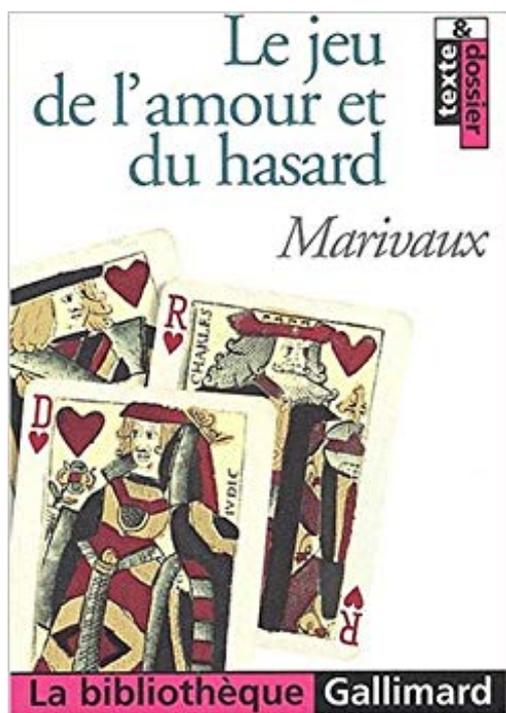


Le jeu de l'amour et du hasard *by* Eloïse Lièvre, Pierre Carlet de Chamblain de Marivaux



ISBN: 2070405249

ISBN13: 978-2070405244

Author: Eloïse Lièvre, Pierre Carlet de Chamblain de Marivaux

Book title: Le jeu de l'amour et du hasard

Publisher: Gallimard (August 18, 1998)

Language: French

Category: Dramas & Plays

Size PDF version: 1678 kb

Size ePUB version: 1710 kb

Size DJVU version: 1574 kb

Other formats: lit docx txt mobi

Le jeu de l'amour et du hasard [mass_market] Marivaux, Pierre Carlet de Chamblain de, Lièvre, Eloïse [Aug 18, 1998]



Reviews of the *Le jeu de l'amour et du hasard* *by* Eloïse Lièvre, Pierre Carlet de Chamblain de Marivaux

- **Adrierdin**

Interesting storyline

- **Clever**

I understand the title is in French, but It says the language is English. I downloaded this to find that it was in French!

- **Kage**

It is often claimed that Beaumarchais' Figaro plays are a milestone in French drama, subversive works that question the hierarchical power of the aristocracy, while celebrating the resourcefulness of servants. But Beaumarchais did not come out of nowhere, and many of his themes were already developed half a century earlier in the comic drama of Marivaux.

In 'The Game of Love and Chance', for instance, the heroine Silvia, is offered an arranged marriage by her father, Orgon. She strikes a compromise: she suggests switching roles with her maid Lisette, so that she can observe the true character of her intended. Unfortunately for her, he has the same idea.

'Game' is ultimately a conservative play - the social hierarchy is reinstated; a daughter obeys her father's wishes, her pretensions as a 'playwright', creating and controlling her own destiny, undermined by his own ultimate authorship.

On the way to this restoration, however, extraordinary things happen. Aristocrats must act as servants, and are humiliated, mocked and parodied by their inferiors. This leads to crises of identity in the main characters from a world in which identity is synonymous with social position. The rigidity of parental decree (and, by extension, the social order), is replaced by a 'game', where love is tested, rather than a social given. Language is shown not to be 'natural', but both a weapon used to negotiate society, and the bulwark behind which true feelings can hide.

Marivaux has been called the Racine of comedy - his characters are placed in an artificial setting where problems are interior rather than externally provoked. The emphasis, therefore, is on dialogue: elaborate, artificial speech, which has been called 'marivaudage', and dismissed as 'precious'. Translated, the tortuous, rhetorical wit can sound like laboured imitations of Elizabethan sonnet sequences (e.g. 'your eyes gave birth to my love, another glance made it grow, a third mothered it etc.').

Still, with a little imagination; and a prior love of a theatre that flouts its (commedia dell'arte-derived) conventions, rather than concealing them; as well as the delicacies of the 18th century of Watteau, should find much to enjoy in this still amusing, and often suspenseful, comedy.

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