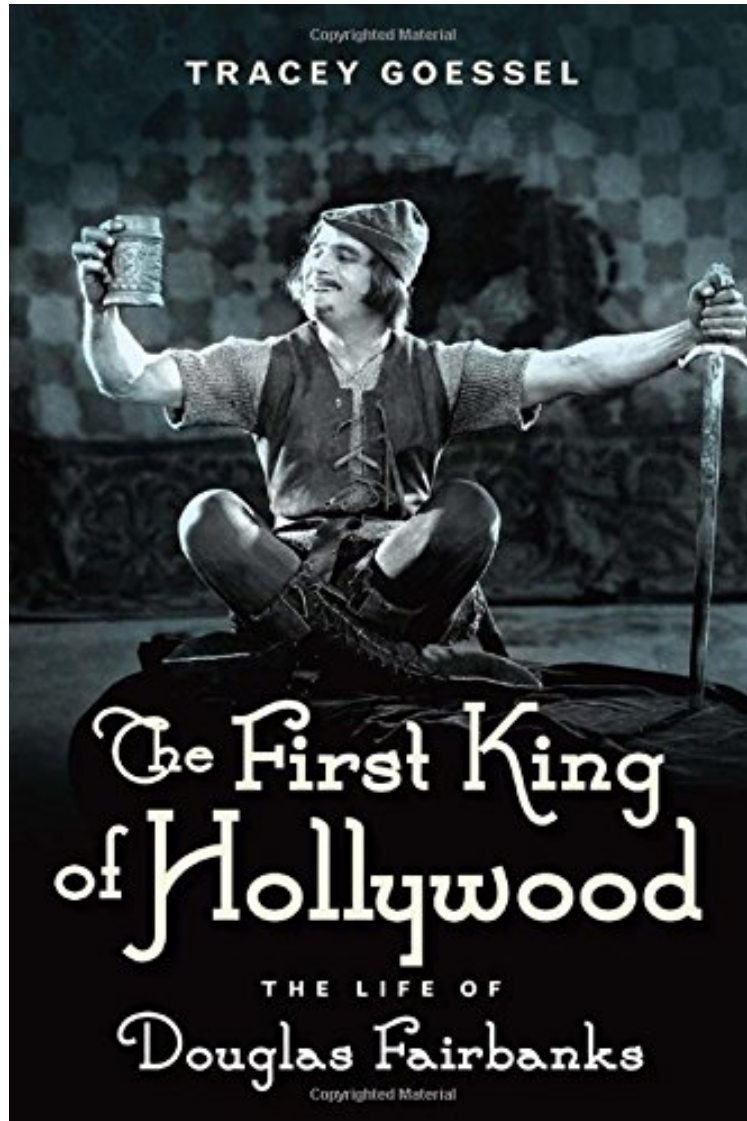


[Free pdf] The First King of Hollywood: The Life of Douglas Fairbanks

The First King of Hollywood: The Life of Douglas Fairbanks

Tracey Goessel

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Tracey Goessel : The First King of Hollywood: The Life of Douglas Fairbanks before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The First King of Hollywood: The Life of Douglas Fairbanks:

29 of 30 people found the following review helpful. A Thoroughly Delightful Read!By Donna HillDouglas Fairbanks, Sr. could be described in many terms, "buoyant, breezy, daring, agile, enthusiastic, intensely earnest, peppery, live and wide-awake." In fact, I stole this quote directly from Tracey Goessel's new, and dare I say, landmark biography of

