



Footsteps: Adventures of a Romantic Biographer

Richard Holmes

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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.

In this gripping book, Holmes takes us from France's Massif Central, where he followed the route taken by Robert Louis Stevenson and a sweet-natured donkey, to Mary Wollstonecraft'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.

"Deeply impressive . . . *Footsteps* is a singular event in the modern history of biography, and in itself a delightful reading experience."—Alfred Kazin

"This exhilarating book, part biography, part autobiography, shows the biographer as sleuth and huntsman, tracking his subjects through space and time."—*The Observer*

"A modern masterpiece . . . [Holmes is] the most romantic of contemporary biographers and probably the most revolutionary in spirit and form."—Michael Holroyd, author of *Bernard Shaw*

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