

The First King of Hollywood: The Life of Douglas Fairbanks

By Tracey Goessel

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The complete, definitive biography of Hollywood's first superstar

Douglas Fairbanks was the greatest leading man of his generation—the first and the best of the swashbucklers. He made some of the greatest films of the silent era, including *The Thief of Bagdad*, *Robin Hood*, and *The Mark of Zorro*. With Charlie Chaplin, D. W. Griffith, and his wife, film star Mary Pickford, he founded United Artists. Pickford and Fairbanks ruled Hollywood as its first king and queen for a decade. Now a cache of newly discovered love letters from Fairbanks to Pickford form the centerpiece of the first truly definitive biography of Hollywood's first king, the original Robin Hood, the true Zorro, the man who did his own stunts, built his own studio, and formed a company that allowed artists to distribute their own wealth outside the studio system. Fairbanks was fun, witty, engaging, creative, athletic, and a force to be reckoned with. He shaped our idea of the Hollywood hero, and it has never been the same since. His story, like his movies, is full of passion, bravado, and romance.

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Editorial Review

Review

“one of the most delightful Hollywood biographies to slide down the mast in years.” —*New York Times Sunday Review*

“First-time author Goessel puts the silent film actor back in the spotlight where he rightly belongs with this salient and comprehensive biography.” —*Publishers Weekly*, starred review

“[A] book that would be perfect for the cinephile in your life.” —Retroist

“Tracey Goessel's biography of Douglas Fairbanks is impeccably researched and elegantly written. It gives new relevance to one of the seminal figures of 20th century movies and manhood, and at the same time it gives us an amazingly intimate view of the tragic love affair between Fairbanks and Mary Pickford. This is not merely a worthy book, it's a necessary book.” —Scott Eyman, author of *John Wayne: The Life and Legend* and *Empire of Dreams: The Epic Life of Cecil B. DeMille*

“Tracey Goessel gives us for the first time the real, three-dimensional man, in all his vibrancy, creativity, and sexiness. Beyond being a mega-star, he was a daring, hands-on producer and industry leader.” —Cari Beauchamp, historian, journalist, and author of *Joseph P. Kennedy Presents: His Hollywood Years*

“A lively biography of a lauded actor.” —*Kirkus Reviews*

“a royal read.” —The Huffington Post

“Tracey Goessel has researched Fairbanks's life and work more thoroughly than anyone before her, and her book will undoubtedly become a classic among film biographies.” —Kevin Brownlow, author, *The Parade's Gone By*

“[The] prose is exuberant, buoyant and filled with humor, much like Fairbanks himself.” —Strictly Vintage Hollywood

“this highly recommended book illuminates a vanished era of American film.” —*Library Journal*

“In an epic new biography, pioneering film star Douglas Fairbanks finally gets an in depth exploration of his eventful life. This entertaining book is heavy on the detail, but also humorous and full of compassion for its subject.” —A Classic Movie Blog

"doggedly researched and sharply written." —The Guardian

About the Author

Tracey Goessel is on the board of directors of the San Francisco Silent Film Festival and is the founder of the Los Angeles-based Film Preservation Society. She has published numerous articles on silent film history and has lectured widely on Douglas Fairbanks. She is a major collector of silent film ephemera, and her purchase of the Pickford-Fairbanks love letters started an eight-year quest to write the definitive biography of America's favorite swashbuckler.

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From reader reviews:

Melissa Alfonso:

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