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Nicholas Ridout

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## Stage Fright, Animals, and Other Theatrical Problems

Why do actors get stage fright? What is so embarrassing about joining in? Why not work with animals and children, and why is it so hard not to collapse into helpless laughter when things go wrong? In trying to answer these questions – usually ignored by theatre scholarship but of enduring interest to theatre professionals and audiences alike – Nicholas Ridout attempts to explain the relationship between these apparently unwanted and anomalous phenomena and the wider social and political meanings of the modern theatre. The book focuses on the theatrical encounter – those events in which actor and audience come face to face in a strangely compromised and alienated intimacy – arguing that the modern theatre has become a place where we entertain ourselves by experimenting with our feelings about work, social relations and about feelings themselves.

NICHOLAS RIDOUT is Lecturer in Performance at the School of English and Drama, Queen Mary, University of London.

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