



Alec Guinness: A Life (The Great British Actors Series)

Garry O'Connor

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Alec Guinness: A Life (originally, Alec Guinness: The Unknown), is Garry O'Connor's second biography of Guinness, published in 2003. The first, Alec Guinness: Master of Disguise was published 10 years earlier to universal acclaim, yet when he died in 2000, a large part of the truth about him was still hidden.

Guinness appeared in 77 films and 55 plays: an outstanding career spanning the 20th-century. The Ealing comedies, his Obi-Wan Kenobi in Star Wars, the Oscar-winning Colonel Nicholson in A Bridge on the River Kwai as well as George Smiley in Smiley's People, ensure he will never be forgotten.

O'Connor's riveting biography adds a new depth and dimension to our understanding, not just of Guinness's many layered, complex life, but of his remarkable acting ability, showing how he was able to subsume his personality in the roles he crafted.

This, of four of O'Connor's lives of great 20th-century actors, is undoubtedly the best. Sheridan Morley of The Literary Review called it, 'A truly brilliant detective study... One of the truly great actor biographies of our time.' Alexander Walker of The Evening Standard called it, 'A sourcebook for all future Guinness commentators.'

In the Guardian Simon Callow judged that 'O'Connor's openness to this [hidden sexual] aspect of Guinness has resulted in a theatrical biography that goes far beyond the reach of most such books, and is his best book so far.'

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