Fairbanks entitled *The First King of Hollywood: The Life of Douglas Fairbanks* published this month by Chicago Review Press. Douglas Fairbanks was many things besides a swashbuckler, he was also a pioneer, astute businessman, ardent lover and husband, sometimes mostly absent father and indubitably, a star. Goessel has been researching her subject for over a decade and this shows in the depth of detail uncovered in this volume and also in the rarity of the images used in the book (because I am a photo maven). One of the great strengths in this biography is Goessel's style of writing. Her prose is exuberant, buoyant and filled with humor, much like Fairbanks himself. Not only that, it's a very well written tome. It is rare in today's market for biographies to find one that is so scrupulously researched, so level-headed and crammed with details (especially in the footnotes, many of which made me laugh out loud). There is a lot of meat in this book, but, it does not feel like a heavy meal on your stomach. You (me) devour it with the relish of James Beard and are left hungry for more! We are not weighed down with psycho-babble analyzing Fairbanks' thoughts and feelings, nor is there any imaginary dialogue. Quotes are sourced directly either from the horse's mouth or the person in question. Goessel also does not shirk from calling shenanigans if the memories of some do not line up with the facts. Fairbanks had his flaws, and Goessel is not shy in discussing them. It's clear as mud she loves her subject (who can blame her), but, nothing ever descends to fangirl blathering. Again, at the risk of sounding like a fangirl myself, this book is a pure pleasure to read. We are not also subjected to page after page of reciting of each lengthy plot from Fairbanks' equally long film career. This is a great blessing since the recitation of plotlines, today, often takes up a good portion of any biography. Now, not to say plotlines are not discussed, but, these are paragraph summaries, not page after page. (HOORAY). The various production details are fascinating. The true gold in this book are the quotations from some of Fairbanks' letters to Mary Pickford, which she kept in a box until the day she died. It's rare to have something so personal survive and to end up being curated in such good hands, well it's a miracle. 90 years on, it's still a great love story. I confess, I got to the last page and I did shed a tear or two. It is a pity that Fairbanks is often relegated to a footnote, or only referred to as a swashbuckler from the silent era. Hopefully Goessel's fine book will do much to bring Fairbanks back to the forefront as a true pioneer (as his wife Mary Pickford is almost universally acclaimed to be) and remembered for his good works, as well as the incredible entertainment enjoyment his films bring to the viewer 90-100 years later. NOTE: If you are reading the kindle edition, the photo inserts are AFTER the index and they're not listed in the TOC. In short (or not), I give this book a healthy and solid ***** stars! 12 of 12 people found the following review helpful. The amazing Douglas Fairbanks By Uncle Bill Dukenfield One of the best "celebrity bios" to come along in a great while. Goessel captures the nature of Fairbanks...his wit, his athleticism, his sense of play... in her fast-paced writing which seems to be from a pen dipped in the essence of Fairbanks. A delightful read that covers the story of this amazing man's life, the goods and bads, and is not just a "and then he did this, and then he did that" litany. A needed overview of her subject as well as much comment on early American theater and motion pictures. Highly recommended 6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. An outstanding work of biography and film history By J.B. Kaufman In this book, one of the most important figures in Hollywood's Golden Age gets the literary treatment he deserves. Tracey Goessel has been pursuing her Fairbanks research for years with passion, dedication, and more than a little savvy, going so far as to build her own world-class collection of primary documents and memorabilia. Books researched with this level of painstaking care are rare enough; still rarer are books that build on that foundation with skillful writing. Under Ms. Goessel's sure hand, "The First King of Hollywood" is not a dry compendium of statistics but a page-turning delight. She communicates her enthusiasm to the reader, telling her story with authority and just the right balance of respect and playful wit. We need more books like this. And we need more books by this author!

Silent film superstar Douglas Fairbanks was an absolute charmer. Irrepressibly vivacious, he spent his life leaping over and into things, from his early Broadway successes to his marriage to the great screen actress Mary Pickford to the way he made Hollywood his very own town. The inventor of the swashbuckler, he wasn't only an actor; he all but directed and produced his movies, and in founding United Artists with Pickford, Charlie Chaplin, and D. W. Griffith, he challenged the studio system. But listing his accomplishments is one thing and telling his story another. Tracey Goessel has made the latter her life's work, and with exclusive access to Fairbanks' love letters to Pickford, she brilliantly illuminates how Fairbanks conquered not just the entertainment world but the heart of perhaps the most famous woman in the world at the time. When Mary Pickford died, she was an alcoholic, self-imprisoned in her mansion, nearly alone, and largely forgotten. But she left behind a small box; in it, worn and refolded, were her letters from Douglas Fairbanks. Pickford and Fairbanks had ruled Hollywood as its first king and queen for a glorious decade. But the letters began long before, when they were both married to others, when revealing the affair would have caused a great scandal. Now these letters form the centerpiece of the first truly definitive biography of Hollywood's first king, the man who did his own stunts and built his own studio and formed a company that allowed artists to distribute their own works outside the studio system. But Goessel's research uncovered more: that Fairbanks' first film appearance was two years earlier than had been assumed; that his stories of how he got into theater, and then into films, were fabricated; that the Pickford-Fairbanks Studios had a specially constructed underground trench so that Fairbanks could jog in the nude; that Fairbanks himself insisted racist references be removed from his films' intertitles;

and the true cause of Fairbankss death. Fairbanks was the top male star of his generation, the maker of some of the greatest films of his era: The Thief of Bagdad, Robin Hood, The Mark of Zorro. He was fun, witty, engaging, creative, athletic, and a force to be reckoned with. He shaped our idea of the Hollywood hero, and Hollywood has never been the same since. His story, like his movies, is full of passion, bravado, romance, and desire. Here at last is his definitive biography, based on extensive and brand-new research into every aspect of his career, and written with fine understanding, wit, and verve.

one of the most delightful Hollywood biographies to slide down the mast in years. New York Times Sunday