

The Asheville Times

FREE COURSE IN PHOTO-PLAY WRITING

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Reputable producers, the big recognized actors in the moving picture world, are practically unanimous in the belief that the policy of encouraging amateurs to write plays and scenarios proves profitable not only to the producers, but to the writers as well, because all the well known producers are willing to pay good prices for new and original stories, stories that appeal to the public with their human interest and life-like qualities. The demand is greater than the supply. Wonderful screen adaptations from stories written heretofore by unheard of authors are appearing daily, and the authors become famous over night, as it were. You can learn how to write an acceptable photoplay by following the Lillian M. Rubenstein course of lessons which the Asheville Times is publishing each week. The third lesson appears below.

LESSON NO. 3

In the preparation of a photoplay a writer should always be included either immediately after the title or after the synopsis, as in reading a photoplay the director is enabled to immediately grasp the number of characters necessary to the production of the play and anything that tends to save time for the director strengthens the selling chances of the script. Again a great many of the producing companies flash this cast of characters upon the screen before showing the picture, which gives the audience a better conception of what will be shown. For example:

Cast of Characters.
John Mason, a ranchman
Mary his wife
Lettie his daughter
Tom Warren, in love with Lettie
Bud Hawkins, a gambler, also in love with Lettie
Cowboys, Indians, etc.

In writing a scenario or photoplay, a great many writers finish the synopsis before writing the scenario, in my estimation it saves a great deal of trouble in the way of rewriting to prepare your scenario first, then your synopsis and lastly your cast of characters; in submitting your play be sure to place the synopsis first, as that is what the editor wants to give him his first idea of what your scenario is all about. By writing your synopsis first, you naturally write your scenario in the way of your first impression of your play, but after you have started writing your scenario you will be surprised how many new bits of action will suggest themselves to you. Ideas which will materially strengthen your plot. You write in this new action and if the synopsis has already been written, what happens? Why you simply are compelled to destroy the first synopsis and write a second one, which is proof conclusive that to write your synopsis last is the better way.

As the TITLE may be suggested by some action in the scenario, keep that for the very last. In writing one of my photoplays which was released by the Lubin company, I had given no thought to a title for same, while writing the action of the play a murderer was photographed in the act of striking his unsuspecting victim. This was caused by the murderer stepping upon the bulb of a camera, which caught the picture of the murder. There was my title staring me in the face. "Caught by a Camera," and that title fitted my story perfectly, at the same time telling nothing of the

climax of the picture. Should a writer decide to write a photoplay for some special company, featuring a certain actress or actor, naturally it behooves that writer to choose a title which will call particular attention to that special star for whom it is written, but as a rule the most sensible and also most remunerative plan is to write a good, strong original story which can be used by any company and then after getting into proper shape, start it upon the rounds of the film companies, trusting to its merit to find a resting place in some studio.

Always remember that the TITLE is the advertisement which draws the patron to a moving picture theater as an attractive TITLE means a larger crowd.

In writing a photoplay you must realize that the different details must occur naturally and in an interesting manner, not mechanically, as though manufactured for the purpose. The events must lead up to the grand "denouement" or "crisis" naturally and smoothly, with a plausible reason for each action. How often while seated in a moving picture theater have you heard the following remarks: "Why, what in the world did he do that for?" "There's no sense or reason in that action" and etc., and this is too often true of the photoplay of the present. One wonders how stories so crammed with inconsistencies are ever made. One explanation is that a great many producers imagine they can also write a photoplay and most of the poorly written photoplays produced are invariably written by the producer himself, as plays of that description are never purchased from outside. Lately there has been a rumor that the different companies intend to refuse to make any plays written by any one employed in the company and if this rule goes into effect it will be to the advantage of the outside writer.

The plot of a photoplay, like a building, must have a good foundation to rise upon and unless the foundation is interesting from the start the attention of the audience will lag, eventually killing the entire play. Another thing to avoid is starting a story in so interesting a manner as to excite the expectations of the audience to so great a height that as the play progresses and the plot fails to live up to the earlier promise made, the audience begins to realize that the best part came first and leave the theater, feeling as though they had been "stung," to utilize a slang expression; that title fitted my story perfectly, at the same time telling nothing of the



Lillian M. Rubenstein

your aim to start your story so as to prove interesting all the way through, never place your cart before your horse, but reserve your best and strongest action for the end. The style of story which always pleases is the one in which something important depends upon the arrival of one of the characters at a certain place in the "nick of time"; perhaps it is the delivery of certain papers, or the life of one of the characters at stake, the honor of the hero or heroine, whatever it is the thrill which takes possession of the audience as they sit in tense attention wondering "If he will get there in time" always gets the play "over" and makes it a success, providing the thrill furnished was sufficiently original. If you are ambitious to become a successful photo play-writer, learn to observe life in every aspect, try to invent complications and plots from any "trivial incident" which falls under your observation and in striving for the big things don't forget or overlook the small events happening right at your elbow, as it is the little details of heart interest from which the big stories are produced. There isn't a day that one can't find the germ of a plot in some newspaper article, for where can one find a greater array of tragedies, dramas or comedies than from the headlines of a daily newspaper?

