



The Human Comedy, Vol. III: A Start in Life and Other Works (Noumena Classics)

Honoré de Balzac

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On a coach ride between towns, a callow young man gets caught up in a round of tale-telling with his fellow passengers and ends up committing an indiscretion that will take a lifetime to undo . . . In the town of Besançon, a cloistered young girl reads a romance penned by a mysterious newcomer and schemes to take the place of the story's real-life inspiration: a beautiful Italian duchess . . . Two lovers stand in defiance of the age-old feud that has decimated their families: a vendetta that even Napoléon Bonaparte himself may be powerless to stop . . . Beginning again in life, whether in one's profession, or, to a lesser extent, for the purpose of concealing one's identity, is the theme that unifies the three stories (A Start in Life, Albert Savarus, and The Vendetta) in this volume of The Human Comedy. Left unfinished at the time of Balzac's death, La Comédie Humaine is a vast literary undertaking composed of some hundred short stories, novellas, and novels set in the shadow of the Napoleonic Wars during the Bourbon Restoration and the July Monarchy. Throughout, Balzac utilizes nineteenth century French society to examine humanity and the human experience with all its attendant virtues, vices, and peculiarities. The third volume of Noumena Press's Human Comedy features detailed background information on each of the stories, 27 illustrations, more than 60 pages of annotations, and two appendices that contain "Journey by Coucou" by Laure Surville (Balzac's sister) and "Mateo Falcone" by Prosper Mérimée--stories that were the inspiration for Balzac's A Start in Life and The Vendetta, respectively. "Journey by Coucou" appears in English translation here for the first time. Honoré de Balzac (1799-1850) was one of France's most prolific and influential authors. In his lifetime, he worked as a legal clerk, publisher, printer, businessman, and even ran for political office. Failing in all these endeavors, he was nonetheless able to make use of these experiences in his writing to create some of the most memorable stories and characters in French literature.

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