

Audition: A Memoir

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Young people starting out in television sometimes say to me: "I want to be you." My stock reply is always: "Then you have to take the whole package."

And now, at last, the most important woman in the history of television journalism gives us that "whole package," in her inspiring and riveting memoir. After more than forty years of interviewing heads of state, world leaders, movie stars, criminals, murderers, inspirational figures, and celebrities of all kinds, Barbara Walters has turned her gift for examination onto herself to reveal the forces that shaped her extraordinary life.

Barbara Walters's perception of the world was formed at a very early age. Her father, Lou Walters, was the owner and creative mind behind the legendary Latin Quarter nightclub, and it was his risk-taking lifestyle that gave Barbara her first taste of glamour. It also made her aware of the ups and downs, the insecurities, and even the tragedies that can occur when someone is willing to take great risks, for Lou Walters didn't just make several fortunes—he also lost them. Barbara learned early about the damage that such an existence can do to relationships—between husband and wife as well as between parent and child. Through her roller-coaster ride of a childhood, Barbara had a close companion, her mentally challenged sister, Jackie. True, Jackie taught her younger sister much about patience and compassion, but Barbara also writes honestly about the resentment she often felt having a sister who was so "different" and the guilt that still haunts her.

All of this—the financial responsibility for her family, the fear, the love—played a large part in the choices she made as she grew up: the friendships she developed, the relationships she had, the marriages she tried to make work. Ultimately, thanks to her drive, combined with a decent amount of luck, she began a career in television. And what a career it has been! Against great odds, Barbara has made it to the top of a male-dominated industry. She was the first woman cohost of the Today show, the first female network news coanchor, the host and producer of countless top-rated Specials, the star of 20/20, and the creator and cohost of The View. She has not just interviewed the world's most fascinating figures, she has become a part of their world. These are just a few of the names that play a key role in Barbara's life, career, and book: Yasir Arafat, Warren Beatty, Menachem Begin, George H. W. Bush, George W. Bush, Jimmy Carter, Fidel Castro, Hugo Chávez, Bill and Hillary Clinton, Roy Cohn, the Dalai Lama, Princess Diana, Katharine Hepburn, King Hussein, Angelina Jolie, Henry Kissinger, Monica Lewinsky, Richard Nixon, Rosie O'Donnell, Christopher Reeve, Anwar Sadat, John Wayne . . . the list goes on and on.

Barbara Walters has spent a lifetime auditioning: for her bosses at the TV networks, for millions of viewers, for the most famous people in the world, and even for her own daughter, with whom she has had a difficult but ultimately quite wonderful and moving relationship. This book, in some ways, is her final audition, as she fully opens up both her private and public lives. In doing so, she has given us a story that is heartbreaking and honest, surprising and fun, sometimes startling, and always fascinating.

Barbara Walters is the first woman ever to cohost a network news program. She is the recipient of numerous awards, including a Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences. An ABC News correspondent, she is also host of The Barbara Walters Specials and the creator, cohost, and co-executive producer of ABC

Daytime's The View. She lives in New York City.Excerpt from the Prologue
Back in the sixties, when I was appearing daily on NBC's Today show, I was living on Seventh Avenue and Fifty-seventh Street. My apartment was across from Carnegie Hall and on the corner of a very busy street. It was also near several large hotels that catered to businessmen. Perhaps because of this, the corner was the gathering place for some of the most attractive "ladies of the evening." Each morning at five o'clock I would emerge from my building wearing dark glasses, as I hadn't yet had my makeup done, and I was usually carrying a garment bag. It seemed obvious to the "ladies" that there was some big "number" I had just left. Now, bear in mind that, even then, I wasn't exactly a spring chicken. But I would emerge and look at the young ladies, some of whom were still teenagers. "Good morning," I would say. "Good morning," they would answer. And then I would get into this long black limousine with its uniformed driver, and we would glide off into the early morning light. And you know what effect all this had on the ladies?

I gave them hope.

Perhaps this book may do that for you.

So here it is, the whole package, from the beginning.

Other Books

I'll Never Write My Memoirs, "Memoir from model and actress Grace Jones"--Provided by publisher.

⌘ ⌘ ⌘ ⌘ ⌘ . To some of my old collaborators, it was as though I could not exist without Jean-Paul piecing me together . I was in an ivory tower and he was making it harder for me to work with other people. I didn't care. He gave me everything I ..."