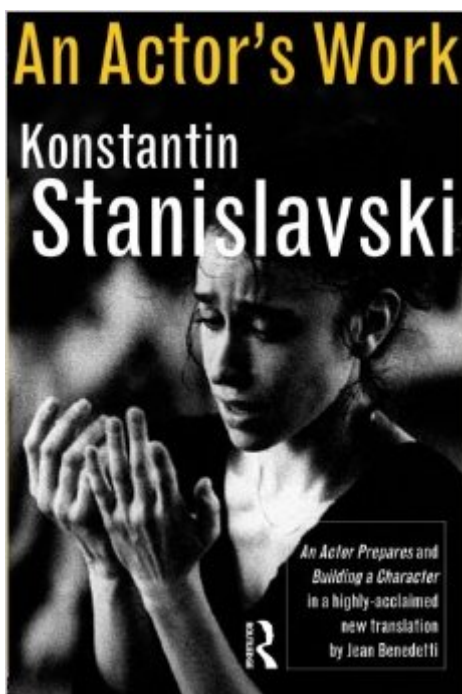


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# An Actor's Work: A Student's Diary



## Synopsis

Stanislavski's "system" has dominated actor-training in the West since his writings were first translated into English in the 1920s and 30s. His systematic attempt to outline a psycho-physical technique for acting single-handedly revolutionized standards of acting in the theatre. Until now, readers and students have had to contend with inaccurate, misleading and difficult-to-read English-language versions. Some of the mistranslations have resulted in profound distortions in the way his system has been interpreted and taught. At last, Jean Benedetti has succeeded in translating Stanislavski's huge manual into a lively, fascinating and accurate text in English. He has remained faithful to the author's original intentions, putting the two books previously known as *An Actor Prepares* and *Building A Character* back together into one volume, and in a colloquial and readable style for today's actors. The result is a major contribution to the theatre, and a service to one of the great innovators of the twentieth century.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Stanislavski is a familiar name in theatre circles. The legendary director of the Moscow Art Theatre wrote perhaps some of the most influential work on acting in the last century. I could list the big names who cite his influence (most famously, Marlon Brando and Sir John Gielgud), but the fact is his teachings have become so much a part of the way we approach theatre, that almost any actor in the English-speaking world (and abroad) can claim at least some influence. Unfortunately, most English-speakers are familiar with Stanislavski's 'system' in the considerably problematic translation

by Elizabeth Hapgood. What's more, the form that translation took (as two separate books, the famous "An Actor Prepares" and "Building a Character") misrepresented Stanislavski's original intentions. In actuality, "An Actor Prepares" and "Building a Character" are two parts of a larger book, called "An Actor's Work on Himself." In the Soviet Union, they were published as volumes one and two of the same book. Hapgood worked with Stanislavski on an early edition of the first half of the book, which in her translation would become "An Actor Prepares." However, Stanislavski continued revisions on the book after Hapgood had returned home to America in 1935. The translation that was published, in addition to being abridged to half the original's length, was also missing the subsequent revisions that Stanislavski released in a Soviet edition three years later just before his death. Stanislavski did not live to complete part two. Hapgood received fragments from Stanislavski's son, Igor. Not knowing that these were meant as a completion to a single holistic system, she published them as "Building a Character.

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