

Say Hello to  
your very own book of  
**Quotes**



QuotationsBook

# Quotes about Acting and Actors

from QuotationsBook.com

You are not in business to be popular.

- Alley, Kirstie

We become actors without realizing it, and actors without wanting to.

- Amiel, Henri Frederic

The actors today really need the whip hand. They're so lazy. They haven't got the sense of pride in their profession that the less socially elevated musical comedy and music hall people or acrobats have. The theater has never been any good since the actors became gentlemen.

- Auden, W. H.

I don't get acting jobs because of my looks.

- Baldwin, Alec

Acting is a matter of giving away secrets.

- Barkin, Ellen

For an actress to be a success, she must have the face of Venus, the brains of a Minerva, the grace of Terpsichore, the memory of a Macaulay, the figure of Juno, and the hide of a

rhinoceros.

- Barrymore, Ethel

The face of Garbo is an Idea, that of Hepburn an Event.

- Barthes, Roland

For the theatre one needs long arms; it is better to have them too long than too short. An artiste with short arms can never, never make a fine gesture.

- Bernhardt, Sarah

To grasp the full significance of life is the actor's duty, to interpret it is his problem, and to express it his dedication.

- Brando, Marlon

Acting is the expression of a neurotic impulse. It's a bum's life. The principal benefit acting has afforded me is the money to pay for my psychoanalysis.

- Brando, Marlon

The hardest part has been maintaining a small head -- remaining down to earth. So many people try to make you more than you are. This business has changed a lot of good people and a lot of good families, and I don't want that to happen to me.

- Brandy

A man who strains himself on the stage is bound, if he is any good, to strain all the people sitting in the stalls.

- Brecht, Bertolt

One forgets too easily the difference between a man and his image, and that there is none between the sound of his voice on the screen and in real life.

- Bresson, Robert

The actor searches vainly for the sound of a vanished tradition, and critic and audience follow suit. We have lost all sense of ritual and ceremony -- whether it be connected with Christmas, birthdays or funerals -- but the words remain with us and old impulses stir in the marrow. We feel we should have rituals, we should do something about getting them and we blame the artists for not finding them for us. So the artist sometimes attempts to find new rituals with only his imagination as his source: he imitates the outer form of ceremonies, pagan or baroque, unfortunately adding his own trapping -- the result is rarely convincing. And after the years and years of weaker and waterier imitations we now find ourselves rejecting the very notion of a holy stage. It is not the fault of the holy that it has become a middle-class weapon to keep the children good.

- Brook, Peter (Stephen Paul)

From '86 until the summer of last year, wherever I went, people would say, You would have made a great James Bond! Weren't you going to be James Bond? You should have been, you could have been, you may have been. Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes. It was like unfinished business in my life. I couldn't say no to it this time around.

- Brosnan, Pierce

When I was a fireman I was in a lot of burning buildings. It was a great job, the only job I ever had that compares with the thrill of acting. Before going into a fire, there's the same surge of adrenaline you get just before the camera rolls.

- Buscemi, Steve

I am acquainted with no immaterial sensuality so delightful as good acting.

- Byron, Lord

First of all, I choose the great 'roles', and if none of these come, I choose the mediocre ones, and if they don't come, I choose the ones that pay the rent.

- Caine, Michael

Such is an actor's life. We must ride the waves of every film, barfing occasionally, yet maintain our dignity, even as the bulk of our Herculean efforts are keel-hauled before our very eyes. 'On filming MacHale's Navy';

- Campbell, Bruce

The popularity of that baby-faced boy, who possessed not even the elements of a good actor, was a hallucination in the public mind, and a disgrace to our theatrical history.

- Campbell, Thomas

Until Ace Ventura, no actor had considered talking through his ass.

- Carrey, Jim

The most difficult character in comedy is that of the fool, and he must be no simpleton that plays that part.

- Cervantes, Miguel De

The basic essential of a great actor is that he loves himself in acting.

- Chaplin, Charlie

Actors search for rejection. If they don't get it they reject themselves.

