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Jane Austen by Claire Tomalin

[Jane Austen](#) A Life **Written by Claire Tomaline** **Book**, 400 pages | Vintage | Biography & Autobiography - Literary; Biography & Autobiography - Women | **\$16.00** | 978-0-307-42646-8 (0-307-42646-7)

Here, firmly rooted in her own social setting for the first time, is the real Jane Austen--the shy woman willing to challenge convention, the woman of no pretensions who nevertheless called herself "formidable," a woman who could be frivolous and yet suffer from black depressions, who showed unfailing loyalty and, in the conduct of her own life, unfailing bravery. In an act of understanding and brilliant synthesis, Claire Tomalin reveals Jane Austen with a clarity never before achieved, one which makes us look upon her novels with fresh and even greater admiration.

The world she wrote about--that place of civility and reassuring stability--was never quite her own. As Tomalin shows, Jane Austen's family existed on the very fringe of the world she described in her fiction, struggling to get ahead with little money and no land in the competitive society of Georgian England, sometimes succeeding but often failing with painful consequences. New research in family papers has yielded a rich, tragicomic picture of the Austen clan--their ambitions, their matrimonial alliances, their exotic connections with India and France. At the same time, Tomalin's explorations in local archives reveal a surprising view of the neighbors the family lived among in Hampshire, more extravagant and eccentric by far than anyone depicted in Austen's books. We realize how much closer her genius lies, in its splendid artifice, to the great comic operas of Mozart than to the main tradition of the English novel.

But it is in the deeply human portrait of Jane Austen herself that this biography excels. The honesty and directness of her personality (perfect heroines made her "sick and wicked"), her strength in giving up a chance at marriage to follow the path her vocation as a writer required her to take, the warmth and long consistency of her relationship with her sister, Cassandra, the poignancy of her death--Claire Tomalin here captures, with unforgettable skill, the living character of a great writer who is read, reread, read again, and adored, now more than ever.

From the Hardcover edition.

<http://www.randomhouse.com/catalog/display.pperl?isbn=9780307426468>

Samuel Pepys by Claire Tomalin

[Samuel Pepys](#) The Unequalled SelfWritten by [Claire Tomaline](#)Book, 528 pages | Vintage | Biography & Autobiography - Literary | **\$17.95** | 978-0-307-42759-5 (0-307-42759-5)

For a decade, beginning in 1660, an ambitious young London civil servant kept an astonishingly candid account of his life during one of the most defining periods in British history. In **Samuel Pepys**, Claire Tomalin offers us a fully realized and richly nuanced portrait of this man, whose inadvertent masterpiece would establish him as the greatest diarist in the English language.

Against the backdrop of plague, civil war, and regicide, with John Milton composing diplomatic correspondence for Oliver Cromwell, Christopher Wren drawing up plans to rebuild London, and Isaac Newton advancing the empirical study of the world around us, Tomalin weaves a breathtaking account of a figure who has passed on to us much of what we know about seventeenth-century London. We witness Pepys's early life and education, see him advising King Charles II before running to watch the great fire consume London, learn about the great events of the day as well as the most intimate personal details that Pepys encrypted in the Diary, follow him through his later years as a powerful naval administrator, and come to appreciate how Pepys's singular literary enterprise would in many ways prefigure our modern selves. With exquisite insight and compassion, **Samuel Pepys** captures the uniquely fascinating figure whose legacy lives on more than three hundred years after his death.

From the Trade Paperback edition.

<http://www.randomhouse.com/catalog/display.pperl?isbn=9780307427595>

Samuel Pepys by Claire Tomalin

[Samuel Pepys](#) The Unequalled SelfWritten by [Claire Tomalin](#)Trade Paperback, 528 pages | Vintage | Biography & Autobiography - Literary | **\$17.95** | 978-0-375-72553-1 (0-375-72553-9)

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<http://www.randomhouse.com/catalog/display.pperl?isbn=9780375725531>

Jane Austen by Claire Tomalin

[Jane Austen](#) A Life **Written by [Claire Tomalin](#)** Trade Paperback, 400 pages | Vintage | Biography & Autobiography - Literary; Biography & Autobiography - Women | **\$16.00** | 978-0-679-76676-6 (0-679-76676-6)

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