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Otherwise Engaged: The Life of Alan Bates

Donald Spoto

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The actor who emerges in this biography is a compassionate man who was drawn to troubled souls, who disliked the passivity he detected in himself but was capable of communicating and understanding psychological subtleties' Observer

In 1956, at the age of 22, Alan Bates was cast in John Osborne's controversial play, Look Back in Anger. The play changed the course of British theatre – and of Alan's life. With a sudden rush of fame, he became a member of a new circle of actors at the Royal Court: the English Stage Company. From then on, he also worked steadily in television and won international acclaim for his roles in a number of major films, from A Kind of Loving and Zorba the Greek to Women in Love. But his personal life was not always as seemingly straightforward as his career – his relationships, including that with his wife, Victoria Ward, were often turbulent. Drawing on dozens of interviews with his family, lovers, colleagues and friends – and mining a rich store of primary research – Donald Spoto chronicles Alan's achievements as a performer against the backdrop of a complicated personal life.

'A judicious critical appraisal' ' The Times

'Serious and sympathetic' Literary Review

'You have captured Alan and his life … It has been very moving to read and to relive' Benedick Bates, son of Alan Bates

'Fascinating. Donald Spoto's book captures his essence' Arthur Laurents, author of The Way We Were

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