- Chase, Chevy

When an actor has money, he doesn't send letters, but telegrams.

- Chekhov, Anton

An actor is only merchandise.

- Chow Yun-Fat

I really think that effective acting has to do literally with the movement of molecules.

- Close, Glenn

To see him act is like reading Shakespeare by flashes of lightning.

- Coleridge, Samuel Taylor

Celebrity is death --- celebrity -- that's the worst thing that can happen to an actor.

- Cusack, John

I am the Fred Astaire of karate.

- Damme, Jean-Claude Van

Somebody told me I should put a pebble in my mouth to cure my stuttering. Well, I tried it, and during a scene I swallowed the pebble. That was the end of that.

- Davies, Marion

You name it and I've done it. I'd like to say I did it my way. But that line, I'm afraid, belongs to someone else.

- Davis Jr., Sammy

The real actor has a direct line to the collective heart.

- Davis, Bette

I have often seen an actor laugh off the stage, but I don't remember ever having seen one weep.

- Diderot, Denis

Some scenes you juggle two balls, some scenes you juggle three balls, some scenes you

can juggle five balls. The key is always to speak in your own voice. Speak the truth. That's Acting 101. Then you start putting layers on top of that. &#91;On his acting techniques&#93;

- D'Onofrio, Vincent

I'd prefer not to be the pretty thing in a film. It's such a bloody responsibility to look cute, because people know when you don't and they're like, They're trying to pass her off as the cute girl and she's looking like a bedraggled sack of potatoes.

- Driver, Minnie

I find myself fascinating.

- Dreyfus, Richard

I mean, the question actors most often get asked is how they can bear saying the same things over and over again, night after night, but God knows the answer to that is, don't we all anyway; might as well get paid for it.

- Dundy, Elaine

Acting doesn't bring anything to a text. On the contrary, it detracts from it.

- Duras, Marguerite

She represents the un-vowed aspiration of the male human being, his potential infidelity -- and infidelity of a very special kind, which would lead him to the opposite of his wife, to the woman of wax whom he could model at will, make and unmake in any way he wished,

even unto death.

- Duras, Marguerite

Mr. Clarke played the King all evening as though under constant fear that someone else was about to play the Ace.

- Field, Eugene

Show me a great actor and I'll show you a lousy husband. Show me a great actress, and you've seen the devil.

- Fields, W. C.

The great actors are the luminous ones. They are the great conductors of the stage.

- Fiske, Minnie

The best actors do not let the wheels show.

- Fonda, Henry

A good many dramatic situations begin with screaming.

- Fonda, Jane

You spend all your life trying to do something they put people in asylums for.

- Fonda, Jane

I'm an assistant storyteller. It's like being a waiter or a gas-station attendant, but I'm waiting on six million people a week, if I'm lucky. &#91;On being an actor&#93;

- Ford, Harrison

The actor's popularity is evanescent; applauded today, forgotten tomorrow.

- Forrest, Edwin

I was born at the age of twelve on a Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer lot.

- Garland, Judy

If you have to be in a soap opera try not to get the worst role.

- George, Boy

An actor is a guy who, if you ain't talking about him, he ain't listening.

- Glass, George

Acting is nothing more or less than playing. The idea is to humanize life.

- Goldblum, Jeff

Acting is happy agony.

- Guinness, Sir Alec

More than in any other performing arts the lack of respect for acting seems to spring from

the fact that every layman considers himself a valid critic.

- Hagen, Uta

Acting on a good idea is better than just having a good idea.

- Half, Robert

A movie camera is like having someone you have a crush on watching you from afar -- you pretend it's not there.

- Hannah, Daryl

They are the only honest hypocrites, their life is a voluntary dream, a studied madness.

- Hazlitt, William

We must overact our part in some measure, in order to produce any effect at all.

- Hazlitt, William

They are, as it were, train-bearers in the pageant of life, and hold a glass up to humanity, frailer than itself. We see ourselves at second-hand in them: they show us all that we are, all that we wish to be, and all that we dread to be. What brings the resemblance nearer is, that, as they imitate us, we, in our turn, imitate them. There is no class of society whom so many persons regard with affection as actors.

