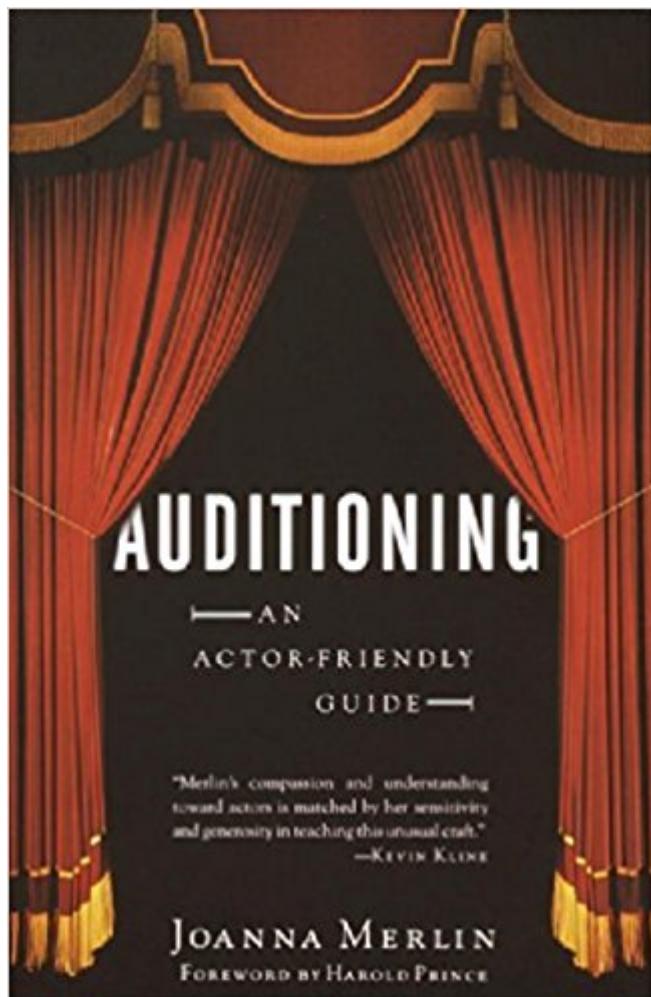


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# Auditioning: An Actor-Friendly Guide



## **Synopsis**

Theater veteran and acting teacher Joanna Merlin has written the definitive guide to auditioning for stage and screen, bringing to it a valuable dual perspective. She has spent her career on both sides of the auditioning process, both as an award-winning casting director who has worked with Harold Prince, Bernard Bertolucci, and James Ivory, and as an accomplished actor herself. In this highly informative and accessible book, Merlin provides everything the actor needs to achieve self-confidence and artistic honesty—*from the most basic practical tips to an in-depth framework for preparing a part*. Filled with advice from the most esteemed people in the business, such as James Lapine, Nora Ephron, and Stephen Sondheim, and charged with tremendous wisdom and compassion, this indispensable resource will arm the reader to face an actor's greatest challenge: getting the part.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Experienced acting teacher and casting director Merlin, who has worked with such luminaries as James Ivory, Bernardo Bertolucci, and Stephen Sondheim, provides comprehensive instruction here on how actors can improve their auditions. The author's writing style is friendly and straightforward while still being technically focused. She takes a variety of dramatic scenes and breaks them down to show how an actor can use a short section of a play to make a big impression. She includes special advice for auditioning for film, TV, and musicals. Merlin also goes through the actual auditioning event step by step, with advice on how to handle props, costumes, positioning, lights, and other potential problems. One chapter includes comments from directors on what they would

like to see in an actor's audition. A gem of a book for every library that serves aspiring actors and we all do, don't we? For all libraries. J. Sara Pault, Coastal Plain Regional Lib., Tifton, GA Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc.

"Joanna Merlin [is] one of the top casting directors in the country and a formidable actress." Kevin Kline  
Her compassion and understanding toward actors is matched by her sensitivity and generosity in teaching this unusual craft." Kevin Kline

Best audition book ever. Joanna Merlin is a Master. The book is accessible and worth every penny. Her advice and pointers come from a place of true knowledge and immense experience. If you're an actor who wants to audition well, buy this book!

This is a very helpful book for most anyone who is new to the process of auditioning for the world of professional theater written by an experienced casting director who is also an actress. There are several books out on this subject. This one was recommended to me by the casting director of a regional theater company. The first chapter, which covers the emotional baggage that actors bring to auditions was especially helpful to me. The following chapters give a good overview of the audition process, so you know what to expect, and much good advice about preparing material for presentation.

best of the best

I received this book on time and in great condition! I highly recommend this book to actors, especially those that have just started acting.

Terrific no-nonsense approach; tried and true advice from a woman who knows what she's doing. Highly recommend.

Before I read this, I had a big problem with my confidence as well as with everything else. But this book really helped me believe in myself, believe it or not.

The subtitle is no joke: Joanna Merlin's book is certainly Actor-Friendly. Auditioning is a terrible process for all parties involved. Auditors and auditioners both know that an actor cannot truly

demonstrate the breadth and depth of their skill in a five minute general audition, nor a callback. But this is the process by which we cast shows, and until someone figures out a better way to do it, it's the one we're stuck with. Joanna rightly points this out in her opening, and goes to great lengths to get the actor to relax and take a positive (and more psychologically healthy) perspective towards the audition process. Her tips help bolster self-confidence, relaxation, acceptance of not getting a part, and a spirit of playing. She also gives several anecdotal stories from her own experiences in the business, supporting her advice with real-world examples. The meat and potatoes of the book is her actual advice on what to do in order to prepare and deliver an audition and callback, with chapters on general advice, advice for camera, and advice for musicals. She gives solid advice for monologue selection, the key points to hit for swift text analysis, making your characterization distinct (here her training in the Michael Chekhov technique shows), and later a more practical walkthrough of the event itself. This text is not a magical cure-all, nor a guarantee that you're going to land your next role. I'll be honest and tell you that I didn't. This book, however, did certainly helped me prepare and understand what was going on during the callback, and how to approach and understand why I might not have gotten the part (which, when I later talked to the director, turned out to be accurate). If you're an actor who is consistently anxious about auditioning, and gets terribly discourage or even depressed by not getting the role, absolutely read this book. Its biggest value is in shifting your perspective. If you're an actor who is comfortable with auditioning, then you've probably got a system that lets you deal with the stress, anxiety, and nerves already, but this book may be worth it for you to read Joanna's recommendations and anecdotes.

I am a voice actor and have had trouble with my auditions in the past. I found this book while book surfing at Barnes and Nobles and read the first couple pages. I was hooked. It was as if the author had stepped into my skin to write this book. Every fear you have ever had as an actor, every insecurity, every inane thought is in this book, because the author has experience as an actress and a casting director and knows these thoughts from her personal experience. She tells you how to have confidence in your read, what the directors may be thinking, how to prepare properly for an audition. It is honestly the best audition advice I have ever seen or heard, and I've heard a lot of it. I bought it and it is worth every single penny. Though I do not act for film, I am easily able to apply many of the techniques and advice for cold reading and voice acting. I highly recommend this book.

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