



The Unexpurgated Beaton: The Cecil Beaton Diaries as He Wrote Them, 1970-1980

Cecil Beaton

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Cecil Beaton was one of the great twentieth-century tastemakers. A photographer, artist, writer and designer for more than fifty years, he was at the center of the worlds of fashion, society, theater and film. **The Unexpurgated Beaton** brings together for the first time the never-before-published diaries from 1970 to 1980 and, unlike the six slim volumes of diaries published during his lifetime, these have been left uniquely unedited.

Hugo Vickers, the executor of Beaton's estate and the author of his acclaimed biography, has added extensive and fascinating notes that are as lively as the diary entries themselves. As one London reviewer wrote, "Vickers' waspish footnotes are the salt on the side of the dish." Beaton treated his other published diaries like his photographs, endlessly retouching them, but, for this volume, Vickers went back to the original manuscripts to find the unedited diaries.

Here is the photographer for British and American *Vogue*, designer of the sets and costumes for the play and film *My Fair Lady* and the film *Gigi*, with a cast of characters from many worlds: Bianca Jagger, Greta Garbo, David Hockney, Truman Capote, the Queen Mother and Princess Margaret, Mae West, Elizabeth Taylor, Marlene Dietrich, Rose Kennedy and assorted Rothschilds, Phippses and Wrightsmans; in New York, San Francisco, Palm Beach, Rio and Greece, on the Amalfi coast; at shooting parties in the English countryside, on yachts, at garden parties at Buckingham Palace, at costume balls in Venice, Paris or London.

Beaton had started as an outsider and "developed the power to observe, first with his nose pressed up against the glass," and then later from within inner circles. Vickers has said, "his eagle eye missed nothing," and his diaries are intuitive, malicious (he took a "relish in hating certain figures"), praising and awestruck. Truman Capote once said "the camera will never be invented that could capture or encompass all that he actually sees."

The Unexpurgated Beaton is a book that is not only a great read and wicked fun but a timeless chronicle of our age.

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