- Hazlitt, William

Acting is the perfect idiot's profession.

- Hepburn, Katharine

The most minor gifts and not a very high class way to earn a living. After all, Shirley Temple could do it at the age of four.

- Hepburn, Katharine

It's a business you go into because you're an egocentric. It's a very embarrassing profession.

- Hepburn, Katharine

If you give an audience a chance they will do half your acting for you.

- Hepburn, Katharine

I never said all actors are cattle, what I said was all actors should be treated like cattle.

- Hitchcock, Alfred

You reach a point where you say you're not going to do juveniles any longer.

- Howard, Ron

I have tried to be as eclectic as I possibly can with my professional life, and so far it's been pretty fun.

- Hunter, Holly

Talk to them about things they don't know. Try to give them an inferiority complex. If the actress is beautiful, screw her. If she isn't, present her with a valuable painting she will not understand. If they insist on being boring, kick their asses or twist their noses. And that's about all there is to it.

- Huston, John

Abused as we abuse it at present, dramatic art is in no sense cathartic; it is merely a form of emotional masturbation. It is the rarest thing to find a player who has not had his character affected for the worse by the practice of his profession. Nobody can make a habit of self-exhibition, nobody can exploit his personality for the sake of exercising a kind of hypnotic power over others, and remain untouched by the process.

- Huxley, Aldous

Actors often behave like children, and so we're taken for children. I want to be grown up.

- Irons, Jeremy

In civilized life, where the happiness and indeed almost the existence of man, depends on the opinion of his fellow men. He is constantly acting a studied part.

- Irving, Washington

Acting provides the fulfillment of never being fulfilled. You're never as good as you'd like to be. So there's always something to hope for.

- Jackson, Glenda

Acting is not about dressing up. Acting is about stripping bare. The whole essence of learning lines is to forget them so you can make them sound like you thought of them that instant.

- Jackson, Glenda

I want to do a musical movie. Like Evita, but with good music.

- John, Elton

An agent is a person who is sore because an actor gets 90% of what they make.

- Johnson, Alva

Players, Sir! I look on them as no better than creatures set upon tables and joint stools to make faces and produce laughter, like dancing dogs.

- Johnson, Samuel

Actors are loved because they are unoriginal. Actors stick to their script. The unoriginal man is loved by the mediocrity because this kind of artistic expression is something to which the merest five-eighth can climb.

- Kavanagh, Patrick

I think every American actor wants to be a movie star. But I never wanted to do stupid movies, I wanted to do films. I vowed I would never do a commercial, nor would I do a

soap opera -- both of which I did as soon as I left the 'Acting' Company and was starving.

- Kline, Kevin

I just stopped playing bitches on wheels and peoples' mothers. I have only a few more years to kick up my heels!

- Lansbury, Angela

I was sitting in the looping studio late one night, and I had this epiphany that they weren't paying me for my acting, for God's sake, but to own me. And from then on, it became clear and an awful lot easier to deal with.

- Lawless, Lucy

I don't do T & A very well because I haven't got much of either.

- Leoni, Tea

The thing about performance, even if it's only an illusion, is that it is a celebration of the fact that we do contain within ourselves infinite possibilities.

- Lewis, Daniel Day

You don't merely give over your creativity to making a film -- you give over your life! In theatre, by contrast, you live these two rather strange lives simultaneously; you have no option but to confront the mould on last night's washing-up.

- Lewis, Daniel Day

People say I'm cocky, but am I supposed to sit here and be insecure and not know where my future's going or not realize that moviemaking is the greatest thing to happen to me?

- Lewis, Juliette

We are born at the rise of the curtain and we die with its fall, and every night in the presence of our patrons we write our new creation, and every night it is blotted out forever; and of what use is it to say to audience or to critic, Ah, but you should have seen me last Tuesday?

- Macliammoir, Micheal

It's not a field, I think, for people who need to have success every day: if you can't live with a nightly sort of disaster, you should get out. I wouldn't describe myself as lacking in confidence, but I would just say that the ghosts you chase you never catch.

