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Tom Ogden



THE
COMPLETE
IDIOT'S
GUIDE[®] TO

Magic
Tricks

by Tom Ogden

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For Mom, who encouraged every move; my sister Jeanne, my one and only assistant; and Ed Cashmore, who introduced me to the art.

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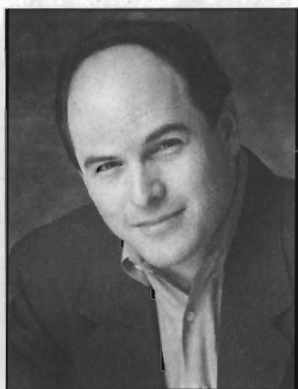
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Preface



I was about five or six years old when some uncle—or family friend anointed as an uncle—pulled a coin out of my ear. It was my first introduction to magic, and I've been hooked ever since. The possibility that someone could pull a coin from my ear was unbelievable. The possibility that I could pull a coin from my ear was worthy of unending devotion and study. I mean, come on—what a great way to make money! But more importantly, what a great world to live in where such things are possible.

I studied magic voraciously; reading, watching, practicing. I worked with coins and cards, ropes and silks, wands and canes, invisible strings and unseen mirrors. I wanted nothing more than to be a magician. Alas, as I began to truly study magicians, I realized I didn't have the discipline to master their seemingly endless techniques and skills. So, I moved into spinning illusions of a different kind. But my heart has never strayed far from the parlor room. I can still make magic happen with everyday objects that fascinate my friends and delight my children. And I remain a devoted admirer of the amazing men and women who perform the art of magic all over the world. I have been privileged to know many.

One in particular, Mr. Tom Ogden, has become a good friend. Tom is a fairly unassuming guy whose pleasant face and rakish demeanor mask a world of devilry up his sleeve and in his jacket pocket. Tom manipulates cards with an ease and dexterity that most can only match whilst channel surfing with the remote. His keen wit is always at the ready to abet his whimsical skills, and he has bewildered and entertained me for years with his bottomless bag of tricks. He makes it look too easy, and perhaps it is.

It recently dawned on me that if a schnook like Tom Ogden can mesmerize a frankly superior mind like mine, maybe anyone can do it. Well, Tom was the first to agree. And that is no small confirmation. Not only is he a master magician, but he is a fan and student of magic and its illustrious history. He has brought magic into theaters, corporate board rooms, sales seminars, personal growth programs, cruise ships, dining rooms, video arcades, broom closets...he's a bit obsessive and has waaayyyy too much time on his hands.

In this book, Tom will take you on a tour of prestidigitation. He will show you the how, where, and why of every trick. He will take you into magic's illustrious history and its exciting future. And by the final page, you will be a veritable David Copperfield (minus the millions of dollars and Claudia Schiffer).

Whether you are a little curious or completely devoted, nimble-fingered or knuckleheaded, you can have a new hobby, career, interest, or obsession in magic. If you have ever been amazed, this book is for you. For amazement lies within. And

perhaps most astounding of all is the joy that awaits when the magician and child is awakened in you.

I hope you enjoy Tom. I know you'll enjoy his book. Welcome to an astonishing world of mystery, curiosity, power, laughter, wonder and delight. Welcome, oh, intrepid student, to the magnificent world of MAGIC!

—Jason Alexander

Best known from his nine seasons as George in television's *Seinfeld*, Jason Alexander won the Tony Award® for his performance in *Jerome Robbins' Broadway*. He also appeared in the original Broadway casts of *Broadway Bound*, *The Rink*, *Merrily We Roll Along*, *Personals* (Drama Desk nomination), and *Accomplice*. He's appeared in such feature films as *North*, *The Paper*, *Pretty Woman*, *Jacob's Ladder*, *Love! Valour! Compassion!*, and supplied the voice of Hugo in Disney's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. Alexander has directed the films *For Better or Worse* and, most recently, *Candy Pink*. On TV, Jason Alexander starred in revivals of the musical plays *Bye Bye Birdie* and *Cinderella*, as well as providing the voice for Duckman in, well, *Duckman*.

Foreword

My love for magic started when I was five years old. I was sitting in the audience watching my first magic show. The magician asked for a volunteer, and I was the lucky boy who got to go up on the stage. As the magician plucked silver dollars from behind my ear, I felt a strange and wonderful sensation. Amazement, wonder, awe, whatever you want to call the emotion, I felt it—big time. I knew at that moment what I wanted to do with my life. I wanted to share the emotions I was experiencing with others. I wanted them to feel what I felt that day.

Since you're holding this book in your hand, I assume that you, too, have been bitten by the magic bug and that you're taking your first tentative step into the world of illusion. Welcome.

As a beginner in magic, you naturally will be fascinated with the 'secrets' of magic—how the tricks are done. Let me tell you the most important secret right now: Knowing how the tricks are accomplished does not make you a magician. Being able to properly *perform* magic, and affect people in a positive way, is what **makes you** a magician.

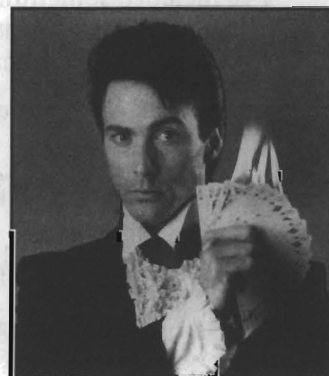
Through this book, Tom Ogden will teach you how to become a real magician. You could have no better instructor in the ways of the conjurer than my good friend Tom Ogden. I've worked with Tom countless times and can assure you that he speaks from experience. He's an accomplished magician and, more importantly, a first-rate entertainer.

Remember, your true goal is to entertain your audience. Your audience can be your family, friends, coworkers, or a theater full of strangers. The goal is the same, to amaze, yes, but primarily to entertain.

Practice your magic. But most of all, have fun as you share your magic with others.

—Lance Burton

Lance Burton, World Champion Magician, was the first American ever to be awarded the *Grand Prix* at the *Fédération Internationale des Sociétés Magiques* (F.I.S.M.) (1982), magic's highest competitive award. His television credits include 15 appearances on *The Tonight Show* (ten with Johnny Carson and five with Jay Leno), two national television specials (*The Legend Begins* and *The Encounter*) as well as guest star appearances in numerous other programs. In Las Vegas, Burton appeared for nine years in the *Folies Bergere* at the Tropicana Hotel and Casino and five years in his own show at the Hacienda Hotel. In 1996 he began a 13-year contract in the Lance Burton Theatre in the Monte Carlo Resort and Casino.



Introduction

Bottom line? In these pages, I've tried to write the book I would have wanted to own when I first started out in magic.

The Complete Idiot's Guide to Magic Tricks has more than just complete explanations of the tricks. It also covers showmanship and stage presence, ethics and professionalism, the history of magic, and how to do your first paid performances.

But first and foremost, it's about tricks.

The Tricks

I've been performing magic for 35 years, most of them as a full-time professional, and I've read dozens of magic books and countless sets of instructions in magazines and boxed with magical paraphernalia.

Most magic books, even books for complete beginners, are filled with vague phrases like, "Use *your favorite method* to *pretend* to put a coin in your left hand, but *secretly keep it hidden* in your right hand." Favorite method? Pretend? Secretly keep it hidden? *How?* Even the so-called self-working tricks had such bare-bones instructions that I often turned them into not-working tricks.

Professor Hoffmann observed in *Modern Magic* (1876), "There is a vast difference between telling how a trick is done and teaching how to do it." I hope that *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Magic Tricks* will "teach you how to do it."

You don't have to buy special apparatus. OK, maybe a hank of rope and a deck of cards, but no tin tubes or giant packing crates. I don't want you to have to spent lots of money to have to perform your first tricks. Make the investment with your time and dedication, not your pocketbook.

I've included something for everyone in *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Magic Tricks*, from the very basic tricks that any beginner can perform (albeit with practice) to variations for the veteran performers on the intermediate and advanced levels.

I hope that *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Magic Tricks* will "teach you how to do it."

What Won't I Find?

I believe in the First Commandment of the Magician's Code: Thou shalt not reveal the secrets and methods of magic tricks.

So, if all you're looking for to find out secrets, like where Lance Burton's doves come from, where Seigfried & Roy's elephant goes, or how David Copperfield flies, put this book back on the shelf and go home.

I don't believe in exposure for exposure's sake, but I do believe in legitimate instruction for the serious student in the art of magic. Everyone has to start somewhere, and with this book I hope to instill in you a genuine love for the art of magic and a respect for its ethics and professionalism—and at the same time, teach you some really killer magic.

There are absolutely no tricks in this book that you can't do as a direct result of reading *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Magic Tricks*.

You don't have to buy special apparatus. OK, maybe a hank of rope and a deck of cards, but no tin tubes or giant packing crates. I don't want you to have to spent lots of money to have to perform your first tricks. Make the investment with your time and dedication, not your pocketbook.

I've avoided dangerous or hazardous tricks, including those that use of sharp knives, cigarettes, or fire. In the few tricks that could employ such objects, I've offered alternate handling and marked them with special warnings. (These include "Astral Ashes," "You Got the Moves," "Ashes to Ashes," "Magic with Everyday Objects," "Center Tear," "It's All in Your Mind," "Dollar Bill in Orange," and "It's Just a Stage You're Going Through.") Still, no sword swallowing, no real escape artist tricks, and no ropes or scarves around the neck. Sorry.

What else won't you find?

- ▶ No tricks that require special lighting, smoke, or mirrors.
- ▶ No tricks with livestock. Magic with animals require special care and feeding of the animals and is far beyond the scope this book.
- ▶ No tricks in which candy, or anything other than food, is given away.
- ▶ No tricks with liquids. Anything that could be spilled is out! There's just too messy to deal with here.
- ▶ Only one or two tricks require an assistant. Most can be practiced and performed on your own.

I know, I know. There are great tricks to be found in every one of these categories. They'll just have to wait for our next magic book.

What you *will* find are more than 125 tricks, from simple self-working wonders to stunning sleight-of-hand sensations.

Apology to the Lefties

Like most magical literature, these instructions are written with the right-handed reader in mind. I have tried to be as sensitive and politically correct as possible throughout this book. Unfortunately, though, I just didn't have the extra pages to give the separate handling to every trick and sleight for you readers who are left-handed. I'll have to ask your forgiveness as you adapt these instructions.

Interestingly, you're not alone in magic. A group of left-handed magicians, friends on the West coast, formed their own little circle called The Left-Handed League back in the 1970s. Among its better known members are actor Harry Anderson, comedy magician Mike Caveney and screenwriter Turk Pipkin.

How to Use This Book

The Complete Idiot's Guide to Magic Tricks is divided into six parts, each of which reveals different secrets within the art of magic.

Part 1, "Open Sesame," defines magic, helps you set some goals and introduces you to the Magician's Code, our own Bureau of Standards and Practices. Open Sesame, the magic door opens wide, and you learn your first set of tricks, all with the traditional magicians' symbol, a magic wand.

Part 2, "All the World's a Stage," teaches you basic stagecraft and showmanship, including how to routine an act, how to dress, how to write your patter, and what to do when disaster strikes.

Part 3, "Easy Does It: No Skill Required," is where we really start learning magic tricks. The tricks in this section don't require any sleight-of-hand whatsoever. You'll find more than 50 tricks with cards, coins, and mathematics.

Part 4, "Getting Down to Basics: Simple Sleights with Ordinary Objects," introduces you to some of the most basic and versatile sleight-of-hand moves with cards, coins, and everyday objects. You'll add another 50 miracles to your bag of tricks with this section.

Part 5, "Life Is a Cabaret," and it's time to look at bigger tricks you can do for larger audiences or from a stage. This section is filled with longer, more involved routines—25 tricks that can be found in the acts of professional magicians performing today.

Part 6, "Past, Present, and Future Perfect," sounds like a Time Machine. And it should. This is where you examine the history of magic, then discover its effect on modern popular culture. Before you go, you'll learn how to look and act like—even become—a professional!

I really hope you'll take the time to actually read the appendices rather than just flipping them (which is what I usually do) or not even glancing at them at all.

Appendix A, "Say the Magic Word," is not just a glossary of the magic terms scattered throughout the book. It also includes almost a hundred additional jargon terms and weird ways in which magicians use common words and expressions.

Appendix B, "Where to Learn More," includes advice on how to continue your studies in magic through books, videos, classes, and magical mentors. It also lists the names and addresses of the top magic dealers, magazines, clubs, and conventions.

Appendix C, “Recommended Reading,” contains the information on all the books I’ve mentioned throughout *The Complete Idiot’s Guide to Magic Tricks*, and I’ve added the names of several more books that I think merit special attention.

Magic Boxes

Throughout the book, I’ve added five types of bonus information in special boxes.



Now You See It

Add to your appreciation of magical lore through these anecdotes out of magic history.



Say the Magic Word

This is where you pick up the slang, jargon, and unusual word usages of the magical cognoscenti.



Hocus Quote-Us

Learn what the experts have to say about the theory and practice of magic.



Tip of the Wand

These boxes suggest ways to make your magic more effective, extra deceptive, and more entertaining.



Sawed in Half

Here’s what *not* to do. These warnings help you avoid some of the common mistakes of the sorcerer’s apprentice.

Acknowledgments

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I appreciate all the guidance, support, and (most of all) patience of Alpha Books and my editors, especially Gary Krebs and Phil Kitchel. Thanks for standing by me as I obsessed over every piece of the manuscript.

Greg Farber, whose color portrait of the author (that’s me!) graces the cover of this book, also shot more than 300 black-and-white hand photographs to serve as models for many of the line drawings rendered by illustrator, Bob Borgia.

Thanks, too, to Jay Marshall, Charles Reynolds, George Schindler, Gordon Bean, and Stan Allen.

Special Thanks from the Publisher to Max Maven, Technical Reviewer

The Complete Idiot's Guide to Magic Tricks was reviewed by Max Maven, a celebrated performer, author, creator, and magic consultant. As technical advisor for this book, Max Maven not only checked for accuracy but also added incredible insights and suggestions. His help was invaluable.

Max is a headliner in clubs across the U.S and in more than two dozen countries, and performs his own full-evening, one-man show, *Thinking in Person*. He has appeared on hundreds of television and radio programs, and he’s hosted or starred in television series or specials in more than a dozen countries. His interactive “mind games” have appeared on *The World's Greatest Magic* (NBC), on British TV, and in his own MCA video *Max Maven's Mindgames*.

Maven has published more than 1600 creations in the conjuring literature and has been an advisor to more than 70 television shows and numerous famous magicians. He’s the author of *Max Maven's Book of Fortunetelling* (Prentice Hall!).

He has received awards from the Society of American Magicians and the International Brotherhood of Magicians, and was named Lecturer of the Year by the Academy of Magical Arts (Magic Castle), which also honored him with a Creative Fellowship.

Special Thanks from the Publisher to Bob Borgia, Illustrator

Rendering line drawings for a magic book so that the magicians' hand positions and props are depicted accurately takes an understanding of the craft as well as the needs of the reader. As a performing magician and magical consultant/designer, illustrator Bob Borgia brings that special perspective to his work on *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Magic Tricks*. Borgia's designs and storyboards have been sought out by such clients as MTV, Disney, ABC, and rockers Brian McKnight and Henry Rollins. His portrait of illusionist Lance Burton recently appeared on the cover of *Genii, The International Conjurers' Magazine*. As a performer, Borgia has toured from Asia to the casinos hotels in Vegas, Tahoe, and Atlantic City, and he's been seen on magic television specials internationally.

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Part 1

Open Sesame

In the beginning, there was Magic.

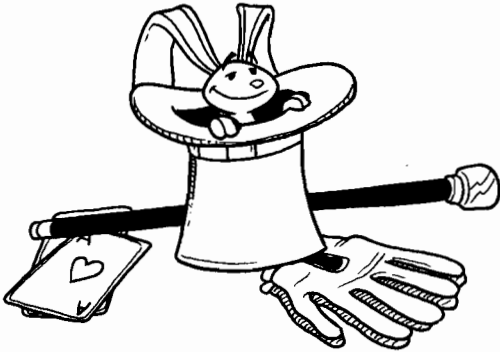
What is magic, anyway? Well, magicians have tried to answer that question for centuries, coming up with dozens of definitions and classifications. Let's see if you can figure it out for yourself by taking a small peek at what others have said.

Then we'll look at where you're heading. Why do you want to perform magic? And what kind of magic do you want to do? Before you can become a full-fledged Sorcerer's Apprentice, you'll have to take the Magician's Pledge. To be a magician, there are some things you have to promise to do: like practice, and keep the magical methods to yourself. Before you learn your first magic trick, raise your hand and take that oath!

Finally, your first magic tricks! And you'll use the traditional emblem of the magician: the magic wand. Before this section is over, you'll have more than a half dozen wonderful illusions in your bag of tricks.

So, let's get started. Open, Sesame!





The Big "M": Magic!

In This Chapter

- ▶ The search for a definition of magic
- ▶ The belief in real magic in the world
- ▶ *The Golden Bough* breaks magic into categories
- ▶ Magic—The Secret Clubhouse
- ▶ Fancy names for magic and magicians
- ▶ Tricks vs. Effects vs. Methods

What is magic?

Just what do we mean by magic? It's all just tricks, right? Illusions.

Well, people didn't always think so. Long before magicians performed in ill-fitting tuxedos, people were trying to figure out the universe. And, believe it or not, some of the folks who thought they had the answers were called magicians.

The world is filled with wonderful things. Let me put that another way: The world is filled with things full of wonder. Early magic, before it became a performance art, was humanity's attempt to understand and harness the world's wonders. Since the beginning of time, magic has tried to duplicate, alter, or defy the immutable laws of Nature.

Probably the first "tricks" in pre-history were natural deceptions, natural occurrences such as mirages or optical illusions, that early humans thought they saw but that



Hocus Quote-Us

If we lose a sense of the mysterious, life is no more than a snuffed-out candle.

—Albert Einstein

weren't really there. Before long, some schmuck in a cave was learning how to create illusions of his own. You can almost see Grok, sitting in his cave, looking at his shadow and pondering, "Is that dark figure on the wall—there, that thing that keeps following me—is it alive? Is it real? What is it?"

Or imagine this scene: Grok grunts and points over Javaboy's shoulder. The kid looks away, and Grok grabs the woolly mammoth meat roasting in the fire between them and eats it. Javaboy turns back. The meat has disappeared! No wait, the meat's in Grok's hands. How did it get there? Javaboy decides that it must be magic, and Grok has the gift!

If you stop to think about it, it's not such a great leap from there to today, when we pretend to put a coin into one hand but secretly keep it in another.

Back then it was magic; today it's known as magic tricks.

Out on a Limb

Throughout the centuries, some branches of magic developed into occult and pseudo-scientific forms, such as divination, astrology, wizardry, alchemy. But, at the same, magic also developed into an entertainment art. Even the first magicians used psychology, the power of persuasion, and manual or physical dexterity to convince others that they had special powers—and that they should be rewarded for a demonstration of those abilities.

Of course, if the magicians didn't tell anyone that they were just doing tricks, sometimes they ran the risk of being accused of, well, being in league with the devil.

Some time back, I was performing on a cruise ship, and we anchored off a small island in Indonesia. After a welcoming ceremony by the locals that included the ritual offering of a dead chicken (honest!) to see if auspices were good for our arrival, one of the area tribes allowed about 150 of us to travel up into the hills to visit their village. We were greeted with dances, chanting, singing, and exchanges of gifts. Then, while the passengers watched the native women weave at hand looms, I noticed all the hamlet's children near the stone circle where the dances had been performed.

Needless to say, I immediately walked over and started doing some small magic tricks to entertain them, just a bit of simple sleight-of-hand. Soon, the rest of the tribe gathered, and I discovered that I was in the middle of the circle.

Well, I finished up my impromptu "show," and soon the passengers and I were heading back to the ship. As we departed, our Indonesian liaison pulled me to one side and said, in deadly earnest, that the elders of the tribe had been watching me and my "powers" very closely. It seems that they couldn't decide whether to burn me at the stake or elect me chief!

Maybe I’m exaggerating, but only a little. In retrospect, I have no doubt that the village had a local shaman, upon whose magic they often depended. I’m sure my sudden appearance and demonstration of my magical power could have been perceived as a threat.

Did I mention that this was in 1995?

I was only doing a few simple tricks. Why was my magic perceived as being so great or powerful? The answer’s simple. I didn’t do card tricks or tricks with shiny rings or tin tubes or trick boxes. I did sleight-of-hand with things from their own environment:

- I made two small stones from their ritual dance circle jump from one hand to the other. (You’ll learn this trick as “Coin Flight” in Chapter 15.)
- I took ashes from their ceremonial fire mound and made them appear on someone’s palm. (Look for “Ashes to Ashes” in Chapter 16.)
- I borrowed a knife from one of the men’s belt, then cut and restored a piece of twine (aka “The Cut and Restored Rope: The Real Work,” Chapter 19, “Give a Magician Enough Rope...”).
- I plucked a leaf from a bush, ripped it into shreds, balled it up on my palm, closed my fist, then opened it to reveal the leaf completely whole and restored into one piece (I’m pretty sure that’s the trick that drove them over the edge. But it’s “Ah, Choo!” also from Chapter 16.)

My little “show” was perceived as *real* magic because I was able to manipulate and control Nature. Just think! Before you finish this book, you could be elected chief too!

In his ground-breaking study of myth and magic, *The Golden Bough* (1890), Scottish anthropologist Sir James George Frazer (1854–1941) wrote that all societies have evolved through three separate but overlapping belief systems, starting with the magical (where mysteries abound, but some people have power and influence over them), through the religious (where humanity looks to a higher power for answers and control over their life, surroundings, and future), and into the scientific (where humanity tries to confront the mysteries and conquer the laws of nature for itself.)

Frazer called the magic performed in early civilization “sympathetic magic,” governed by a “Law of Sympathy”: A magician can affect another individual by performing spells or some other occult actions over an object that’s similar to, or in sympathy with, that person. Frazer recognized two types of sympathetic magic:

- Contagious magic. The magician performs the spells over something that’s come in contact with the “victim,” like a lock of hair or toenail clippings. (Ugh, gross!)
- Homeopathic or Imitative magic. The magician weaves a spell over an object that represents, resembles, or is somehow otherwise similar to the individual. The best-known example of imitative magic would be sticking pins into a voodoo doll.

Have you experienced any unexpected, sharp pains recently?

Not long after my Indonesian experience, I was performing in Kenya. Before the show, a man approached me and asked, "Do you really do magic?" He did not even question whether there was real magic in the world. He *knew* there was. It was part of his culture. He believe there was magic used for good and to heal (what we call "white magic"), and there was magic used for evil or to harm people (the infamous "black magic"). I guess he wanted to know what kind of magic I was going to do so he'd know how close to sit.

During that same African tour, I led a workshop for corporate and civic leaders entitled "Magic and Creativity." After the seminar, one of the men who had attended came up to me, a bit disappointed, saying that he had only come because he wanted to know how witchcraft could be used to increase his bottom line.

On performance tours here in the States I've had little old ladies beat me with their umbrellas, screaming, "You got the Devil in you, boy!"

It's a sobering thought to realize that people worldwide still believe in *real* magic and in true magical powers. That's the tradition and history that we, as magical entertainers, still carry with us into the 21st century.

It's Us Versus Them

One of the reasons magic continues to fascinate people is its secrets. How we do our magic has always been shrouded in secrecy. Throughout history, the practice of magic has been a closed, secret society. Well into the 20th century, it was very difficult to learn how even the simplest tricks were done. Although the earliest magic books date back half a millennium, there was no magical literature, per se, until quite recently. There were no instructional magic videos, no TV specials breaking the Magician's Code, no Internet sites revealing the tricks.



Now You See It

Master illusionist Mark Wilson (b. 1929) was the first Western magician to perform in China after Nixon's historic 1972 visit, and during the trip, Wilson was assigned a Chinese magician as a *liaison*. During one of their exchanges, Wilson performed a stunning card trick, in which the red cards separate from the black cards. Wilson offered to teach it to his new friend, and tears came to the Chinese magician's eyes. Wilson was puzzled, so the other magician explained, "You must understand. It may be a well-known trick in the United States, but here no one has ever seen it. If you teach it to me, I will be the only person in a country of a billion people who knows how it is done."

Like other vocations, many of magic’s “tricks of the trade” were passed down from generation to generation, from master to apprentice.

So think of this book as a metaphorical passing of the magic wand.

A Rose by Any Other Name

The performance of magic has been known by many colorful names throughout history: conjuring, thaumaturgy, legerdemain and prestidigitation.

The word “magic” itself has a colorful history. Two thousand five hundred years ago, the Magi first visited Greece. The Magi (singular, Magus), a priesthood following the teachings of the Persian prophet Zoroaster, practiced astrology and other occult arts. The Greeks coined the term *magikos* to describe their mysteries. The Romans generalized the word’s meaning with their Latin *magical* (meaning, essentially, the art of magic). The term referred to both the arcane practices, such as conjuring up spirits and foretelling the future, and the entertainer’s performances of deception by nimble finger-work. Today, we use the word *magic*.

At the start of this book, I welcomed you all as Fellow Conjurers. Today, the word “conjurer” is synonymous with “magician,” and “conjuring” is the act of performing magic. However, that wasn’t always the case.

