

BOOK REVIEWS

THE ACTOR TAKES A MEETING: HOW TO INTERVIEW SUCCESSFULLY WITH AGENTS, MANAGERS, PRODUCERS, AND CASTING DIRECTORS

by Stephen Book

Interviewing doesn't come naturally to many actors. We want the job, we want to impress or please our auditor or interviewer—and it's this very mindset that prevents us from either booking the job or being remembered favorably when the next one comes along. Why are we so self-conscious when meeting a new agent? Why do we blow a callback by trying to ingratiate ourselves with the director?

Stephen Book's *The Actor Takes a Meeting* addresses these questions head-on, rooting out the mistakes actors make in pursuit of work. Using actual interviews with members of his acting class and offering corrective exercises to improve their interviewing skills, Book pinpoints all the places we go awry: being overeager, using false flattery, seeking approval, asking permission, talking ourselves up or down, wanting something from the inter-

viewer so much that we forget to be who we are and instead try to make him or her like us. All of these spell death to the interview, Book says.

When we show that we want something from the interviewer, he explains, it puts that person in a position of ultimate power, with the actor as nothing but a groveling supplicant hoping to find favor. What could be less attractive? Book seeks to adjust this equation, teaching actors how to behave as equals with their interviewers.

I don't agree with every suggestion he makes, but Book so beautifully articulates the psychology behind the interview process that I heartily recommend his book to every actor I know—and to anyone else who interviews often but wonders why his or her success rate is so darn low.

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Reviewed by Paul Haber