- Malkovich, John

I have spent more than half a lifetime trying to express the tragic moment.

- Marceau, Marcel

After Blood Simple, everybody thought I was from Texas. After Mississippi Burning, everybody thought I was from Mississippi and uneducated. After Fargo, everybody's going to think I'm from Minnesota, pregnant, and have blonde hair. I don't think you can ever completely transform yourself on film, but if you do your job well, you can make people believe that you're the character you're trying to be.

- McDormand, Frances

Actors die so loud.

- Miller, Henry

This is not a tough job. You read a script. If you like the part and the money is O.K., you do it. Then you remember your lines. You show up on time. You do what the director tells you to do. When you finish, you rest and then go on to the next part. That's it.

- Mitchum, Robert

I'm not an actress who can create a character. I play me.

- Moore, Mary Tyler

Left eyebrow raised, right eyebrow raised.

- Moore, Roger

Some people are addicts. If they don't act, they don't exist.

- Moreau, Jeanne

Acting deals with very delicate emotions. It is not putting up a mask. Each time an actor acts he does not hide; he exposes himself.

- Moreau, Jeanne

Acting is a question of absorbing other people's personalities and adding some of your own experience.

- Newman, Paul

Every time I get a script it's a matter of trying to know what I could do with it. I see colors, imagery. It has to have a smell. It's like falling in love. You can't give a reason why.

- Olin, Lena

I have to act to live.

- Olivier, Sir Lawrence

The actor becomes an emotional athlete. The process is painful -- my personal life suffers.

- Pacino, Al

Elizabeth Taylor is pre-feminist woman. This is the source of her continuing greatness and relevance. She wields the sexual power that feminism cannot explain and has tried to destroy. Through stars like Taylor, we sense the world-disordering impact of legendary women like Delilah, Salome, and Helen of Troy. Feminism has tried to dismiss the femme fatale as a misogynist libel, a hoary cliché. But the femme fatale expresses women's ancient and eternal control of the sexual realm. The specter of the femme fatale stalks all men's relations with women.

- Paglia, Camille

She runs the gamut of emotions from A to B.

- Parker, Dorothy

You can't do four movies and be good to everybody and be flying all night and shooting all day with a different wig and then be going to sing on Broadway without feeling a little tired. You endlessly feel you're letting somebody down.

- Parker, Sarah Jessica

All men practice the actor's art.

- Petron

Ah just act the way ah feel.

- Presley, Elvis

I don't want to read about some of these actresses who are around today. They sound like my niece in Scarsdale. I love my niece in Scarsdale, but I won't buy tickets to see her act.

- Price, Vincent

I don't think there's a punch-line scheduled, is there?

- Python, Monty

In Europe an actor is an artist. In Hollywood, if he isn't working, he's a bum.

- Quinn, Anthony

I must say that acting was good training for the political life that lay ahead of us.

- Reagan, Nancy

A lot of what acting is paying attention.

- Redford, Robert

Acting is not being emotional, but being able to express emotion.

- Reid, Thomas

Insecurity, commonly regarded as a weakness in normal people, is the basic tool of the actor's trade.

- Richardson, Miranda

There are no small parts. Only small actors.

- Rogers, Ginger

I was planning to go into architecture. But when I arrived, architecture was filled up. Acting was right next to it, so I signed up for acting instead. &#91;On his college registration experience&#93;

- Selleck, Tom

Oh! it offends me to the soul to hear a robust periwig-pated fellow, tear a passion to

tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings.

- Shakespeare, William

Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you -- tripping on the tongue; but if you mouth it, as many of your players do, I had as Leif the town-crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus, but use all gently; for in the very torrent, tempest, and as I may say, the whirlwind of your passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness.

- Shakespeare, William

Why, except as a means of livelihood, a man should desire to act on the stage when he has the whole world to act in, is not clear to me.

- Shaw, George Bernard

An actress must never lose her ego -- without it she has no talent.

