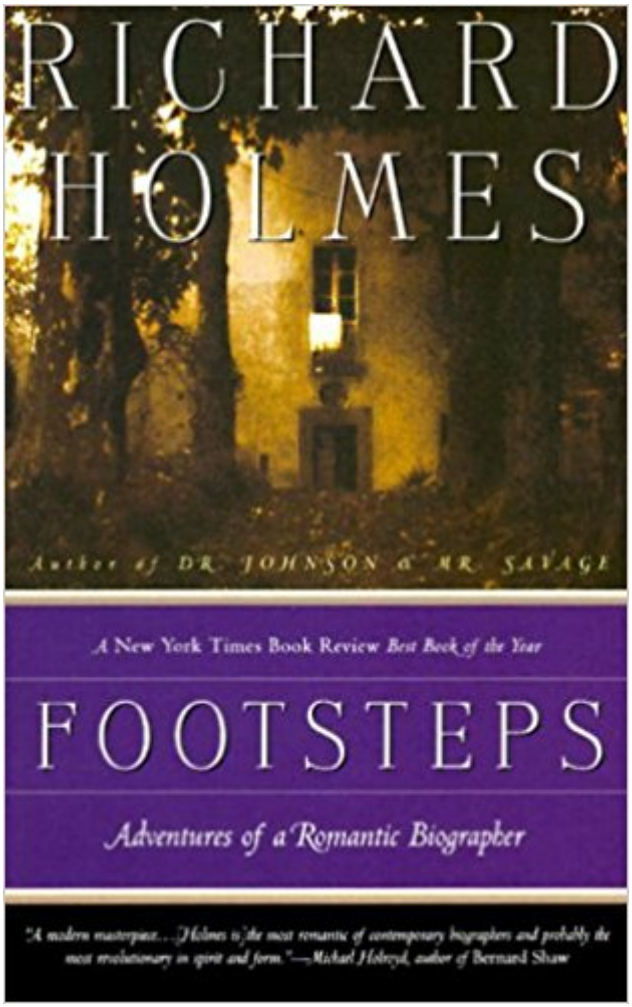
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Footsteps: Adventures Of A Romantic Biographer



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Synopsis

Richard Holmes knew he had become a true biographer the day his bank bounced a check that he had inadvertently dated 1772. Because for the acclaimed chronicler of Shelley and Coleridge, biography is a physical pursuit, an ardent and arduous retracing of footsteps that may have vanished centuries before. Ã Â In this gripping book, Holmes takes us from FranceÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Massif Central, where he followed the route taken by Robert Louis Stevenson and a sweet-natured donkey, to Mary WollstonecraftÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Revolutionary Paris, to the Italian villages where Percy Shelley tried to cast off the strictures of English morality and marriage. Footsteps is a wonderful exploration of the ties between biographers and their subjects, filled with passion and revelations. Ã Â Ã¢â ¬Å“Deeply impressive . . .Ã Â Footsteps is a singular event in the modern history of biography, and in itself a delightful reading experience.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •Alfred Kazin Ã Â Ã¢â ¬Å“This exhilarating book, part biography, part autobiography, shows the biographer as sleuth and huntsman, tracking his subjects through space and time.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •The Observer Ã Â Ã¢â ¬Å“A modern masterpiece . . . [Holmes is] the most romantic of contemporary biographers and probably the most revolutionary in spirit and form.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •Michael Holroyd, author of Bernard Shaw

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Follow the footsteps of this absorbing and delightful author as he attempts to trace the paths of four sometimes intractable, but always fascinating, Romantic writers. Robert Louis Stevenson’s travels

through the Cevennes with a donkey; Mary Wollstonecraft's revolutionary Paris and friends; Percy B. Shelley's Italian exile (a postscript to Holmes's acclaimed Shelley biography); and Gerard de Nerval's deranged vision and sad pilgrimage are all presented with rigor, charm, and historical and personal sleuthwork. Holmes's interest in each biographical subject is palpable and seems at times a fixation. But he rewards the reader with a growing understanding of each writer's life, as well as much insight into the technique and art of biography. Enjoyable, informative reading for literati, this book is recommended for larger general and academic collections. Carol J. Lichtenberg, Washington State Univ. Lib., PullmanCopyright 1985 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

`This exhilarating book, part biography, part autobiography, shows the biographer as sleuth and huntsman, tracking his subjects through space and time.' Hilary Spurling, Observer `Nothing is simple in this intricate, complicated and fascinating book, which is like a set of Russian dolls, biography containing travel-writing containing autobiography containing and so on...Holmes is indeed a biographer and a romantic in every sense.' Richard Boston, Guardian --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Richard Holmes is one of the very best biographers of the romantic period whose works are set principally in Europe and especially England. His vicarious adventures and concomitant emotions, while following in the footsteps of the famous, are marvelous evocations of nature, love, passion, artistry, and sheer love or horror of life. This book and another, Sidetracks, are wonderful excursions into the unseen world of the mind of great people, scientists, authors et al. Excellent reading. He currently has a best seller in The Age of Wonder which he discussed at the last National Book Festival with the customary flair of a nonchalant, albeit perfectionist, Brit. Enjoy!

I thoroughly enjoyed Holmes's narrative detailing his efforts to trace journeys of some of his biographical subjects in Europe. Much has been written on the art and craft of biography, but Holmes presents biographical research as a physical undertaking and, at times, an adventure. His efforts to trace his subjects' journeys is nicely tied to the prevailing conditions of the times, and one can trace Holmes's development as a biographer. This is a "must read" for any aspiring biographer and, for the rest of us, a highly readable, enjoyable romp through parts of Europe.

So good that I am now reading my fourth Holmes book (three of them in a row), and would like them

to keep coming. Holmes makes narrative do things I've never seen it do before, and with more than one narrative method.

a really interesting book by a great author

Footsteps is a profound inquiry into biography, autobiography and the process of self knowledge.

As fascinating as the writers the author pursued, fluid prose and neat contexturalising with events in his own 60s and 70s life.

I loved every story he told in it, but the part about Mary Wollstonecraft was very interesting. I never knew that about her.

THIS BOOK WAS SUGGESTED TO ME AND I CONSIDER THE SUGGESTION A GIFT--NOT ONLY REALLY, REALLY INTERESTING STUFF ABOUT THE ROMANTICS STARTING WITH ROBERT L. STEVENSON BUT I NEVER READ SUCH A COGENT DISCUSSION OF THE ART OF BIOGRAPHY. AM GOING ON TO READING HOLME'S OTHER WORKS.

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