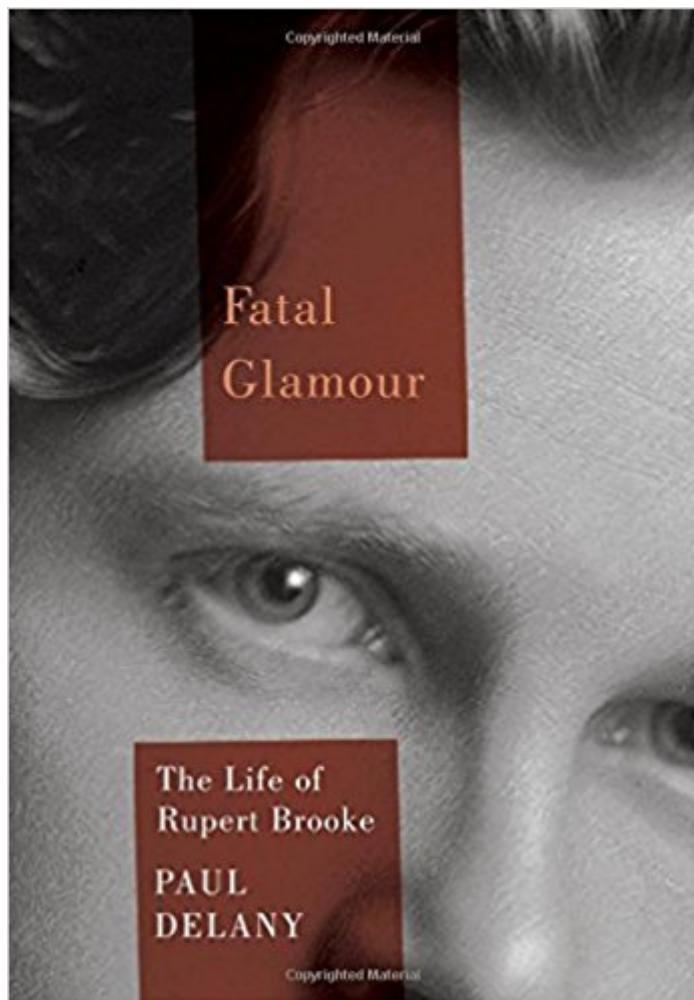


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Fatal Glamour: The Life Of Rupert Brooke



Synopsis

Rupert Brooke (b. 1887) died on April 23, 1915, two days before the start of the Battle of Gallipoli, and three weeks after his poem "The Soldier" was read from the pulpit of St Paul's Cathedral on Easter Sunday. Thus began the myth of a man whose poetry crystallizes the sentiments that drove so many to enlist and assured those who remained in England that their beloved sons had been absolved of their sins and made perfect by going to war. In Fatal Glamour, Paul Delany details the person behind the myth to show that Brooke was a conflicted, but magnetic figure. Strikingly beautiful and able to fascinate almost everyone who saw him - from Winston Churchill to Henry James - Brooke was sexually ambivalent and emotionally erratic. He had a series of turbulent affairs with women, but also a hidden gay life. He was attracted by the Fabian Society's socialist idealism and Neo-Pagan innocence, but could be by turns nasty, misogynistic, and anti-Semitic. Brooke's emotional troubles were acutely personal and also acutely typical of Edwardian young men formed by the public school system. Delany finds a thread of consistency in the character of someone who was so well able to move others, but so unable to know or to accept himself. A revealing biography of a singular personality, Fatal Glamour also uses Brooke's life to shed light on why the First World War began and how it unfolded.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Rupert Brooke had a fascinating life, what with being a sadistic bully to the women who associated with him, looking impossibly handsome and lovable, and turning into a national hero because he

wrote some agreeable if sentimental poems about England just at the start of WWI--and then went off to be a soldier, but died before he went into battle because of what was apparently an infected insect bite. This is a fine and very well researched biography which takes into account things we've learned about Brooke recently. I don't think I was aware of what an anti-Semite Brooke was. I think it's an excellent and very well written book. I think that Delany may have felt understandably hesitant to use much of the material mentioned in Nigel Jones's scathing biography of Brooke, simply because Jones got there first; it had been covered. This is the more reserved and balanced biography, I think, whereas Jones dug up a lot of dirt from the letters Rupert wrote and received; of course perhaps Delany evaluated that material differently. There's certainly agreement about his mistreatment of Brooke's female friends. Jones, however, is straightforward in making it clear that Brooke was in fact a handsome, manipulative bully who hectored his friends about what they ought to do, why they should promise not to have sex (except with him), how vile they were if they DID have sex, etc. etc. etc. He was constantly juggling women so each would think SHE was the only one for him. He was a self-righteous creep and pest and sounds like a personality disorder on steroids. He and his friends were a bit younger than the Bloomsbury group, and one of Delany's strengths, I think, is making it clear that one difference is that no one in Brooke's circle was as talented as the members of the Bloomsbury circle.

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