



Voltaire in Exile

Ian Davidson

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In 1753, Voltaire—playwright, poet, philosopher and one of the most feted figures in Europe—was forced by Louis XV and his powerful mistress Madame Pompadour into exile, where he remained for the last twenty-five years of his life. During his years in Geneva, on the outskirts of France, Voltaire carved out a new world in isolation, becoming a successful entrepreneur, writing his masterpiece *Candide*, and lavishing gifts upon those around him. But it was as a figure cast out by the establishment that Voltaire began to develop his astonishingly modern ideas of human rights and social equality, borne out in his campaigns against a series of miscarriages of justice. In *Voltaire in Exile*, Ian Davidson recreates this period in the life of one of the giants of the Enlightenment. By painstakingly translating the rich correspondence between Voltaire and his family, members of the Court at Versailles, and the French intellectual elite, Davidson allows us to discover Voltaire the artist, the campaigner, the aesthete, the lover, the humorist. The result is a wonderfully vivid portrait of this extraordinarily funny, iconoclastic, complex, and, above all, ferociously intelligent individual.

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