

The entire page is framed by a highly detailed, ornate border of floral and leaf motifs. In the center, a large circle is defined by a decorative border of small, repeating floral patterns. Inside this circle, the text is centered. Above and below the main title are decorative, semi-circular flourishes with intricate scrollwork.

LESSON THREE

—  
SHOWMANSHIP &  
IMPROMPTU  
MAGIC

(37)

THE RUPERT HOWARD SCHOOL,  
LONDON

# LESSON 3

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several "calls." Do not be afraid to use these methods of creating and stimulating applause, for your success as a professional magician depends on the impression you make upon those who see you. They will have a far higher opinion of your show if you take several re-calls than if you take none at all, even though the performance is exactly the same.

## STAGE FRIGHT AND NERVOUSNESS.

Stage fright and nervousness are two different troubles from which a performer may suffer. Broadly speaking, stage fright only attacks the beginner. The sight of a great sea of faces over the glare of the footlights seems to hypnotise him, rendering him powerless to speak or move. He stands apparently rooted to the spot, completely unable to carry on with the performance.

First of all, I want you to remember this at every performance you give:—

*THE AUDIENCE ARE YOUR FRIENDS RIGHT FROM THE START. THEY HAVE COME KNOWING THAT YOU WILL GIVE THEM A GOOD TIME, AND THEY WILL HELP YOU ALL THEY CAN.*

There is no need to be frightened of an audience, because they are just as keen for the performance to be a success as you are. Remember, they are there to see you, and they have confidence that they will enjoy your show.

Go out and talk to them just as if they were your friends. Let them see that you are delighted to be with them, and that you fully expect to enjoy the evening as much as they will. You can never succeed as an entertainer of any sort unless you can make your audiences like you. I have dealt with this matter elsewhere, but it is so important that I want to impress this point on you again.

For the first few occasions on which you appear before a large audience I advise you to address your patter to someone near the centre of the hall, and to try and forget the rest of the audience. Of course this advice is only for

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your first performances in front of big audiences. When you have gained a little more experience and conquered any inclination to stage fright you should look all round the hall, until you have seen everyone present.

Do not be afraid of the size of an audience. I do not of course mean that you will find it just as easy to perform before a big audience at first; I simply want to impress on you the fact that there is nothing to be afraid of because your audience is large.

Whereas stage fright deprives a performer of the ability to carry on, keeping him glued to one spot and unable to speak or move, stage nervousness is usually a temporary period of depression that attacks a performer shortly before the show starts. Even a seasoned performer may suffer from nervousness before the performance commences, especially if he intends to present a new effect. This feeling wears off soon after the commencement of the performance, however, when you find that the show is going as well as usual. There is no cure for nervousness before a performance, and many artistes suffer from it all their lives. The best advice is not to worry over the performance or its results. Make your preparations carefully and do your best. Even if the audience do not like your show, it is not the end of everything.

Failure—if it occurs—should be the stepping stone to success in Magic. If you do not make good on one occasion it should spur you on to fresh efforts to improve your performance. If you should have a disappointing experience, do not let it "get you down." You can be a magician! You will be a clever magician if you persevere. The second paid performance that I ever gave so disheartened me that I decided to give up Magic. I realised the next day, however, that what I must do was to work twice as hard at it, not give it up.

Remember, the man who has never had any failures in this world has never done anything worth doing.

STUDENT'S NOTES

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