



Peter O'Toole : A Biography

Michael Freedland

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Dust jacket notes: "People have said that Peter O'Toole is probably the greatest actor since Olivier; the crown prince of the theatre who renounced his claim to the throne after playing Lawrence of Arabia; a brilliant Shakespearian actor whose Hamlet was the greatest of the century but who is now haunted by the ghost of Macbeth. Bestselling biographer Michael Freedland traces the story of the toolmaker's son from Connemara, County Galway, whose father taught him how to escape from a racecourse with the loot when the wrong horse ran past the post. The young O'Toole was a newspaper copy boy and National Service sailor before his burning ambition to act won him a scholarship to RADA and led to a brilliant career with triumphs such as Becket and Lawrence of Arabia. And yet, O'Toole's name seems to be more frequently associated with tales of drunken brawls and roustabout behavior. Here is the man whom Katharine Hepburn playfully punched and who returned the compliment by filling her car with empty beer cans and spirit bottles. One director said of O'Toole that he needed to surround himself constantly with psychopaths. This fascinating biography gets right to the heart of the man with the steely blue eyes. It describes the pain when his actress wife Sian Phillips divorced him; the women in his life - none of whom has ever captured his wild spirit; and the loyal and loving son who brought his dying mother by ambulance to see the first performance of Macbeth - the production which caused the biggest fight over a Shakespeare play since the days of the bard himself. Peter O'Toole is unique. In this first-ever biography a true picture emerges of one of today's greatest actors."

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