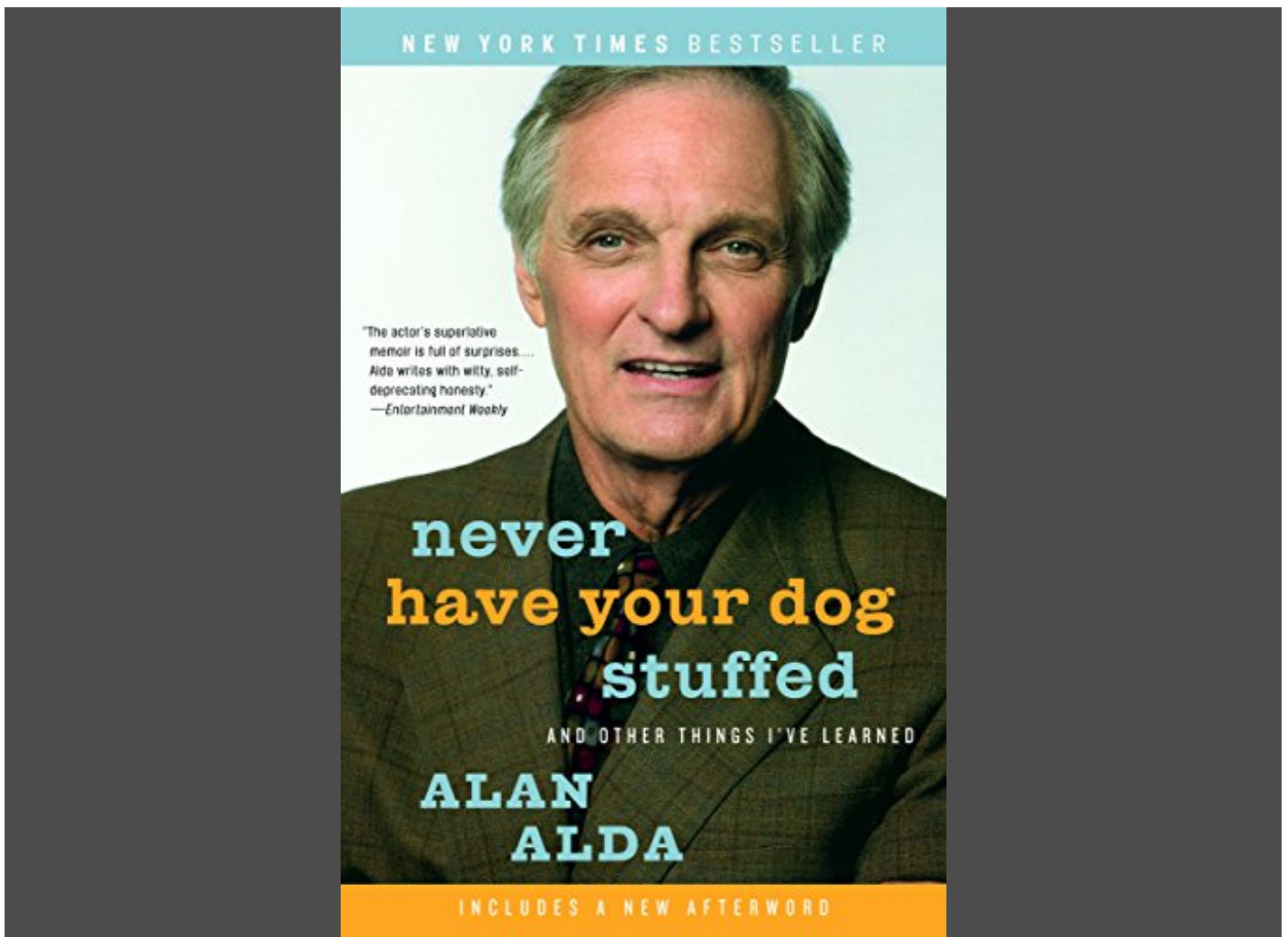


# PDF | Never Have Your Dog Stuffed: And Other Things I've Learned

by Alan Alda



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He's one of America's most recognizable and acclaimed actors—a star on Broadway, an Oscar nominee for *The Aviator*, and the only person to ever win Emmys for acting, writing, and directing, during his eleven years on *M\*A\*S\*H*. Now Alan Alda has written a memoir as elegant, funny, and affecting as his greatest performances.

“My mother didn't try to stab my father until I was six,” begins Alda's irresistible story. The son of a popular actor and a loving but mentally ill mother, he spent his early childhood backstage in the erotic and comic world of burlesque and went on, after early struggles, to achieve extraordinary success in his profession.

Yet **Never Have Your Dog Stuffed** is not a memoir of show-business ups and downs. It is a moving and funny story of a boy growing into a man who then realizes he has only just begun to grow.

It is the story of turning points in Alda's life, events that would make him what he is—if only he could survive them.

From the moment as a boy when his dead dog is returned from the taxidermist's shop with a hideous expression on his face, and he learns that death can't be undone, to the decades-long effort to find compassion for the mother he lived with but never knew, to his acceptance of his father, both personally and professionally, Alda learns the hard way that change, uncertainty, and transformation are what life is made of, and true happiness is found in embracing them.

**Never Have Your Dog Stuffed**, filled with curiosity about nature, good humor, and honesty, is the crowning

achievement of an actor, author, and director, but surprisingly, it is the story of a life more filled with turbulence and laughter than any Alda has ever played on the stage or screen.

*From the Hardcover edition.*

### **Amazon.com Review**

Alan Alda's autobiography travels a path less taken. Instead of a sensationalist, name-dropping page-turner, Alda writes about his life as a memory play, an exercise in recollecting his childhood, his parents (dad Robert was a veteran on stage, film, and vaudeville), and his career. You want to know about Alda's most famous work, the eleven years on *M\*A\*S\*H*? You have exactly 16 pages to do so, and guess what: It's one of the least entertaining parts of the book. But should fans of the award-winning actor-writer-director avoid this slim memoir? Not in the slightest. Slyly humorous and open-hearted, *Never Have Your Dog Stuffed* is a breezy, most enjoyable read. Alda's ability to recall his childhood (including backstage at raunchy vaudeville shows), school years, stage struggles and successes is as entertaining as one of his Emmy-winning teleplays. Alda is inordinately attune recalling life's crystallizing moments: when religion no longer worked for him, how something in his pocket made him forever a better actor, or his mother's painful descent into dementia. Alda's ever present humor is a great asset whether telling a charming love story on meeting his wife Arlene or a life-threatening illness in a remote part of Chile ("I am in and out of consciences, but I never take a break from the screaming. The show must go on."). Like Alda's persona, his book is more human and less flash. What would be filler in most books is often the most entertaining and revealing here; especially Alda's dynamic relationship with his parents. Really, who else would name his memoir after an unfortunate trip to the taxidermist? The year the book was published during a revival for the 69-year-old; he was nominated for an Oscar, Emmy, and Tony in the same year. --*Doug Thomas*

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