From the Old French and Latin *com* (together) and *jurare* (to swear), the word “conjurer” originally referred to the oracles, seers, wizards, and sorcerers who swore incantations and spells to call up supernatural creatures (especially demons) or to raise spirits of the deceased. Their ritual or ceremonial act became known as conjuring. But, as magic became accepted as social entertainment in the 17th and 18th centuries, stage magicians—for the first time—could claim that they conjured without the fear of being accused of witchcraft. Well, usually.

I’ve always liked the word *prestidigitation*. The word is generally used interchangeably with “magic,” but prestidigitation is, more specifically, sleight-of-hand. The word, coined by French performer Jules de Rovere in 1815, comes from the Latin roots *praestus* (nimble) and *digitus* (finger). So, if you have sneaky fingers, you’re a prestidigitator!

There’s another French word for magic, also meaning sleight-of-hand, but it’s not heard quite as often: *legerdemain*. The term is an Anglicization of the French *léger de main*, literally meaning “light of hand.”



Hocus Quote-Us

When the Magi came to Greece in the 5th century B.C. ... the Greeks held them in a certain awe, but they didn't trust them. So magic always had that cast: this is not fully trustworthy. These people are suspect.

—Eugene Burger

A far stranger word for magic is the seldom-heard *thaumaturgy*. Derived from the Greek root *thauma*, meaning “a wonder,” *thaumaturgy* is, literally, the working of wonders. And, oh yes, the worker of the miracles? The magician is known as a “*thaumaturge*.”

It's a Trick!

Whenever someone hears that I'm a magician and says to me, “Do a trick,” I think, “What? Roll over? Play dead?”

Magicians perform tricks. That's what we do. But, believe it or not, some magicians don't like the word!

“Trick” comes from the Old French *trichier*, which means “to cheat.” True, a magic trick is a deception, but most of us don't want our audiences thinking that we're trying to cheat or delude them.

Some magicians have embraced that connotation over the centuries. British magicians Nevil Maskelyne (1863–1924) and David Devant (1868–1941) suggested in their 1911 book *Our Magic* that the “trick” was the secret used to accomplish the magic, in other words, how the magician tricked (or deceived) you. But, today, when people talk about magic “tricks” they mean the actual feats of magic.



Hocus Quote-Us

Perception ... originates with the perceiver, not with the object. ... The magic show takes place ultimately in the spectator's head.

—Henry Hay, in *The Amateur Magician's Handbook*

If you want to be on the “inside,” magicians prefer the word “effect” to “trick.” By “effect,” magicians mean what the spectators think they see being performed, in other words, what takes place magically. Magicians use the term because it's what, *in effect*, happens during the trick.

For example, if you attend a magician's lecture or convention, you'll often hear performers dismissing a confusing or involved trick by saying, “I saw what he did, but what's the effect?”

Effective Immediately

How many different types of effects are there? Well, magic breaks or replicates the laws of Nature. So, I guess a better, or easier, question might be, what are the unchangeable laws of Nature that magicians have tried to break?

Over the years, many magical thinkers have tried to delineate the different effects that are possible, but there has never been a consensus.

One of the first attempts to codify magic's effects was made by David Devant, who is considered to have been one of England's greatest magicians. He offered seven different possible effects (the parenthetical definitions are mine):

- Production or creation (that is, making something appear)
- Disappearance (making something vanish)
- Transformation (changing one thing into another, or changing its physical appearance or attributes)
- Transposition (making two or more objects change places)
- Defiance of natural laws, such as gravity
- Demonstration of animation or teleportation (making something come to life, move under its own power, or move from one place to another)
- Demonstration of psychic or mental powers (mind-reading, in all its various forms)

In 1932, the British magic author and theorist S.H. Sharpe (1902–1992) published his own list in *Neo Magic*. In it, he listed six categories with several sub-heads. (This time, the definitions are his own.)

- Productions (from not being to being)
- Disappearances (from being to not being)
- Transformations (from being in this way to being in that)
- Transpositions (from being here to being there)
- Natural science laws defied
 - a. Anti-gravity
 - b. Magical animation
 - c. Magical control
 - d. Matter through matter
 - e. Multi-position
 - f. Restoration
 - g. Invulnerability
 - h. Rapid germination
- Mental phenomena
 - a. Prediction
 - b. Divination
 - c. Clairvoyance
 - d. Telepathy or thought transference
 - e. Hypnotism
 - f. Memorization
 - g. Lightning calculations

In his 1944 book *The Trick Brain*, Dariel Fitzkee (1899–1978) offered 19 basic effects.

And the debate continues. For instance, what kind of effect is a penetration—you know, a solid through solid, such as sawing a person in half. And, how about escapes?

Are they magic, or are they a separate field altogether? (Some illusionists would argue that the magical effect of an escape is really penetration—being able to penetrate through the ropes and chains.) And, should demonstrations of mental phenomena, mind-reading or telekinesis, be considered magic? Or, like escapes, are they too a completely different discipline?

It all gets rather confusing.

You're probably asking yourself right about now, "What difference does it make how many different types of effects there are? I just want to do magic!"

It's important for several reasons. First of all, you'll want to see the tricks from the audience's point of view. What do they think they see happening?

Second, whether you're doing more than one trick at a single sitting or performing for the same spectators on different occasions, you'll want to vary the types of tricks you do to hold the audience's interest.

And third, as you're building your magic repertoire and constantly adding more effects to your bag of tricks, it's good to know what's out there and available to you.



Tip of the Wand

You should always try to be aware of the educated guesses or hunches your audience will make when trying to figure out your tricks and attempt to, overtly or subliminally, eliminate those as possible methods.

A Method to Your Madness

If laypeople guess at how we do our magic, they usually explain it with invisible wires, false bottoms, trap doors, trick boxes, fast hands, palming, sticking things up our sleeves, smoke, or mirrors.

In lay terms, they're talking about the "secret" of the trick. Magicians call the means by which a magic effect is accomplished the "method."

The method is much more than just the secret, however. The method can include such elements as the preparation, the basic underlying magic principles, the sleights and other handling used, and sometimes the entire routine that's performed.

There's More Than One Way to Skin a Cat

Depending upon how obsessive-compulsive you are and how many lists you want to make, there are all sorts of other ways to categorize magic and magicians. And just to prove it, here's another list:

You and your magic can be defined by

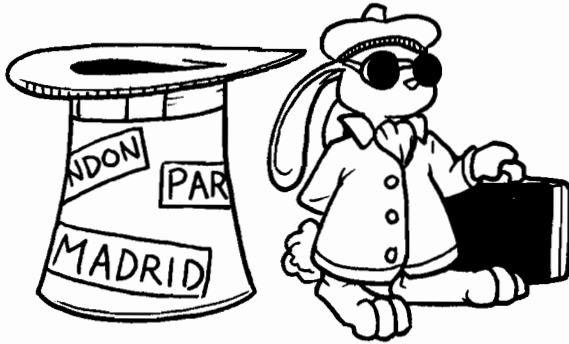
- What style of magic you do.
- The type of character you play.

- Your choice of tricks.
- The size of your act.
- The type of venues you play.
- The type of audience you perform for.
- Whether it's a hobby or your meal-ticket.

Throughout this book, we'll examine all of these categories, and many more. And by the time you're through, you'll have more than 100 tricks, sleights, and subtleties at your fingertips. So let's get the show on the road.

The Least You Need to Know

- It's still a widely held belief throughout the world that real magic exists.
- Scientists and magical theorists have tried to categorize and define the many types of magic.
- Magicians closely guard their secrets and, until very recently, primarily passed them down from master to apprentice.
- Magicians prefer to use the word "effect" to "trick" to mean what they perform and what the laypeople think they see.



Let's Get the Show on the Road

In This Chapter

- ▶ Who can do magic?
- ▶ Why do magic?
- ▶ Special uses for magic
- ▶ Amateurs, part-timers, and pros
- ▶ The least you need to begin
- ▶ Breaking the barriers to performing

Just as there's no single, simple answer as to what magic *is*, there's also no single, simple reason why people get into magic.

In this chapter, we'll focus on why you're interested in magic and the many reasons to perform it. We'll also investigate some of the nontraditional ways that magic's being utilized: in education, business, religion, and medicine.

We'll take inventory of what you need to get started: your basic bag of tricks. And, finally, we'll eliminate those last-minute worries. It's magic time!

Can Anyone Do Magic?

Yes, Virginia, you can do magic.

Magic is an entertainment art, pure and simple. It's a practiced skill, requiring no innate powers or abilities, either physical or psychological. While average dexterity, a sense of stagecraft and showmanship, and a general understanding of human nature are useful tools—as they are for any performance art—they're not prerequisites before starting a study of magic.

Anyone with the interest and drive to seek out the secrets of magic, practice the basic sleights, and rehearse the routines can become a magician.

So, can *you* do magic? The answer is yes, with patience and practice, you can do magic.



Now You See It

Many actors have learned magic at one time or another for a particular role. But there are also dozens of celebrities who are truly interested in the art and who perform magic. High on the list of magic aficionados are such notables as Jason Alexander, Mohammed Ali, Woody Allen, Harry Anderson, Carl Ballantine, Milton Berle, Marlon Brando, George Bush, David Carradine, Johnny Carson, Dick Cavett, Tony Curtis, Dom DeLuise, Cary Grant, Neal Patrick Harris, Benny Hill, Shari Lewis, Karl Malden, Steve Martin, Mickey Mouse, Dick van Patten, Orson Welles, and HRH Charles, Prince of Wales.



Hocus Quote-Us

Whether you are a newcomer to the field or an old pro, the idea is to have fun.

—George Schindler, in *Magic with Everyday Objects*

What's In It For Me?

Why do magic?

When I was a kid, by that time, there were lots of magicians on television, such as Fantasio and Jay Marshall (among many others) on the *Ed Sullivan Show* (yes, kiddies, I'm *that* old) and Mark Wilson on *The Magic Land of Allakazam*. Then were my first live shows: seeing Frank Scalzo (and his Technicolor Doves) at the Kimberton Carnival, and Phil Chandler coming to town with a Spook Show (where the magician performed between two late-night horror movies).

So, I thought, if I could perform magic, well, that would be pretty special, huh? Yes, I admit it—at first I just wanted to be able to do something special, something that would let me be the center of attention. Plus, I enjoyed fooling the heck out of people. As I matured, however, I realized that my real desire was not to *fool* people but to *entertain* them. And be special and the center of attention.

Why do *you* want to be able to perform magic? Why did *you* pick up this book?

Let Me Entertain You

People become interested in magic for any number of reasons. For many, it was the experience I had, of seeing a magician perform, either live or on television. Some were given a beginner's magic set as a birthday or holiday present. But it's a big jump from seeing a magician to deciding, "Hey, I want to do that."

Here are just a few of the right reasons people want to learn magic and how they wind up using it:

- Have fun.
- Provide fun. Yes, you too can be the life of the party.
- Make new friends...
- ...And influence people (learn leadership skills and stage command)
- Get dates. (See my next list.)
- Build poise or self-confidence.
- A burning desire to perform. Different than providing fun, some people just need to be in some branch of the performing arts.
- Fool people. (Also see the next list.)
- Fascination with the puzzle aspect of magic. Different than fooling others, puzzles provide mental challenges to the audience and, often, the performer.
- Exercise and digital dexterity.
- Earn money.
- Meet new people by using magic as an "icebreaker," especially in business settings.
- Use magic to illustrate a message or motto.

Of course, there are some wrong reasons to do magic. I hesitate to even mention them, but here are some of the reasons that there's a sizable number of people who don't like to watch magic:

- Attract or become the center of attention. I call this the "Hey, Look At Me" syndrome.
- Be able to do something that no one else can—the "Ain't I Special?" complex.

- Fool people. Yes, this was also on the last list. It's alright to fool people, but don't make people look like fools. As I was growing up, a woman next door refused to watch my magic because she thought I was trying to make her look stupid.
- Get dates. I wasn't sure which list to put this one in. Sure, magic can make you seem witty, charming, and mysterious, but if you push it too much, you can come off as pompous, creepy, or just plain nerdy. It's a razor-thin line. (If your last recourse to getting a date is magic, well, maybe you should pick up *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Dating*.)

I Want More

There must be more to life than pulling rabbits out of hats. Besides its entertainment factor, magic is used for a variety of different purposes. Let me mention just three: Education, Religion, and Rehabilitation.

Magic is often used in educational arenas by classroom teachers, motivational speakers, and sales leaders, because the magic keeps the audience awake as the performer delivers a message. Ideally, the actual effect should also suggest the points to be made.

Example? How about a cut-and-restored rope to demonstrate the theme "Togetherness"? Or calling a volunteer onto the stage to be a "team player"? Or, on a grand scale, making a new product appear at an industrial or trade show?

Magic is also used in the ministry. In a sense, it's a specific form of educational magic, because Gospel magic, as the genre is known, uses its patter and effects to illustrate Christian teachings. Sometimes even the apparatus has been specifically decorated to resemble religious accouterments.

Magic has long been recognized for the physical (especially digital) dexterity that it requires. I know several doctors who are not magicians but practice sleight-of-hand with coins and cards to keep their fingers nimble and their minds alert. Magic is also beneficial in physical therapy and rehabilitation. It has psychological value, because it gives patients a goal—a reason to exercise their minds and bodies—as well as practical physical healing. In the mid-1980s, David Copperfield worked with physicians and nurses nationwide to codify one such remedial program under the name Project Magic.



Sawed in Half

Gospel magic is a legitimate form of educational entertainment, especially when used to reach the very young. But if you perform Gospel magic, be careful that no one confuses your illusions with actual miracles from the Bible. I watched a Gospel magic show several years back and, as I went forward to congratulate the pastor, I heard a little girl ask her mother, in all naiveté, "Is that how Jesus did all of his tricks?"

For the Love of It

What do you want to do with your magic? Do you just want to learn a few kicks to fool the gang tricks and be the life of the party, do you want to make few bucks at it now and then, or do you want to be the next David Copperfield?

Each of these is a valid, fulfilling, and practical goal. It all depends how much you're willing to invest in your craft.

By the way, we magicians have different names for you, depending on whether you're doing this just for the fun or it or whether you're doing it to avoid getting a real job.

Amateur Hour

From the French and Latin word *amare*, an amateur is, literally, one who loves; thus, an amateur magician is someone who practices the art for his or her own pleasure, rather than as a profession or for money. In its everyday usage, the term "amateur" sometimes carries the negative connotation of someone who lacks professional skill. In the case of magicians, however, many amateur magicians have great technical expertise and performance capabilities, but have simply chosen not to pursue magic as a career, even on a part-time basis.

The Semi-Professional and the Part-Time Pro

A semi-professional is someone who has a nine-to-five job but also performs magic shows, often on weekends, as a secondary occupation. Unfortunately, the term semi-professional sometimes carries a negative connotation, implying that someone who has a "real" job but does magic "on the side" isn't good enough to "make it" as a full-time pro. Does "semi-professional" mean that the performer is *almost* professional? *Almost* good enough to perform? Absolutely not.

That's why Gene Anderson (b. 1941), a comedy magician and full-time Dow Chemical employee, coined the term part-time professional: A person who performs magic on a professional level but has a different full-time occupation. Any magician who is doing shows for money should be performing on a professional-level. It's just that the magician has chosen to perform on a part-time basis.

The Big Leagues: The Professional

In simplest terms, a professional magician is someone who makes his or her full-time living as an entertainer. But the words "professional" and "professionalism" go well beyond that, incorporating such concerns as attitude, ethics, and businesslike behavior. At the end of the book, we'll take a more detailed look at the important issue of professionalism.

I have to point out that many amateurs and semi- or part-time professionals are as skilled (or more so) as some of their professional peers. They have the same passion that brought us all into magic. They're still avidly learning new tricks, practicing, and rehearsing. Much of a professional's time and energy, unfortunately, is taken up in getting booked and in the tedium and rigor of touring. Also, because they're hired based on their reputation, many pros are reluctant to add or change material.

Your Basic Bag of Tricks

So it's time to start putting together your bag of tricks. What's your first step? Fortunately, you don't have to drop out of school and enroll in a Wizards Academy, or spend all your bar-mitzvah money on special props—at least not at first.

No Special Powers Needed

Like most manual tasks, magic is a skill, a craft that can be developed through practice. Almost anyone with normal eye-hand coordination can perform most magic, but even advanced sleight-of-hand can be perfected through sufficient practice. I mean, I can't even hammer a nail straight, but I can get a chosen playing card to anywhere I want in the deck.

And, once again, just in case you've already started shopping for a black cat, cauldron, and broom, you don't need any supernatural powers to perform this magic. You don't need to be hearing voices or getting psychic heat flashes. Mere mortals may apply.

It Costs How Much?

You can spend tens of thousands of dollars on your illusions (if, say, you want to make a Lear jet disappear) or you can spend next to nothing. The choice is up to you.

If you stay in magic, I predict that *most* of you will go through these stages:

- Building your apparatus out of inexpensive items found around the house
- Buying tricks made out of tin tubes and fancy red boxes with fake Chinese lettering
- Investing in a few magic books or instructional videos
- Maybe getting one "big" trick to end your show
- Every few months, getting that new trick that everyone's talking about (what I call "flavor of the month" magic). Trust me, we all have piles of played-with-once-but-never-put-in-the-act stuff in our magic closets.
- Settling into your favorite tricks, most of which you will make out of inexpensive items found around the house

The effectiveness of your magic does not depend on how much you spend. It depends on the entertainment you can provide.

Perseverance: The Other 99%

The most important thing you can invest in is yourself. Commit to spending the time that you will need to learn, practice, rehearse, and polish your tricks.

Thomas Alva Edison said, "Genius is one percent inspiration and ninety-nine per cent perspiration." I think the same goes for magic. One percent of magic is learning the secrets; everything else is working on your showmanship and performance.

How Little You Can Get Away With

I realize that you want to know how every trick in the universe is done. And you want to know it *now*.

By the time you actually decide which tricks you like most and want to perform regularly, you'll have learned dozens, if not hundreds, of tricks. The great thing is, you'll be able to go back to the old tricks, and learn new ones, for the rest of your life.

It doesn't matter how many, or how few, tricks you do, as long as you do them impeccably. Before long, some of those tricks will be "signature" tricks. Soon, you'll be taking requests. People who have seen you perform will bring up their friends, saying, "Show my bud that trick with the so-and-so."



Now You See It

When Albert Goshman (1921–1991?) was considering performing magic professionally, the noted close-up magician Dai Vernon (1894–1992) advised him to learn and perform five tricks better than anybody else. If he could do that, Vernon observed, he would have a life-long career in magic. Goshman followed Vernon's suggestion, and, even though he perfected many more than five routines, Goshman became internationally famous for the handful of tricks that had become his trademarks.

Danger, Will Robinson

I feel like Robby the Robot, flailing my arms in warning, but there are some tricks you should carefully consider before putting them into your repertoire because they can be

dangerous, or just messy. Any tricks in this book that fall under these categories will have “Sawed in Half” advisories printed by them to tell you of the ramifications if something does go wrong.

Here are some things that should cause extra concern:

- ▶ Playing with fire, including flash paper (paper that has been treated to burn up quickly)
- ▶ Sharp objects
- ▶ Tricks with (cough, cough) cigarettes
- ▶ Water, which can, and will, spill
- ▶ Confetti, glitter, or other loose objects, which can fall on the floor, causing you or others to slip
- ▶ Edible giveaways (As my mother would say, “Who knows where it’s been?”)
- ▶ Animals (Birds can fly to chandeliers; rabbits can scratch and bite. And all of them can, well, poop.)
- ▶ Balloons, which, when popped or deflated, can be easily swallowed by infants



Sawed in Half

Some tricks are just too dangerous to perform. In *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584), Reginald Scot explains how “to thrust a dagger... into your guts...and...recover immediately.... [You] seem to kill yourself, or at the least make an unrecoverable wound.” He then goes on to describe a magician who made a mistake trying to perform the illusion and actually did kill himself. Scot’s advice? “See you be circumspect.” That is, be careful!

That’s not to say tricks that involve water, birds, and fire shouldn’t be learned or even performed. Magic with all of these items can be performed safely and effectively, if proper precautions are taken and if they are handled carefully. Some of the most exciting magic seemingly puts the magician or the assistants in death-defying situations. But notice I said “seemingly.” There should always be safeguards in place to make sure no one—the magician, the assistants, or the audience—is in any danger.



Hocus Quote-Us

The hand is not quicker than the eye; it does not need to be.
—The Great Merlini, in *How to Entertain Children with Magic*

Release the Genii Inside

Are you all ready to go? I’m sure that most of you are. But some of you might still be just a little bit nervous. Don’t worry. Be happy. Here are the Top Ten most common excuses (in no particular order) that beginners use to keep their inner genii bottled up. Let me answer your concerns right off the bat!

- ▶ “I’m too clumsy.” Remember, you can be uncoordinated in one skill and talented in

another. In the case of magic, "practice makes perfect" is more than a motto. It's a way of life.

- **"My hands are too small."** You don't need mongo-size hands for magic. Some of the top sleight-of-hand artists in history have had short, stocky fingers.
- **"I'm not fast enough."** Speed doesn't count. In fact, it draws unnecessary attention. Instead, the hands have to move smoothly and naturally. "The hand is quicker than the eye," is a myth: The eyes see at the speed of light.
- **"I'm too old to start a new hobby."** Don't be silly. You should never stop learning. Jack be nimble, Jack be quick, you're never too old to learn a new trick!
- **"I'm not smart enough."** You don't need a super IQ for magic. In fact, most magic is quite simple. Yes, you will have to be able to read and follow instructions, but you're doing OK so far, aren't you?
- **"I'm not sneaky enough to fool anybody."** It's true. You will be fooling people using some truly clever techniques, but you don't have to be the Great Deceiver to get away with most magic tricks. People don't know the secrets we know, so it's much easier to bamboozle them than you would suspect.
- **"I'm afraid I'll make a mistake and look stupid!"** Remember Murphy's Law, "If something can possibly go wrong, it will," and (to paraphrase poet Robert Burns) "The best laid plans of mice and men oft go astray." Unfortunately, they're both true. Every magician—repeat—*every magician* has had tricks go wrong. We'll take a more detailed look in Part 2 at what to do when disaster strikes.
- **"I get terrible stage fright."** We all do from time to time. True, some magicians get it worse than others. But practice and preparation can cut it to a minimum. So can getting enough successful performances under your belt to build your ego and self-confidence.



Hocus Quote-Us

The belief that arduous practice and exceptional skill is necessary in the performance of close-up magic is erroneous. In fact, some of the cleverest and most bewildering tricks are made possible through the use of subtle principles and unique methods that can easily be learned by anyone with a fair amount of practice.

—Frank Garcia in *Million Dollar Card Secrets*



Hocus Quote-Us

If these things are done for mirth and recreation, and not to the hurt of our neighbor, nor to the abusing or profaning of God's name, in my opinion they are neither impious nor altogether unlawful: though [by these means] a natural thing [is] made to seem supernatural.

—Reginald Scot, in *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*

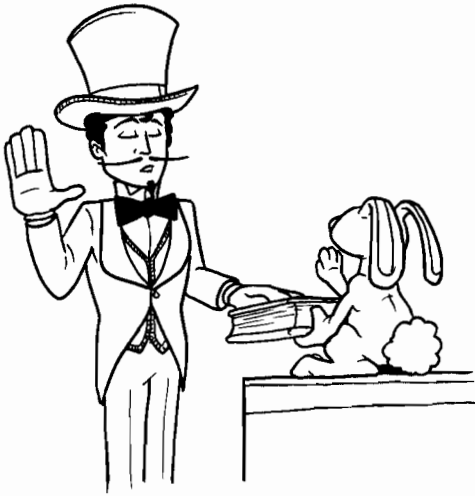
- **“I don’t look like a magician.”** There’s no right or wrong “look” for a magician. You don’t have to be a magazine cover model to do magic. You don’t have to wear a top hat and tails. You just have to look appropriate for the magic you’re going to perform.
- **“Magic is evil and the work of Satan.”** Your point being...? Seriously, I’ve said it before, and I’ll say it again: You’re not going to be burned at the stake for doing magic. Unless, maybe, it’s a really *good* trick.

There are probably as many different reasons to perform magic as there are people who take up the wand. And, over time, your reasons, and the tricks you perform, will probably change. The important thing now is that you take that first step on your road to wizardry.

If you’re ready to make that commitment, turn the page and take the Magician’s Pledge.

The Least You Need to Know

- There are no special prerequisites to learning or performing magic.
- People become interested in magic for many different reasons and utilize it in many different ways.
- Magic can be performed just for the fun of it, part-time, or as a vocation.
- You don’t need to make a large financial investment to perform magic; but you do need to dedicate your time and energy to perfect your craft.
- Most of the mental barriers the beginner puts in place are unfounded and can be quickly removed.



The Magician's Pledge

In This Chapter

- ▶ Why you should keep the secrets of magic
- ▶ Creating a "Magic Moment"
- ▶ Natural magic vs. flourishes
- ▶ Involving your audience
- ▶ Make your magic direct

You've probably all heard of the Magician's Code. I guess it's supposed to be the magical equivalent of the Ten Commandments, rules ordained by some Higher Power (maybe some Universal Society of Wizards?) that we must all follow ... or die.

