THE BALL AT SCEAUX

HONORÉ DE BALZAC

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The novella "The Ball at Sceaux" is part of Balzac's great life work — the expansive fiction series titled "The Human Comedy."

The central character is Émilie de Fontaine, youngest daughter of a noble but impoverished family in post-revolutionary France. Her hapless father hopes to find her a good marriage, but Émilie, spoiled and willful, has repeatedly turned away suitors. She has a list of requirements for any prospective husband, one of which is that he must, of course, be "the son of a peer of France." (The peerage was an elite aristocratic distinction.) She holds firm to this resolve, but events have a way of turning out surprisingly.

Balzac was a master of irony and realism and his writings were hugely influential in the development of European fiction.

– Summary by Bruce Pirie

Translated by Clara Bell. Read by Bruce Pirie.

01 Section 1 · **02** Section 2 · **03** Section 3 · **04** Section 4 · **05** Section 5

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Genre(s): Literary Fiction, Published 1800 -1900

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