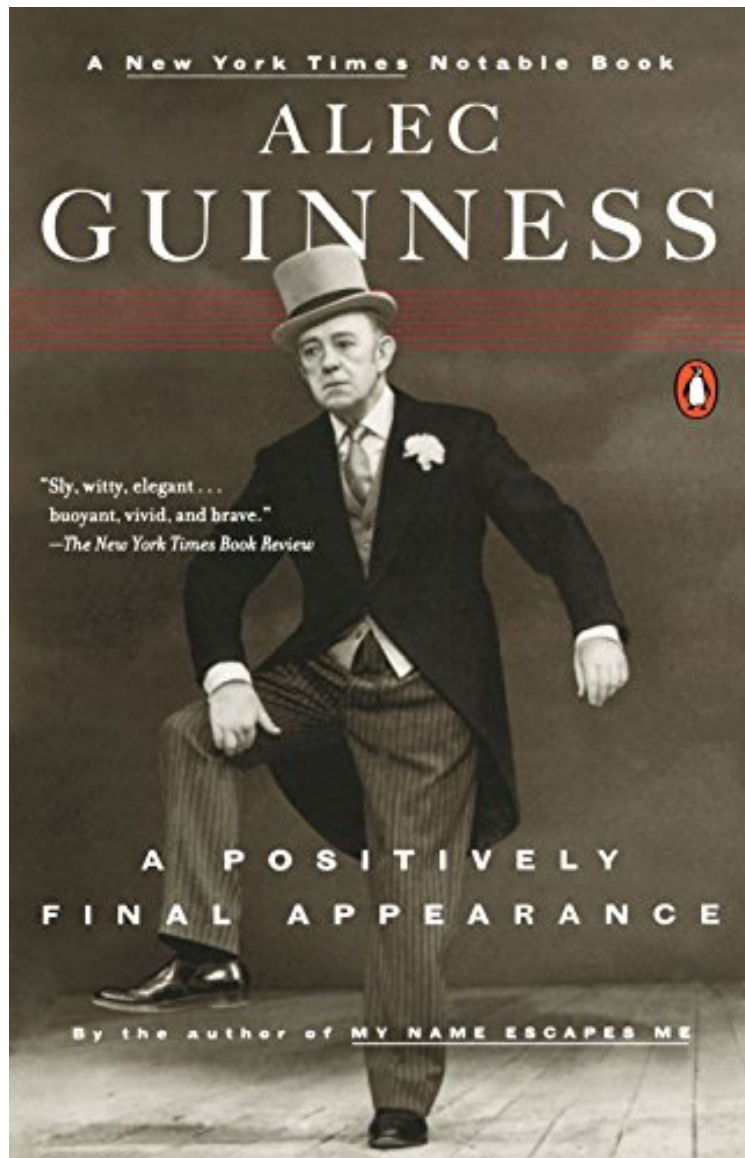


(Mobile book) A Positively Final Appearance

A Positively Final Appearance

Alec Guinness

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Alec Guinness : A Positively Final Appearance before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Positively Final Appearance:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Darker but still witty reading...By John the ReaderThe charming cover shows Sir Alec in one of his Stan Laurel moods and poses, this time in executing an especially commissioned dance on stage, with careful chorography he says, for the more infirm and elderly performer. The book is a sort of

journal, a valid form of biography, and covers his closing years ending shortly before his death in 2000. By now Sir Alec Guinness in his late eighties is rather frail, considers himself 'elderly and rather infirm' as is aware of the dangers of becoming a curmudgeon - but despite his watchfulness he still embarrasses himself by catching himself peevishly growling at modern youth, and the lowering of standards (particularly when his beloved Connaught Hotel decides to become "popular"). The first chapter, "Men as trees, walking" opens the book in an eye clinic surgical ward - it proves to be one of a series of continual doctor's visits in an ever increasing go-round that most of his more senior readers will know all too well. He retains his ability to enchant and entertain however, and his mischievous wit is once more peeping at us over the top of the page - among those he thanks for help in writing this book (and it really was his last) are his dogs, "who instinctively knew the right moments to interrupt me"! Amazingly he foretells of his own death, awaking one morning he says, thinking "You only have another seven hundred days to live". He estimates that made the time of his passing as "November 2000. Not bad I thought..." In fact he died a little earlier, in the August and his beloved, life-long wife Merula confirmed the rightness of their companionship by dying in October. Given advanced age and health problems this is a far darker tale than the other two books in his series of biography (*Blessings in Disguise* and *My Name Escapes Me*) but it is still a delightful read. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The last of Alec Guinness's memoirs, this is a ... By Lou The last of Alec Guinness's memoirs, this is a lovely book with longer, more essay-like entries than "My Name Escapes Me". 11 of 12 people found the following review helpful. A great man By Ian Burley The journal of an extraordinary gentleman, one of the greatest actors ever to grace stage or screen. His reflections on his career are moving and perceptive, totally lacking in self-aggrandisement. His thoughts on the whole "Star Wars" phenomenon are particularly witty but smack of the desperation of being hounded by that film's fans. It's tragic that this great man may only be remembered by modern generations for his appearance in that opus instead of for his work in the Ealing comedies, "The Bridge on the River Kwai", his lengthy stage career and his magnificent turn on TV as George Smiley.