Municipal Elections in Iowa

Des Moines, Ia., March 25.—Practically every city in Iowa of any importance will hold a municipal election Monday, the greatest interest centering on those cities which have adopted the commission form of government, including Des Moines, Sioux City, Burlington and Cedar Rapids. Municipal improvement is the principal issue in the smaller towns where there are issues at all, but in a majority of the towns the contests are of little importance. In one or two places law enforcement has been pushed to the front.

OFFERINGS AT THE LOCAL THEATERS

Managers of local theaters make the following announcements today:

COMING ATTRACTIONS.

At the Auditorium.

"Twin Beds" tonight at 8:30.

Margaret Illington in "The Lie," Monday, March 27.

At the Strand.

Selwyn and company, sponsors for "Within the Law," "Under Cover," "The Show Shop," "Under Fire," and "Rolling Stones," will bring their laugh festival, "Twin Beds," from its 52 weeks in New York to the Auditorium tonight with a splendid cast of comedians.

"Twin Beds" is the joint work of Salisbury Field and Margaret Mayo, the latter the author of "Baby Mine." It concerns itself with the harrowing experience of three couples who live in a big apartment house, and, through the first friendliness of one of their number, suddenly find that, try as they may, they cannot escape each other. In the scramble for peace and privacy, both of which recede steadily as the plot progresses, the characters in "Twin Beds" are incalculably amusing. The advance seat sale is now open.

Margaret Illington in "The Lie"

Of all the plays that the distinguished English author, Henry Arthur Jones has sent to this country, there is little question but that "The Lie" is the most interesting of its kind, and this playwright has written some ninety odd plays, many of which are familiar to playgoers in America. "The Lie," with the popular and emotional actress, Miss Margaret Illington, was one of the great big dramatic successes of the past season in New York city, where the play ran for an entire year. Theatergoers have taken most kindly to both play and star, the first on account of its humanly dramatic values and dramatic worth and to the star, because of her unquestioned ability—Miss Illington is claimed to be the foremost actress of native birth on the stage today especially in the big emotional roles.

"The Lie" tells very interestingly the self sacrifice of one sister for another and its attendant results. The theme of duplicity is as "old as the hills," but under the guiding hand of so expert a craftsman as Mr. Jones, it is endowed with a certain novelty and as he brings out the dramatic values he proves that he still is the splendid playwright he always has been. As "Elinor Shale," the self sacrificing sister, Miss Illington is seen at her very best and her performance is a delightful one. With her New York cast and production Miss Illington brings "The Lie" to the Auditorium on Monday March 27. The advance seat sale is now open.

At the Galax

A new film favorite is to be presented to audiences at the Galax today, in the beautiful Mae Murray, the new Lasky star, who will make her bow to photodramatic patrons in the screen version of Mary Johnston's famous story, "To Have and To Hold." It is a Paramount picture. Heretofore, Mae Murray has been entirely identified with the stage. Several months ago she consented to appear in a new picture. So great was her beauty, so charming her personality and so wonderful her ability, that every motion picture magnate in the country sought her service. She was finally secured by the Lasky company under a three-year contract. Miss Murray is endowed with youth and beauty in addition to her wonderful dramatic ability and there can be no doubt that she will be a great favorite to local theatergoers. The well known Lasky actor, Wallace Reid, is featured with Miss Murray and the two are surrounded by a number of all star Lasky players, "Bobby Bumps and his Pointer Pup," a Bray cartoon comedy, will also be shown today.

D. W. Griffith's remarkable motion picture production, "The Avenging Conscience," will be seen for the first time here on Tuesday, March 28, at the Galax.

This unusual photoplay, which is based on Edgar Allen Poe's thrilling story of "The Tell-Tale Heart," scored an instantaneous success in New York, Philadelphia and Chicago, by virtue of its extraordinary photographic effects and its powerful story. It is the most brilliant and startling production that has been seen in many a day, equalling "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" and "The Bella." It is replete with mystery and surprises.

Henry Walthall, who portrays the leading character, does some excellent acting. He also has the leading part in Mr. Griffith's big New York success, "The Birth of a Nation." The other principal roles are enacted by Blanche Sweet, Mae Marsh, George Seligmann, Spottiswoode Aitken and Ralph Lewis.

The production just recently ended a long engagement at the Chestnut Street Opera house, Philadelphia. Every one of the Philadelphia newspapers enthusiastically praised "The Avenging Conscience" and pronounced it by far the greatest achievement attained in motion pictures.

