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The Coney Island Fakir: The Magical Life Of Al Flosso



Synopsis

"If there is a better all-around magician," master mentalist Joseph Dunninger wrote of Al Flosso, "I have yet to discover him." Combining subtle, sophisticated manipulations with his bold, gritty persona, Flosso's magic became legendary. Though he stood only 5'2", Flosso was a giant of the magic world. This is a remarkable book about a remarkable life. The book traces Flosso's fascinating career, from his days as a street-corner shill, carnival pitchman, Punch & Judy operator and sideshow magician to his work on Broadway, film and television. He worked with giants of the entertainment world, including the Marx Brothers, Bud Abbott, Ed Sullivan and Jackie Gleason. As proprietor of New York's leading magic shop, Flosso dispensed advice and equipment to the 20th Century's greatest magicians, from Harry Houdini to David Copperfield. The Coney Island Fakir captures the essence of this unique performer, his original style, and his influence on the world of magic. Here's what the critics say . . . "A quite readable portrait of a delightful and unique character in the annals of magic . . . readers will ponder and wonder, laugh and linger over the extraordinary character it portrays. Mr. Brown has done not only his subject but the future of our art great service." -Jamy Ian Swiss, *Genii* "Flosso was a true character, and Gary Brown [is] an excellent writer. In this well-documented biography, Brown traces Flosso's colorful life from his beginnings . . . Al Flosso -- there will never be another." -David Goodsell, *M*U*M* "If you enjoy magical biographies, you will want to pick up a copy of Gary Brown's new biography of Al Flosso . . . I enjoyed *The Coney Island Fakir*, and I think you will, too. Recommended." -*Magic* "This is a delightful book, a well-written and beautifully-produced anecdotal biography. Gary's engaging conversational style adds to the easy pace of the story." -Michael Edwards, *alt.magic* Note: This edition includes special bonus material that did not appear in the original print edition.

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Customer Reviews

Just finished the book and found it very entertaining. It provided a look into a world of entertainment that isn't really around anymore as well as an in-depth biography of a major player in that world. The image of the disorganized magic shop operator is not unusual, what is unusual is to find out more about the men behind those counters. Having known Jay Marshal and reading about Flosso and Marshals paths crossed made it all the more interesting for me. Well worth the price.

Not really a biography as the term is understood, Brown's method is to string together incidents, dates, and tales from magicians who knew Al Flosso. The book has an amateur writer flavor to it...and yet...and yet...you're gonna love it. Brown's book is an easy read and a page-turner and chock full of Big Names and famous places. Old timers in magic will know the Names, and young magicians will need to read this to learn something about the performing art they're entering. Definitely recommended.

This will be brief, but then so is this book, deceptively so. Al Flosso was a veteran of performing magic and allied arts in the converging worlds of circus sideshows, vaudeville, motion pictures and television. It is a light, enjoyable read, filled with first and second hand accounts of Flosso's exploits. The characters in these anecdotes are a who's who of society, show business, and even the underworld. I would rate this work higher, except for a few factual or typographical errors, the bane of any writer's existence. Case in point, John Northern Hilliard was the editor / ghost writer for T. Nelson Downs's "The Art of Magic"; Hilliard is confused here with another magic personality and politician, William "Bill" Hilliar.

As a young boy starting out in magic and first walking into Flosso's magic shop the air of mystery was more than I thought was possible. The memory of those feelings have stayed and will stay with me always. Flosso's kindness and his enthusiasm to share made me at the time and to this day (as

a working professional) believe that magic is real. Thank you so very much Mr Brown for bringing closer to him and allowing me to share in the wonderful stories that will always be a big part of magic's history, mystery and wonderment.

Al Flosso was one of the greatest magicians of his time, a man who knew more about his craft than probably anyone alive. Gary Brown and Teller have done a remarkable job capturing Flosso and his craft in this elegantly written, funny, and often moving book. I personally knew Al, and this book captures the elements about him that were so fascinating. More importantly, the authors have given us a rare glimpse into the world of a man who made his living fooling people, and doing it in such a way that they were always entertained. Highly recommended.

I remember like it was yesterday my visit to Flosso's magic shop. It was like a trip to the Vatican wonderful stuff all around magic from modern day to olden day all in one place. This book is a pleasure to read and has a wonderful historic wealth of magic and the magicians in the USA during the vaudeville hey day. Get it you will enjoy it.

The book itself is WONDERFUL. The Kindle Fire HD 7" is a huge FAIL with this file. For whatever reason, the file will not format properly on ANY of my Fire HD's -- (The left 1.5 letters do not display) -- making reading an odious task. Fortunately, I own a number of Kindles and was able to read the book on the Kindle Keyboard. If you have a Fire HD 7" only -- I'd suggest passing on this -- If you are using another device it's a 5 STAR read. Unfortunately, the book can be stored only on a limited number of devices -- be aware, as you may need to deregister a device to put the this file on a functional system. I do not know if this is a prob with the file I have, or a universal issue -- but "I don't like it" is accurate in the Kindle Universe --- If the file were PDF format and readable on other devices I'd be thrilled -- a great read, poorly executed. On the plus side, I am now wary about Kindle purchases -- very disappointing. The review addresses the purchase overall -- not just the content.

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