

## Topic Page: [Guinness, Alec, 1914-2000](#)

Definition: **Guinness, Sir Alec** from *Philip's Encyclopedia*

British actor. He is best-known for his film performances in the Ealing Studios comedies, such as *Kind Hearts and Coronets* (1949), *The Lavender Hill Mob* (1951) and *The Ladykillers* (1955). He won an Academy Award for best actor in *Bridge on the River Kwai* (1957). Other films include *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962), *Doctor Zhivago* (1965), *Star Wars* (1977), *A Passage to India* (1984), and *Little Dorrit* (1988). He was knighted in 1959.

Summary Article: **Guinness, Sir Alec**

From *Chambers Biographical Dictionary*

1914-2000

English actor

Born in London, he worked briefly as a junior copywriter for an advertising firm before training to become an actor at the Fay Compton Studio of Dramatic Art. He made his stage debut in *Libel* (1934). He appeared as Osric in John Gielgud's production of *Hamlet* (1934-35) and joined the Old Vic in 1936, where he played *Hamlet* (1938). He rejoined the company in 1946 after serving in the Royal Navy throughout World War II. He made his film debut as an extra in *Evensong* (1934) but began his cinema career in earnest with the Dickens adaptations *Great Expectations* (1946) and *Oliver Twist* (1948). Long associated with Ealing Studios, his many comic triumphs include *Kind Hearts and Coronets* (1949), *The Lavender Hill Mob* (1951) and *The Ladykillers* (1955). He received a Best Actor Oscar for *The Bridge on the River Kwai* (1957) and an Honorary Award for lifetime achievement in 1980. Other films include *Tunes of Glory* (1960), *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962), *Star Wars* (1977) and *Little Dorrit* (1988). Although infrequent, his many distinguished stage performances include *The Cocktail Party* (1949-50), *Ross* (1960), *Dylan* (1964), *Macbeth* (1966), *A Voyage Round My Father* (1971), *The Old Country* (1977) and *A Walk in the Woods* (1989). His television work includes two BAFTA-winning appearances as inscrutable spycatcher George Smiley in *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy* (1979) and *Smiley's People* (1982) as well as *Foreign Field* (1993). He was knighted in 1959 and published the autobiographies *Blessings in Disguise* (1985) and *My Name Escapes Me* (1996) and *A Positively Final Appearance* (1999).

Read, Piers Paul Alec Guinness: The Authorised Biography (2003).

**APA**

Chicago

Harvard

MLA

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Guinness, Sir Alec. (2011). In L. Rodger, & J. Bakewell, *Chambers Biographical Dictionary* (9th ed.). London, UK: Chambers Harrap. Retrieved from [https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/guinness\\_alec\\_1914](https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/guinness_alec_1914)



## APA

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## Chicago

"Guinness, Sir Alec." In *Chambers Biographical Dictionary*, by Liam Rodger, and Joan Bakewell. 9th ed. Chambers Harrap, 2011. [https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/guinness\\_alec\\_1914](https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/guinness_alec_1914)

## Harvard

Guinness, Sir Alec. (2011). In L. Rodger & J. Bakewell, *Chambers Biographical Dictionary*. (9th ed.). [Online]. London: Chambers Harrap. Available from: [https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/guinness\\_alec\\_1914](https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/guinness_alec_1914) [Accessed 15 October 2019].

## MLA

"Guinness, Sir Alec." *Chambers Biographical Dictionary*, Liam Rodger, and Joan Bakewell, Chambers Harrap, 9th edition, 2011. *Credo Reference*, [https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/guinness\\_alec\\_1914](https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/guinness_alec_1914). Accessed 15 Oct. 2019.