There's no such thing.

Well, not exactly. But over the years, there *has* been an informal gathering of pithy maxims—more common-sense recommendations than laws—collected to help performers in their practice of magic.

Taking the Pledge

Before you can become a full-fledged Sorcerer's Apprentice and find out how everything in magic is done, you'll have to take the Magicians Pledge.

I'm serious. To be a magician, there are some things you have to promise to do. So, before you learn your first magic trick, you have to take the oath!

Stand up.

I mean it! Stand up, and raise your oath hand. (You can do this in the privacy of your room when the family's away. They're probably already not too sure about you if they saw you buy this book!)

Put your other hand on this book and read these words out loud.

**I promise
To keep the secrets,
To practice the tricks,
And use my powers only for good.**

Believe it or not, you've already agreed to two parts of the Magician's Code—the secrecy and the practice—which is a good start. (I hope the part about good versus evil magic speaks for itself. We don't want any witchcraft or voodoo coming out of this.)

Anyway, I digress. Here are my Mystic Seven Rules, my version of the Magician's Code.

1. Never tell the secrets.

There's an old joke:

Audience member: "How's it done?"

Magician: "I'd tell you, but then I'd have to kill you."

Don't make me come out there and find you!

OK, you shouldn't keep secrets from your parents. I'm talking about the methods of magic.

Why should you keep the secrets? First of all, one of the major reasons people enjoy magic is they *like* being astonished, and trying to figure out how it's done. If you reveal the secret, you take away much of the entertainment value of the trick.



Now You See It

In his 45th Epistle to Lucilius, Seneca the Younger (4? B.C.-A.D. 65) described seeing a magic trick performed. He noted, "It's in the very trickery that it pleases me. But show me how the trick is done, and I have lost my interest therein." Things haven't changed in two millennia.

Another reason for secrecy: The methods are usually very simple. When people find out how easily they were deceived, they often feel stupid—and hate you. They'll say, "Is that all there is to magic?"

Magicians call revealing how a trick is done "exposure." In some highly publicized instances (including high-profile books and television specials), exposure has been deliberate. In other cases, it's by accident or from a bad performance. Some magicians even call the legitimate teaching of tricks to magic students exposure.

The ethical question among magicians seems to hinge on the way in which the secrets are exposed. If the information isn't specifically solicited, it's generally considered to be exposure. Interested parties who seek out the information through private lessons, videos, or books (like, say, *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Magic Tricks*) are considered to be legitimate students of magic.

2. Practice the trick.

Audiences have a love-hate relationship with finding out how tricks are done. Sure, they want to know. Aren't you curious when you see a new trick? But in their heart-of-hearts, I truly believe they enjoy and want to maintain the mystery.

That's why practice is so essential. Practice makes perfect. That's not just a slogan; it should be a mantra. The more you practice, the less likely you are to make a mistake that will expose how the trick is done.

Practice your routines, step-by-step, over and over, until you have every part down, and you can perform the whole trick perfectly from beginning to end. We'll look more at practice and rehearsal methods in Part 2. Until then, did I mention you should practice?

3. Never tell the audience in advance what you're going to do.

Many times you'll hear magicians announce the name or title of their next trick: "And now, the Mystery of the Hindu Rope of Doom," or some such nonsense. That's not what I'm talking about.

I mean you shouldn't tell up front what effect you're going to try to achieve. For example, you shouldn't say, "And now the Hindu Rope trick, where the rope will rise from my hand, turn as solid as a steel bar, then fall like a limp noodle."

That's giving too much away.

There are two main reasons. First, and probably most importantly, if the audience knows in advance *what* you're going to do, they can concentrate on *how* you're doing it. And, nine times out of ten, such a detailed description will give them some idea of what to look out for. Don't do it.

Also, there is the rare possibility that something might go wrong. Let me put that in less terrifying terms: The trick might not work out exactly the way you wanted or expected it to. The rope didn't get rigid? Maybe you can cut it in half and put it back together, then. Or challenge the audience to tie the rope in a knot without letting go of the ends. (You'll learn all three of these rope tricks in Chapter 18, by the way.)

The point is, if the audience doesn't know what's *supposed* to happen, you can switch gears at any time and finish the trick in a different way or go on to a new trick entirely. (We'll look at this concept, known as finding an "out," in more detail in Part 2.)

As with almost every rule, there are exceptions. With some tricks, you have a "catch me if you can" plot. You openly defy the audience to figure out the trick. Others, sometimes called "sucker tricks," pretend to show how a trick is done, then fool them in a different way. Still other tricks are actually more amazing, or at least perplexing, if you repeat them once or twice. You'll learn examples of all of these throughout *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Magic Tricks*.

But, by and large, it's good practice not to give too much away before you've done the dirty work.

4. Never repeat a trick.

I don't mean ever. I mean for the same audience at the same sitting. Repeating a trick is the same as telling the audience in advance what you're going to do. You've eliminated any surprise or mystery. The first time they look to see *what*; the second time they look to see *how*.

If your audience really wants to see a trick again, they'll ask the next time they see you. By then it will probably be OK to repeat the trick. They'll have forgotten all the details, so it will seem new—especially if you perform it with some new twist.

Before long, your spectators will bring up their friends to see their favorite tricks. They're not trying to figure them out; they want to share them with their friends.

One more thing before we leave the rule about never repeating a trick. You will eventually find certain tricks that audiences always enjoy, and that you do so well no one will ever figure them out. These favorites will probably become part of your repertoire, your magical bag of tricks, and you can repeat them almost every time you perform.

In fact, some of these tricks will become your "signature pieces." Audiences will be disappointed if they ask you to perform them and you don't. Wouldn't you be upset if you went to a concert and the singer or band didn't do your favorite song? Of course you would. Magic audiences are no different.

If you're asked to perform for the same people, you'll be tempted to replace all of your tricks so the audience will see an entirely different, brand-new show. However, the tricks that you perform best have probably been in your repertoire the longest. You've practiced, rehearsed, and performed them more than any others. (By replacing just a few tricks in your "act" at a time, you always have some killer material.)

5. Never run when they're not chasing you.

Audiences know that you're going to try to fool them. You're a magician! But, unless you act weird or do something really sneaky, they usually accept what you're saying and doing at face value. They assume that ordinary-looking objects *are* ordinary and unprepared.

Unless you're saying it for comic effect, you probably don't want to call something "ordinary" or "everyday." It will draw attention to it and make the audience suspicious.

You'll be running when nobody is chasing you.

6. Nobody likes a wise guy.

Magic already deceives your audience. It tricks them. If you want them to be entertained, and not angry that you're fooling them, never be a smart aleck. Otherwise, you're placing not just a chip but a whole 2-by-4 on their shoulder and challenging them to figure out your tricks.

And, rather than be made to look stupid, they'll respond in any number of undesirable ways. They might...

- Heckle or berate you.
- Walk away.
- Simply dismiss you and your magic.
- Come up with the correct method.

By the way, in this last instance, it doesn't matter if their solution is wrong or right. How can you prove they're wrong without exposing the correct method?

You can, of course, make a conscious choice to perform as a wiseacre, but it is an incredibly difficult persona to pull off and still be entertaining. (A non-magical example would be comic Don Rickles.) But if you make this choice, you must be incredibly talented and terrifically entertaining, as well as totally aware of the effect you'll have on the audience and the response you're likely to get. Until you have years of experience, I wouldn't recommend you perform magic as a smarty-pants.

7. Knowing the secret doesn't make you a magician; performing magic makes you a magician.

I know the colors of the spectrum, but I can't draw a straight line. I know what a plié is in ballet, but I can't dance. Just knowing how the magic works doesn't mean you can perform the tricks. Even the tricks you see labeled as "self-working" (like the ones in Chapter 10), don't happen automatically when you pick them up!

If you read the description of a magic trick and it sounds like something you'd like to be do, try it out with the recommended props in hand. Practice each part diligently.

(Yes, that word “practice” again! You’ll hear it several more times before this book is through!) Rehearse it, move-for-move, word-for-word, beginning-to-end, until it’s perfect. Then comes the real test: Performing the trick in front of real people. Hone your performance until your audience is amazed and amused each and every time you perform.

That’s what makes you a magician!

Tricks of the Trade

Every time you perform, there’s lots more going on than just the secret. You’ll use everything you’ve learned and every bit of experience you’ve acquired to make that performance as entertaining and as deceptive as possible.

So, before you learn your first tricks in Chapter 4, I want to let you in a few more miscellaneous secrets.

This is “concept stuff.” I know it seems a bit strange introducing these notions to you now, before you’ve started to learn any magic, but there’s a method to my madness.

These are such important ideas that I hope you’ll have them in the back of your mind the whole time you’re reading this book. Every so often, as you’re learning a trick, I hope the little beep will go off in your brain and you’ll say, “Oh, yeah ... “ And I hope you’ll also refer back to this chapter time and time again.

This Magic Moment

Remember how Jeannie in *I Dream of Jeannie* did her magic? That’s right: She folded her arms and nodded her head. And how about Samantha on *Bewitched*? Right again! She twitched her nose.

What they were doing was giving us a “magic moment.” They were letting us know the instant that the magic happened. You probably know of at least one magical equivalent: a wave or a tap of the magic wand. What else could you do to signify the instant that the magic takes place? In addition to the wand stuff, here are three of the most common:

- Snap your fingers
- Wave of the hand
- Say a magic word

No, you don’t have to give such a magic signal. The magic will happen just fine without it, thank you very much. But I can give you at least three good reasons to consider using one.

Creating a magic moment suggests that all of the folderol and fiddle-dee-dee you've done up to that point had nothing to do with how the trick is done. It was all just preparation. The magic hasn't even begun to take place yet. Not until ... now! ... and you snap your fingers. It happens, at that instant, at the magic moment.

The pause before the magic moment also gives the audience a chance to reflect on everything they've seen up to that point. The hand is empty. The newspaper is in pieces. The rope is cut in half. Then, you wave your hand or say the magic word, and ... woosh! ... the magic takes place.

Any audience is a collection of individuals who are digesting what they're seeing at different speeds. By giving a magic moment, you ensure that everyone in the audience "sees" the trick and responds at the same time. (This holds true if you're performing for just one person. Your spectator's scattered thoughts are all brought together and crystallized at one instant, exactly when you want, when you provide a magic moment.)

The Too-Perfect Theory

Another reason for a magic moment is give a reason as to why or how the magic takes place!

Most magicians believe that you should leave no possible clue as to how a trick is done. But some magicians believe that tricks can be so incredible, so impossible, that they are actually "too perfect." Often you'll hear the audience say, "But the magician never even got near the (fill in the blank with the appropriate prop)."

According to this "Too-Perfect Theory," the audience can be so blown away by the magic that they either refuse to believe what they've seen or dismiss it outright. That's usually when you'll hear things like, "It's done with a stooge!" Or mirrors. Or a trap-door. Or twins. People can only suspend their disbelief (see Chapter 7) so far.

To keep the audience hooked long after the tricks are over, many magicians like to provide spectators with several possible explanations for their tricks. That way, the audience is never certain how the tricks were done, and they'll keep discussing the magician and the tricks. There's the old stand-by, sleight-of-hand, so you might like to make sure you touch whatever props are used at some point during the routine. Even if everything is done in the spectator's hands, you might want to at least approach the apparatus.

Then, of course, there's providing a magic moment: Snap your fingers over the deck, gesture at the empty box that you never got near, hold your fingertips to your forehead before you open your mind-reading prediction.

As you might expect, the "Too-Perfect Theory" is debatable among magicians, but the issue is worth considering as you design the presentations of your magic tricks.

Au Natural

No, I'm not suggesting you perform magic in the buff.

When magicians use the word *natural*, they mean that when you perform a sleight, your hands should move the same way they would if you weren't making the secret move. Likewise, if you're hiding something in your hand, it should look like it would if nothing were hidden there. Otherwise, the audience will get suspicious. They may not know what's being done, but they know you just don't look natural. They'll know something sneaky's going on.

Truth be told, many coin sleights look very odd. In order to perform the sleights that allow us to produce, vanish, multiply, or in some other way change the coins, magicians sometimes have to hold them in ways that normal people just don't hold them. The reason is simple: We *have* to! We're not *really* magic! (But don't tell anyone!)



Say the Magic Word

When you perform a sleight or secret move, or hide something in your hand or on your person, it's important that you look **natural**; that is, the same way you would if you weren't performing the secret action.

One of our jobs as magicians is to make our sneaky moves, our sleights, look as natural as possible. The best way to do this is to perform the action we're supposed to look like we're doing, then try to simulate it.

I'm getting a bit ahead of myself, but for the sake of explanation, let's say you're supposed to put a coin from your right hand into your left hand, but you're secretly going to keep it in your right hand. (This is called a pass, and you'll learn it in Chapter 15). Stand in front of a mirror, and watch yourself actually transfer the coin from your right into your left hand. When you do the secret move and *don't* transfer the coin, the movements of your hand should look exactly the same.

Always strive to make your magic look natural.

Let It Flourish

Another debate that continues to rage among magicians is how much demonstrable skill you should display to the audience. (Similarly, magicians discuss the appropriate use of flourishes, or gestures, that are often designed simply to show off obvious skill.)

One Sunday afternoon I was at the Magic Castle, a magician's private clubhouse in Hollywood, California, and I saw one of the teenage magicians proudly showing off his work on a Paul Harris card trick. He had half the deck in each hand. The top cards of each pile shot up, did a somersault, and landed on the top of the card in the other hand. (It was darned clever, and it was performed quite well.) But just at that moment, 85-year old "Professor" Dai Vernon, a legendary card master, shuffled by, took one look at the move, and said to the kid, "That's what's killing magic!"

Fortunately, we all knew the Professor's philosophy on cards: Whenever you handle a deck of cards, everything has to look completely natural.

The problem with flourishes, he felt (along with many other magicians), is their flamboyance. The audience knows it's not our first time on the dance floor, but we don't want them to think we're so skilled that they dismiss our card magic out-of-hand. Their thinking would be, "If you can do that with a deck of cards, of course you can find my card, or anything else you want to do with them."

What they'll say, however, is, "I wouldn't want to play cards with you."

Sense-ational

Try to involve as many of the audience's senses as possible in your magic. Need a review of science class? Remember sight, sound, touch, smell, taste?

Beyond the five senses, try to involve the audience's minds and their emotions as well. Perhaps you could start your trick with a provocative question: "Do you believe in ESP?"

The more meaningful you can make your magic, on as many levels and in as many ways as possible, the more the audience will enjoy and remember you and your performance.

Now Taking Requests

I've mentioned before that, once you've performed enough to develop a reputation, you may have people come up and ask you to do a specific trick. The danger when you take "requests" is that whoever asks often gives away the effect: "Do that trick where the rope stands up." Here you have a few options. You can do the trick, and hope they just want to enjoy it one more time rather than try to catch you.

Or, as I've suggested, you could put some spin on the trick. It doesn't even have to be a real variation; it can be totally bogus: "You remember last time I used a blue rubber band? Watch what happens when I do it with a red rubber band!" (Or a five-dollar bill rather than a single. You get the picture.)

I generally try to beg off by offering to do a similar trick with the same objects, saying something like, "Well, here, let me show you something just like it that you haven't seen before." It will usually satisfy their request, and they'll be happy to see something new.



Hocus Quote-Us

The essential ingredient of successful magic is simplicity. The average person enjoys being entertained by magic, but if the routines are complicated, the tricks will become problems instead of magic.

—Frank Garcia in *Million Dollar Card Secrets*



Hocus Quote-Us

[Beginners] spend hours on elaborate sleights and methods that would have no meaning except to another magician who already knows the secret of some old trick.... Both versions would look the same to an audience.

—Bill Severn, *Magic and Magicians*



Hocus Quote-Us

The very best method of performing a given trick is the easiest method, and it is the method which should be used.

—Jean Hugard and Fred Braue, *Expert Card Technique*

KISS

Finally, don't forget to KISS your audience: Keep It Simple, Stupid.

You want your magic to be direct, so that the audience can understand what's supposed to happen. Try to avoid multiple or complicated steps, proving this and showing that. Keep the introduction of the props and the premise as short as possible. Just let the magic happen. Otherwise, you might run the risk of losing the audience's attention or interest. (That sounds better than saying you'll bore them to death, doesn't it?)

Keep sleight-of-hand, especially visible moves and flourishes, to a minimum. I know you've spent hours and hours learning them, but in most cases your audience only cares about the magical effect and being entertained.

And, if you have a choice of how to do a magic trick, it's usually best to go with the easiest or more direct method. There are dozens, if not hundreds, of ways to make a person pick the playing card you want them to take, for example, but some of them take longer than it does to reveal the card at the end of the trick.

Remember, audiences only care about the effect (what happens); they know nothing about the method (how you do it). The easier it is for you to do the magic, the less likely it is that you will make a mistake, that something will go wrong, or the audience will see the secret something.

Have you memorized all this? Or have you just had enough theory for now? Alright, turn the page. Your first magic awaits!

The Least You Need to Know

- A code of ethics involving secrecy and professionalism in performance has evolved into the so-called "Magician's Code."
- Sometimes the magic seems too perfect to be true; one answer is to suggest the "magic moment" when the magic supposedly occurs.
- Your actions should look natural at all times, although flourishes can be used with great discretion to spice up your magic.
- Try to involve the audience as often and on as many levels, physical and psychological, as possible.
- Direct magic, with simple, uncluttered presentations, is often the most involving and entertaining.



It's Wonderful, It's Marvelous

In This Chapter

- ▶ The earliest use of a magic wand
- ▶ The wand as a tool for Druids, alchemists, and diviners
- ▶ The wand as a magic accessory
- ▶ How to make the magic wand appear and disappear
- ▶ How to make the wand cling to your hand
- ▶ Passing the wand through a solid object
- ▶ Understanding *palming*, *misdirection*, *sucker tricks*, and *sight gags*

Well, it's time to start looking like a magician! And it's time to learn some tricks!

Perhaps the image most associated with magic—the traditional symbol of a magician's power—is the magic wand. Along with the top hat, cape, and rabbit, the magic wand says magic to laypeople. How did such a simple thing—a stick of wood—come to represent this mysterious craft?

Wielding the Wand

The use of the magic wand can be traced back to ancient times when a staff or rod was carried as an emblem of mystical skills and authority. Remember the story of Moses? His staff (referred to today as Aaron's rod) turned into a snake and gobbled up the serpents produced by the Pharaoh's wizards.

Hermes, a messenger of the Greek gods who possibly descended from the Egyptian deity Thoth, carried a *caduceus*—a wand-like rod encircled by two intertwining cords or snakes. The caduceus symbolized wisdom and the ability to heal—traits attributed to all early magicians. (The caduceus has since been adopted by physicians as their emblem.)

Remember, too, the story of Circe, the enchantress of Greek myths who turned men into swine? According to Homer's *The Odyssey*, Circe accomplished the trick by tapping the men with her magic wand.

The Druids, wizard-priests who populated Europe (especially the British Isles) in the first millennium BC, carried wands to demonstrate their command over the earth's elements. The Druids were a fertility cult with the tree as their central symbol, so it was only natural that the priests' ceremonial wands were carved from wood. (The upper echelon of Druidic wizard-priests carried wands made of gold. The second rank carried silver wands, and the lower five levels of priesthood had wands of bronze.)

In the Middle Ages, the magician-chemists adopted the wand as a symbol of their great magical skill. Dowzers and soothsayers used magic wands known as *divining rods* to locate hidden objects and foretell the future. Medieval doctors, who carried walking sticks as they wandered from hamlet to village, were often referred to as—what else?—wand carriers.

A 17th-century mountebank holding a wand as he performs the classic Cups and Balls trick.



No one is certain when the magic wand was adopted by ordinary street conjurers. Certainly such entertainers did nothing to dispel the public's association of the wand with the occult, but magicians soon learned that a wand had practical uses as well.

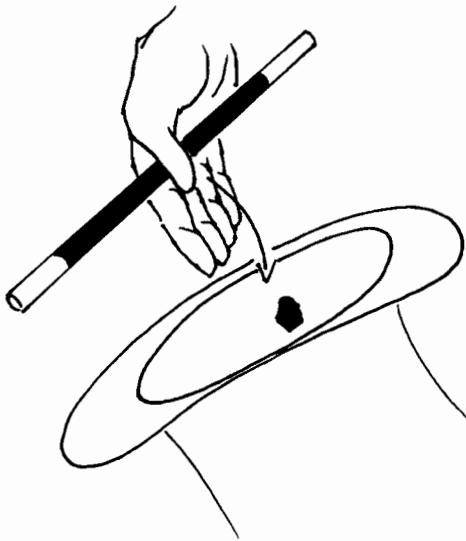
The techniques that early street magicians developed are still in use today, so you might want to take special note of them:

- The wand can be used for *misdirection*. If you point your wand, the audience will tend to look in that direction. When the audience looks over *there*, you're doing the dirty work over *here*.
- When you hold a wand, your hand is in a loose fist. (Try it.) If you have something palmed (hidden in your hand), holding a wand gives you an excellent excuse to keep your hand closed, yet still look perfectly natural.
- As you pick up your wand, you can also secretly pick up an object sitting next to the wand.
- As you pick up or set down your wand, you can ditch an object that is being concealed in your hand. One popular method is to have your wand resting across a top hat sitting mouth-up on the table. As you grasp the wand, you drop whatever you're hiding in your hand into the mouth of the top hat.



Say the Magic Word

Misdirection is, quite simply, getting the audience to look, think, or perceive in the direction or way you want them to.



As you reach for the wand, drop the object hidden in your hand into the open top hat.

The Trick Stick

You can easily make your own magic wand. You can take the mystic approach and pretend you're a Druid in the first century BC by going to some darkened forest (or maybe just your backyard), finding an old yew or hazelwood tree, and hacking off a gnarled branch. (For some reason, many Druids thought these types of trees contained the most mystical powers.)

Here's a more practical idea. Go to a store that sells dowel rods. You'll find them at art-supply stores and almost all hardware stores.

Find one $\frac{1}{2}$ " or $\frac{3}{4}$ " in diameter, and have it cut to a length of 12"–15". (Try different lengths and diameters to see what feels comfortable to you.)

If you can't get a dowel rod, try using the thick paper tube on a pants hanger that you get from the dry cleaners. It'll work just as well.

The traditional 20th century magic wand is black with white tips. My first wand, however, was a 10" black rod with a $\frac{1}{2}$ " silver tip at each end. Paint your dowel rod or cardboard tube whatever color you want, let 'er dry, and, voila, you have a magic wand!

Wand from Nowhere

Your audience thinks a magician can just—poof!—make a magic wand appear out of thin air. (Is there fat air?) Well, here's one way you can do just that.

The Effect: You open a small coin envelope or purse and pull out a solid wand too long to fit inside.



Tip of the Wand

If this is your opening trick, you can start with the envelope in your left hand, with the tip of the wand already inserted in the slit. Flick the envelope with your right fingers to show that the small envelope is empty, and then reach in and pull out the long wand.

Preparation: Get a small manila coin envelope, about $2\frac{1}{2}$ " \times 4 $\frac{1}{4}$ ". (In stationary stores, this is a #3 envelope.) Make a small horizontal slit on the flap-side of the envelope, near the bottom.

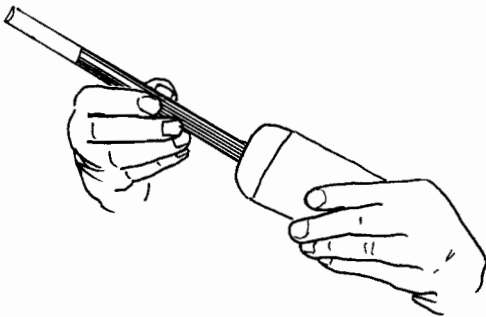
Hide your magic wand in your left sleeve. (You can hold it in place against the underside of your forearm by tucking one end under a watchband or bracelet.)

The Routine: When you are ready to perform, pull the end of the wand out of your sleeve far enough that the tip extends to the base of your middle and ring fingers. Bend your fingers slightly to hold the wand in place.

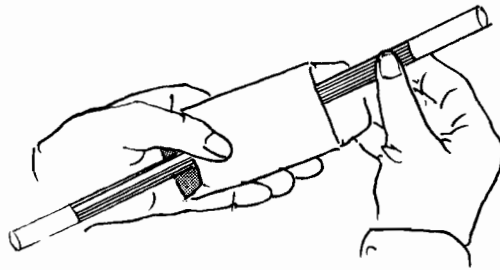
Pick up the coin envelope with your right hand, and casually show it to the audience. They won't see the slit, but if you're as paranoid as I am, you may want to cover it with your thumb. All they have to see is that the envelope is small and empty.

As you place the envelope in your left hand, work the tip of the wand into the slit. (You'll have to experiment in order to find the handing that seems most comfortable to you.) Practice in advance so you can do this quickly and smoothly; it has to look like you're just switching the envelope from one hand to the other.

Reach into the coin envelope with your right thumb and forefinger, grasp the tip of the wand, and slowly pull it out of the envelope. Give the audience time to register that the wand is *much* too long to have fit in the envelope. If you want, call attention to it by acting surprised, holding up the wand like a ruler, and briefly comparing its length to the envelope's. Finally, crumple up the envelope, or put it away so that it cannot be examined.



