



# Dr Johnson and Mr Savage

*Richard Holmes*

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## **Dr Johnson and Mr Savage** Richard Holmes

A classic reissue of Richard Holmes's brilliant book on Samuel Johnson's friendship with the poet Richard Savage, which won the James Tait Black Prize for Biography.

Dr Johnson & Mr Savage is the story of a mysterious eighteenth-century friendship. Richard Savage was a poet, playwright and convicted murderer who roamed through the brothels and society salons of Augustan England creating a legend of poetic injustice. Strangest of all his achievements was the friendship he inspired in Samuel Johnson, then a young, unknown schoolmaster just arrived in London to seek his literary fortune. This puzzling intimacy helped to form Johnson's experience of the world and human passions, and led to his masterpiece *The Life of Richard Savage*, which revolutionized the art of biography and virtually invented the idea of the poet as a romantic, outcast figure.

Richard Holmes gradually reconstructs this alliance, throwing surprising new light on the character of Dr Johnson. This extraordinary book also questions the very nature of life-writing and exposes the conflicts between friendship, truth and advocacy which the modern form has inherited.

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