



## Samuel Pepys: The Unequaled Self

By Claire Tomalin

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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.

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## Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Samuel Pepys (1633-1703) is the most famous diarist in English letters. From 1660 to 1669, he penned an unforgettable day-by-day description of Restoration London, with its disasters (the Great Plague of 1665, the Great Fire of 1666), its tumultuous politics and its amazing cultural fervor. Pepys's diary also describes his eager womanizing, as he makes passes, often clumsily, at barmaids and shop girls and the wives of his associates. It is Pepys's intermingling of the public and the private that makes his diary so remarkable. Tomalin (*Jane Austen: A Life*, etc.) really knows her man, following him closely through some of the great events of English history. As a young government clerk, Pepys allied himself with his cousin Edward Montagu, who turned away from Cromwell to help Charles II become king in 1660, and the Restoration made Pepys's career. Highly organized, intelligent and a savvy political infighter, as Tomalin portrays him, he became a leading navy official and helped build the British navy into a world power. Tomalin also brings us inside Pepys's personal life: his tempestuous marriage, his romantic liaisons, his private, quite negative feelings about King Charles II. Tomalin writes brilliant chapters on all aspects of Pepys's life, relying not only on the diary but also on impressive scholarship. Tomalin clearly admires her subject, whose energy she constantly praises. For those who have already enjoyed the diary, Tomalin's learned and entertaining work admirably fills in the gaps. 16 pages of photos.

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From Library Journal

Tomalin, biographer of Jane Austen and Charles Dickens, goes beyond Pepys's diary years to examine his entire life.

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From [Booklist](#)

Sing another chorus of "Life Isn't Fair." Last year, Stephen Coote, author of *Royal Survivor* (2000), a fine biography of English Restoration monarch Charles II, published an excellent life of the man who started to make the British navy the great instrument of empire that it became: Samuel Pepys, clerk of the acts on the Restoration-era naval board. Now Tomalin, author of the acclaimed *Jane Austen* (1997), rather trumps Coote by plumbing much more extensively Pepys' best-known achievement, his diary for 1660-69, considered the absolute classic of its type ever since its first, bowdlerized publication in 1825 (unabridged publication came as late as 1970). Coote drew upon the diary, but he concentrated on Pepys' significance as the archetypal modern bureaucrat, albeit one who had to observe the patronage system that persisted from medieval times until the nineteenth century, and did so adroitly and very much to his profit. Tomalin mines the diary, and she also expands upon the characters and events, great and small, that affected Pepys' life and livelihood to bring the man and his milieu to life--pungently as well as vibrantly, for one of her most effective tactics in the book is to point out how fulsomely every place smelled in an age lacking plumbing, sanitation, and cleanliness as we know them. Think of Tomalin's biography as the Technicolor version of a story

Coote renders in sepia. *Ray Olson*

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## Users Review

**From reader reviews:**

**Deborah Browning:**

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**Judy Brewer:**

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**Gene Conley:**

The book untitled Samuel Pepys: The Unequalled Self contain a lot of information on the item. The writer explains the girl idea with easy means. The language is very straightforward all the people, so do definitely not worry, you can easy to read the idea. The book was published by famous author. The author brings you in the new period of literary works. You can easily read this book because you can read on your smart phone, or program, so you can read the book with anywhere and anytime. If you want to buy the e-book, you can wide open their official web-site along with order it. Have a nice study.

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