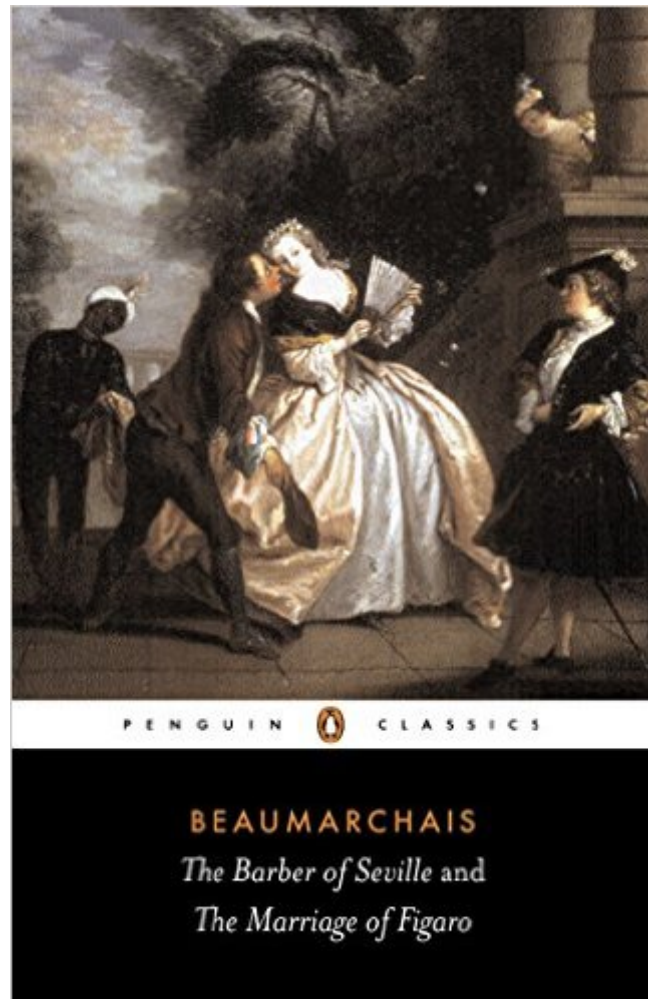


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The Barber Of Seville And The Marriage Of Figaro (Classics S)



Synopsis

The sparkling plays about the scoundrelly valet Figaro, 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 "a French courtier, secret agent, libertine, and adventurer" created an audacious farce of disguise and mistaken identity that balances wit, frivolity and seriousness in equal measure. For more than seventy years, Penguin has been the leading publisher of classic literature in the English-speaking world. With more than 1,700 titles, Penguin Classics represents a global bookshelf of the best works throughout history and across genres and disciplines. Readers trust the series to provide authoritative texts enhanced by introductions and notes by distinguished scholars and contemporary authors, as well as up-to-date translations by award-winning translators.

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Customer Reviews

These two plays have been made very famous by the two operas by Rossini and Mozart. However the plays seem to be relatively unknown. Of the two plays "The Marriage of Figaro" is the better of the two. I would also like add a criticism of the movie *Amadeus*. In the movie Salieri comments on

the ending of the opera based on the play in a way that seems to imply that Mozart deserves all the credit. In fact the opera is very faithful to the play. Mozart should get all the credit for the music of the Marriage of Figaro, but Beaumarchais deserves credit for the plot. But to get back to my point, these are two great plays that deserve to be better known. Figaro (the play) was controversial in its day as a satire about the rights of aristocrats but today the satire does not seem very harsh. Figaro the roguish main character who believes he is just as good as his master is one of the great literary characters. That is not just my opinion, it was also the opinion of the novelist Balzac. I would especially recommend this Penguin edition for the introduction which has a short biography of the adventurous life of Beaumarchais. It is a miracle he found the time to write these plays, but I am very glad that he did.

THE BARBER OF SEVILLE dated from 1775. In 1784 the first performance of LA FOLLE or LE MARRIAGE DE FIGARO took place. Mozart's opera was performed for the first time in 1786 in Vienna. The dimension of characterization is what is new in the plays. Also, there is lightness of touch. They are derived from older models. THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO is a true sequel to THE BARBER OF SEVILLE it is stated in the introduction. Parisian audiences identified Beaumarchais with Figaro. Figaro proclaims in the first play that habitual misfortune has compelled him to laugh. When Count Almaviva asks if Bartholo is honest, Figaro replies that he is honest enough to avoid being hanged. When Bartholo reacts to the presence of Figaro in his house, Rosine says sarcastically when Bartholo attempts to draw the lattice closed to just wall her up. Bazile, the music master and the friend of Bartholo, defends his actions to Bartholo claiming that Count Almaviva always has a pocketful of irresistible arguments. In THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO Figaro allows that once a man has been enraged he can be maneuvered into doing anything. The Count is annoyed because he seems to run into Cherubin everywhere. It seems the 'wretched page' jumped out of the window to get away from the wrath of the Count. The Countess (Rosine) says that it is more than time that she retire to a convent. Suzanne and Figaro agree that chance is the best insurer of good fortune. The Countess impersonates Suzanne to win back the Count. Suzanne impersonates the Countess and holds a discussion with Figaro. The men are fooled, bested. Cherubin, the page, keeps on turning up when he is supposed to have been vanquished. The playwright provided notes on the costumes and characters for the plays. Reading the plays is a laugh aloud experience.

I had to read this for class, and I don't hate it. So there's that.

So I read this for my theatre history class and thoroughly enjoyed it. The ideal it proposes, or doesn't propose still are up for debate and intensely relevant for today. For a full analysis read my post here: [...]

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