operas) telling him to save the paper. Nathan gets ruined and tries to commit suicide but Angelique saves him and takes him to a hotel. During those times Angelique misses from her lodge at Theatre-Italien so she tells her husband Felix de Vandenesse that her sister is having trouble. Angelique then manages to go to baroness Nucingen to raise 40k to save Nathan from this debt. Rastignac is confidant to madame Nucingen and friend with Felix so the husband finds out about his wife's young-love with Nathan and gracefully fix the situation where he makes a setting at the Opera where Florine finds out and so he recovers his wife's sent letter to her lover and manages to have Angelique being sorry about her being in love with another man after the three of them go to Florine apartment for the letters where she sees how Nathan and Florine are lived in great shape loving each other. After a few years Angelique sees Nathan on the street and as she finds him totally indifferent wonders how was it possible for her to ever be in love with such a man who is spiteful and so low opposite to her angel loving caring husband.

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### **Fazackerly Toast says**

once again a young woman comes out looking like a fool, a Jew comes out looking like a knave, and the hero is a brilliant wise saintly noble aristocrat. Hmmph!

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### **Claire Scorzi says**

25° dia do Mês da leitura mágica.

25ª leitura concluída.

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### **Lisa says**

This isn't a review, it's a summary so that I can remember the complicated plot.

The dedication is to the Comtesse Balignini, who Balzac seems to have met (and flirted with?) when travelling in Milan but she has now retired to a convent. She has a daughter, Eugenie, after whom the central character in this story is named. But the Eugenie of the story is denied happiness by a 'rigid mother'...

## Chapter 1: The Two Maries

In this chapter, Balzac introduces two sisters: Madame Felix de Vandenesse and Madame du Tillet, who are Marie-Angelique and Marie-Eugenie respectively. Angelique is weeping and Eugenie is trying to comfort her, but admits that her marriage is not a happy one and Angelique should not look to her for help.

Balzac then explains their background. They are sweet girls, and very innocent, because their mother, the Comtesse de Granville is a religious fanatic. Prior to their marriage they had never been into society nor been to the theatre or a ball. Their father deplors his wife's excesses but has largely abandoned the girls to their mother because he thinks there is no middle course with daughters: either they are educated, flighty, and have no religion or they are ignorant and innocent. So they have a limited education, and have read very little, for example, the very popular Fenelon's *Telemaque* (*Adventures of Telemachus*, 1699, see <http://ablemedia.com/ctcweb/showcase/kan...>) is thought dangerous for the girls to read. (This story of a trip to the Underworld was a thinly veiled attack on absolute monarchy and Louis XIV banned Fenelon because of it.)

His sons, on the other hand, get a normal education, go to balls and the theatre and become lawyers. They live with their father in a separate part of the house (Balzac calls this separation within the family 'the great evil of individualism.')

His sole intervention on behalf of the girls is to insist on them having a music teacher, Schmucke, an elderly eccentric who is very poor. The girls love Schmucke dearly.

These two girls marry young to escape their mother's strictures. Balzac comments that many men like to marry innocent girls like this so that they can mould and manipulate them.

## Chapter 2: A Confidence Between Sisters

Angelique is weeping because she loves her husband and fears she may have lost him. Eugenie is trying to comfort her, but admits that her marriage is not a happy one and Angelique should not look to her for help. Eugenie has married an ambitious banker, but did so without a dowry (called a 'dot') and he despises her for it. Eugenie (du Tillet) is unhappy because she is a mere ornament to her husband, and she must obey him in everything. She is rich - 'covered in diamonds when I go to court, I wear the richest jewels in society but I have not one farthing I can use' i.e. she has no money of her own and no choice about what to spend it on. He's 'as hard and polished as that piece of marble' only interested in 'what flatters his vanity and proclaims his wealth'.

Angelique has married an aristocrat who never imagined that the revolution would change society so much that he could have a banker as a brother-in-law. The 'bridle of piety' weighs less heavily on Angelique: she goes into society and is a great success, though some of the other women are very jealous of her.

These two men live in worlds at enmity with each other because one has benefited by the revolution and the other is in favour of the restoration.

Du Tillet is a bad man. He is an associate of Baron de Nucingen and sometimes (because he thinks her opinion doesn't matter) Eugenie sits in on their plots and plans to ruin other people so that over time Du Tillet will become 'noble'. Du Tillet could easily lend Angelique 40,000 francs but she dare not ask him – and when he comes in, she refuses his money because she does not want to be in his power. . So Eugenie is not able to help Angelique with the money she needs.

