

# **SHORT STORIES**

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Short stories by Honoré de Balzac

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**HONORÉ DE BALZAC**

**SHORT STORIES**



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# SHORT STORIES

By HONORE DE BALZAC



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# DON JUAN;

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## THE ELIXIR OF LONG LIFE

ON a winter's night, in a sumptuous palace at Ferrara, Don Juan Belvidero was entertaining a Prince of the house of Este. At this period a banquet was a wonderful scene, possible only for the riches of royalty and the power of Princes.

Round a table lit with perfumed tapers sat seven joyous women bandying sweet talk. About them the noblest marble of the greatest masters gleamed white against walls of crimson stucco, and formed a contrast with the gorgeous colors of carpets brought from Turkey.

These women, clad in satin, glittering with gold, loaded with jewels only less brilliant than their eyes, told each her tale of overpowering passions, diverse as their own charms. But among them was no difference either of thought or expression; a movement, a look, a gesture supplied their words with commentaries wanton, lewd, melancholy, or scoffing.

One seemed to say: "My beauty can rekindle the ice-bound heart of age."