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Nota di contenuto	1. Introduction -- 2. Through the Glass Darkly, Ursule Mirouët -- 3. A "Divine" Comedy, Eugénie Grandet -- 4. The Gerontocracy and Youth, Pierrette -- 5. The Tangible and the Intangible, Le Curé de Tours -- 6. The Dying Patriarchy, La Rabouilleuse -- 7. Nascent Capitalism, "L'illustre Gaudissart" -- 8. A Provincial Muse, La Muse du département -- 9. Empty Wombs, La Vieille Fille -- 10. Restoration Boneyard, Le Cabinet des antiques -- 11. Aeries and Muck, Illusions perdues -- 12. Conclusion.
Sommario/riassunto	Melding the fields of literature, sociology, and history, this book develops analyses of the ten novels in Balzac's <i>Scènes de la vie de province</i> . Following the order of the novels projected in <i>La Comédie humaine</i> , Allan H. Pasco investigates how Balzac used art as a tool of social inquiry to obtain startlingly accurate insights into the relationships that defined his turbulent society. His repeated claim to be an "historian of manners" was more than an empty boast. Though Balzac was first and foremost a great novelist, he was also a trailblazing sociologist, joining Henri de Saint-Simon and the subsequent Auguste

Comte in considering the relationships that represent society as an interacting, interlocking web. Using a methodology that combines close analysis with a broad cultural context, Pasco demonstrates that Balzac's sociological vision was extraordinarily pertinent to both his and our days.

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