A New York Times Notable Book from an Oscar award-winning icon. These journal entries are comprised of Sir Alec Guinness's observations on Britain during the tumultuous times of Princess Diana's death and the election of Tony Blair, and comments on his quintessentially English country life with his wife. Written from the summer of 1996 through 1998, *A Positively Final Appearance* is a follow-up to the best-selling *My Name Escapes Me*. Guinness offers frank (and surprising) reflections on the effects of appearing in the Star Wars films, and both hilarious and poignant memories of such well-known performers as Humphrey Bogart and Noel Coward. This delightful, humorous journal is a wonderful legacy from a beloved actor. Sly, witty, elegant . . . buoyant, vivid, and brave. The New York Times Book Review Simply, deliciously funny. The Washington Post Reading Guinness is like finally sitting down and soaking in the wisdom of the grandparent you never seem to have time for. And we may never see the likes of him again. Chicago Sun-Times

.com Alec Guinness begins his most recent memoir, a sort of sequel to his bestselling *My Name Escapes Me*, with what he calls an apology for a "ramshackle book": "It states it is a Journal and yet it doesn't quite aspire to that and it isn't a diary. Not many dates are to be found in it." What is in it are as charming a collection of memories, readings, observations, and anecdotes as could be imagined from an actor whose genius for self-effacement is legendary. Now in his 85th year, the celebrated Sir Alec has made a major contribution to a minor but much-loved literary form, the notebooks of an English gentleman. (It's no surprise to learn in these pages that Samuel Butler, author of *The Way of All Flesh* and his own published *Notebooks*, is one of Guinness's favorite authors.) Considering his age and virtual retirement, Guinness's life is an astonishingly active and full one, and for all the reminiscing, much of *A Positively Final Appearance* is taken up in describing his present-day doings with his beloved wife Merula (married 61 years), their dogs, and the occasional forays they make to visit friends and family. There are trips farther afield as well, to a spa in Baden-Baden and to films and theater, including a hilarious attempt to see the controversial West End hit *Shopping and F****ing* (with Guinness suggesting several substitutes for the supplied asterisks). His omnivorous reading is simply staggering, and a lifelong love affair with Shakespeare is evidenced not only by his memories of favorite performances but also his readings of scenes from the Bard, which reveal an imaginative scholarship infused with a lifetime's theatrical experience. One of the strangest paradoxes of this superb actor (and equally fluent prose stylist) is that he seems destined to be remembered primarily for his becloaked performance in the original Star Wars trilogy as Obi-Wan Kenobi. There's a priceless story included about Guinness's encounter with a child who claimed to have seen the first film over 100 times, and the request he made of the boy: "Do you think you could promise never to see Star Wars again?" The result of this request, along with much else in this entirely captivating memoir, will amuse and delight. --John Longenbaugh From Publishers Weekly Erudite, droll and modest, this sequel to *My Name Escapes Me*, written in the form of a diary from the summer of 1996 through 1998, comprises the distinguished actor's celebrations of life's pleasures great (the solace of Catholicism; a loving marriage) and small (a good meal, a devoted pet). The opening description of a cataract operation as successful that seeing the world "sharply and in full color" prompts the actor to "burst into happy tears" is typical of a book that acknowledges how powerful and how

evanescent such pleasures can be. The book is shadowed with dark ruminations about the rise of germ warfare, the ethics of abortion and the arms race between Pakistan and India. At the same time, Guinness, married for 60 years to a woman who drolly blames "the aggressiveness of Donald Duck" for all that is deplorable in Western civilization, refuses to take himself too seriously, and the book can be ferociously quaint. Although his greatest fame came belatedly with his role in the Star Wars trilogy, Guinness is disdainful of the films' cultish appeal, calling them modest entertainments whose acolytes have lost themselves "in a fantasy world of secondhand, childish banalities." He asks one favor of a 12-year-old boy who claims to have seen the film more than 100 times: "Do you think you could promise never to see Star Wars again?" Guinness describes his 1939 Romeo as "the worst... ever to disgrace our boards." Such puckish self-effacement comes easily to a man who thinks, upon seeing the Hale-Bopp comet, a spectacle "not even seen by Socrates, Christ, or Shakespeare" that it makes the hurly-burly of a British election year "no more than a tiny puff of dust." National publicity. (Oct.) Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal. Let's hope he's wrong, but Sir Alec seems determined that this is his final appearance as author. Perhaps, at the age of 85, he's entitled to put away the pen, but many of us will miss future installments of his life and his memories. Blessings in Disguise was written in a more traditional biographical format, while My Name Escapes Me and this latest book are written as journals, though Guinness takes the opportunity to wander among decades and events as the mood strikes him. He offers theater and film lovers a charming (and at times piercingly perceptive) peek behind the curtains of the world of the British stage and screen, as well as British politics and life. He seems to have known and acted with everyone who is anyone in the theater but is so casual about it all that it's like being invited to a small party where we will know everyone, too. Thanks, Sir Alec, for inviting us along. Highly recommended for all libraries, especially those with theater collections. ASusan L. Peters, Emory Univ. Lib., Atlanta Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.