Producing the wand from a coin envelope, from the audience's point of view.



How the trick is done, from your point of view.

You can use this same method to produce the wand from almost anything. Many magicians pull the wand from a small change purse that has been prepared with a slit in the bottom. If you're performing at a dinner party, you can produce the wand from a dinner roll by pushing the tip of the wand through the bottom of the bun.

Set the roll in your left hand, near the fingertips. Poke a hole into (and secretly through) the center of the roll with your right fingertip. Casually reposition the bun so that the end of the wand enters the hole in the bottom of the roll. Then, using your right thumb and forefinger as if they were tweezers, reach into the roll and slowly pull out the wand.

Static Cling

The Effect: A magic wand clings to your left palm. You turn your hand to show the audience how it's done: You're holding the wand in place with your right forefinger. You repeat the trick, but this time your right hand is nowhere near your left hand. (Throughout the book, when I give you sample patter, it will be in italic.)

Preparation: None.

The Routine: *I've always been fascinated by static electricity. You know: You rub a balloon against your head, and it sticks to the wall. The balloon, not your head. You put your socks in the dryer, and the ones that aren't eaten up by the dryer come out stuck to each other. You have to peel them apart. I've always wondered if I could produce that static cling by magic.*

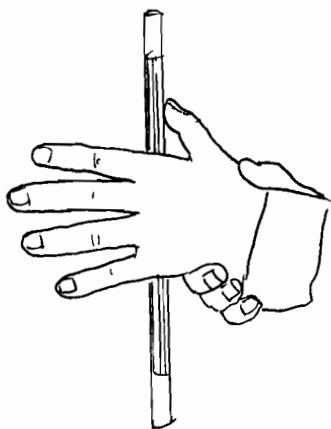
First of all, check the wand and my hand to make sure there isn't anything sticky on them. If you think they're covered with Super Glue, this won't be much of a trick.

Show your magic wand. Also show that your open left hand is empty. Both can be examined. Place the wand across the center of your left palm, and close your left fist. The wand should stick out of both sides of your fist.

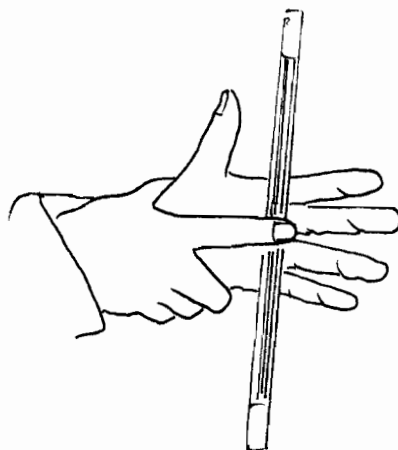
Grasp your left wrist with your right hand, as if to steady your arm. Raise your left hand and slowly open it so that the back of the hand is toward the audience. Amazingly, the wand seems to stick to your palm. Spread your left fingers and wiggle them. Shake your left hand. The wand does not fall.

The secret is simple. As you grasp your left wrist with your right hand, secretly extend your right forefinger to press the wand against your left palm. This cannot be seen from the audience's view.

Would you like to see how it's done? Okay, but don't tell anyone, or they'll kick me out of the Magicians' Union.



The clinging wand, from the audience's point of view.



How it's done, from your point of view.

Turn your hand so that audience can see the right forefinger holding the wand in place.

Did you figure it out? Or was it too hard for you? Here, I'll do it again.

You're now going to perform what magicians call a *sucker trick*. That's where you perform a trick, show how it's done, and then repeat the trick but, by using a different method, fool the audience again. Your explanation may or may not be correct; regardless, the audience discounts it when you fool them the second time.

Perform the trick exactly as before. This time, however, you slowly remove your right hand from your left wrist. The wand continues to cling to your left palm.

See, you just can't move your right hand. Of course, if you're a real magician, you can.

How do you do it? The great thing about a sucker trick is it proves the adage, "A little knowledge is a dangerous thing." Because you've supplied one solution to a puzzle, the audience mentally blocks out any other possible solutions.

Remember how you set up for Wand from No-where by tucking the wand under your watchband? If you want to perform this sucker ending, secretly prepare by placing a long pen (or similar object) under the watchband on your left wrist.



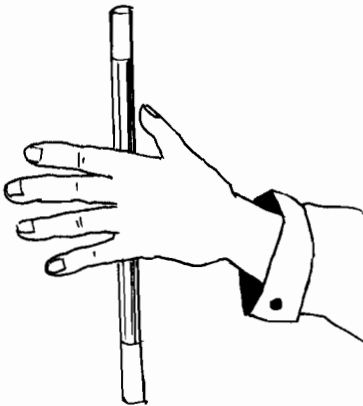
Say the Magic Word

In a sucker trick, the magician pretends to explain how a trick is done. (This may or may not be the correct method.) Then, the magician repeats the trick, but uses a different method to fool the audience again.

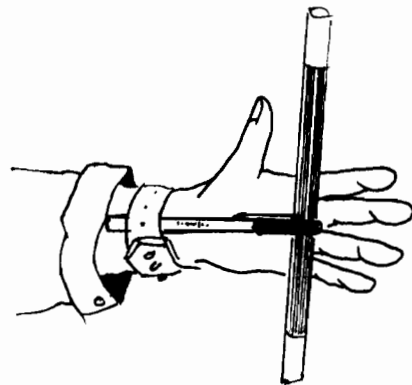


Sawed in Half

Although it's in common use, the jargon term "sucker trick" is, well, not very flattering to the audience. Never, ever, under any circumstance, say the term in front of non-magicians. They'll eat you alive!



The clinging wand, the sequel, from the audience's point of view.



How it's done, from your point of view.

After you show how you make the wand cling to your hand, the audience won't be expecting you to repeat it, so they'll let down their guards. When no one is watching, secretly grasp the end of the pen tucked under your watchband, and pull it out along the inside of the forearm and past the wrist so that one end reaches the center of the palm.

When you repeat the trick, hold your open left hand palm down. Pick up the wand with your right hand, and secretly slip it between the palm and the pen. Repeat all the same moves as before. This time, however, you can remove your right hand, because the pen, unseen by the audience, holds the wand in place.

When you place the wand on the table or hand it to the spectator, all eyes will be on the wand. This is the perfect time to nonchalantly push the pen back up your sleeve and out of sight.

This trick doesn't have to be performed with a magic wand, of course. You can use any object that's long enough to extend out of the ends of your fists. Try it with a pencil or pen, a butter knife or other cutlery, a breadstick, and even chopsticks.

Trapdoor Trickery

This is one of those tricks that, on the printed page reads like it couldn't fool anybody. You just have to trust me on this one. This is a great trick, totally simple to do, and it's used by many professional magicians. Don't pass this trick by.

The Effect: You drape a handkerchief over your loosely closed left fist. You make a small depression in the center of the hanky with your magic wand. Then, you slowly push the wand all the way through the handkerchief. Finally, you spread out the hanky to show that there's no hole in it.

Preparation: You need a clean pocket handkerchief.

The Routine: Make your left hand into a loose fist and cover it with a pocket handkerchief. Pick up the wand with your right hand.

Everyone knows that magicians use trapdoors. Of course, mine's invisible. I'll show you what I mean.

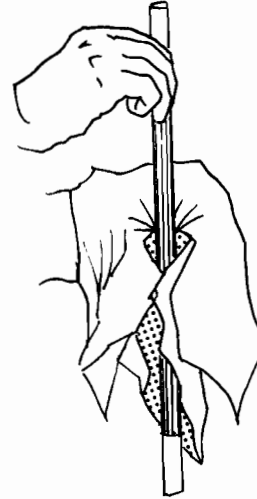
Using the tip of the wand, poke the center of the handkerchief into your left fist, making an indentation, a sort of well.

Turn your wrist so that the back of your hand is toward the audience. Under cover of the hanky, open your hand so that fingers and thumb are in a C shape.

Make one or two more pokes with the wand. As the wand approaches your hand for one last poke, push the wand straight in against the side of the handkerchief. Push the wand into the open C formed by the fingers until it hits the left palm. Close your left fingers back into a fist, holding the wand in place. Performed smoothly, this should simply appear as if you're making one last depression in the hanky.



The wand penetrates the handkerchief, from the audience's point of view.



How the wand penetrates the handkerchief, from your point of view.

Slowly push the wand all the way down into the hanky. From the audience's point of view, it looks like the wand is going through the middle of the handkerchief and out the bottom.

Set the wand aside. Spread out the handkerchief and point to its center.

See! The wand went right through the trapdoor. And the handkerchief has healed!

Wander Away

The Effect: You wrap your magic wand in a piece of newspaper, and then immediately tear up the paper. The wand has disappeared! If you want, you can make the wand reappear in your pocket (or elsewhere).

Preparation: You must have two identical-looking magic wands for this trick. One should be solid, perhaps made out of a dowel rod. The other, a hollow wand, must be made out of poster board or construction paper or other art paper that matches the color and gloss of the wand as closely as possible.

The easiest way to make the hollow wand is to roll a piece of construction paper around the solid wand. Glue this piece of paper in such a way that you produce a tube, or *shell* wand, wrapped around the solid wand. Slide the shell off the solid wand.



Tip of the Wand

This trick doesn't have to be performed with a magic wand. You can use a pen or a butter knife. I often perform it with my pocket comb.



Say the Magic Word

In magician's parlance, a shell is a hollow object made to look like a solid object. Usually, the shell is made slightly larger to allow you to next it over the matching, solid object. The audience must never suspect that a shell is other than the real thing; to that end, you must handle the shell as if it were just as solid and heavy as the item it counterfeits.

Decorate the ends of the fake wand to resemble the tips of the real wand. If you want to make the hollow wand even more convincing, glue a short, solid plug (made of a wooden or plastic dowel) into each end of the tube. That way, you can casually tap the ends of the wand against the table to show that your trick stick is solid.

Place the solid wand at some convenient, but hidden, location. Get a sheet of newspaper, and you're ready to begin.

The Routine: Show the hollow wand, and wave it in the air. If you want, tap it against the table to show that it is (more or less) solid.

Roll up the wand in the sheet of newspaper. Make a magic gesture over the newspaper tube, and then tear up and discard the newspaper, being careful that none of the pieces of the wand fall out or are exposed.

The magic wand has disappeared!

Show your empty hand. Reproduce the solid magic wand from wherever you have hidden it.

This routine presents the trick as two different effects: a vanish followed by a production (or reproduction). If you prefer, you can just make the wand disappear. That way, you don't have to worry about trying to make two wands that match. If you're performing several tricks in a row, the vanishing wand might make an excellent *closer* (the closing trick or routine of an act). When you're ready to make the wand disappear, say, "Well, I guess my magic's all through, so I don't need this anymore!" Roll it up into the newspaper, rip it up, and presto! It's gone!

Accessorize, Accessorize, Accessorize!

These days, very few magicians actually wield a wand. Perhaps they think it looks hokey or is too much of a cliché. More probably, the wand just isn't necessary any more.



Say the Magic Word

A **sight gag** is an action or prop that provokes laughter without the need for verbal explanation.

Over the years, however, magicians have invented several gimmicked wands that allows them to perform specific effects. Some trick wands are used merely as sight gags rather than used to perform magic. Many of these wands are available in magic shops. Among the more popular trick wands are the following:

- **Coin wand** Coins appear, one at a time, attached to the end of the wand.
- **Rising wand** The wand, held against the palm or in a loose fist, rises straight up a few inches.

- **Color changing wand.**
- **Breakapart wand** When the magician holds the wand, it's solid; when the spectator holds the wand, it breaks apart pieces, like beads on a string.
- **Drooping wand** When the spectator holds the wand, it bends or sags.
- **Stretching wand.**
- **Multiplying wand** During comic banter with an assistant, the magician makes a magic wand multiply into five or six wands.
- **Pop-off wand** A sight gag in which the white tips of an oversized wand pop off whenever the wand is squeezed.

Congratulations! You're the proud owner of your own magic wand, and you can already use it to perform a half dozen tricks. Now it's time to pick up a few tips on how to present your magic so that it's as effective, deceptive, and entertaining as possible.

The Least You Need to Know

- The tradition of the wand as a symbol of magical power goes back to ancient Egypt and Greece.
- In addition to being ornamental, magic wands have a practical use. They can help a magician conceal, acquire, or dispose of items hidden in the hand.
- A magician can use misdirection to make an audience look the other way at a crucial moment during a trick.
- In a sucker trick, you perform an effect, expose a probable method, then fool the audience by repeating the trick by using a different method.
- You can easily make a magic wand at home from a dowel rod or cardboard tubing.
- Some extraordinary tricks and sight gags can be performed only with specially crafted magic wands.

Part 2

All the World's a Stage

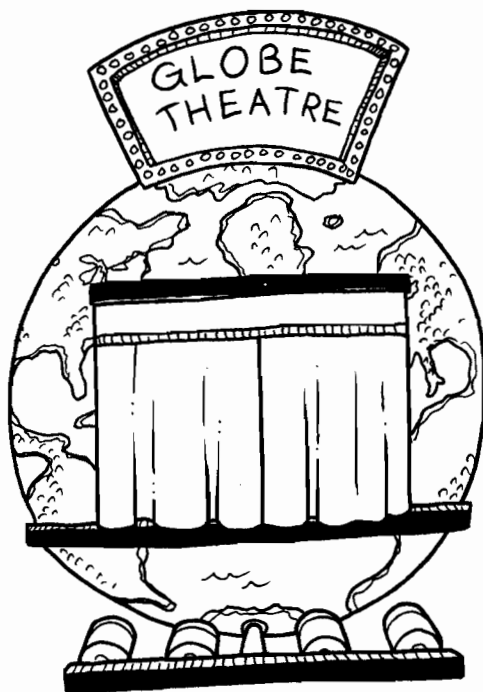
If you're like most magicians when they first start out, things are a little shaky. That's because most people have never had to stand up in front of an audience before—much less try to entertain them.

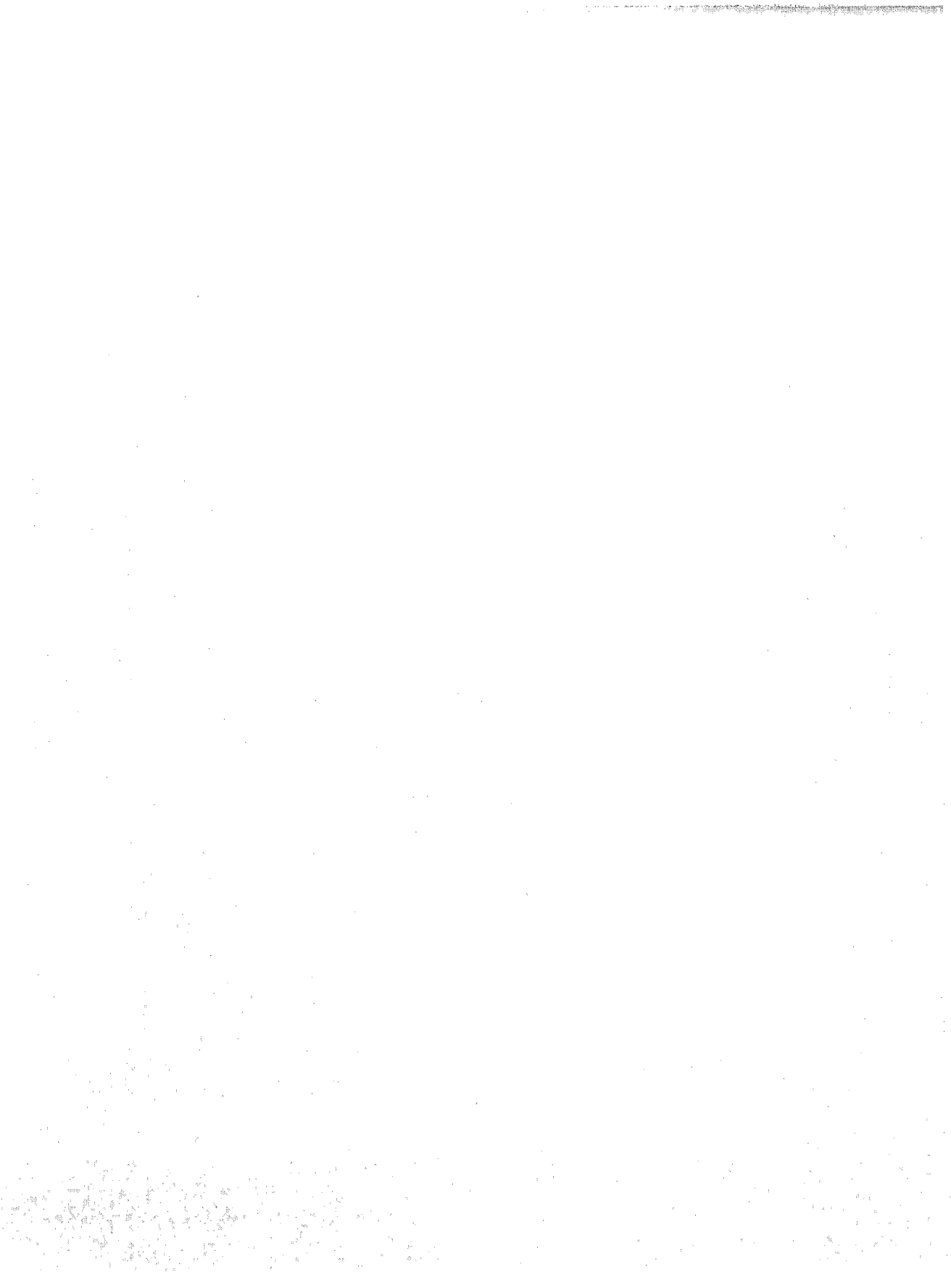
But we'll fix all that in this section of the book. First, you'll find out how to build your confidence, how to rehearse properly, and how to look your best. Also, you'll learn what to say and how to say it.

Next, it's time for some real tricks of the trade: how to work with volunteers from the audience, and how to get applause and laughter. Then, some tips on what to do when something goes wrong. (Don't worry, it happens to all of us.)

Before this section's over, you'll know it all, from your big entrance to that well-deserved bow.

Ready? Curtain Going Up!







How Do You Get to Carnegie Hall?

In This Chapter

- ▶ Practice vs. rehearsal
- ▶ How to build your routines
- ▶ Theme acts
- ▶ Openers, closers, kickers, and cappers
- ▶ Choosing magic that's right for you

There's an old show business joke: A violin player walks up to a man on the street in New York City and asks, "How do I get to Carnegie Hall?" The man answers, "Practice!"

Now that you've started learning some magic tricks, we're going to take a look at the best way to practice them, and how to put them together into a routine or an act.

Practice Makes Perfect

As you've probably learned while trying out the tricks with the magic wand, they may not automatically work the first time you try them. Usually, you have to try a trick many times before you can get it to work even *once*.

That's where practice comes in.

Practice is the repetition of a sleight or move, or a series of moves, until the action becomes second nature and, hopefully, flawless.



Say the Magic Word

Practice is the repetition of a single sleight or series of moves to perfect them. Practice is usually performed quite informally, over and over, until you can perform the move perfectly: first time, every time.

Practice in the privacy of your room or away from strangers. This is no time for anyone to be watching you. You'll feel awkward enough trying something completely new. Plus, you'll want to be removed from all criticism at this point. There'll be plenty of time for that later.

The first time you try the trick, you'll discover where your trouble spots are—the places where whatever you're doing or holding seems especially awkward. Isolate just those sections of the trick, and practice them on their own.

Some magicians like to practice their moves "cold." That is, they'll set the deck of cards, or piece of rope, or whatever they're working on someplace around the

house. Whenever they pass by the trick, they pick it up and try to perform the move. Their reasoning is that when they practice the move several times back-to-back, they get noticeably better at it. But when they actually perform the trick, they only get one chance.

I prefer, however, to practice the move incessantly. If it's small enough, I'll carry the prop with me. I'll take it out of my pocket while I'm in line at the bank or waiting for a movie to begin. I'll practice it while watching *Jeopardy!* I'll practice it until I can do it without even knowing the gizmo's in my hand. And I never worry about anyone staring at me: I'm not giving away a trick, because I'm only doing one move or sleight. Plus, I figure I don't look any stranger than anyone else on the streets these days.

A word about mirrors. Mirrors can be your friend. Practicing in front of a mirror will give you an idea of what the audience will see, but not exactly. Remember that you are seeing a reverse image of what a spectator will see.

Also, the angle may be quite different. Some moves that are completely deceptive when viewed straight-on don't fool a soul if they're seen from above, below, or the side. Some magicians who perform close-up or table magic practice their moves in the center of a small tri-fold mirror, so they can see their hands from several angles. (These mirrors are available at many stores that sell beauty supplies as well as through many magic shops.)

Remember that when you look in a mirror, you're seeing not only the audience's view but also the side of the hand the spectator doesn't see. You must be able to mentally separate what the spectator will see from what you're hiding.

As you can tell, practice is rather informal. You work on bits and pieces of the trick, then finally put them together and practice performing them from beginning to end.

Stress Rehearsal

Now it's time to *rehearse*. Many magicians use the words "practice" and "rehearsal" interchangeably, but I think of rehearsal as the performance of a complete trick, routine, act, or show, as if an audience were present. Proper rehearsal will get you ready for actual performance, because it's more detailed and more formal than practice.

When you rehearse, you should perform the trick word-for-word, movement-for-movement, as close as possible to actual performance conditions. This should include the wardrobe, lights, words, music—all elements we'll look at further in this part of the book.

If you're used to practicing in front of a mirror, you should try to wean yourself away from it during the first few rehearsals. If you keep watching the mirror, you'll become dependent on it. You must get used to looking at your (for now) invisible audience.

You shouldn't rehearse in front of an actual audience, of course, but you may want to invite a trusted friend, family member, or (if you're fortunate enough) a theatrical director to watch you rehearse. First of all, you may need someone to act as a volunteer for some of your tricks. But more importantly, they can provide feedback on how your trick looks like from their point of view.

Listen to their observations and recommendations, but remember, they're only suggestions. Your invited guests may be able to point out rough spots, or if they saw your secret moves, but, when all is said and done, you're the one who's performing the trick and responsible for what the audience sees.

You're the star!

Putting It Together

So let's say you've learned all the magic-wand tricks in Chapter 4. You've practiced and rehearsed each one, and you're able to perform them successfully. You've fooled whomever you showed them to, and they seemed to enjoy them as well.



Say the Magic Word

Rehearsal is much more formal than practice. It's a run-through performance of a complete trick or routine as if there were an audience present.



Sawed in Half

Unless you want the stage techies to know you've never worked in theater, don't confuse "practice" or "rehearsal" with a "run-through." A run-through (sometimes called a "technical rehearsal" or "tech," for short) is less detailed than a full dress rehearsal, for the purpose of setting lights, music, and cues, and to pinpoint and eliminate potential and actual problems. (In other words, you run through your routines, but it's not necessarily a run-through. Got it?)



Say the Magic Word

A **routine** is a series of magic tricks that naturally flow together.

Magicians use the word to mean the order in which you perform the tricks. When you place tricks in a specific order, you are **routing** them. Your completed routine or collection of routines is your **act** or **show**. A **theme act** is based around a central premise or prop(s).

Marvin ("Mr. Electric")
and Carol Roy.

You may want to keep performing them as separate tricks, but you may want to put several of them together into a *routine*, or put several routines together into an *act*.

Theme acts are built around a single concept or type of prop. For example, in a cigarette act, the magician produces or does tricks mostly with cigarettes; likewise, a silk act uses lots of silk handkerchiefs.

There are many ways to decide which tricks belong in one routine or section of the act:

- The tricks may all use the same prop.
- All of the props may be built around a central theme or story.
- The tricks may just "feel" like they belong together. You may not even know why you feel that way; they just seem right together.





Now You See It

One of the most famous proponents of the theme act is Marvin Roy (b. 1925). In his teens, he performed silk magic as Marvin the Silk Merchant. In 1950, he produced an act with lightbulbs. Working with his wife Carol, Marvin Roy has toured the world as Mr. Electric, performing such effects as producing a string of lit miniature bulbs from his mouth, and producing Carol inside a giant lightbulb. In addition to his Mr. Electric act, Marvin and Carol have developed theme acts with jewelry, puzzles, and other items.

Everyone Line Up!

One of the real difficulties is deciding in what order to perform your magic tricks. This is what magicians usually mean when they talk about their routines. There are many ways to “routine” a show.

Doin’ What Comes Naturally

Sometimes the effects flow naturally: from one into the next. You produce something, do a trick with it, then vanish it. That’s the sort of routine you’d have if you perform the magic-wand tricks in order from the last chapter.

- You show your hands empty, reach into a small envelope, and pull out a wand much too long to have been inside.
- You talk about the wand’s magical properties, and how it clings to its master. The wand sticks to your hand.
- You explain that the wand can perform tricks of its own, and to prove it, you do a trick with a trapdoor.
- You roll the wand (which, unknown to the audience, is tubular rather than solid) into a piece of paper, and tear the paper into pieces. The wand disappears.
- If you need the wand for another trick, you can immediately reproduce it.

