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**HOW TO
CHOOSE
A MONOLOGUE
FOR ANY
AUDITION**

And Other Thoughts for Actors

SECOND EDITION

ABOUT YOU

What Kind of Actor Are You?

There's more to life than you know and it's all happening out there.

Discover what part you can play and then go for it.

IAN MCKELLAN

I sometimes ask actors in my New York classes who say they want to work in the professional theater, “Can you name your top ten favorite New York theater directors? Not just ten, but your ten *favorite*?”

I’ve found that very few actors can answer this question. I think this is partly because acting is seen as a difficult profession with few rules, and one in which most actors are expected to be happy if they get cast in *anything*. So why torture yourself by identifying your favorites?

This is why: if you don’t know what a goal is, how can you move toward it?

The more you know about what inspires, moves, and motivates you, the more targets you will have to aim at. If you find out there’s an open call for a play by a fantastic new playwright whose work you just happened to read, or a session with the casting director of an independent film you loved, you’re more likely to go the extra mile to get yourself down there than if the name means nothing to you.

Knowing who you are as an actor is a different question than, “What is your type?” which is discussed in the next chapter.

It’s about knowing what kind of writing, shows, films, and performances made you want to act in the first place. It’s about knowing which projects you would do anything to be seen for—and which ones you can take or leave.

I’m talking about an ever-deepening exploration. Consciously developing and defining what kind of actor you are over the course of your career will make you recognize the opportunities—and the auditions—that will truly help you express

yourself as that actor.

Doing this thinking and exploring will inspire you as you read and collect audition material. It will give you heroes, and it will give you goals. Here are some questions to get you started.

Who or what are your favorite:

- Actors?
- Contemporary plays and playwrights?
- Classical plays and playwrights?
- Theater directors?
- Independent films and directors?
- Studio films and directors?
- Classic films and directors?
- Theater companies?
- Theaters (which stages would you *love* to act on)?
- Styles of acting?
- Types of characters to play?
- Periods in history?
- Cultures?

And:

- What kinds of stories do you want to tell?
- Who is telling the kinds of stories you want to tell?

- What do you want to do with your acting? Explore it as a potential career? Support yourself? Support a family? Do certain kinds of projects? Change the world in some way?
- What kinds of experiences do you want to give your audiences?
- What kinds of projects would you love to act in? Broadway tours? Repertory companies? Political theater? Film locations?
- Do you want to be an actor-for-hire?
- Do you want to create your own work?
- What skill levels do you hope to reach as an actor?
- Who are some actors who have reached these levels? How did they do it? What can you learn from their journeys?
- What parts of your acting do you most want to develop?
- Are you also a writer? A director? A producer?
- Do you want to act as part of your community, or do you want to reach the whole world?
- What other questions will help you develop your sense of yourself as an actor?
- What are your acting goals?

It's easy to become so distracted by simply wanting to get cast that you lose sight of the kinds of work that will actually make you the happiest. Thinking and writing about these questions on a regular basis will give you a deeper sense of yourself as an artist.

In the beginning of your career, you will probably want to go on a lot of auditions, so that you can practice and build up your auditioning chops. When you are more experienced, having a sense of who you are as an actor will help you to be more selective in identifying the auditions and projects that will move you forward toward your goals.

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