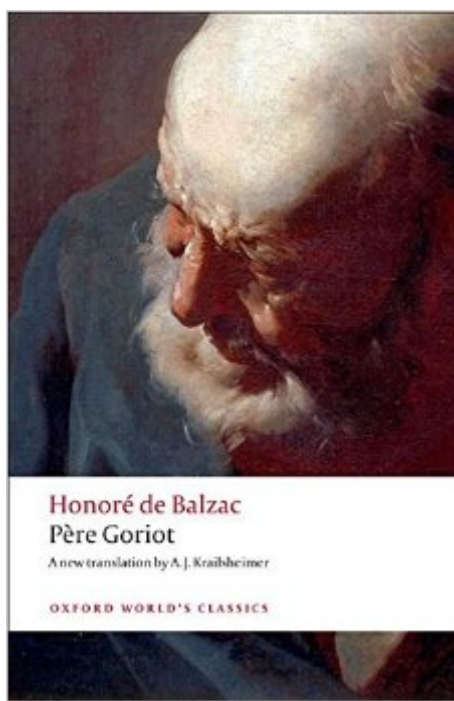


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# Pere Goriot (Oxford World's Classics)



## Synopsis

This fine example of the French realist novel contrasts the social progress of an impoverished but ambitious aristocrat with the tale of a father, whose obsessive love for his daughters leads to his personal and financial ruin. About the Series: For over 100 years Oxford World's Classics has made available the broadest spectrum of literature from around the globe. Each affordable volume reflects Oxford's commitment to scholarship, providing the most accurate text plus a wealth of other valuable features, including expert introductions by leading authorities, voluminous notes to clarify the text, up-to-date bibliographies for further study, and much more.

## Book Information

Paperback: 304 pages

Publisher: Oxford University Press; Reprint edition (May 5, 2009)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0199538751

ISBN-13: 978-0199538751

Product Dimensions: 7.6 x 0.8 x 5 inches

Shipping Weight: 7.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars Â Â See all reviews Â (5 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

When you're trying to educate yourself without the service of an academic advisor, you still need something to point you in a profitable direction. Sixty years ago I was groping around for a reading regimen and one book on the subject (I don't remember the title) declared that although Tolstoy's *War and Peace* was "the world's greatest novel," Balzac (1799-1850) was "the world's greatest novelist." OK. I went ahead and spent a couple years reading Tolstoy but I never got round to Balzac. That is, until quite recently. It was David Harvey who woke me up. In the introduction to his *Companion to Marx's Capital* (Verso, 2010) he said that Marx was a great admirer of Balzac and had the ambition to some day write a full study of *la Comedie humaine*. Unfortunately for people who love classic novels, Marx never finished his work on *Capital* and so was never able to get seriously into his great love of French literature! Harvey hadn't read much Balzac but he said that later, when reading one of his novels, "I found myself often saying, 'Ah, that's where Marx got it

from!"Its hard to know where to start with Balzac, but I picked up the Oxford World Classics edition of Pere Goriot (1834), probably the most widely read of his books. It's a bit formidable for someone like myself who seldom reads novels and likes things short and simple. Balzac's paragraphs in Pere Goriot often run to 800 words and his chapters to 75 or 80 pages. Not a good format for my short attention span, but when I finally mustered the courage to begin, I soon saw why he ranks so high among the world's writers.

When a book has nothing but five-star reviews, as this one does, you might want to take note and order it and read it right away! This was among the top 5 books I have ever read. And I've read sooooooooooooo many books, married to Lit Prof. This book is so old that it seems to have been forgotten or shoved to the back of the stacks. This is a terrible shame, that people would miss a book of this magnitude. I only found it because I bought Harvard Classics of Literature (I own the 5-shelf hard copy of the Harvard Classics but never thought to actually READ them. Duh on me). But I didn't know they had a grouping of just Novels and poems, for Kindle. So I got it for free, I think? And the whole collection of all the novels was 500,000 pages. Gulp. But I thought, well I will be in no rush and just read along. OMG! OMG! IN SO DOING, I FOUND BOOKS that I doubt one would find anywhere else! I wanted to run in the streets and yell, "Everyone! Read these obscure novels!" But among them, I found the Hope Diamond of novels: Goiroit by Balzac. Knew nothing of Balzac. Read his bio. Then I realized that Goiroit is a true story of the struggle with morals in a young man in Paris early 1800s, who is so poor and wants to be so rich. (No spoilers, I promise). When a writer of Balzac's genius writes from life, you have hit a gold mine. The details are so stunning every inch of the way, because drawn from life, could never be thought up. The characters all were real people, and as unique as real people are. Within seconds of reading, you will never put this book down. My life came to a complete halt after I only half-interestedly started reading. OMG OMG. If I had missed this book, it would have been an actual tragedy.

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