

Samuel Johnson



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Ford Madox Ford declared Samuel Johnson the most tragic of all our major literary figures.” Blessed with a formidable intellect and a burning passion for ideas, Johnson also struggled throughout his life with mental instability and numerous physical defects. One of the most illustrious figures of the English literary tradition, Johnson made his fame as poet, essayist, critic, dictionary-maker, conversationalist, and all-around larger-than-life personality. His success was all the greater for the adversity he had to overcome in achieving it. Drawing on a lifetime of study of Johnson and his era, as well as a wide array of new archival materials, noted biographer Jeffrey Meyers tells the extraordinary story of one of the great geniuses of English letters. Johnson emerges in his portrait as a mass of contradictions: lazy and energetic, aggressive and tender, melancholy and witty, comforted yet tormented by religion. He was physically repulsive and slovenly in dress and habits, but his social ideas were progressive and humanehe strongly opposed slavery and the imperial exploitation of indigenous peoples. He gave generously to the poor and homeless, rescued prostitutes, and defended criminals who’d been condemned to hang. But these charitable acts could not dispel the darkness that clouded his world: overwhelming guilt and fear of eternal damnation. A masterful portrait of a brilliant and tormented figure, this book reintroduces a new generation of readers to the heroic Dr. Johnson.

作者介绍:

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