



# The Barber of Seville / The Marriage of Figaro

Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais , John Wood (Translator)

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A French courtier, secret agent, libertine and adventurer, Beaumarchais (1732-99) was also author of two sparkling plays about the scoundrelly valet Figaro - triumphant successes that were used as the basis of operas by Mozart and Rossini. A highly engaging comedy of intrigue, The Barber of Seville portrays the resourceful Figaro foiling a jealous old man's attempts to keep his beautiful ward from her lover. And The Marriage of Figaro - condemned by Louis XVI for its daring satire of nobility and privilege - depicts a master and servant set in opposition by their desire for the same woman. With characteristic lightness of touch, Beaumarchais created an audacious farce of disguise and mistaken identity that balances wit, frivolity and seriousness in equal measure.

## **The Barber of Seville / The Marriage of Figaro Details**

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## **From Reader Review The Barber of Seville / The Marriage of Figaro for online ebook**

### **Amy says**

I really liked The Barber of Seville. I thought it was very witty, very sharp, and very nimble. I didn't enjoy The Marriage of Figaro as much, however. Ensiform's review of this book expresses my sentiments toward these two plays far better than I ever could.

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### **Nikki says**

The Barber of Seville: 4 stars.

The Marriage of Figaro: 3 stars.

'The Barber of Seville' was a lot of fun to read, very comical and full of intrigue. The sequel, 'The Marriage of Figaro', was less amusing, in part because I found it to be exceedingly complicated. A nice lighthearted read.

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### **Lisa Cook says**

A classic, but not really classically good. Funny, but 17th century French humor, so take that for what it's worth. It was an interesting choice to have the hero of one play be the villain in another, then suddenly have everything wind up all hunky-dory. Situational comedy in the truest sense, but nothing really that stood out as extraordinary.

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### **Rovi / ???? says**

The first play is really good, filled with excellent remarks and humour, I painted half the play with my pen (:. Unfortunately I lost both my appetite and track in the second play, it was too long and complex for such a risky story, risky means can be boring. But I think someone who enjoys romance will like both.

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### **Zeina says**

Figaro, porte-parole de Beaumarchais exprime toutes ses idées révolutionnaires contre la noblesse de son temps et annonce la révolution sociale et politique de 1789.

"Vs vous êtes donné la peine de naître et rien de plus" dit-il

(Il est vrai que Figaro est un valet mais il a l'éloquence d'un maître )

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## **Mauro says**

Para constatar que a literatura teatral do iluminismo era uma bobajada adolescente, de muita forma e nenhum conteúdo.

Não sobreviveria aos séculos não fosse a música que se pôs em cima.

Paulo e Cora Rónai fizeram uma adaptação cheia de maneirismos dos adolescentes dos anos 70, daqueles que se fazem para aproximar os jovens dos livros (e graças a Deus nunca funciona), o que torna a leitura ainda mais pamponha.

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## **Ensiform says**

“The Barber Of Seville,” translated, and with a panegyric introduction on the life of Beaumarchais and the social import of his plays, by John Wood. This romantic comedy, a very short and predictable light farce, is brilliant; I laughed out loud several times. It’s fast-paced, witty, subtle, deft, and even manages some brief commentary about the gap between rich and poor. I enjoyed it very much —— the humor carries over into English and is timeless. Figaro, Figaro, Figaro —— a great character.

“The Marriage Of Figaro,” also translated by John Wood. Although this play, the sequel to the above, is not as neatly drawn up as its antecedent, nevertheless it’s impressive work. The humor is just as witty, and in general the scenes were adroit and fast-paced, although this lengthy play’s plot is more tangled, and this stands in the way of the humor. The main difference in content between this play and the above is in this one, the injustices between nobles and their servants, and the skewed treatment of men and women, are more heavily accented. This play was put on in the 1780s, and first rumblings of equality must have been apparent. Some of the lines speak of the sentiments of Voltaire or Rousseau. Funny and socially important, this play is marvelous.

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## **Rhys says**

These two plays are farcical romantic comedies and social satires, more famous as operas than plays. Beaumarchais had an interesting life in politics, diplomacy, mechanics, law as well as in literature. *The Barber of Seville* is a relatively straightforward work compared with the sequel *The Marriage of Figaro*. Figaro is the main character in both plays; he is a rogue but one with depth. Beaumarchais sort to challenge the status quo and in fact the second play scandalized many of his contemporaries.

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## **Magid says**

It's funny that I should find the play that inspired such a work of genius as Mozart's opera of the same name to be so uninteresting. Maybe it was the translation. It just seemed like a silly farce, which it kind of is, but I guess I need Mozart to point out all the subtleties inbetween the lines.

