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Kevin McAleer

ERROL FLYNN

An Epic Life

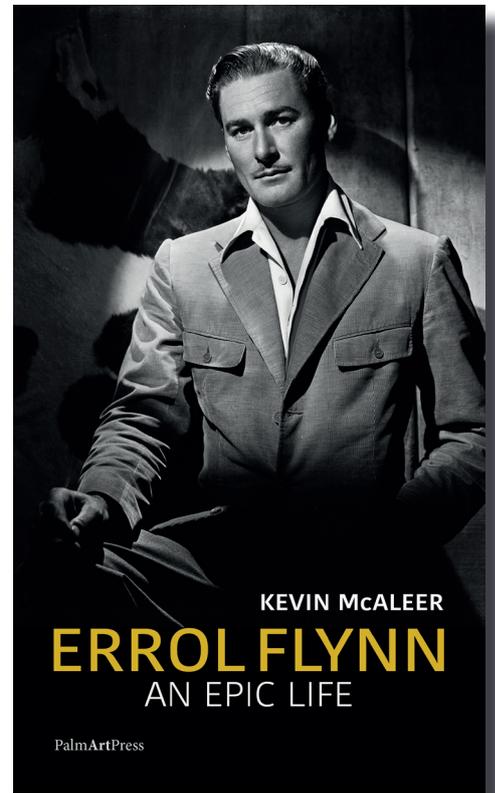
The basic drama with Errol Flynn was that he had everything – looks, charm, talent, intelligence, and a huge following of devoted fans and willing women. He was the classic image of a swashbuckling hero and romantic lover. That which other men merely fantasized about, Flynn did with style and dash, living in a way which surpassed any film he ever made. But somewhere on the road to movie immortality he embarked on a destructive lifestyle that wrecked his career and ultimately killed him. Why did it happen? What were the forces at work in this complex individual whose own father regarded him as an “enigma”?

Kevin McAleer is not the first author to wend his way through the maze of myth and falsehood that comprises Flynn’s legend, but no one has yet attempted an epic narrative of his life in verse. Flynn’s ghostwriter for his memoir *My Wicked, Wicked Ways* called him “one of the most poetic men I have ever met,” and McAleer holds the view that biographies and other accounts of Flynn have failed to capture his verve and essential spirit, which had greater affinity to an age of high-flown lyricism than to our own prosaic times. Flynn himself was fond of claiming that he’d been born into the wrong century, so McAleer is taking him at his word and recounting his saga in the same way as did English balladeers the tale of Robin Hood – Flynn’s most memorable screen incarnation.

In detailing Flynn’s life, McAleer draws inspiration from Lord Byron’s playful and jocosely *Don Juan*, whose stanza form he employs. Flynn was not only the embodiment of Byronic romanticism but one of the twentieth century’s great libertines, having also assumed the title role in the 1948 Hollywood film *Adventures of Don Juan*, so it is only fitting that the roguish ottava rima stanza be used in recounting his life.



Kevin McAleer was born in Santa Monica, California, received his doctorate in history from UC San Diego, and presently lives as a writer and translator in Berlin. His stories have appeared in German and American periodicals, he is author notably of the novels *Surferboy* and *Berlin Tango* as well as co-editor of the two-volume work *Everyman in Europe: Essays in Social History* and author of *Dueling: The Cult of Honor in fin-de-siècle Germany* which was chosen by the Encyclopaedia Britannica as one of its “Books of the Year.” In his *Errol Flynn: An Epic Life* the author now brings the fine art of versemaking to his unique combination of rigorous scholarship and storytelling flair.



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