After Angelique leaves, Du Tillet reveals that he knows what she wants the money for: to save her lover from the debtor's prison. Eugenie doesn't believe it but Du Tillet cynically replies that girls brought up in piety like her make bad wives because they want to be happy and never are within marriage. He warns Eugenie not to interfere because it's in his interest to see the man go to prison, but he decides to have her watched because he does not trust her.

## Chapter 3: The History of a Fortunate Woman

Balzac introduces Felix de Vandenesse as a man of about 30 who has tired of bachelor life and chose Angelique because he wanted a wife he could mould – to mix a paternal role with a conjugal one. He is a decent husband who has tried to make his wife happy.



But after four years she, having initially been very happy, became dissatisfied. Vandenesse, by satisfying every need, had suppressed desire – for if all needs are met then no desire exists and the person suffers. (Balzac puts up a not very convincing argument here that this is why women apply the arts of coquetry and invent quarrels in marriage.) Angelique felt the monotony of her marriage as Felix deliberately maintained 'temperate regions of conjugal affection' and was in need of a bit of passion! He takes her into society when salons were reopened after the events of 1830 and warns her against the jealousy of other women. Her pretended friends encourage her to take a lover...

#### Chapter 4: A Celebrated Man

At the salon of Comtesse de Montcornet, Angelique meets the celebrated author Raoul Nathan. Not particularly handsome and rather scruffy in a Byronesque kind of way, he is lionised by Emile Blondet and is rather conceited though the success of his novels and plays is mixed. Not a man of principle his politics blow with the prevailing winds and at the moment he is a republican hoping for preferment. He dazzles Angelique and is flattered when the other women tell him he has made such a conquest. He and his friends mock her behind her back once she has left. (Nathan already has a mistress, an actress called Florine).

At breakfast the next day Angelique asks her husband about Nathan but doesn't take any notice of his warnings about him. (This, Balzac says, is because women have 'elastic' minds which rebound after being given information they don't like.)

At a subsequent ball, Nathan decides that Angelique's influence could be useful to him and he flirts with her. Felix isn't happy about this...

#### Chapter 5: Florine

This chapter introduces the actress Florine who has supported Nathan by sharing her home with him, lending him money, paying for things he needs – and of course he is using her. She works long hours to get herself out of poverty while he lazes about and sneers about her behind her back. He helps only by writing favourable reviews for publicity for her.

She is as loyal as she can be given her circumstances but she has to supplement her income through prostitution. (She isn't an elegant courtesan.)

It is through Florine that Nathan learns that there is a possible vacancy for a government position and on Blondet's advice he writes the sort of articles in his new newspaper journal that he thinks will lead to preferment. He decides to borrow money from a usurer to finance this paper because he is so certain he will be elected and will be able to pay it back – Florine sells everything she has to try to prevent him from doing this and is feted for it.

#### Chapter 6 Romantic Love

At Lady Dudley's ball, Nathan is quizzed by Madame d'Espard who (along with Lady Dudley and Madame Manerville) is encouraging the scandal behind the scenes but defending Angelique's honour in public.

Nathan lets her think they are madly in love, and she tries to get him to write a play about it. She is a bit alarmed when Lady Dudley reveals his carefully concealed background: a bankrupt Jewish father and a Catholic mother who brought him up Christian; she feels she should not receive a man like that in her house. Angelique and Nathan meet up again at Madame D'Espard's salon the following week He takes umbrage at some light-hearted remarks and has to be reminded of his manners by Blondet. He chafes at this, dithers about whether to keep going to these salons but ends up returning anyway. Rastignac and Marsay are there and they discuss politics...Nathan is losing a lot of precious work time by attending these social functions; society women – who act as if it were still the 18th century when things were settled - have no idea how much work has to be done by men who need to make a living. He is burning the midnight oil in order to get the paper out on time (and wearing himself out trying to ride the tides of political change).

Nathan arranges to meet Angelique daily in the seclusion of the Bois but stands her up three times because he wants to impress her by arriving in a cabriolet and charge the cost of it to the paper. His partners (du Tillet

and Massol) readily agree (because they want to bankrupt him). When he does turn up to meet her with the air of a man at leisure, he is a bit peeved that she doesn't understand the 'enormous costs of his little attentions'. When he reveals to her that he is a harried man, rushing from the paper, evading his creditors, and attending society functions he is rewarded with a kiss.