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### **Robert Stewart says**

*The Marriage of Figaro* may be the pinnacle of the comedies of manners of the 17th & 18th centuries. It's playfully bawdy, like Wycherley's plays, but not gratuitously so. There's cynicism, like that of the city comedies, but not so much that it overwhelms the comedy. And, like the best of Sheridan and Goldsmith, the action is well choreographed and the plotting complete.

Plus, it has Figaro, definitely the perfect hero for this form.

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### **Julie says**

I read these 2 plays for an opera course on the Figaro Saga. The plays are well worth reading and the bio of Beaumarchais in the introduction is fascinating.

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### **Sandhya Ratnam says**

Almaviva was such a bae in the first play but I was so disappointed by him in the second!! But that's the point and I can appreciate what his character development does for the grand scheme of the plays. Figaro is definitely the star of both plays and that whole arc with his birth was an amazing plot twist. I love how scheming everyone in the castle is and all the gossip! I would've loved to have lived in that castle!!!!

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### **Mason says**

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for Dr. Craig Saucier's course, Western Civilization After 1500:

In the years leading up to the storming of the Bastille and the French Revolution, the prevalent ideas pertaining to the privilege of the nobility began to shift. The circumstances of one's birth, under this new paradigm, might not necessarily be the sole determinant of one's worth, if it was a factor at all. Pierre Beaumarchais's *The Marriage of Figaro* represents this changing sense of identity in French culture in the form of the comedy of an unscrupulous count and his clever servant.

Beaumarchais was a writer who supported the American Revolution and participated in the early French Revolution. Though *The Marriage of Figaro* was clearly written as a comedy, Beaumarchais imbued the work with his notion of the significance of noble birth, or lack thereof. The titular character wins his happiness in life through cleverness rather than by right. Figaro's writing experience is a vehicle for Beaumarchais's misgivings against censorship. "Stupidities that appear in print acquire importance only in so far as their circulation is restricted... unless there is liberty to criticize, praise has no value, and that only trivial minds are apprehensive of trivial scribbling" (200).

The play begins where *The Barber of Seville* left off. Figaro has aided the count in winning the woman he desired, and in exchange has earned a marriage to his love, Suzanne. However, the deceitful count plans to take Suzanne as his mistress, thus cheating Figaro and forgoing his faithfulness to his wife, the countess. Figaro, Suzanne, and the countess devise a plan to entrap the count by having someone impersonate Suzanne

to entice him, only to then reveal the count's treachery (131-133).

Marceline's arrival complicates the situation, as she demands Figaro's hand in marriage as part of an agreement in which he borrowed money from her. Realizing that Figaro plans to deny Suzanne to him, the count supports Marceline's claim to Figaro and delays the marriage while the case is tried. In the events of the case, it is ultimately revealed that Figaro is actually Marceline's illegitimate, kidnapped son, thus resolving her claim in the negative and freeing him to marry Suzanne (174-175).

The countess switches costumes with Suzanne to rendezvous with the count. He believes he is meeting with his intended mistress when he is actually meeting with his own wife. Figaro, unaware that the switch has taken place, suspects Suzanne of adulterous intent, until he goes to the countess and finds that she is actually Suzanne in disguise. The count finds them together, still failing to notice the switch, and calls the attendees of Figaro's wedding to witness his wife's unfaithfulness. To his embarrassment, his own attempt at adultery is exposed, while Figaro emerges with both wife and dowry (214-216).

Figaro denies the understood notion of aristocratic privilege, valuing his own efforts in life to be of greater worth than those of his master, the count. "Nobility, fortune, rank, position! How proud they make a man feel! What have you done to deserve such advantages? Put yourself to the trouble of being born – nothing more! For the rest – a very ordinary man!" (199). The play also questions the double standard on adultery for men and women during this time period, as shown in the count's speech to the countess (205-207).

The Marriage of Figaro provides a comical story which demonstrates the changing political ideas of its time. The culture of the story is not yet engulfed in the depths the French Revolution, but it is ripe for such a development of ideas. The old nobility, once inherently virtuous, is depicted as villainous and foolish. Simultaneously, in Figaro, Beaumarchais shows us a common man who triumphs after rising from nothingness.

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### **Al-Leigh says**

<http://missal-leigh.com/2013/08/10/bo...>

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### **Emily Snyder says**

Though the plot could be a tad convoluted at times, the dialogue was absolutely hilarious in both plays and the characters so winning I couldn't help rooting for them. I would love to see this performed in its stage version (rather than the Opera). The famous wit of Beaumarchais is certainly well on display with these.

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