Sometimes the prop in a routine transforms into or helps you produce the next prop. For example, you may have seen a magician onstage do something like this: A red ball changes into a red silk handkerchief, which then turns into a cane. Or, a magician performs a card trick on a table, lifts the last card, and underneath is a coin. This leads into several tricks with coins.

Some routines are built around a story. For instance, in one trick you'll learn in Chapter 10, the four jacks represent robbers. One of these cards could also represent a crook in the subsequent trick. This concept is seen more often with stage magic than in close-up magic. In his early television specials, David Copperfield often devised small mini-plays that used several different magic tricks to tell the tale.

After a while, if you do your tricks in the same order, you'll become comfortable performing them that way. The tricks will begin to feel as if that's the natural order in which they belong—even if they wouldn't ordinarily seem related.

Open and Shut Case

There are other considerations when picking the order to perform your tricks. Two types of tricks almost scream out where you have to place them. These are known as *openers* (performed first) and *closers* (performed last).



Say the Magic Word

An **opener** is the first trick or routine in an act. Some tricks have to be openers, if the set-up or props must be removed to allow you to perform other tricks. Most openers are short, flashy tricks, but a good performer can make almost any trick into an effective opener.

Some tricks have to be performed first because you are pre-set in an awkward physical preparation that will make it difficult for you to perform other tricks. These are best used as openers. You may want to perform the wand-from-envelope as an opener, for example, because it will be much easier to do other tricks *after* the wand has been removed from your sleeve!

Magical tradition suggests that an opener should be a quick, flamboyant trick to command the audience's attention. Other magicians prefer to open with a short speech or a patter routine to settle the audience and get them comfortable with the performer's character and performance style.

Either way, the important thing is to get the audience to notice you—and *like* you—immediately.

At the other end of the spectrum, closers are tricks that are almost always used as—you guessed it—the last trick you perform. The closer is often the biggest show in your act or the trick with the most powerful effect—something that's so good, it's impossible to follow with another trick.



Say the Magic Word

A **closer** (pronounced clo'-zer) is the last trick or routine you perform. The term also describes a trick strong enough to be worthy of the closing spot.

Can You Top That?

Many magicians follow their actual closer with a short, final piece—more of a friendly farewell than an encore. The great clown Red Skelton would end a riotous evening with a gentle thank you, a sincere wish that his audience has a safe trip home, and a "God Bless."

Two similar types of post-trick tricks are worth mentioning; the terms are sometimes (erroneously) used interchangeably. A *capper* is a trick or bit of business that finishes off or tops the last routine. A *kicker* is also an extra added effect, not necessarily better but almost always different than the original effect.

Let's say you've plucked coin after coin out of thin air. (It's called "Miser's Dream," and you'll learn it in Chapter 21.) After you've produced your last single coin, you make one last grab in the air and catch a handful of coins. That's a *capper*. Then you pour out the bucket, and the coins have changed to dollar bills. That's a *kicker*.



Say the Magic Word

A *capper* is an effect that completes or tops a previous trick. A *kicker* is an extra climax that follows a trick, but has a completely different effect than the original routine.

Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and Tomorrow

When building your routine, take into account the audience's attention span. How long can they watch any single trick, or a whole act, before losing interest, no matter how good you are? How long can they sit or stand still in one place? (My attention span is usually mandated by my butt and my bladder.)

I would love to give you the optimum running lengths for a trick, a routine, and an act, but they're different for every magician and type of audience. You'll have to discover what works best for you through experience.

Change for Change's Sake

Have you ever heard the expression "Too much of a good thing"? You want your act to build in excitement and surprise, but you may want to vary your tricks to make your act more interesting.

How? One way is to alternate (or intersperse) the tricks that need a volunteer from the audience with those that you perform solo or with your own assistant. That way, the spectators can relax between "audience-participation" tricks; plus, if you're a stage act, it won't look like an endless stream of people running on and off the platform.

Here are some other ways to vary your routines:

- Follow a large trick or two with one of a smaller, more intimate nature.
- Change type, color, or size of props.
- Do many different effects. If you tear and restore a napkin (Chapter 16), cut and restore a rope (Chapter 18), and cut and restore a piece of newspaper (Chapter 21), you've done three different, terrific tricks, but they're all the same effect.

You've taken something apart and put it back together. Maybe follow the cut-and-restored rope with a trick in which the ropes stretch, then get tied in knots. Then move on to a completely different prop and effect.

Similarly, in close-up magic, you may want to perform more than card tricks. Card tricks are great, but after awhile, they sometimes start to look the same. If you specialize in cards, coins, or any other prop, vary the look, story, and effect of the tricks. With cards, some might be "pick a card" tricks, others might have a rhyming patter, or be mere demonstrations of skill.

In all of these cases, when you vary and alternate tricks, consider everything but method. It doesn't matter if all the tricks are done the same way, because the audience doesn't know how the tricks are accomplished. The only thing that matters is that they *look* like different tricks.

Index Indicators

When I was first learning how to routine my tricks together, I would take a stack of 3×5 file cards. I wrote the name of a trick at the top of one card, and underneath I wrote all of the special considerations to take into account when performing that trick:

- How long did it take to perform?
- Did it need advance preparation, or could it simply be picked up and performed?
- Did it have to be performed at any particular spot in the program?
- If so, was it an opener or closer?
- Did it need a trained assistant?
- Did it use or require audience participation?
- Was it messy? Did I have to clean up afterwards?

I made an index card for every trick. Then I'd pick out tricks that seemed to go together or naturally followed one into the next, and arranged them in some order. (Some performers call this type of segment—material such as tricks, jokes, or songs that are always performed together—a "chunk.") Of course, I didn't have to perform these tricks together; I just noticed that, over time, I usually did.

In addition to these "chunks," I had other feature tricks, openers, closers, and so on.

Then, when I'd routine a show, I'd lay out all the individual cards and "chunks" on a table and mix and match until I had the tricks in an order I liked. I could easily arrange my show for a special occasion, a particular audience, or a specific running length.

Before long, I no longer needed the index cards. Now all that information is in my brain, and I can make up new routines and shows at the drop of a top hat. Soon, you'll be able to, too!

So Many Tricks, So Little Time

By the time you finish this book, you will have learned more than 100 different tricks. Which tricks should you do?

Be careful when picking a trick for your repertoire (your metaphorical bag of tricks) or your act. Make sure *you* like the trick: If you don't, you'll have a rough time making audiences like it.

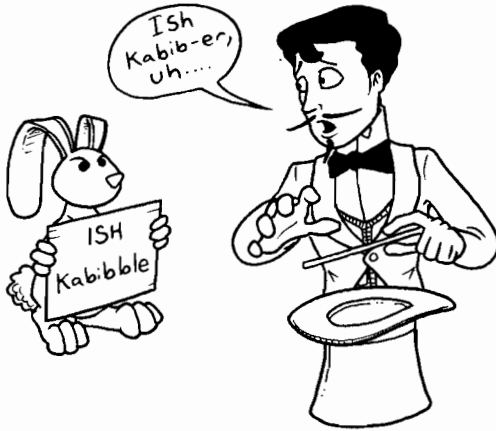
Make sure you enjoy and feel comfortable performing it. You'll invest a lot of time practicing and rehearsing the trick.

After all that, if a trick doesn't fit your style or personality, or just doesn't "feel right," drop it. It will never look natural in your hands. I have learned the secrets to thousands of tricks, have actually practiced hundreds, yet my working repertoire is only a few dozen tricks.

But the final judge is the audience. If, for whatever reason, the audience doesn't enjoy (or respond appropriately to) a trick, drop it in favor of something new. There are plenty of magic tricks to choose from, and entertaining the audience is everything.

The Least You Need to Know

- Practice is work on a sleight or move; rehearsal is more complete and works on the entire trick, routine, or act.
- Theme acts are often built around a single type of prop or concept.
- Some tricks seem to naturally flow from one into the next; tricks can be grouped together into routines, however, in any way that feels comfortable to you.
- Some tricks are best performed first (openers) or last (closers). Cappers top the effect; kickers add an extra, unexpected (and often unrelated) effect.
- For your own magic, choose tricks that you enjoy performing.



Say the Secret Words

In This Chapter

- ▶ How to write the all-important patter, or script
- ▶ Turning your “Ah-ha”s into “Ha-ha”s
- ▶ Interior monologues, or the silent script
- ▶ Mime, pantomime, and the silent act
- ▶ Magic and music

Once you’ve mastered the technical handling—the mechanics of performing a trick, you have to decide on a presentation. And, for most of us, a large part of that is planning what you’re going to say.

Pitter Patter

“Patter” is the term magicians use for what we say onstage. It’s believed that the word “patter” is derived from the Catholic “Our Father” rite, the “Pater Noster”: Perhaps to much of the laity, who didn’t speak the Latin (in which the mass was conducted), the priests’ chanting sounded as nonsensical as the incantations believed to have been intoned by medieval wizards.



Hocus Quote-Us

The [magician] uses words of art, partly to protract the time, and partly to gain credit and admiration of the beholders.

—Reginald Scot, in *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*



Hocus Quote-Us

Nothing is so profoundly a performer's own as his patter. You can change the color of your eyes more easily than the color of the patter that suits you.

—Henry Hay, in *The Amateur Magician's Handbook*

The words you speak create the mood of your performance. Will it be serious, comic, mysterious, or simply a demonstration? The patter reflects your style and character, and it can be used to entertain or to misdirect. Sometimes the patter adds to your deception: You lie. Choose your words carefully, because they can be all-important to the success of your performance.

When All Is Said and Done

Few things define you onstage as much as the words you say. The patter immediately lets the audience know your basic character and tells your point of view about the trick you're performing. That's why it's so important to find, or write, patter that's "you." The patter must not only be appropriate for you personally, but also for the audience and the situations in which you'll be performing.

How do you decide what to say? Actors usually have the advantage of being handed their scripts. We usually have to write our own.

For those of you making your first stab at this daunting task, I suggest you start by writing down what you want to say. Don't depend on your ability to think up patter on the spot, or having the Magic Muse strike you during a performance. Your patter should be as planned and practiced as the rest of your presentation. Memorize the words, but use the script, only as a basis, a springboard, for the words you actually speak.

Your first attempt will probably be rather dry, bare-bones descriptive patter—and there's nothing wrong with that.

Here's an example of simple, straightforward patter for the vanishing wand:

Here I have my magic wand. I roll it up in a piece of newspaper, say the magic word—Abracadabra—and, look, the wand has disappeared!

You might try your hand at using patter to tell a story. For example, the original patter written by Gene Gordon for "The Professor's Nightmare" (Chapter 18), in which three different-sized ropes all become the same length, is about a geometry student who disproves the mathematical axiom, "Things that are unequal to one thing are unequal to each other." British magician Paul Daniels (b. 1938) tells the story of Papa Bear, Mama Bear and Baby Bear while performing his version of the trick. Two examples of story patter found in this book are the tale of the bank robbers in "The Four Robbers" (Chapter 10) and "The Cattle and the Rustlers" (Chapter 12).

As I've suggested, you don't have to perform your prepared patter word for word. In fact, you shouldn't. You don't want your words to sound like a recitation; feel free to vary it, change words around, and react to what's happening at that particular performance.

Then why write out a script at all? Until you become adept at thinking up words as you go along, a script will give you confidence: You'll know you *do* have something to say.

Throughout this book I've included some patter lines and ideas for many of the tricks you'll be learning. (It will appear in italics with the trick.) Often, marketed magic tricks suggest patter; some give full patter. There are whole books of patter for standard magic tricks available at many magic shops. Canadian magician Sid Lorraine (1905-1989) and professional comedy writer Robert Orben have both produced several such manuscripts. You'll probably have to adapt any prepared scripts to be appropriate to your age, character, and performance style.



Hocus Quote-Us

*Don't talk like Professor Hoffmann;
don't talk like me; talk like you.*

—Henry Hay, in *The Amateur
Magician's Handbook*

The Mad Patter: How to Be Funny

Sometimes the magic alone is so astonishing or unexpected that it elicits laughter. More often, audiences laugh at what we say and do, most of which is planned, some of it ad-libbed, or merely accidental.

First of all, comedy is not just telling jokes. Jokes are formalized stories, from “one-liners” to long, drawn-out stories. Most involve a “set-up” (a premise or opening line), some further elaboration, then the “punch” or “punchline” (involving the surprise twist, a wry observation, or play on words).

Some magicians tell great jokes and successfully integrate them into their tricks. Often, they'll drop them as “asides” while they perform the steps of the routine. For example, an experienced magician might pretend to read comic want-ads while cutting up and restoring a piece of newspaper (see “Clippo” in Chapter 21).

More often, your comedy will be quips about what's happening onstage or in the audience, or observations about yourself or members of the audience. A simple way to add comedy to your act is the use of sight gags. A *sight gag* is any prop or action that provokes laughter when the audience



Say the Magic Word

A **sight gag** is an action or actions (sometimes referred to as a “bit” or a “bit of business”) or a prop that provokes laughter without the need for words or explanation. A sight gag may be immediately funny or, like some jokes, require a series of “set-ups” to get to the “punch.”

sees it. Oversized props (such as giant sunglasses) or surprise actions (such as snakes jumping out of a peanut-brittle can) are two commonly used sight gags.

Comedy can also be produced by specially decorated props or paraphernalia. Your wardrobe, make-up, and, of course, your stage actions can also provoke laughter.

Three popular “bits of business” that invariably get laughs are the magician getting into trouble (for example, you can’t find the selected card), the magician pretending to get hurt (for example, you’re holding a deck of cards, try to tap it with a magic wand, hit your thumb instead and general clumsiness and slapstick (such as pretending to stumble as you cross a stage).

Just think: If you pretend to stub your toe and drop a deck of cards, you have the slapstick of your awkwardness, you’ve hurt yourself, and you’re in trouble because you dropped the cards. Big yuks here.

You already have a sense of humor if you’ve ever laughed at anything. But can you be funny? If you’ve ever made someone else laugh, you can be funny. You only have to learn how to use that talent in your magic.

Where can you find your jokes and comedy material?

- Think funny! Immerse yourself in *appropriate* humor by listening to comics and comedy magicians. See funny films, videos, and TV.
- Look for comedy in comic strips, funny signs, illustrations, books, and magazines.
- Check with magic dealers. There have been lots of books of comic patter and jokes written especially for magicians.
- Adapt, don’t adopt. Don’t use a joke or bit exactly as you’ve heard or seen it. Change the words or actions to make it pertain to you and your magic.
- Don’t steal another performer’s jokes or sight gags. Seek permission or be sure that they are so old they’re in public domain. (We’ll talk more about this in Chapter 24.)
- Write it down! If you think of a joke or funny bit, or you ad-lib something funny while performing a trick (which you will!), write it down as soon as possible, before you forget. Don’t trust your memory.

And here are a few general tips about actually performing comedy. Of course, all rules are made to be broken, but I would recommend sticking with these until you are an accomplished comedy magician.

- Use comedy that’s appropriate for your age, the audience, and where you’re performing.
- Avoid questionable material (for example, ethnic jokes or sexual innuendo). If in doubt, leave it out!
- If you’re telling a joke, memorize your punchline.

- Wait for the laugh. It'll take some people longer than others to "get it."
- Don't apologize or berate the audience if they don't laugh. Just move on to the next trick.
- Just like you don't tell in advance what's going to happen in a trick, don't announce that you're going to tell a joke or that "this'll kill ya." Comedy, like magic, is based on surprise.

Most of all, humor is a personal style. What do you find funny? That's probably the type of comedy you'll perform best.

If you don't feel comfortable performing comedy, don't do it. The audience will recognize the strain and be uncomfortable with and for you. It's easy to tell whether the audience finds you funny or not. People laugh, or they don't, and you'll know the difference between real and nervous laughter.

If they don't laugh at first, don't give up. Like the tricks and sleights themselves, the performance of comedy and comedy magic is a practiced, learned skill that takes years of performance in front of many types of audiences to master.

Magic Words

Remember in Chapter 3 when we talked about creating a "magic moment," and I suggested that magicians commonly do it by saying a magic word?

Well, what exactly is a magic word?

The magic words are, of course, spoken as part of your patter. But a magic word has a specific function: It's the word or phrase that supposedly *causes the magic*. You know plenty of magic words already: *Abracadabra*, *Hocus Pocus*, *Presto*. In the story of "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves," the only way to open the secret door to the cave was to call the magic words "Open Sesame." The illusionist Dante was known for his magic words "Sim Sala Bim." Mark Wilson naturally chose "Allakazam" to be used as the magic word on his ground-breaking television show, "The Magic Land of Allakazam."

"Abracadabra" is the best-known magic word. Its first written record comes from A.D. 208, when it was part of a folkloric cure for a fever. Occultists suggest that *abracadabra* is an acronym of the Hebrew letters for the Holy Trinity. Regardless, *abracadabra* was in common use as a conjuring word by the Middle Ages.

"Hocus Pocus" is another common magic phrase. Its roots are uncertain; some historians point to Ochus Bochus, a legendary Norse wizard. Thomas Ady, in his 1656 book on witchcraft, cites a medieval stage magician named Hocus Pocus. Others think *hocus pocus* is a corruption of words from the Latin Catholic mass.

"Presto" is unusual in that its true meaning is known. It's an Italian word meaning "quickly" or "at once." The word is often used when performing a transformation, as in "Presto Chango!"

Sing Out, Louise!

No matter how clever your patter is, it's useless if the audience can't hear you.

If you've been fortunate enough to study speech or elocution in school, you've already learned the importance of speaking clearly and enunciating each word. Perhaps the best example of unencumbered verbal communication is a TV news anchor. Don't listen to the content; just study the way they speak. The words are clean and precise. You can hear and understand every word.

Of course, you have many variables in a live performance situation. You'll always have the ambient sounds of the room where you're performing. You may not be the only one talking. You may have to be heard over background music.

If you are working to a small group and there's no conflicting noise, you don't need to raise your voice too much to be heard.

If you're working on a stage, be sure your voice projects to the other side of the room. Projection is not shouting: It's using the diaphragm to push the air out of your lungs and through your larynx. Shouting, on the other hand, is centered in the throat. If you shout rather than project, you'll wind up with a sore throat before the end of your performance.

One way to practice projection is to imagine that your listener is at the far side of a large room. Speak in a loud but conversational tone. If someone sitting at the other end of a room can hear you, everyone in between can hear you as well.

Consider using vocal tricks, like regional accents or stage whispers, to add color and style to your performance. Sometimes lowering the volume draws your audience in closer to you.



Sawed in Half

If you use a mike stand, try to adjust its height in advance of the show. It looks unprofessional if the first thing you do after walking on stage is adjust the microphone stand, especially if it doesn't move easily.

A brief word or two about microphones. Not all microphones are the same. If you have the chance, you should test the microphone and the sound in advance (that is, do a "sound check"). Remember, the sound on your side of the stage will be different than the sound "out front." If you can, have someone stand on the other side of the speakers to check the volume and the tone (e.g., treble, bass), quality (e.g., crisp or fuzzy sound) and possible feed-back (that awful electronic squeaking and squawking).

Make sure you know what kind of microphone will be provided. Remember, you're a magician, so you'll need your hands free. You'll need a mike on a stand or a wireless lapel (or lavalier) microphone.

The Silent Script

Some actors use a technique known as the “interior monologue” to keep themselves mentally and emotionally involved with everything happening onstage. In essence, they talk to themselves, but it’s an unspoken script. Their thoughts might include:

- the actor’s observations on another actor’s words or actions
- the actor’s observations on his or her own actions
- the actor’s true thoughts—what he or she really means—while saying something else

An interior monologue provides the actor with an inner life: You can see it in their eyes and expressions.

Magicians, especially those who perform silent acts, can make use of this technique as well. In his book *Magic and Showmanship*, Henning Nelms coined the term “silent script” for the unspoken patter that a magician recites in his or her mind while performing. In a silent script, you may silently reinforce your actions (“Look, I’m putting the silk in my pocket”) or comment on your attitudes, reactions, or what’s happening onstage (“I’m pretty good, huh?” “Boy, did he just do something stupid!”)

By “performing” a silent script in addition to your actual patter, you will keep your mind active and connected to the audience at every moment.



Hocus Quote-Us

Every performer needs lines to think whenever he is silent. ... The technique consists of writing out on paper enough lines to fill all the gaps in your speech. Then recite these lines mentally while you perform. Do not attempt to memorize them exactly, just get the basic ideas in mind. Note that although both the spoken and the silent scripts fit your assumed character, the silent lines do not fit your real situation at all. The silent script ... provides an easy way to believe in your own miracles.

—Henning Nelms, in *Magic and Showmanship*

Speak Up, I Can’t Hear You!

Most people’s opinion of mime is based on the often-intrusive white-faced silent clowns that we see doing strolling comedy at parties and theme parks.

In fact, mime is a legitimate theatrical technique, popular at least by the time of ancient Greece and Rome. In true mime, all actions and concepts are illustrated without the use of speech, apparatus, or stage props. Although many mimes work in white-face, this is by no means universal. Perhaps the best-known mime character is the white-faced Mr. Bip created and performed by the French artist Marcel Marceau.

Pantomime is also performance without speech, in which gestures, movements, and facial expression are used to help to convey a story, theme or message. As opposed to

mime, in pantomime the actors often use props, apparatus, and costumes in the production.

A magic act in which you don't speak is usually referred to as a "silent act." Usually the tricks are performed to music and/or sound effects. Some, but not all, silent acts are also pantomimes (but usually not mimes), because the performer uses gestures, facial expressions and other physical movements in addition to the magic manipulations to convey the magician's character and the act's theme.

Music Hath Charms

Many magicians, both patter and silent acts, work to music. Music can be used in magic acts to create special moods and responses the same way it does in films, on TV, in theater, and in church.



Hocus Quote-Us

Music hath charms to soothe the savage breast.

—William Congreve, in *The Mourning Bride* (I, I)(1697)



Sawed in Half

Recorded music is protected for professional use by copyright. Either you or the theater in which you perform is responsible for obtaining rights for the music's use. In most instances, artists are covered under a blanket license agreement obtained by the venue annually. You may want to check with ASCAP or BMI, the two largest licensing organizations for their exact rules.

What type of music suits the character you want to portray and the mood you want to create? Should the music be modern, popular, classical, or standards? What tempo—fast, slow, rhythmic? Do you want music in a peppy major key, or an atmospheric or mournful minor key? What instrumentation? Should it be an instrumental or do the words help convey your act's theme?

There's some controversy about the use of well-known or popular music. If the music comes with certain associations, those connections may transfer automatically to your act. Three examples of soundtrack music that instantly evoke certain images are the themes from

- *Chariots of Fire*—Slow-motion action
- *Mission: Impossible*—Suspense
- *The Exorcist*—Supernatural mystery

If your audience starts humming, tapping, or singing along with the music, it may draw them out of your magic. It's a decision only you can make from personal experience.

Now comes, perhaps, the hardest part: Your final task will be to fit your routine to the music. One way is to build your routine to fit the song. If you do, make sure that you don't add repetitive or nonessential actions just to make the trick long enough. Your actions onstage should match the tempo and length of the music; any special accents in the music (such as a crescendo, a cymbal crash, a chord) are great points for "magic moments."

You can edit the music to fit your existing routine. This requires careful planning and professional sound equipment to produce a good tape. Keep the finished tape as a “master” copy. Make duplicates, and bring two copies to the show—one to use, and one as a back-up for when the sound equipment eats the tape. Because it will.

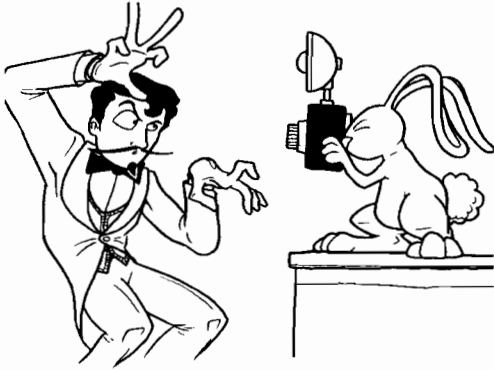
You may have the opportunity to work with a band or orchestra. The live sound can make your act even more exciting. If you’re a patter act, they can play on and off, and provide accents (such as ta-da chords and drum rimshots). If you’re a silent act and have “charts” (musical arrangements for the band to follow), the live orchestra can follow *you* rather than your having to work to your tape.

Learning to write and deliver patter is a lifelong process. Experimentation with patter and pantomime styles, comedy and music, will keep your act fresh and alive for both you and your audience.

Now, let’s find out how to look and act your best as you become an Actor Magician.

The Least You Need to Know

- Write out or prepare your patter in advance, but only use it as a starting point for what you actually say in performance.
- Comedy, well-delivered, can be an important tool in entertaining with magic.
- It doesn’t matter how good your patter is if it can’t be heard.
- Use a “silent script” to keep your magic fresh and your mind active, attuned to what’s happening at every moment while you perform.
- Carefully select your music; make sure that it’s appropriate to your character and style and that you match it to the visual cues in your magic.



Every Move a Picture

In This Chapter

- ▶ Getting on and off stage
- ▶ Be your own director
- ▶ Finding a wardrobe that's right for you
- ▶ Staying scrubbed and shiny new

The great 19th century French magician Robert-Houdin said, "A magician is an actor playing the part of a magician."