#### Chapter 7: Suicide

Vandenesse takes Angelique to the countryside as usual, where she exchanges letters with Nathan. Meanwhile he is under siege from his erstwhile friends. His newspaper staff hate him, and Florine - who would have realised that his friends are really his enemies - is away. Massol the lawyer and Du Tillet the banker have let him have full control in order to let him hang himself. (Du Tillet uses the paper only for his stock-gambling). Nathan lords it over everyone, believing that he is managing them, but he's naïve, as most men of imagination are.

He is angling for a position as 'chair on the Board of Education and a place in the Council of State' and the office of Master of Petitions – and they have promised it to him if his editorial stance complies with their purposes. Politically, Nathan is manipulated by Nucingen and Rastignac, and by du Tillet and Blondet, to give ostentatious support to the "doctrinaires" of their new and ephemeral cabinet. To appear independent he refuses money for the paper from other sources and so has to take it from Du Tillet instead.

He is presented to the de Nucingens where the Baroness receives him for Angelique's sake – but when she tries to talk to him about her he puts her off by talking about Florine instead, claiming to be devoted to her. Florine returns to Paris but is persuaded by Nathan that all is well and uses the money she's earned to splash out on new furnishings. He is attentive to her and she has no idea that he is flirting with Angelique: he leaves a portfolio of their correspondence lying about and it never occurs to her not to trust him. His debts fall due but Du Tillet renews them for a short period – all seems to be going well.

But there are political ructions in Paris, (Rastignac loses his position after the death of de Marsay) and when Angelique (who has returned to Paris and resumed contact with Nathan) asks Felix about their impact, he warns that Nathan will ruin his business if he 'sits on the fence' editorially. He still suspects nothing.

And then in December the debts fall due again and this time Du Tillet demands payment. Nathan has to go to a usurer to get the money and never suspects that Du Tillet has made this easy for him for his own purposes. He pays back Du Tillet, but then when the debt to the usurer falls due, the banker makes the usurer instigate court proceedings because he doesn't want Nathan to be a rival in the electoral college – and Nathan can't stand for election if he's bankrupt. Florine can't help him because her spending has put her in debt too. Entrapped, he sees everything crumbling around him, and he thinks there is no alternative but suicide (which is very fashionable in Paris at the time).

He makes a melodramatic farewell to Angelique who then realises something is badly wrong. She pursues him to his rooms, has the door broken down and finds him almost suffocated with the smoke from a pan of charcoal. She has him removed to a hotel and then seeks help from her sister Eugenie.

#### Chapter 8: A Lover Saved and Lost

Du Tillet realises that the rumours about Angelique and Nathan are true and takes steps to find out what's going on. He learns where Nathan is but it takes him three days. This buys Nathan a little time.

Meanwhile Angelique has to find the money to help him. Felix asks what she is distressed about but she is evasive, alluding to 'that matter at her sister's' (without explaining that she had gone to Eugenie to borrow money). Felix warns her that Eugenie's husband is a bad man and that it's a pity he's a member of their extended family.

At the opera Eugenie reveals that she has been able to get the money: the Baroness de Nucingen will lend it on condition that someone else guarantees it. Du Tillet is furious when Nathan seems cheered, he knows the women are behind it.

Heedless of the risk to their old music-master Angelique gets Schmuck to guarantee the 40000 francs. She promises to visit again with her sister – but we know she won't because his poverty is too extreme. She

rushes back to the baroness, and gets the money.

It is only afterwards that the baroness realises she has frustrated her own husband's plans (because he hadn't told her anything about them). Rastignac visits and she tells him about it as a bit of gossip, and he explains what's going on and that she has interfered with her husband's chances of preferment. She decides to keep quiet about this.

When Du Tillet finds out that the debt is paid he is furious but for the first time Eugenie stands up to him and recognises that it is her sister's problems which have finally given her the courage to do this. She flees to her sister's.

#### Chapter 9: A Husband's Triumph

Eugenie fears that Angelique may now flee with Nathan, and confesses the whole story to Felix. He is tolerant and understanding, and wants Angelique to give up Nathan of her own free will. He pays back the baroness, and – promising his support for Nucingen to get the position he wants, persuades her to tell him everything she knows. He uses the same promise to get Rastignac to tell him about Florine.