At the Majestic

Harry Carr and his musical comedy company will close their engagement at the Majestic after a matinee and two night performances today with "Lonesome Island," a musical farce comedy. Crawford and Humphries will open an engagement of one week at the Majestic commencing with a matinee performance on Monday. "Sugarfoot" Gaffney, the well known blackface comedian will be seen in the principal comedy roles. The bill to be presented is called "The

Isle of Nowhere." An excellent chorus who are well dressed will be one of the main features with "The Isle of Nowhere."

"Sugarfoot" Gaffney will be well remembered by the Majestic audiences. There will no doubt be large houses to witness the performances given next week as this company is rated as one of the best on the circuit.

At the Princess

The final chapter of "The Red Circle" will be shown at the Princess today. "Judgment Day" is the title of the last episode of this serial story of heredity, romance and humanity which has been attracting hundreds to the Princess every Saturday. In connection with "The Red Circle" Charlie Chaplin will be seen in a two reel comedy called "Shanghaied." This comedy is said to be one of Chaplin's best works and is a sure cure for the

At the Strand.

"My Partner" is the offering at the Strand today. This is a five act Mutual Masterpicture. De Luxe edition, and is one of the best that has been released as yet this season. Burr McIntosh is the star of this photoplay today and is supported by a number of favorites, among whom are Ned

blues. Commencing next Saturday the Princess will show a new serial called "The Girl and the Game" in which Helen Holmes is featured. The story was written by Frank H. Spearman and will appear in The Times every Friday. The next story is told in 15 chapters and the picture will be shown in 15 installments of two reels each at the Princess every Saturday.

Singleton and Marie Hammer. Mr. McIntosh will be remembered for his clever acting in the Legitimate production of "The Gentleman From Indiana" and other plays. This being the second of the Mutual Masterpictures shown at the Strand since the De Luxe edition was released, it is safe to say that it will be as good if not better than the first production, which was "True Nobility." As a laugh producer for today's performances, the management has provided the patrons with the two-part Keystone comedy entitled, "Dirty Work in the Laundry," in which a number of all-star Keystone comedians enact difficult roles. The Strand orchestra has arranged a special program of music which they will render this afternoon and tonight.

AUDITORIUM

SATURDAY, MARCH 25

SELWYN & COMPANY

—PRESENTS—

THE LAUGH FESTIVAL

"Twin Beds"

By SALISBURY FIELD and MARGARET MAYO

Direct From the Record-Making Run of Fifty-Two Weeks in New York.

PRICES 50c to \$1.50

SEAT SALE THURSDAY

THE Strand

T-O-D-A-Y

Mutual Masterpictures

De Luxe

—PRESENTS—

"My Partner"

Five Acts of Sustained Heart Interest

—ALSO—

A KEYSTONE COMEDY

"DIRTY WORK IN THE LAUNDRY"

ADMISSION — 10c

PRINCESS

TODAY

LAST CHAPTER OF

The Red Circle

—ENTITLED—

"JUDGMENT DAY"

DON'T MISS THIS FINAL EPISODE

—ALSO TODAY—

CHARLIE CHAPLIN

—in—

"SHANGHAIED"

TWO PARTS

COMING—"THE GIRL AND THE GAME"

5c — ADMISSION — 5c

"PARAMOUNTS" VS. ATHLETICS

OATES PARK — APRIL 5-6

AUDITORIUM Monday March 27

SELWYN & COMPANY present

MARGARET

ILLINGTON

"A great actress in a great play."—N. Y. Herald.

THE LIE

"Inspiring, reverberating triumph."—AMY LEASE, in CHICAGO NEWS.

By HENRY ARTHUR JONES

ONE YEAR AT THE HARRIS THEATER NEW YORK CITY

NEW YORK CAST AND PRODUCTION

PRICES: Orchestra, \$2; Dress Circle, \$1.50 and \$1; Balcony, \$1, 75c and 50c; Gallery, 50c. Seats at Allison's Now

Galax

"ASHEVILLE'S BUSIEST THEATRE"

PARAMOUNT

TODAY

JESSE L. LASKY PRESENTS

THE CHARMING

MAE MURRAY

SUPPORTED BY WALLACE REID AND AN ALL-STAR CAST IN A FAITHFUL PRESENTATION OF THE HISTORICAL ROMANCE

"TO HAVE AND TO HOLD"

A GLANCE BACKWARDS INTO THE DAY WHEN STRONG MEN AND BRAVE WOMEN FOUGHT FOR THE RIGHTS OF EXISTENCE ON A NEW CONTINENT

ALSO TODAY

"BOBBY BUMPS and HIS POINTER PUP"

BRAY CARTOON COMEDY

GALAX SUPERB ORCHESTRA

5c — ADMISSION — 10c



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