Whether you do your magic on a stage or close-up among friends, you are playing a role: the magician.

The Character Actor

Think of yourself as a character in a theatrical play. Your character is the persona, the "role" you take when you perform, whether it's doing card tricks one-on-one or a bigger show on a stage.

You may choose to portray a recognizable "type," such as a wizard, a Mississippi riverboat gambler, a nerd. This kind of act is often referred to as a "character act."

Perhaps the best example of a contemporary character act in magic is Tomsoni & Co., in which John Thompson (b. 1934) portrays a Polish prestidigitator name The Great Tomsoni, the Wizard of Warsaw. The act doesn't depend on ethnic jokes: Rather, Thompson enacts a highly-decorated Eastern-European magician with an aristocratic bearing, who wears white tie and tails and an honorary sash across his chest. He is assisted by his wife Pam, who plays a gum-smacking, bored, and slightly-ditzy blond-haired floozy.

If you don't play an obvious "type," then you must build your character based on your own personality. It will be a "heightened" extension of the real you. Your character will take into account such psychological and physical features as your:



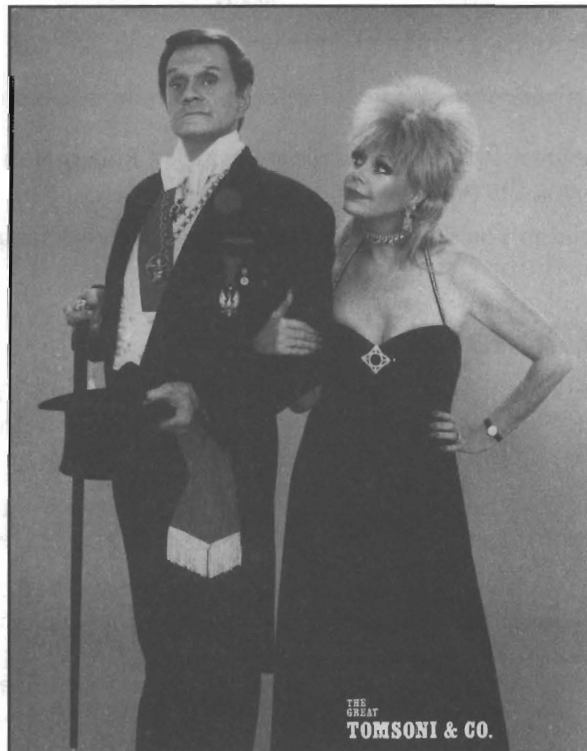
Hocus Quote-Us

A magic trick is a little play, carefully built, detail by detail. It is devised so that everything is so obviously fair that the one or two small points on which depend the success of the deception may be slid over without attracting attention.

—John Mulholland, in *Quicker Than the Eye*

- ▶ Attitude, bearing, and point of view. (Are you haughty, joking, devil-may-care, daring?)
- ▶ Level of magic ability. (Are you award-winning, a klutz, incompetent?)
- ▶ Physical attributes. (How old are you? Are you peppy or weak?)
- ▶ Status or reputation, as perceived by others and yourself. (Are you award-winning? Does your character think he or she is too good for the venue?)
- ▶ Idiosyncrasies, eccentricities, and individual traits. (Do you mumble to yourself? Do you use a specific magic word throughout your act?)

The Great Tomsoni & Co. (John and Pam Thompson)



Regardless of how you create and develop your character, everything you say and do when you perform, everything the audience experiences, must be related to the character you're portraying. This includes such elements as selection of tricks, wardrobe, prop decoration, body movements and mannerisms, patter (including the words you use, diction, and dialect), and music.

In general, then, your character is comprised of all the qualities or features that distinguish you from all other magicians.

Curtain Up!

When you walk onto the stage, you must let the audience know by your first actions that you have complete command of the stage, and that they can sit back, relax, and be entertained. They sense your charisma and are immediately charmed. This indefinable quality that you develop and build on every time to perform is known as *stage presence*.

One way to "take charge" is to pause a few moments before you begin your magic to mentally prepare yourself. Let yourself know that you have a special gift that you are about to share with the audience.

Then, don't just walk on stage (literally, or figuratively if you're performing close-up). Make an entrance! Know why you are coming on the stage: to dazzle, amaze, and entertain. Some actors call this entering a scene "with intention." You know what you want to achieve and how you're going to do it.

Tell yourself, "I have the skills and the talent; now it's show time!"

Let's Take a Trip

Between your entrance and your exit, you must take the audience on a journey. In order to travel to this incredible world where you can make the impossible possible, you must get the audience to believe, if only for a while, that magic *is* possible.

This is called "Suspension of Disbelief," a phrase coined in 1871 by Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772–1834) in his *Biographia Literaria*. The audience knows that what it's seeing is not true (disbelief), but they're willing to ignore that fact (suspension) in order to partake of and enjoy the performance.

Suspension of disbelief is absolutely essential for a magician's audience. The spectators need not necessarily believe that the magician can perform real magic, but they must forego trying to figure out how the tricks are done and, for at least the length of the show, be willing to believe that magic is possible. Only then can they become enraptured.



Hocus Quote-Us

The last step in a successful trick is to take a bow. ... I don't mean that you must literally bob your head or bend from the waist. ... You must pause definitely until everyone knows the trick is done. Then pause just a little longer. Give them time to decide whether they will applaud.

—Henry Hay, in *The Amateur Magician's Handbook*



Hocus Quote-Us

The first and most important principle in the design of stage movement is to avoid all purposeless movement.

—John Dolman, Jr., in *The Art of Play Production*

Get Off Already!

When you finish your trick, or at the end of your show, you have to let the audience know that you are through. Every magician develops his or her own way to do this, and, over time, so will you.

Some magicians spread their arms wide, as if saying (in a “silent script”) “There you have it!” Such a gesture almost guarantees a response, and is, in fact, a popular “applause cue.”

You may prefer to make a quick nod of the head, or perhaps a full or partial bow. Or, maybe a small hand gesture or flourish is more your style.

Many magicians lose the applause and response they deserve because they move or exit too soon. The audience will love what you do. When they applaud, or cheer, just wait! Stand there, smile, and enjoy it. Acknowledge their response with a “thank you” or some physical gesture, then move on to your next trick or make your exit.

What I Really Want to Do Is Direct

Actors have it easy. The writer gives them the words, the director tells them where to move, the wardrobe department dresses them, the electrician sets the spotlights, and a marketing department advertises and sells the tickets.

Unfortunately, most of us have to do all those things ourselves. Magicians, like all performers, are judged by how they look and the actions they take on the stage. The series of stage movements and actions performed

during a magic trick is known as *blocking*. (Blocking can also mean the act of creating the sequence of motions.) You made your first decision about blocking when you decided what side of the stage to enter from, and how to get off.

One of the biggest problems many magicians have is eliminating unnecessary actions. They pace nervously or wander aimlessly around the stage. They riffle or shuffle their cards for no reason.

Edit your actions and economize on your motions so that every movement has a purpose. That way, every move you *do* make will command complete attention.

Cleanliness Is Next to Godliness

Look your best. This should not have to be stated, but remember the old adage, "Cleanliness is next to godliness." Personal grooming includes skin, hair, nails, body odor, and breath. (Forego that Philadelphia cheese steak, heavy on the onions, until after the show.)

Of course you *bathe*. But don't forget to regularly wash or dry clean all of your wardrobe as well. Sweat and body odors linger in cloth. You'll be working in close proximity to members of your audience, the people who asked (or hired) you to perform, and possibly your assistants or other performers. Don't be a stinky magician!

Magicians make their living with their hands. A professional manicure is not just a present to pamper yourself; it makes your hands look terrific!

Your hair, whatever the style, must be clean and appropriately groomed.

Be aware of what you look like to others. Let someone whose opinion you trust give you an outside opinion.



Now You See It

I was astounded the first time I met Harry Blackstone, Jr. On television, it always looked like he had a full goatee and mustache, but when I saw him in person, it was pencil thin. He told me that he had discovered a goatee and mustache that looked full when you stood face-to-face looked bushy and unkempt on television or from a stage.

While we're talking about getting squeaky clean, don't forget that looking your best extends to your props and other equipment as well. Take a look at your props from time to time. Are they getting dirty? Chipped? Should they be replaced? Painted? Patched up? Playing cards are perhaps the worst offenders. Cards wear quickly and easily pick up dirt from the hands. How much does a deck of cards cost? A buck fifty? If you can't afford a new deck, get your parents to raise your allowance, or raise your fees. (One year, Santa filled my stocking with decks of cards. It was one of the best, most practical gifts I ever got.)



Now You See It

I was once playing in Pittsburgh, and a magician and his wife came out to see my show. After the program, she mentioned, in all sincerity, how much she had enjoyed the trick I performed with the black and gray silk handkerchiefs. I corrected her and said, "You mean the trick with the black and the white silk hanky." I could tell by the expression on her face that she honestly thought that the white silk scarf had been gray. I had never noticed how dirty I had allowed the ratty old silk hanky to become. Needless to say, the next day, and from then on, I had fresh, clean handkerchiefs—and I hope other props as well—in my act.

Remember, if the audience doesn't feel you have pride in your looks or the looks of your act, they will lose interest quickly. Try to look better than your best.

Get Dressed!

Looking your best includes clean, pressed wardrobe. It often doesn't matter what you wear as long as it suits your character and where you're performing. It could be blue jeans (as popularized by Doug Henning in the 1970s), a GQ look (like David Copperfield), or a tuxedo (for Harry Blackstone, Sr.). You would probably dress much differently if you're performing your magic impromptu among friends (casual clothes), among co-workers at the office (business attire), or on a stage in front of a large audience (stage wardrobe or costume).

Throughout the centuries, magicians have worn a variety of costumes. In medieval times, many wore long wizard-like gowns. Others mimicked Asian garb. Itinerant street performers wardrobe themselves in everyday attire. By the mid-19th century, magicians were legitimate entertainment in the theater and the homes of polite society. The popular French magician Robert-Houdin, along with others of his era, made formal attire—which at the time was "tie and tails"—*de rigueur* for magicians. They dressed like the company for whom they performed.

In the 20th century, the tuxedo jacket replaced the tailcoat as men's formal wear. Although fewer magicians work in a tuxedo or tails today than, say, even two decades ago, it's not necessarily old-fashioned or un-hip to wear one on the stage. In fact, a well-tailored tux can look quite elegant. Nothing looks more unprofessional, however, than a worn, shiny, ill-fitting or out-of-style tuxedo.

Doug Henning, who first surfaced in the early 1970s, was primarily responsible for magicians breaking away from the traditional tuxedoed look. He wore jeans, a brightly colored shirt and sneakers—perfect for his onstage character.



Now You See It

Yes, it's true. Those long tails and jackets do sometimes have secret pockets. A *pochette*, literally French for "small pocket," is a small, special pocket located in the back of the trousers at the top of the thigh, hidden by the tails of a swallowtail jacket. A *profonde* is a secret pocket located in the tails of a formal tailcoat, used to steal and get rid of objects.

Perhaps you'll want an informal or contemporary look, too. Many comedy magicians, for example, have foregone the tuxedo for a suit or sports coat and tie.

If you perform a character act, the role you portray will dictate your wardrobe. A character act, in which you wear particularly unusual or specially made apparel, such as would be worn to portray a gypsy or a wizard, is sometimes called a "costume act."

Just make sure your wardrobe suits your age, personality and the style of act you're performing, while still being acceptable to your audience and the venue in which you perform. How you dress must have a "look"—a signature style—because audiences will equate it with you and your magic.

So, Actor-Magician, we're almost ready to dive into the big bag of tricks. But, if you can hold on a little longer, just a few more pages, I'd like to give you a few tips on some situations you're likely to come up against whenever you perform ... and what to do about them.

The Least You Need to Know

- Your performance character can be a recognizable "type" or an extension of your own personality.
- Take command from the moment you walk on the stage so that the audience can relax and enjoy your magic.
- Your applause cues, bows (literal or figurative) and exit should be as rehearsed as the rest of your act.
- You are responsible for all aspects of how you look onstage, from your fingernails to your clothes.
- What you wear is not as important as making sure it's appropriate for your act and acceptable to your audience and the venue where you're performing.



One Last Look

In This Chapter

- Overcoming stage fright
- What to do when something goes wrong
- Handling hecklers
- Working with volunteers from the audience

In just a few pages we'll be tackling our next magic tricks. But before we do, let's take one last look at some of challenges that you may face when you perform.

With rare exceptions, the audience is on your side and rooting for you. They don't want you to mess up: They want you to succeed and do well. Nevertheless, the audience will judge you on how you deal with the difficulties, the dilemmas and the unexpected.

If you think about possible problems and unusual situations *now*, they won't be such a big deal if they occur. Plus, if you're keep them in the back of your mind as you're learning all the tricks, you'll be able to apply some of these ideas as you go along.

Boo!

Are you nervous? Well, of course you are. You should be. You want to do your best, but you're not sure you've practiced enough. Then there's the unexpected: What if something goes wrong? What if you drop the cards, or they see you hiding the coin? And aren't there lots of people out there who want nothing more than to see magicians mess up?

I firmly believe that some nervous energy is good. It keeps you “alive,” on the edge. It keeps you aware of everything going on around you. All of your antennae are out. As actors would say, it also keeps you “in the moment”: You appreciate that particular audience, watching at that particular time. You’re aware of what makes every moment between you and your audience special and unique.

But too much stage fright can be debilitating. I know a magician who is very talented—his ability with a deck of cards is staggering—but get him in front of more than one or two people at a time, and his hands shake so violently it’s painful to watch.

What can you do to prevent stage fright, or at least keep it under control? First of all, nothing prevents stage fright more than total preparation. You may still have stage fright before every show—it’s perfectly normal. But if you know, in your heart of hearts, that you have practiced and rehearsed so thoroughly that your routine is flawless, you will start every show with all the confidence in the world.

There’s an old expression that’s been applied to almost every occupation: If it were easy, everyone would do it. You have a special skill and craft, and you’re willing to share it with your audience. As another old adage goes, if they could do it, they’d be up there instead of you.

Besides, what’s the worst thing that could possibly happen? If a trick doesn’t work, will everyone get up and walk out? Will you be arrested and put in jail? Will you be thrown out on the streets? Or be executed? Get serious. For the hobbyist magician, the worst that could happen is someone might laugh, or make a wisecrack.

But is any of that terrible enough to make you afraid to perform? No.

Things Go Wrong

No matter how much you practice, now and then you’ll mess up a sleight. No matter how many tech rehearsals you’ve had, sure as shootin’, one day when you step up to a microphone, the feedback will sound like Martians are landing.

As my mother used to say, deal with it.

If a mistake happens, if a loud noise or some huge interruption takes place—anything that’s obviously *not* a planned part of your performance—and the audience notices it, you can’t pretend that nothing happened. The audience saw (or heard) it. The audience knows you saw or heard it. If you just ignore it, the audience will think you’re oblivious or too insecure to acknowledge it.

Usually all you have to do is just notice it, and let the audience know that you know that they noticed it. You don’t have to be terribly clever. Often, just a mere observation will get a huge laugh, applause, or other congratulatory response from the audience. Why? Because the audience felt more panic than you: Uh, oh. Something’s gone wrong. That wasn’t supposed to happen. What will the magician do? As soon as you acknowledge the disturbance, you set them back at ease. They can relax, and get back to enjoying the magic.

Here are just a few common situations you might encounter, and some of the standard lines magicians have developed to cover them. Remember, you should only use these types of “comebacks” if they fit your style and are appropriate to your age and character:

Someone arrives late.

- Stop everything. Wait patiently for them to sit. Just watch them with a big smile on your face.
- Look at your watch.
- *We'll have to start over.*
- *Good! Now we can start.*
- *Good! We thought you'd never get here!*
- *Here's what's happened so far.* Then do a rapid, tongue-twisting recap of everything that's happened in the trick or the show up to that point.

Someone walks out.

- (As they're leaving) *I get better!*
- (After they've gone) *And stay out!*
- (After they've gone) *Good! I thought they'd never leave!*
- (After they've gone) *Now the fun can begin!*

No one laughs.

- If you're among friends, or business acquaintances, turn to someone you know who has a sense of humor and say, “I told you that joke would never work.”
- *I expected so much from that one.*
- *Quiet in here, isn't it?*
- Do *not* say “Is this an audience or an oil painting?” or other put-downs of the audience. You can do self-deprecating humor, but don't attack the audience. After all, they were kind enough to watch you and give you the benefit of the doubt.

No one applauds.

- *What a nice quiet place to rehearse.*
- *Save your applause. Oh, you did.*
- *Not yet. Save it for the big ending.*
- *It was nothing. I can tell by the applause.*

The microphone whines or gives feedback.

- The Mother Ship has landed.
- Stand back! It's going to explode!

You mispronounce something.

- I just washed my tongue and I can't do a thing with it.
- My tongue got wrapped around my eye tooth, and I couldn't see what I was saying.

Someone yells, "I've seen it before." or "I know how it's done."

- *Oh, then we don't have to do it.* Start to put the prop away, and wait for the audience's objections to bring it back out.
- Hand them the prop, or invite them to do the trick.
- *Me, too.*
- *Don't tell. It'll be our secret.*
- *Well, you're going to see it again.*

Most of the time when someone calls this out, it's not out of malice. It's just to let you know they're hip—they've been around. Most of the time, especially if it's a child, simply acknowledging their comment is enough to satisfy them.

You mess up something so badly that you absolutely cannot finish the trick, or the trick goes completely wrong.

- *Oops!*
- Shrug your shoulders.
- Act as surprised as everyone else that it didn't work. Then slowly and deliberately, put the props down, and move on to your next trick.
- Laugh at yourself and the situation.
- Pick up this book, and let the audience see the cover as you quickly leaf through it.
- But, whatever you do, don't apologize. Don't explain. And don't say, "See, what should have happened...."
- The best recovery is fooling and entertaining them even more with your next trick!

Get Out of Here

If you're lucky, no one notices when you make a mistake or goof up a trick. That's one reason you should never tell the audience in advance what you're going to do. If the trick doesn't work out, you should try to improvise some other satisfactory ending to the trick. It may not be as good as the one you had planned—but only you know that! They don't have a clue.

Magicians refer to this as getting “out” of a situation. Part of your practice and rehearsal should be brainstorming what could possibly go wrong while you're performing each trick. Make a list. Then, try to come up with a possible “out” or “outs” for each of those situations.

Expect the unexpected. Just when you think you've covered every possible situation, something else goes wrong. As I've mentioned before, things happen. Keep your cool. Deal with it. And move on.



Tip of the Wand

Robert Orben has written a number of booklets for comics, magicians, and other stand-up performers that contain lists of prepared ad-libs to cover almost any situation. Many of the major magic dealers can supply them. I also highly recommend Lilly Walters' *What to Say When: A Complete Resource for Speakers, Trainers & Executives* (McGraw-Hill, 1995). Available in the business section of most bookstores, *What to Say When* offers advice and provides lines that are suitable for magicians as well.

Oh Yeah?

Trying to stop someone who heckles—who interrupts, grabs at things, or yells at you when you're performing—is a no-win situation.

When it occurs, everyone watching is aware of it. They're embarrassed for you, and, since the goon is a member of the audience, they're embarrassed.

There have been dozens of books and articles written about how to deal with hecklers. During the nightclub era of the 1950s and 1960s, responding to hecklers with “put-downs” and trying to “top” the heckler was common. Robert Orben even put out a booklet entitled “Heckler Stoppers” filled with insult humor to make comebacks to unruly or obnoxious audience members. Unfortunately, as one Las Vegas comic noted, “For every heckler put-down I came up with, the drunken heckler had one more ‘Oh, yeah?’”

You can't win. If you chastise the offender, you come off looking ungracious or impolite. You run the risk of upsetting his friends: They're probably already upset at their buddy, but if you insult their friend, they may turn their anger toward you.

Your first attempt should be to just ignore it. If you are fortunate, either the heckler will quiet down on his or her own, or a friend will quiet them.

Often, the heckler is simply seeking attention. If you simply talk to the person, acknowledge their jokes or their presence, many times they'll be satisfied and quiet down. If you're performing a stage show and notice before you begin that the audience is unruly, you might arrange in advance for the client, management, or booker to be on the lookout for (and take care of) any troublemakers.

The best thing you can do is try to find a way to end the situation quickly and gracefully.

Cliché City

Probably the comments you'll hear most often as a magician are "I wouldn't want to play cards with you," "Are you going to make that food [you're eating] disappear" and "Can you make my wife disappear?" (For some reason it's always the husbands who ask about making their wives disappear, never the other way around.)

You'll hear these quips for the rest of your life, so get used to them now. Unfortunately, the best you can usually do is smile, and acknowledge the joke. After all, the jokes are actually rather clever (or *were*, the first time you heard them). And it's probably the first time the person who says it to you has thought it up.

Let them have their 15 minutes. Then go somewhere private and bang your head against the wall.

May I Have a Volunteer, Please?

Working with volunteers from the audience is a whole art in itself. Many tricks in your arsenal require the assistance of a spectator from the audience. Magicians call these victims "volunteers," whether they actually offer their services or have to be drafted to take part in their shows.

There are many reasons to use volunteers:

- ▶ They personally become involved, physically and mentally.
- ▶ They stand "in stead" of or act as a committee of observers for the rest of the audience.
- ▶ They can examine apparatus to prove that everything is ordinary and ungimmacked.
- ▶ You need "extra hands" or additional people to perform the routine.

Many people simply want to watch, so don't be upset if anyone declines to help out. Quickly move on to someone else who might be eager to assist you.

When you invite someone to help you, whether you are performing close-up or they must come up onto a stage, they become part of the act. They are part of your show, and part of the stage picture. Make sure the rest of the audience can hear and see them. Position them so that everyone in the audience sees their faces, not their backs.

If you are inviting volunteers onto a stage, meet them at the top of the stairs. Welcome them. Introduce yourself to every new volunteer. Ask his or her name. Use it when you talk to them. People like nothing more than to hear their own names! Engage them, verbally and visually. I also look at them occasionally to make sure I haven't put them to sleep.

Let your volunteers take an active part in the routine. Otherwise, let them return to their seat—or don't invite them to help to begin with. Unless the apparatus you're using is suspect, their purpose should be more than just inspecting props.

Always be aware of your volunteers' safety. Whether they must walk up a set of stairs or use a pair of scissors, their health and safety are paramount.

Don't make fun of them. They were gracious enough to assist you. Treat them with dignity, courtesy, and respect. Treat them the way you would want to be treated if you were a volunteer.

Thank them for helping you before and during the trick. Afterwards, thank them again. If you are performing for a large audience, ask the audience to join you in a round of applause for them.



Now You See It

Harry Blackstone, Jr. (1934-1997) was one of the true gentlemen of magic, as was his father before him (Harry Blackstone, Sr., 1885-1965). Blackstone performed a rope routine that required what he called "the committee" of several men to come onstage to help him. After the trick, as he sent them back to their seats, he asked for another, special round of applause for these volunteers, who had been such good sports and made the routine so much fun. It was a practice that any magician would do well to emulate.

Remember, you will be judged not only for the magic you do, but how you worked with the audience, and especially with those who were kind enough to help you while you pulled off your tricks. Make your volunteers' time onstage be magic as well.

Is your brain exploding with all this what-to-do advice? Mine too. Finally, it's time! Let the magic begin!

The Least You Need to Know

- Everyone gets stage fright now and then. The best prevention is practice and preparation, but if stage fright occurs, use the nervousness to boost your energy level.
- Prepare possible "outs" for things that could go wrong during your performance.
- You will be judged by your attitude and the way in which you handle clichés and hecklers.
- An audience member who volunteers is your guest and become part of your show. Treat volunteers with the respect they deserve.

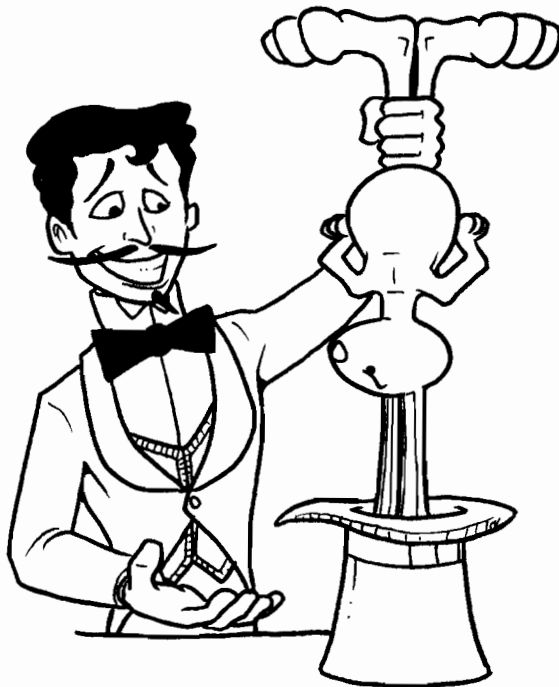
Part 3

Easy Does It: No Skill Required

Hot dog, we're finally going to learn some more magic! Well, it's about time! Actually, all that theorizing back in Parts 1 and 2 is real important. Magic is more than just knowing how the tricks are done. It's the ability to perform them that's important, so the fundamentals of stagecraft had to come first.

