



The Wrong Side of Paris (Modern Library Classics)

Honoré de Balzac

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The Wrong Side of Paris, the final novel in Balzac's *The Human Comedy*, is the compelling story of Godefroid, an abject failure at thirty, who seeks refuge from materialism by moving into a monastery-like lodging house in the shadows of Notre-Dame. Presided over by Madame de La Chanterie, a noblewoman with a tragic past, the house is inhabited by a remarkable band of men—all scarred by the tumultuous aftermath of the French Revolution—who have devoted their lives to performing anonymous acts of charity. Intrigued by the Order of the Brotherhood of Consolation and their uplifting dedication to virtuous living, Godefroid strives to follow their example. He agrees to travel—incognito—to a Parisian slum to save a noble family from ruin. There he meets a beautiful, ailing Polish woman who lives in great luxury, unaware that just outside her bedroom door her own father and son are suffering in dire poverty. By proving himself worthy of the Brotherhood, Godefroid finds his own spiritual redemption.

This vivid portrait of the underbelly of nineteenth-century Paris, exuberantly rendered by Jordan Stump, is the first major translation in more than a century of Balzac's forgotten masterpiece *L'Envers de l'histoire contemporaine*. Featuring an illuminating Introduction by Adam Gopnik, this original Modern Library edition also includes explanatory notes.

From the Hardcover edition.

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