Felix is then able to manipulate a conversation in which Nathan's relationship with Florine is revealed to Angelique, and shows her the notes that were Schmucke's guarantees and burns them, She confesses everything, including that they have been writing letters to each other. He makes a long paternal speech and she is suitably contrite. Nathan's letters to her are burnt, but how to retrieve hers to him? They go to Florine. Florine doesn't believe Nathan has betrayed her, and in order to get her to give up Nathan's letters there is an elaborate scene in which the characters go to a masked ball where Florine sees Nathan flirting with Angelique. Furious, she takes Felix and the still-masked Angelique back to her house and for a payment of 50000 francs surrenders the letters so that they can be destroyed and Angelique's reputation will be safe. Nathan, rescued from ruin tries to go about in society again but Angelique spurns him and his 'friends' make cynical remarks about life and love. He only gets five votes at the election and Du Tillet is elected instead. By the time Angelique and Felix get back from a long holiday in Italy he has lost the newspaper and is working for the government instead.

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### César Lasso says

Acabé esta novelita hace una semana pero inicialmente me dio pereza escribirle una reseña. El argumento podría resumirse en lo siguiente: “mujer de un aristocrático marido *perfecto* se enamora de un artista bohemio *imperfecto*. Las consecuencias, si ustedes tienen curiosidad alguna, las encontrarán en la propia lectura.

Reconozco a Balzac el ser pionero en un asunto, el adulterio, que décadas después dio obras maestras como el *Madame Bovary* de Flaubert, *El primo Basilio* de Eça de Queirós o *La Regenta* de Clarín. Sin embargo, esas novelas que cito me dejarán un recuerdo indeleble mientras que la obra de Balzac la olvidaré rápidamente.

Ando leyendo cosas francesas en preparación a mi primer viaje a Francia como destino (hasta ahora sólo la había pisado en tránsito hacia otros países). Mi anterior lectura fue *El vientre de París*, de Zola, y la novela que ahora comento no resiste la comparación. Zola describe, y describe, y describe, y deja que el lector se forme sus propias conclusiones (probablemente, muy próximas a lo que el autor quería sugerir). Balzac, sin embargo, orienta la opinión del lector. No apunté ejemplos, pero sería algo parecido a “Todos sabemos que las mujeres son frágiles e inconstantes. Nuestra protagonista, por tanto...”. El ejemplo es mío, no extraído de la novela, pero espero que dé a entender a qué me refiero. Por otro lado, Balzac me pareció que dedicaba largos párrafos a filosofar.

No es lo que yo buscaba.

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### **Liedzeit says**

Man erinnere sich an die Doppelte Familie. Die beiden Töchter sind inzwischen nicht eben glücklich verheiratet. Evatochter, Marie-Angélique, verliebt sich in Komödienschreiber Nathan, der auch politische Ambitionen hat und natürlich eine Mätresse, Florine. Florine ist Schauspielerin und eine der ziemlich gut gezeichneten Figuren, durchaus diese Novelle rettend. Jedenfalls muss ein Wechsel her und mit Hilfe der Schwester und des alten Musiklehrers Schmucke geht das alles beinahe auf, aber am Ende ergibt es sich, dass der ungeliebte Gatte Felix, in Wirklichkeit der beste Ehemann von allen, seiner Frau vergebend, sie auch noch überzeugt, dass sie beinahe ihr Herz an einen Hallodri vergeben hätte.

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### **Perry Whitford says**

Two aristocratic sisters raised in religious seclusion by their pious mother are suddenly married off into the glittering, treacherous Paris society of the 1830's, the younger to a domineering banker, the elder to a humane and loving count.

This excellent novella from the 'private life' collection of Balzac's *Comédie Humaine* focusses on the elder daughter, Madame Felix de Vandenesse, who has no need to be dissatisfied with her husband, yet naively invites a scandal on herself when she is manoeuvred into an affair by more sophisticated and mischievous ladies.

Her chosen lover, Raoul Nathan, is an ambitious playwright and would-be politician, a man of some genius but with feet of clay. Despite having a devoted mistress, the vaudeville actress Florine, Nathan recklessly courts Madame Felix, little knowing that he to is the dupe of wiser minds.

Though the story is slight and contains no great depths of either drama or tragedy, I still found *A Daughter of Eve* to be something of a delight, due in no small measure to Balzac's incomparably rich powers of physical description and eye for detail.

Each of the principle players receive the forensic treatment in turn, with both their inner and outer physiognomies laid bare in swift, slashing strokes by the always busy pen of Balzac. His descriptions of rooms and their contents are just as detailed.

The ending, though satisfying, could have been pulled off with a bit more aplomb, and the time spent on the younger sister early on seemed a little wasted by the end; but then again, that's the peculiarity of Balzac's *Comédie Humaine*, where characters pop up here and there across various works, as indeed the two sisters here appear elsewhere.

Ideal light reading for a rainy day.

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