If the tricks in this section were sold in a box, the instructions might read: "No Skill Required." It's true that they don't take a lot of finger-flicking, but you still have to rehearse them over and over until they become second nature—until you can perform them smoothly and naturally from start to finish.

And don't be put off by their seeming simplicity. These are strong tricks. Many of them are classics. Plus, they have one big advantage over tricks that need more technical know-how and sleight-of-hand. No matter how hard, or how close, the audience watches you, they won't see how the tricks are done!







The Key to Kard Konjuring

In This Chapter

- ▶ The basic card trick explained
- ▶ Using a key card to find the spectator's card
- ▶ How to get a card to the top of the deck
- ▶ More than a dozen ways to reveal a chosen card
- ▶ Basic card handling: spreads, jogs, crimps, and breaks

Perhaps no type of magic is performed more often than card tricks. Playing cards seem to hold an endless fascination for laypeople and magicians alike. Perhaps it's because of the infinite combinations and permutations offered by the 52 different designs—53 if we include the joker. Also, almost everyone has played with a deck of cards. Cards are ordinary, everyday objects, which makes magic with them all the more *extraordinary*.

Almost everyone knows at least one card trick, so yours must be special. The tricks in this chapter are very simple, but they're real foolers. And, even though they look very different from one another, all of them use the same method to find out what card your volunteer picks.



Now You See It

The creation of playing cards is often ascribed to Egypt. The first written reference to them comes from 1392. Charles Poupart, treasurer to Charles VI of France, paid 56 sous to Jacquemin Gringonneur to paint "three packs of cards in gold and divers colors of several designs" for the king.



Say the Magic Word

A card **spread**, a wide display of cards held between the two hands, allows your audience to pick cards from anywhere in the deck. A **ribbon spread** is a long row of cards spread out on a flat surface, such as on a table, instead of between the hands.



Say the Magic Word

In order to use a playing card as a **key card** (sometimes called a **locator card**) you must know its position in the deck in relation to a chosen card. It is not always necessary to know the identity of your key card, for example, when using a **short card** or a **crimped card** as a key card.

Your Basic "Pick A Card, Any Card"

When you stop to think about it, almost every simple card trick ends with some variation of the question, "Is this your card?" Sure, you may surround the trick with a cute story. You may even have several cards chosen. But, when it comes right down to it, the plot of the basic "pick a card" trick is always the same:

- A spectator chooses a card.
- The magician reveals the card.

So, let's start our look at card magic with the simplest routine and method.

The Effect: A spectator's card is lost in the deck. You find it.

Preparation: All you need is a regular deck of cards, which may be shuffled before the trick begins.

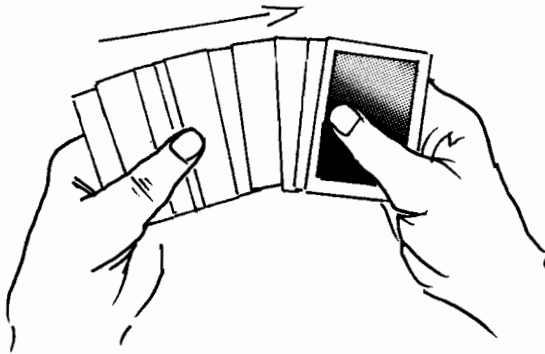
The Routine: *Spread* the cards face-down between the two hands or in a *ribbon spread* on the table.

To spread the cards, hold the deck in the left hand as if you were ready to deal. Hold your right hand like a serving tray, palm up and fingers outstretched. With your left thumb, push cards from the top of the deck onto the right fingers.

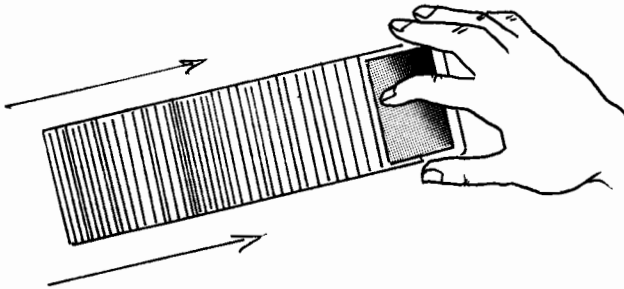
If you prefer to ribbon spread the cards, set the deck on the table. Place your right thumb along the inner short

edge of the cards. Stretch your hand over the top of the pack so that your right middle, ring, and little fingers rest along the outer short edge of the cards. Rest the forefinger on the left long edge of the deck. Press gently on the deck, and slide your hand in a straight, even row to the right. You may vary the ribbon spread by moving the hand in an arc to produce a fan-shaped display.

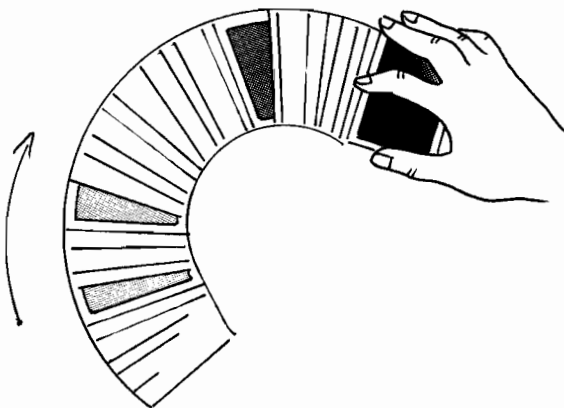
Pick a card, any card. Any card at all.



Spreading the cards allows spectators to pick a card from anywhere in the deck.



The traditional ribbon spread.



The ribbon spread's attractive cousin.

The spectator removes a card from the deck. Square up the deck.

While your volunteer is looking at the card, you must find out the identity of the bottom card of the deck. This is your *key card* (also known as a *locator card*), which will help you find the chosen card. There are several ways to find out what the bottom card is:



Say the Magic Word

Magicians use the word **peek** to mean a secret, brief glance, usually at a playing card. Interestingly, in magician's jargon, the performer says "peek a card," not "peek at a card."

- Look at the bottom card before the trick begins and before anyone knows what you're going to do. One method is to *peek* the card in the process of squaring up the deck after a shuffle or, if the spectator shuffles, as the deck is handed back to you.
- As you hold the deck, you can tilt it upwards slightly, just enough so that you can subtly glance down and peek the bottom card.
- Turn your back to the audience, saying "Don't let me see your card." While your back is turned, simply look at the bottom card.



Say the Magic Word

In most magical literature and throughout this book, the term **cut** the cards suggests (unless otherwise stated) a single, complete cut. In other words, a packet of cards is removed from the top of the deck and placed beside the lower portion on the table. Then the cut is "completed" by placing the lower portion of the deck on top of the upper portion of the pack. (The cards can be cut in the hands, of course, rather than on a table.)

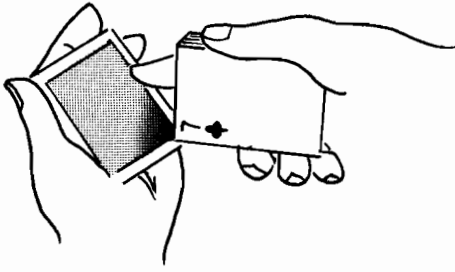
Ask the spectator to return the chosen card to the top of the deck. *Cut* the cards.

Please place your card back on top of the deck. And we'll cut the deck to bury your card.

What has this accomplished? Your key card, the original bottom card of the deck, is now on top of the chosen card in the middle of a face-down deck.

Before we go any further, let me show you a great way to find out the identify of a key card without looking at the bottom of the deck:

After the spectator selects a card, square the deck and hold it in your left hand. Lift up the top half of the deck with the right hand. Point to the cards in your left hand with your right forefinger and ask the volunteer to return the chosen card to the "middle of the deck" (that is, to the top of the packet in your left hand). As you point to the cards, tilt the packet of cards in your right hand so that you can peek its bottom (or face) card. Drop the right-hand packet on top of those in the left hand, burying the chosen card.



Peek the key card while pointing out where the chosen card is to be returned to the deck.

To make it seem that the chosen card is hopelessly lost, you may give the deck another complete cut. In fact, you may cut the deck as often as you wish. As long as you do not shuffle the deck, the key card will stay in position next to the selected card.

Okay, let's get to the Big Finish. You know *where* the chosen card is, but at this point you don't know *what* it is.

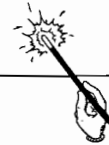
Pick up the deck and deal the cards face-up, one at a time, onto the table.

I'm going to try to find your card. Don't say anything if you see your card. Just keep thinking of its name, over and over.

When you see your key card, do not hesitate. You know that the next card will be the spectator's.

As soon as you turn over the selected card, pretend that the spectator's thought has telepathically flashed into your mind.

Wait! I'm getting an impression... Is this your card?



Tip of the Wand

If, by chance, you are lucky enough to cut the key card to the bottom of the deck, stop. The chosen card will be on top of the deck. If you wish, you can use this stroke of good luck to perform a miracle. Say, "Believe it or not, I have cut your card to the top of the deck. Turn over the top card."

It's a Revelation

The way you display or announce the identity of the chosen playing card is called a **revelation**. As magic inventor and author J.(ames) G. Thompson, Jr. (1910–1975) observed, you might have 100 different ways (magicians would say **methods**) to find the chosen card. But if you have only one way to reproduce it, all 100 versions appear to be the same trick. To the audience, it looks as if you know only one trick.

Conversely, you could use the same method (such as the keycard method you just learned) to locate the card every time. But if you have 100 different ways of saying, "Is this your card?" the audience thinks you know 100 different card tricks.

Therefore, it doesn't matter how many ways you have to find the card, as long as you have lots and lots of ways of *revealing* the card. Here are a few of my favorites.

The Circus Card Trick

This revelation has been around as long as I, or anyone I know, can remember. Its name refers, perhaps, to an early patter line about betting and con games on the circus midway.

The Effect: You make a wager that the next card you turn over will be theirs. It is, but not in the way they expected.

This type of trick, in which you challenge the spectator in a form of a bet, is known as a “*betcha*.”

Preparation: None.



Say the Magic Word

A *betcha* is a trick or puzzle in which the magician challenges the spectator in the form of a bet. Often, a *betcha* involves the spectator performing complete some stunt; sometimes success depends upon understanding the magician’s play on words.

The Routine: Secretly position the selected card beneath your key card, somewhere in the deck.

Deal the cards one at a time, face-up, onto the table. The card after your key card will be the chosen card. Take notice of it, but keep dealing several more cards face-up onto the table. Then pause.

Pick up the top card, face-down, from the deck.

I bet you that the next card I turn over will be yours.

Your volunteer will, of course, think that you intend to turn over the face-down card you are holding. Instead, set it back on top of the deck, rummage through the face-up cards on the table, find the selected card (which you memorized as you passed it) and turn *it* over, face-down.

Heavy-Handed

The Effect: You “weigh” each card as you deal the deck onto the table. You are able to find the selection because, you claim, it is the heaviest in the deck.

Preparation: None.

The Routine: Secretly position the selected card beneath your key card, somewhere in the deck.

I don’t know whether you are aware of it, but when you touch a card, your fingers add a bit of schmutz to the card that makes it heavier.

As you turn each card face-up and deal it onto the table, pretend to be “weighing” the card. When you reach the selected card (the card after your key card), stop. Perhaps go back a few cards and consider another card one more time. Finally, settle on their selection.

This is it.

Elementary, My Dear Watson

The Effect: You locate the selection by examining each card for fingerprints.

Preparation: None.

The Routine: Secretly position the selected card beneath your key card, somewhere in the deck.

Having been trained at Scotland Yard, I can find your card by looking for fingerprints. True, they seem invisible to the naked eye, but not to the eyes of a trained card detective.

Deal the cards, one at a time, face-up onto the table. Appear to examine each one briefly for fingerprints. When you reach the selected card, stop abruptly.

Aha! This is your card! Elementary!

The Eyes Have It

The Effect: You locate the selection by looking into your spectator's eyes as you show each card.

Preparation: None.

The Routine: Secretly position the selected card beneath your key card, somewhere in the deck.

Scientists have learned that the pupil of the eye gets bigger when you look at something that interests you. Let's test that theory. I'm going to hold these cards up to you, one a time. Don't say anything when you see your card. But I'll watch your eyes, and we'll see if they give you away.

Indeed, hold up the cards one at a time. The card after your key card will be the spectator's.

Wow! Your pupils just grew into the size of basketballs. This must be your card!

Just Look!

So far I've shown you how to use a key card to locate a selected card. In these examples, however, you don't know what the chosen card is until it is actually revealed. If you can find out the identity of the chosen card sooner, there are even more ways you can reveal the card.

Here's a sneaky yet effective method to find out the chosen card. Begin the trick the same way as before. Your volunteer picks a card and returns it to the deck. You secretly glimpse a key card and position it on top of the chosen card somewhere in the center of the deck.

Now here comes the tricky stuff: Casually turn the deck face-up and ribbon spread the cards on the table (or spread them in a wide fan between the two hands).

Your card is not hidden in either hand, so it must be somewhere here in the deck. Right?

As you gesture to the cards, casually, yet quickly, look for your key card. It should be somewhere near the center of the deck. If you have ribbon spread the cards from left to right, your key card will be directly behind, or to the left, of the card they selected.

The boldness of this method is completely disarming, yet it is a 100 percent surefire way to locate and discover the chosen card. It looks to the audience as if you are simply proving that the card is still in the deck, not that you are trying to find out what it is.

Now let's try two powerful "Is this your card?" revelations using this new technique.

A Mental Case

The Effect: You locate the selection by reading the spectator's mind.

Preparation: None.

The Routine: Secretly position the selected card beneath your key card, somewhere in the deck.

As in the last trick, you spread the deck face-up onto the table to learn the spectator's card. Because the table display is not necessary for this revelation, once you know the chosen card, you can scoop up the deck and turn it face-down. For added effect, you can even put the deck back in the card case.



Tip of the Wand

Instead of just blurting out the name of the card, pretend to receive the mental message in stages. For example, "It's a black card." "A club." "A number card." "A low number." "It's a 3, the 3 of clubs."

Your card is somewhere here in the deck. The cards are in the case. I can't touch them. Just think of your card and look at me. Your card is....

And now, you pretend to slowly receive a mental image of their card. Struggle a bit. Remember, mind-reading isn't supposed to be easy.

If they've picked a black card, here are two jokes that you might use when "psychically receiving" and announcing its identity.

- *Your card is a red card, is it not? No? That's what I said. It is not a red card. It is a black card.*
- *Your card is a cherry-colored card. It's not? You mean you've never heard of black cherries?*



Now You See It

The joke about the cherry-colored card is said to have originated as a humbug by P.T. Barnum, the famous circus impresario. From 1842 to 1868, he operated Barnum's American Museum in New York. Over the years, it housed a variety of exotic exhibitions, including a cherry-colored cat. Visitors were amused to discover a rather ordinary black cat on display.

Barnum loved magicians, and he hired them to perform in his museum and later in his tented shows. In 1837, while touring "Barnum's Grand Scientific and Musical Theatre," the showman himself took to the stage, first as an assistant to, then later substituting for, his magician Joe Pentland. Barnum remained an amateur magician for the rest of his life, performing simple tricks for his friends and at charity shows.

Heart Throb

You locate a card by using your volunteer as a "human dowsing rod."

The Effect: A selected card is lost in the deck, which is ribbon spread on the table. You hold the volunteer by the wrist and slowly move his or her arm back and forth above the card. You are able to find the chosen card because, you claim, the volunteer's pulse quickens or jumps when his or her hand is above the selection.

Preparation: None.

The Routine: Secretly position the selected card beneath your key card, somewhere in the deck.

Spread the cards face-up on the table and sight the chosen card.

Are you left- or right-handed? Good. Then let's use that. It's the psychic hand. It's most closely connected to the heart and to the mind. Make a fist. Now stick out your forefinger. Hold your hand over the cards on the table, and just think of your card. Let your arm hang freely. I'm going to take your pulse.

Hold your volunteer by the wrist as if you were taking his or her pulse. Slowly move the arm back



Tip of the Wand

To add a bit more mystery to this routine, ask your assistant to close his or her eyes while you are moving the arm back and forth. *I don't want you to even accidentally look at your card. I might see where you are looking. Just think of your card.* After you drop his or her finger onto the card, ask your volunteer to open his or her eyes for the big revelation.

and forth along the cards until, after several passes, you pretend to feel a bit of a vibration; perhaps you claim to feel a skipped heartbeat. Gently lower your volunteer's forefinger onto the chosen card.

The heart never lies.



Say the Magic Word

A **control** is any method that moves a specific playing card or cards to a known position in the deck. For example, when you secretly move a chosen card from the middle to, say, the top of the deck, you are **controlling** the card to the top.

Top That!

In this last section on key-card locations, we'll look at five more ways you can reveal a chosen card. All of these endings depend upon your ability to first *control* the chosen card to the top of the deck.

Here's a very simple method to get a card to the top of the deck using our friend, the key card.

Just as before, spread out the cards face-up and find your key card. This time, as you close up the spread, casually cut the cards so that your key card is brought to the face of the deck. Square the deck and turn it face-down. The key card is now on the bottom of the deck.

Once you can control a selected card to the top of the deck, you can reveal the chosen card in endless ways. Here are three of my favorites:

Reverso

The Effect: The selected card magically turns face-up in the deck.

Preparation: None.

The Routine: Secretly control the chosen card to the top of the deck.

Place the deck behind your back.

I'm going to try to find your card by touch alone.

With the cards behind you, pick up the top card (the selection), turn it over, and stick it face-up anywhere into the center of the deck. Bring the cards back out in front of you.

I think I got it. What was your card?

Spread the cards face-down. There is one card reversed in the deck: the chosen card!

Here's an alternate ending that makes it look like an entirely different trick. When you bring the deck out from behind your back, turn the whole deck face-up.

Spread the cards face-up. There is only one face-down card in the deck. Remove it from the deck. Ask the spectator to name his or her card. Pause slightly to build a bit of suspense. Then, triumphantly turn over the card.

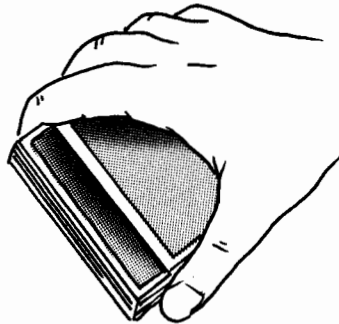
The Airdrop Turnover

This is a classic revelation and still one of the prettiest. You will use this revelation over and over and over.

The Effect: The pack is dropped face-down onto the table or floor. The selected card magically appears face-up on top of the deck.

Preparation: None.

The Routine: Secretly control the chosen card to the top of the deck. With the right hand, pick up the deck from above, with the thumb at the inner short edge and the four fingers along the outer short edge of the deck. With the left thumb, push, or *jog*, the top card about an inch to the right. The *side-jog* is hidden by the fingers at the front of the deck.



Say the Magic Word

A playing card is said to be **jogged** when one of its edges extends out of the deck. An **out-jog** protrudes from the outer or front edge of the deck (toward the audience). Cleverly, if the card protrudes from the inner or back edge (toward you), it is known as an **in-jog**. And, if the card protrudes from either side of the deck, it is known—you guessed it—as a **side-jog**.

This position of holding the cards is known as the "Biddle Grip," named for Elmer Biddle, a 20th-century American magician who used the distinctive hold in "Transcendent," a very popular trick that he published in Genii Magazine (April 1947).

Hold the deck about 15 inches above and parallel to the table or the floor. Drop the deck straight down. As the deck falls, air pressure will flip over the top card.

Unfortunately, this doesn't work every time. Like all tricks, it requires practice. Some magicians have greater success by giving a very gentle push when dropping the deck. Also, the height from which you drop the pack can be a factor. You will have to experiment to see what height gives you the best and most consistent results.



Say the Magic Word

A **crimp** is a slight bend (not a hard fold) in a card or cards. The crimp can be **upward** or **downward**. A crimp marks or holds a specific position in a deck.

The Clapper

The Effect: A card is chosen and returned to the deck. You set the deck on the table and clap your hands. The selection leaps out of the deck and turns face-up onto the table.

Preparation: None.

The Routine: Secretly control the chosen card to the top of the deck. Set the pack down, with one of its long edges parallel to the edge of the table. Cover the deck with both hands, as if to square the cards. Using both thumbs, give a slight upward bend all along the inner edge of the top card. This type of bend is called a *crimp*.

Use both thumbs to put an upward crimp along the inner edge of the top card.

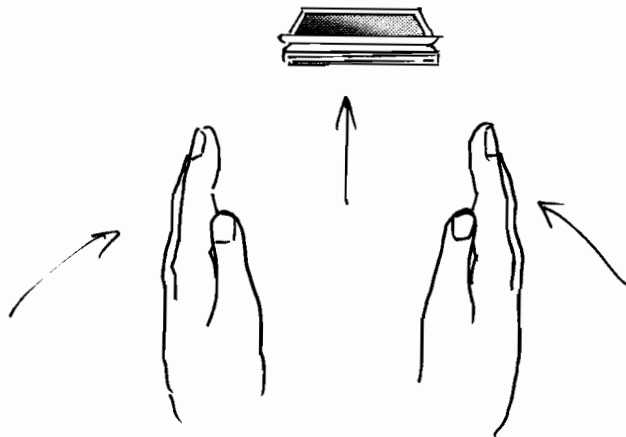


Your card likes to work to applause.

Often the audience starts to clap at this point, but stop them.

Not big applause. Just a little applause. Like this.

A single, strong clap produces enough air pressure to flip over the top card.



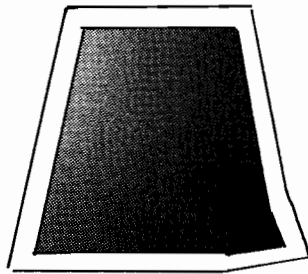
Position your hands about 6-8 inches apart on or just above the tabletop, between the deck of cards and the edge of the table. Clap the hands together just once, firmly and quickly. The air pressure will catch under the crimp and flip the top card over, face-up. The card flies off the deck and onto the table.

Crimping Your Style

A crimped card can also be used as a key card. To do this, secretly give the inner right corner of the bottom card a slightly upward bend, or crimp, before you begin your trick. The curl must go unnoticed by anyone but you.

Although not every magician feels comfortable using a crimped card, there are some advantages to using one as a key card.

- You don't have to know the name of your key card.
- You don't have to turn the deck over to look at the faces of the cards.
- You don't have to know the name of the chosen card before you reveal it.



A playing card with a corner crimp.



The crimped card is clearly visible along your side of the deck.

Have a card selected and returned to the top of the deck. Cut the pack. This positions the crimped card on top of the spectator's selection. (The cards may be cut over and over, but, as long as the cards are not shuffled, the crimped key card will stay above the chosen card.)

Take a close look at the inner short edge of the deck. (In performance, you'll have to be more subtle.) Partway down, directly below the crimp in the key card, there is a small space, called a *break*.

Hold the deck face down. Press the fleshy pad of the right thumb into this break, and cut all of the cards above the break to the bottom of the deck.



Say the Magic Word

A **break** is a small space between two cards in a deck.

This brings the chosen card to the top of the deck and returns the crimped key card to the bottom. And, as we've learned, once the chosen card is on top of the deck, you can produce it using any number of revelations.

Hey, Shorty

Before we take our leave of Mr. Key Kard, I'd like to introduce you to another one of magic's secret weapons: the *short card*. As its name suggests, a short card is a playing card with one narrow end trimmed, usually by about $\frac{1}{16}$ of an inch or so, making it shorter than the rest of deck.



Say the Magic Word

A **short card** is a playing card that has been trimmed shorter, usually by about $\frac{1}{16}$ of an inch, than the rest of the deck. It is often used as a key or indicator card, but it is also the "gaff" in several marketed trick decks. One of the most popular is the Svengali Deck, which was created by Burling Hull (1889–1982) around 1909. In recent years, it has been marketed by Marshall Brodien under the name "TV Magic Cards."



Say the Magic Word

To riffle (or riffle through) a deck of cards, hold the pack in one hand. Then, with the other hand, slightly bend back (upward) one of the edges or corners of the cards, then release the cards one at a time.

You can make one yourself. Take a playing card and, using very sharp or delicate scissors or an Exacto knife, carefully cut about $\frac{1}{16}$ of an inch off the narrow end of the card. Then, round the two corners. (A mini-Sawed in Half Warning: Don't cut yourself!) The short card doesn't have to hold up to close examination, but the edge should be straight and unnoticeable.

A short card is most often used as a key card. In fact, it could be used in any of the tricks in this chapter. Here's how:

Place your short card on top of the face-down deck. Spread the deck, have a spectator select a card, then square the deck. Have the chosen card returned to the top of the deck, then give the cards a single cut. This places the short card underneath the selection, somewhere near the middle of the deck.

Hold the deck in the left hand in dealing position. Arch your right hand over the deck, fingers along the outer short edge of the pack and the right thumb at the inner short edge.

Riffle your right thumb upward along the inner short end of the deck. About the middle, you will feel a pronounced "click." The click you feel (and hear, when you know what to listen for) is the short card falling. Stop riffling *immediately* at that point.