- Shearer, Norma

An actor who knows his business ought to be able to make the London telephone directory sound enthralling.

- Sinden, Donald

Actors ought to be larger than life. You come across quite enough ordinary, nondescript people in daily life and I don't see why you should be subjected to them on the stage too.

- Sinden, Donald

You know how in high school you do these plays and people come up after the show and they're really excited for you? Well, that's what's happening to me right now.

- Sorvino, Mira

I think I am a much better actor than I have allowed myself to be.

- Spacey, Kevin

I'm not handsome in the classical sense. The eyes droop, the mouth is crooked, the teeth aren't straight, the voice sounds like a Mafioso pallbearer, but somehow it all works.

- Stallone, Sylvester

A true priest is aware of the presence of the altar during every moment that he is conducting a service. It is exactly the same way that a true artist should react to the stage all the time he is in the theater. An actor who is incapable of this feeling will never be a true artist.

- Stanislavsky, Konstantin

Unless the theatre can ennoble you, make you a better person, you should flee from it.

- Stanislavsky, Konstantin

The main factor in any form of creativeness is the life of a human spirit, that of the actor and his part, their joint feelings and subconscious creation.

- Stanislavsky, Konstantin

Stage charm guarantees in advance an actor's hold on the audience, it helps him to carry over to large numbers of people his creative purposes. It enhances his roles and his art. Yet it is of utmost importance that he use this precious gift with prudence, wisdom, and modesty. It is a great shame when he does not realize this and goes on to exploit, to play on his ability to charm.

- Stanislavsky, Konstantin

Remember: there are no small parts, only small actors.

- Stanislavsky, Konstantin

Remember this practical piece of advice: Never come into the theatre with mud on your feet. Leave your dust and dirt outside. Check your little worries, squabbles, petty difficulties with your outside clothing -- all the things that ruin your life and draw your attention away from your art -- at the door.

- Stanislavsky, Konstantin

Do not try to push your way through to the front ranks of your profession; do not run after distinctions and rewards; but do your utmost to find an entry into the world of beauty.

- Stanislavsky, Konstantin

Imagination, industry, and intelligence -- the three I s -- are all indispensable to the actress, but of these three the greatest is, without doubt, imagination.

- Terry, Ellen

I can't tell you how many shows I've done with full-blown migraine headaches.

- Thomas, Jonathan Taylor

There were many times my pants were so thin I could sit on a dime and tell if it was heads or tails.

- Tracy, Spencer

I'm disappointed in acting as a craft. I want everything to go back to Orson Welles and fake noses and changing your voice. It's become so much about personality.

- Ulrich, Skeet

If a farmer fills his barn with grain, he gets mice. If he leaves it empty, he gets actors.

- Vaughan, Bill

Every actor in his heart believes everything bad that's printed about him.

- Welles, Orson

I'm an actor. And I guess I've done so many movies I've achieved some high visibility. But a star? I guess I still think of myself as kind of a worker ant.

- Whitaker, Forest

While we look to the dramatist to give romance to realism, we ask of the actor to give realism to romance.

- Wilde, Oscar

Man is least himself when he talks in his own person. Give him a mask, and he will tell you the truth.

- Wilde, Oscar

I love acting. It is so much more real than life.

- Wilde, Oscar

The mere mechanical technique of acting can be taught, but the spirit that is to give life to lifeless forms must be born in a man. No dramatic college can teach its pupils to think or to feel. It is Nature who makes our artists for us, though it may be Art who taught them their right mode of expression.

- Wilde, Oscar

I regard the theatre as the greatest of all art forms, the most immediate way in which a human being can share with another the sense of what it is to be a human being.

- Wilder, Thornton

If I wasn't an actor, I'd be a secret agent.

- Wood, Elijah

Actors are one family over the entire world.

- Woodard, Alfre

The mug is a tool. My ace in the hole. To have looks is the bonus on top of what motivates me to be an actor. Not to realize they're an asset would be counterproductive to the cause; they serve the common good.

- Zane, Billy





QuotationsBook