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Sommario/riassunto	Famous and seductive, female stage performers haunted French public life in the century before and after the Revolution. This pathbreaking study delineates the distinctive place of actresses, dancers, and singers within the French erotic and political imaginations. From the moment they became an unofficial caste of mistresses to France's elite during the reign of Louis XIV, their image fluctuated between emasculating men and delighting them. Drawing upon newspaper accounts, society columns, theater criticism, government reports, autobiographies, public rituals, and a huge corpus of fiction, Lenard Berlanstein argues that the public image of actresses was shaped by the political climate and ruling ideology; thus they were deified in one era and damned in the next. Tolerated when civil society functioned and demonized when

it faltered, they finally passed from notoriety to celebrity with the stabilization of parliamentary life after 1880. Only then could female fans admire them openly, and could the state officially recognize their contributions to national life. *Daughters of Eve* is a provocative look at how a culture creates social perceptions and reshuffles collective identities in response to political change.

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Reviews of this book: Students of French literature and culture will welcome this study of female performers, women who historically achieved great prominence because of their sexuality and public presence. Yet this is much more than simply a descriptive history. Berlanstein puts theater women into the context of the evolving French debate over the role of women in the public sphere. This fascinating new work is an important addition to the scholarship on French gender history. Recommended for specialists in French history and culture.--Library Journal
