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Beaumarchais: A Biography

Maurice Lever

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Beaumarchais: A Biography Maurice Lever
Playwright, politician, publisher, entrepreneur, spy, and rebel: few men of eighteenth-century letters led a more varied or controversial life than Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais. From humble beginnings as a watchmaker to exalted fame as the author of *The Marriage of Figaro*, Beaumarchais was a self-made man in a time when self-fashioning was close to impossible, a revolutionary in both his life and his art.

From these pages emerges the portrait of a man whose talents and activities extended far beyond the comedies that made him famous. We meet a political visionary who openly supported the American revolutionaries on the eve of his country's own political upheaval; a reckless but brilliant entrepreneur; and an early champion of the rights of artists and intellectual property. Most of all, we meet a writer whose wit and social acumen was matched only by his determination to publish on his own terms—even at the risk of political exile.

In a narrative that reaches from the courts of Paris to secretive rendezvous in London and Germany, from Europe to America, and from the theater of war to the performances of the famed Comédie-Français, Maurice Lever re-creates the exciting and often perilous times in which Beaumarchais lived. Incorporating countless letters and firsthand accounts, *Beaumarchais* is an irresistibly lively and engaging account of an extraordinary life.

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