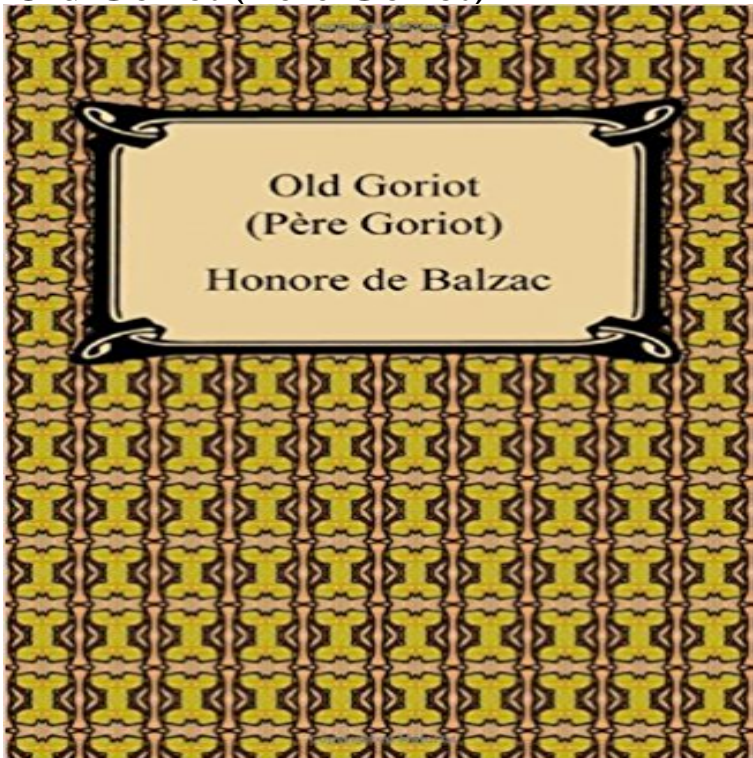


## Old Goriot (Pere Goriot)



Considered to be one of Balzac's most important works, *Old Goriot*, or *Père Goriot*, is the story of its title character Goriot; a mysterious criminal-in-hiding named Vautrin; and a naive law student named Eugene de Rastignac. We are introduced to the characters at Maison Vauquer, a boarding house owned by the widow Madame Vauquer. Central to the theme of the book is the struggle to achieve upper-class status in society. Rastignac is eager to achieve this upper-class standing but is unfamiliar to the ways of Parisian society. Vautrin tries to convince Rastignac to pursue an unmarried woman named Victorine, a dubious suggestion which involves the disposal of her brother who blocks the woman's fortune. The failings to achieve this upper-class status are exemplified by Goriot who has bankrupted himself to support his two well-married daughters, yet they reject him. A classic and tragic story, *Old Goriot* is one of the most pivotal works in Balzac's sweeping novel sequence *La Comédie Humaine*, which endeavors to depict the effects of society on the entirety of the human condition.

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