



Grandmasters of Chess

Harold C Schonberg

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What makes a great chess player? Mr. Schonberg is explicit: vast memory, imagination, intuition, technique, a healthy body, relative youth, a high degree of visual imagery, and the unyielding determination to win are the prerequisites. Almost always child prodigies, chess geniuses invariably have massive egos. Mr. Schonberg begins with François Philidor, the eighteenth century French-man who laid the foundations for the game as it is played today. Among those who followed are the irascible Howard. Staunton, designer of the chess pieces that are still universally used; Paul Morphy, one of the best natural players who ever lived and one of the most tragic; Emanuel Lasker, the dapper Renaissance man of chess; Alexander Alekhine, an alcoholic "social monster"; Jose Raul Capablanca, "The Chess Machine" who lost only thirty-five out of the seven hundred games in his career; and Bobby Fischer, the ego-crushing enfant terrible who has done more to popularize the game than any other player. Mr. Schonberg's presentation of the lives of the grandmasters is so entertaining, the stories so engrossing, that even readers who are not familiar with chess will be captivated by this gallery of brilliant and unforgettable characters.

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