

# Shane O'Neill: 'The Grand Disturber' of Elizabethan Ireland

Brian Mallon



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An historically rooted and dramatic telling of the life of Shane O'Neill, 'a rogue and a rakehell' who was the arch-foe of young Queen Elizabeth I in the early years of her reign. Needing to assert her absolute power, she denied his claim to succeed his father as Earl of Tyrone, setting off a chain of events that nearly saw the English driven out of Ireland. With his victories rose his ambitions, until only the kingship of Ireland would satisfy him. This man is known to history as 'Shane the Proud'. At the center of O'Neill's trajectory is a passionate love story. He was helped in his endeavors by a young Scottish Countess who was married to an old man, an old man who was Shane's 'chiefest rival', and allied to the English. The fiery redhead, Lady Katherine, delivered up her husband to Shane, and thereafter became his wife. The 'irregularities' of this scandalous coupling have heretofore kept Shane O'Neill from the canon of Irish heroes, but this fresh telling, reflecting newly discovered information and reconsidered scholarship sheds surprising new light, and restores his place in the pantheon of Ireland's heroes. This is the epic story of Shane O'Neill's rising ambitions, a powerful tale of a Gaelic world struggling to survive, of a forbidden love that set a course of events that nearly destroyed the ambitions of Tudor England in Ireland. This was the inevitable clash of two dynasties, of two dissonant civilizations, and of two headstrong powerful individuals, Shane and Elizabeth. With their irreconcilable obligations to history, they were destined to match wits, to cross swords, and to see this contention to its bitter end.

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