

# Errol Flynn

## Blueprint for a Tasmanian Devil

by Nick Zegarac

What is it about Errol Flynn that women continue to find so attractive? True, he is the only man to ever make leotards seem the height of viral masculinity. An adventuresome rake, whose eclectic background included stints in professional athletics, government service and panning for gold, his restless wandering could not be tamed by any singular pursuit.

Eventually, Flynn found employ for his dashing good looks as a matinee idol. But the romantic swath he cut on celluloid paled by comparison to his scandalous penchant for playful after hours' debauchery. To those who knew him best, Errol Flynn was as inwardly conflicted as he was outwardly misunderstood; an elegant troubled man who, in Flynn's own words, "*had an insatiable desire to run through the world and not be hemmed by anybody.*"

He was twenty-six when relative obscurity gave way to superstardom; unable to claim youthful ignorance in his indiscretions, yet insufficiently matured to accept adult responsibility for them. His enigma as a rascalion was well entrenched by the time rumors of Nazism and a sexual preference for underage girls became part of his swarthy tableau. Yet, neither a criminal charge of rape in 1942 nor his growing addiction to recreational morphine seemed to tarnish Flynn's reputation as the dashing all-American ladies man.

However, his persona as a wanton reveler and astute womanizer seems to have been, at least in part and in retrospect, slightly exaggerated. Flynn was a family man in rogue's garb and painfully self-destructive beneath his accomplished façade. Always too, there was some great sense of boredom about him – the notion that one lifetime could not contain all the living he would have desired for himself.

"*The search for sensations has played a great part in my life,*" Flynn explained in later years, "*but there have been other quests.*" Yet those 'others' have been eclipsed by that animal magnetism emanating off the silver screen. If Errol Flynn always



returned to the faithful pure heart, often cast as Olivia de Havilland in his films, then beyond the footlights he was unwilling or, at the very least, unable to maintain fidelity in any of his relationships.

Even today, the moniker "in like Flynn" haunts his reputation with tall tales of sexual voracity. The slant of Errol Flynn's iconography towards a beautiful and heroic paragon of manhood largely exists today thanks to his movies; and therein lays the great mystery of Errol Flynn. Was he vulnerable or insincere; genuine or just a great big tease adding new editions to his ever-expanding boudoir?

Perhaps, in the final analysis it is true what they say about the proverbial nice guy finishing last. Flynn's bad boy image in private life became the perfect counterbalance to his on-screen nobleman. Tragically, any romantic trappings entertained by those who desired to know Errol Flynn better in real life proved all too incidental once the spotlight had been turned off.