Cut the cards above the short card to the bottom of the deck. This returns the short card, your key card, to the top of the deck. But guess what? It also automatically, and secretly, brings the selected card to the bottom of the deck. And, once you know where it is, you can perform any of the revelations that you've already learned in this chapter!

If you prefer, the short card can start on the bottom of the deck. Have a card selected and returned to the top of the deck. Cut the cards. Again, riffle up to the short card, stop at the “click,” and cut the cards. This places the chosen card two cards down, directly underneath the short card.

Here are three ways to get the chosen card to the top of the deck:

- Turn the deck face-up and ask, “Is your card on the bottom of the deck? No?” Turn the deck face-down. Lift the top card off the deck, turn it face-up and ask, “Is your card on the top of the deck? No?” Turn the single card face-down and casually slip it into the middle of the deck. The chosen card is now on top.
- Casually cut the single, top card to the bottom of the deck. At this point, it will appear that you have given the deck another legitimate cut or (if anyone notices that you’ve only moved one card) that you are simply “fiddling” with the deck.
- If your short card is the joker, you can say, “Let’s remove the joker from the deck.” Simply turn the deck face-up, spot the joker, remove it, then square the deck, face-down.

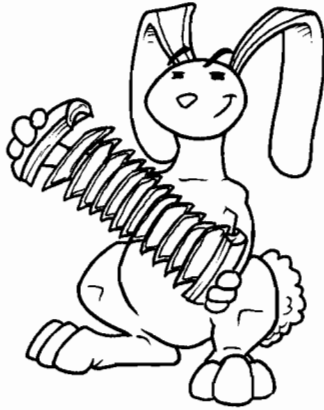


Tip of the Wand

I usually use a joker to make my short card. That way, I have a excuse to remove it whenever I want, thereby “cleaning up” the deck. I can openly eliminate the short card by saying, “Oh, we don’t need the joker. Let me get rid of it,” or “Nobody’s ever accused me of playing with a full deck.”

The Least You Need to Know

- The “pick a card” trick is probably the most basic in card magic.
- The number of card tricks you know is really the number of ways you have to reveal the chosen card.
- A key card can be used to help discover the identity of a chosen card or to control it to the top of the deck.
- Techniques such as spreads, jogs, crimps, and breaks, are basic to playing card magic.
- One of the best gimmicked locator cards is a trimmed playing card known as a short card.



Playing with a Full Deck

In This Chapter

- ▶ Self-working mathematical card tricks
- ▶ Stacking the deck
- ▶ Card tricks that tell a story
- ▶ Simple moves that look like fancy sleight-of-hand

To the average audience, most card tricks look pretty similar, especially if they are all of the “pick a card” variety. Most people enjoy watching one or two card tricks. But bringing out a deck of cards and forcing your audience to watch every trick you know is almost a certain way to clear a room.

Let’s face it. Your friends just can’t appreciate your awesome powers. Here’s how to make your deck of cards a welcome guest at any party by rationing your powers of prestidigitation:



Hocus Quote-Us

"Do you like card tricks?" he asked.

I said no. He did five.

—W. Somerset Maugham, British novelist and playwright



Say the Magic Word

Pre-arranging the order of the cards in the deck is called **stacking** the deck. Some tricks require you to secretly stack the entire deck; others require you to set-up just a few cards or a small stack, sometimes called a stock or set-up, of cards.

- Perform only a few cards tricks at any one get-together.
- Perform only your best, fully rehearsed tricks, the ones that consistently fool and amuse your audiences. Keep the others for those rare occasions when your friends are living only to watch more card tricks.
- Keep card tricks that require counting, shuffling, and repetitive dealing to a minimum.
- Intersperse "pick a card" tricks with those that have quick climaxes and ones involving stories.
- Distinguish between card tricks for other magicians and card tricks for normal people. Magicians appreciate the hidden technique and methods; although laypeople do appreciate the skill, they care more about whether the trick is entertaining.

The card tricks in this section are all self-working or require you to set up a few cards or even *stack* the entire deck in advance.

The 21 Card Trick

This is one of the classics of card magic and virtually every magician has tried some version of this trick at one time or another. Its strength lies in the fact that the spectator merely *thinks* of a card rather than picking it from the deck.

The trick dates back to at least the 18th century, and it has been performed with various numbers of cards. One of the more basic versions uses only nine cards; in the 19th century, the 27-card version was seen most often.

The 21 Card Trick is one of the most popular card tricks, so it's known by lots of people—but that doesn't mean it's not good. Besides, it should be in your bag of tricks, too. And, if you get past the screams of "I've seen that trick before," this revelation of a chosen card will knock their socks off.

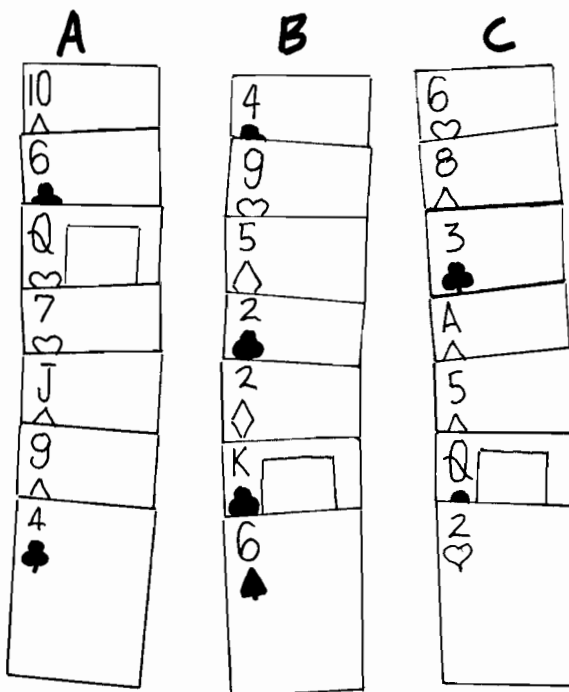
The Effect: The spectator thinks of one of 21 cards which are face-up on the table. After the cards are twice gathered and re-dealt, you identify the card.

Preparation: None. You need a deck of cards, which can be shuffled by you or your audience.

The Routine: Because there are several repeated sequences in this trick, I'm going to explain the routine in steps.

- Deal three cards face-up onto the table, a few inches apart, from left to right, in a single row. Deal a face-up card onto the left-hand playing card on the table, so that about half of the card extends toward you. Deal another face-up card in a similar fashion onto the middle card; also deal another face-up card, extending toward you, onto the card to your right.

Continue to deal five more rows of face-up cards, from left to right, onto those on the table to create three columns of cards, with seven cards in each column. To keep things clear, I'll call them columns A, B, and C.



Twenty-one cards are dealt face-up onto the table to create three columns of seven cards each.

- Just think of one of the cards you see on the table. Don't touch it; just think of it. Do you have one?

Square up all of the cards in column A into a face-up pile. Square up column B into its own face-up pile; likewise, square up column C.

Don't tell me your card. I just want to know which pile it's in.

- Pick up whichever pile the spectator mentions and drop it, face-up, on top of either of the other two piles. Pick up the remaining pile and drop it on top of the

stack. This will sandwich the designated pile of seven cards between the other two packets. Pick up the entire stack of 21 cards and turn it face-down.

4. Repeat steps 1 through 3.
5. Then repeat steps 1 and 2 again.
6. At this point, as soon your volunteer tells you which column the card is in, you will know the thought-of card. It is *always* the fourth card down (that is, the middle card) in the column. Always, always, always. You can tell what it is by just looking at the cards and mentally counting down to it.

There are many ways to finish the trick. The least magical way is simply to point to the face-up card and say, "Is this it?"

You already know lots of other ways of revealing a chosen card from Chapter 9. But here's one more: It's really strong, and it will fool people who already know this trick.

After your volunteer tells you which pile the selected card is in, repeat step 3. At this point the thought-of card will always be the 11th card down in the face-down packet. Pick up the packet, and hand it to the spectator.

In order for this trick to work, we need a magic spell. In fact, why don't you do that: spell the words "Magic Spell," dealing down one face-down card for each letter.

The spectator deals down ten cards as he or she spells M-A-G-I-C-S-P-E-L-L. Ask your volunteer to turn over the next card. It's their card!

There are many different words that your spectator can spell in order to arrive at the tenth or eleventh card. (Obviously, if the word has 11 letters, they turn over the last, or eleventh, card as they spell and deal.) Here are some possible words you might ask your spectator to spell:

- Hocus Pocus (10 letters)
- Mumbo Jumbo (10 letters)
- Abracadabra (11 letters)

Or perhaps a famous magician's name:

- Blackstone (10 letters)
- Lance Burton (11 letters)
- Copperfield (11 letters)

Perhaps your name or even your spectator's name has ten or eleven letters. Using your volunteer's name to find a card is a very powerful ending!

Are you ready for one more way to reveal the card? Just like before, get the thought-of card to be the 11th card down in the deck at the end of the trick.

Deal all of the cards face-down, not on a pile or in rows, but randomly scattered all over the top of the table. While you are doing this, however, mentally count down to the 11th card and remember where you deal it onto the table.

You're now going to do a move that looks as if you really mix up the cards. You *do*, sort of. Spread out the fingers of both hands and place them, palm down, onto the cards on the table. Make sure, however, that your right thumb rests on the back of the selected card. This should be done casually so that it's not obvious to the audience. Use both hands to thoroughly mix and shuffle the cards on the table, but do not lift your right thumb. When you stop, the cards appear to be randomly and completely mixed, but you secretly still know which is the selected card. Remember where it is.



Mix the cards with the outspread fingers of both hands; secretly keep track of the selected card by holding onto it with the right thumb.

Stick out your forefinger and use it to draw a straight line through the cards on the table, dividing the cards in about half.

After the spectator separates the cards, pick up whichever half of the cards does not contain the selected card. Don't allow the spectator to choose which cards to eliminate. In fact, make no mention of the cards you're picking up, or why you've chosen that half; just set them to one side and ask the spectator to do it again.

Stick out your finger and divide them in half again.

Continue this division and seemingly random elimination of cards until there is only one card left on the table: the mentally selected card. You may simply turn over the card, or, for a more magical effect, you might say something like this:

You merely thought of a card in the deck. You had a completely free selection, and there's no way I could have known what card you are thinking of. You never touched your card, but just in case I could have done something sneaky, the cards were mixed face down on the table. Then you eliminated half of the cards, then another half, and again and again, until finally there is only one card left on the table. What card are you thinking of? I don't want to touch it. Turn over the card on the table. Is that your card?

The Four Robbers

The Four Robbers, which dates to at least the 1850s, is one of the first card tricks most people learn. I've put some new twists on this one, however, so that you can fool even those who might be "in the know."

Best of all, this trick offers you the chance to be a real *pasteboard* storyteller. The "mechanics" of the trick are fairly simple, but the tale you tell with the trick makes it fun to watch.

The Effect: You show the four jacks and place them at different parts of the deck—one near the bottom, two in the middle, and one stays on top. You tap the top of the deck, and instantly all four jacks rise to the top of the deck.



Say the Magic Word

Pasteboard is a slang term among magicians and card players for a playing card. The term originated among British card players, dating from at least 1859, and was known in America by 1865. The jargon probably derives from the process used in the construction of playing cards.



Say the Magic Word

An **indifferent** card is an arbitrary playing card used in the *set-up* of a card *trick* where any card can be used. The *identity* and *value* of the card doesn't make any *difference* to the *outcome* of the effect.

Preparation: To get ready, you must prepare a stack of seven face-up cards, with the four jacks, in any order, at the face and any three other cards (magicians would call these *indifferent* cards) are hidden underneath them. Hold this packet in your left hand in dealing position.

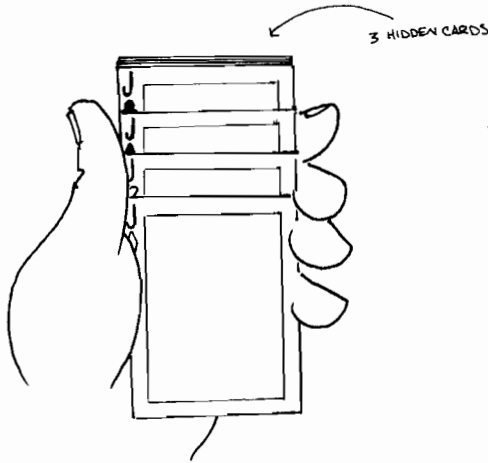
The Routine: Display the four jacks by using your right fingers to slide the top jack toward you, joggling it about an inch out of the back of the packet. Next, pull back the second jack, then the third jack. Keep the final jack with the three cards hidden behind it squared together as if they were one card.

The audience has to think that this is a stack of only 4 cards, so don't let them see the thickness of the packet. You can do this by tilting your left hand slightly downward so that the audience is looking at the faces of the cards rather than at their edges.

These four jacks will represent bank robbers. They rob a bank, and then hurry back here to their hideout.

Square up the packet, turn it face-down, and place it on top of the face down deck. If the cards are handled casually, the audience will think that there are only four cards, the four jacks.

Hold the deck face-down in the left hand. Tilt the deck slightly downward, so that the audience is looking down at the back of the pack. Pick up the top card and, without showing its face, stick it about a dozen cards from the bottom of the deck. Let the card protrude about two inches out of the front of the deck.



Display the four jacks by sliding back the top three cards. Three cards are secretly hidden beneath the bottom face-up Jack.

The first robber hides out on the first floor.

Pick up the next card and, without showing its face, stick it near the middle of the deck. Let the card protrude about two inches out of the front of the deck.

The second robber hides out on the second floor.

Pick up the next card and, without showing its face, stick it about a dozen cards down from the top of the deck. Let the card protrude about two inches out of the front of the deck.

The third robber hides out on the third floor.

Turn the top card face-up to show that it is a jack. Turn it face-down and return it to the top of the deck, allowing it to protrude about two inches off the front of the deck. (This reinforces the audience's belief that they have seen the faces of all four cards sticking out of the front of the deck and that they are all jacks.)

The fourth robber stays as lookout on the top of the building.

Slowly and openly square up the deck. The audience thinks that the four jacks are widely separated, about a dozen cards apart, throughout the deck.

Just then the FBI arrives. "You're completely surrounded," they holler. "Come out with your hands up."

Tap, tap, tap the top of the deck. Turn over the top four cards of the deck: They're the four Jacks.

And, sure enough, the four bank robbers come to the top of the building and are taken away."

Some magicians finish the patter by having the four bank robbers (the Jacks) run up to the top of the building (the deck) so that they can board a helicopter to get away. I suppose it all depends on who you think are the Good Guys and the Bad Guys.

Recollect

This trick is a true optical illusion, based on the audience's assumption that they are seeing one playing card when they are really seeing something else entirely. The trick was invented by the British magician Hercat (1843–1913).

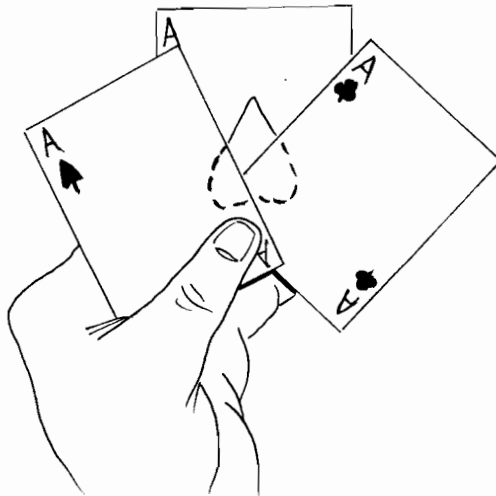
The Effect: The two black aces and the ace of diamonds are separated throughout the deck. After a magic gesture, the three cards collect together in the middle of the pack.

Preparation: Remove the two black aces and the ace of hearts from the deck. As you do, move the ace of diamonds to the bottom of the deck. You can secretly prepare this in advance or, if you hold the deck so that the audience can't see the faces of the cards, you can actually set it up right in front of them.

The Routine: Set the deck face-down on the table. Hold the three-card packet face-up, with the two black aces at the face and the red ace behind them. Spread the two black aces, so that the point of the reversed ace of hearts behind them looks like the ace of diamonds.

Three cards: the ace of spades, the ace of clubs, and the ace of diamonds.

The two black aces and what appears to be the ace of diamonds.



Square up the packet and set it face-down on top of the deck. Take the top card (supposedly the ace of diamonds, but actually the ace of hearts) and, without showing its face, stick it into the center of the pack.

The ace of diamonds goes into the middle of the deck.

Take the next card from the top of the deck. Tilt it slightly to flash its face to the audience, but do not call attention to it. Place it on the bottom of the deck, being careful not to expose the ace of diamonds.

One black ace goes to the bottom of the deck.

Turn over the top card, show it, then turn it over again, face-down, onto the top of the deck.

And the other black ace on top.

Casually cut the deck. Allow the spectators to cut one or more times if they wish. Finally, cover the deck with your hand.

Recollect!

Turn the deck face-up and ribbon-spread it on the table or between the hands. Somewhere in the deck you'll find the ace of diamonds, ace of spades, and ace of clubs together. Remove them as a group from the deck.

And here they are, back together again.

Cutting to the Aces

This trick was invented by Steve Belchou. It was written up by Oscar Weigle and first published in *The Dragon Magazine* in 1939. Even though this is a self-working trick, it gives the impression that the spectator has freely cut to the four aces.

The Effect: The spectator cuts the deck into four piles. The top card of all the piles is turned over to reveal the four aces.

Preparation: Before you start the trick, secretly place the four aces, in any order, on the top of the deck.

The Routine: Set the deck, face-down, on the table. You are going to have your volunteer cut the deck into a row of four packets, beginning with a single cut, in the following manner:

A lot of times, people don't trust me when I shuffle the deck, so I'm going to have you mix the cards for me. Cut the cards, about in half, so that we have two piles.

Next, point to the original top half of the deck.

Cut that half in half.

Then point to the original bottom half of the deck.

And cut that half in half.

At the end of these three cuts, you should have four packets, each containing about a quarter of the deck, in a row in front of you. All you have to remember is which packet was originally the top of the deck, because that packet secretly has the four aces on top. If necessary, rearrange the packets so that this packet is at one end of the row.

Now, just to make sure I can't do anything sneaky, we're going to mix them up a little more.

Remember which packet has the four aces on top? Point to the packet at the *other* end of the row.

Now, to really mix them, let's perform a "Mississippi shuffle." I learned it from an old riverboat gambler. Pick up the pile and deal three cards, face-down, into the empty space where the packet was. Then deal one card on top of each of the other three piles. Finally, drop the packet you're holding back down where it was, on top of the three cards. Point to the packet next in line.

Pick up the next pile and do the same thing. Three down, one on each of the other three piles, then set the packet back in place on top of the other three cards.

Point to the packet next to the one secretly containing the aces.

You know what to do. Pick up the third pile. Three down, one on each of the others, then set it back where it belongs.

Finally, point to the end packet which contains the aces.

One last time. Pick up the remaining pile. Deal three cards down, deal one on each of the others, then set it back down in place on top of the three cards.

Point to any one of the four piles. Wouldn't it be amazing if, with all that mixing and cutting, I were able to get an Ace on top of that pile? Turn it over.

Have the spectator turn over the top card of whichever pile he or she indicates. It is an ace.

That's amazing. But you know what's truly amazing?

Turn over the cards on top of the other three piles to reveal the four aces.

Reverso

Having a selection turn face-up in the deck is one of the strongest ways to reveal a card. Most require fancy finger-flicking, but, for now, your digits can call a time out. This one is completely self-working!

The Effect: Your volunteer picks a card, remembers it, and returns it to the deck. With seemingly no sneaky moves, the card turns face-up in the deck.

Preparation: Get ready by secretly turning the bottom card of the deck face-up.

The Routine: Spread the face-down deck between the hands and ask someone to pick a card. Make sure not to spread the cards too far: you must be careful not to reveal the face-up card on the bottom.

As soon as the card is removed, square the deck in your left hand. Casually drop your left hand to your side. Turn the left side of your body slightly away from the spectator, as if to avoid catching a glimpse of the selected card.

Bring your right hand up to your face to shield your eyes.

Don't let me see it.

Secretly turn over the deck in the left hand. Turn back to face the spectator and raise the deck to below eye level. Unbeknownst to the audience, you have one face-down card squared on top of a face-up pack.

Take the chosen card back and, without spreading the deck, slide the selection into the deck, somewhere near the center.

Place the deck behind your back. Turn the entire deck over, and reverse the bottom card.

I'm going to try to find your card by the sense of touch alone. I'm going to reach into the middle of the deck, find your card, turn it upside down and...there! I think I got it!

Bring the cards back out in front of you. Spread the face-down deck until you come to a face-up card. It will be the volunteer's card. Spread a few more cards, proving (without comment) that all the rest of the cards are face-down. Remove the chosen card and set it on the table.



Sawed in Half

If you are brave, you can let the spectator push the card back into the deck. Just be careful that the deck remains squared, or they'll see the true configuration of the deck.

The Slop Shuffle

This simple yet astonishingly effective card trick was first published in 1937 in Judah and Braun's *Subtle Problems You Will Do*. It was invented by magician Sid Lorraine (1905–1989), who was born Sid R. Johnson in England and lived in Canada from 1914. Best-known for his books on patter, Lorraine was also a comic performer, whose act often featured hilarious gibberish and nonsensical double-talk.

The Effect: You mix the deck in small packets of face-up and face-down cards. With a final cut, the cards are all facing in one direction.

Preparation: None.

The Routine: Hold the deck face-down in your left hand in dealer's position (that is, as if you were ready to deal.) Press your left thumb across the back of the pack. Bring your right hand over the deck, and grip it with your thumb at the inner end, fingers at the outer edge, in the Biddle grip. Lift up with your right thumb and fingers to put a slight upward bend in the entire deck. Remove your right hand. Don't make a big deal out of this. It should just look as if you're squaring or toying with the deck.

Hold your right palm upwards, fingers flat, almost as if it were a tray. With your left thumb, push about 8–12 cards onto your right fingers. Hold this small packet in place with your right thumb.

Now this is a bit tricky to explain, but here goes: Still holding the small packet of cards, rotate your right wrist and hand toward your body, turning the small packet face-up. Your thumb is now underneath and your fingers are on top.

With your left thumb, push off another 8–12 cards, and clip them in your right hand between your thumb and the packet that is already there. Your right hand will now hold a packet of about 20 cards.

Rotate your right wrist back away from you, so that your hand is palm-up. With your left thumb, push another group of 8–12 cards between your right fingers and the packet already in your right hand.



Tip of the Wand

Do not square the cards in your right hand. They look more mixed up when they're sloppy. In fact, it's what gives the trick its name, the Slop Shuffle.

Continue to flip-flop your right wrist back and forth, each time picking up another packet of 8–12 cards from your left hand. When you're finished, you'll be holding the entire deck in your right hand.

The audience believes that the cards are randomly mixed in small bunches of cards, some face-up and some face-down. In fact, it looks so convincing that you might believe it yourself the first time you try it! Actually, the deck is almost equally split, with the top half of the cards face-up and the bottom half of the cards face-down. Also, because of the bend you casually gave the cards at the beginning of the trick, there is a large break between the two halves of the deck.



Say the Magic Word

A **convincer move** is any action that seems to prove an implied condition or state. In other words, the gesture or subtlety convinces the audience that everything is fair and above-board, exactly as it seems to be.

Now comes a "*convincer move*" that reinforces the audience's mistaken assumption at the same time as it rights the deck!

Transfer the deck to your left hand. With your right hand, lift up about a quarter of the deck. At the point where you cut, the audience sees the face of one card and the back of another card.

Some of the cards are face-to-back...

Drop the right-hand cards, just as they were, back onto the left-hand cards. Then, with your right hand, cut deeper into the deck to life up about three-quarters of the cards. Again, the audience sees a face and a back, but on opposite halves.

Some are back-to-face...

Drop the right-hand cards, just as they were, back onto the left-hand cards. Then, with your right hand, cut the cards in the middle, where the cards meet back-to-back. This is easy to do because of the break.

Still others are back-to-back.

As you say this, casually turn the cards in your right hand face-down. Drop the right-hand cards face-down onto the face-down cards in your left hand.

Make a magical gesture, or riffle the edges of the deck. Then, ribbon spread the deck on the table of between your hands to show that all of the cards are now magically facing in the same direction.

Here's an idea for an extra kicker: The Slop Shuffle can also end with a card revelation.

Start the trick by having a card selected and returned to the deck. Then, secretly control the card to the bottom of the deck. (Remember, you learned several ways to do this in Chapter 9.) Perform the Slop Shuffle as it's just been described, until you have only one face-down card (the chosen card) remaining in your left hand. Set this face-down card on top of the rest of the deck in your right hand. Cut the deck at the natural break, and turn over all of the cards above the break. Spread the cards: All of the cards will be face-down except for the chosen card, which will be face-up in the middle.

The Least You Need to Know

- To vary your card tricks, surround them with clever stories that give them a reason to be performed.
- With a few twists and some new handling, even the "old" tricks can fool those "in the know."
- A stacked deck is a happy deck.
- Cards can be held in place, controlled or located by the use of breaks, bends, and crimps.



You Gotta Have a Gimmick

In This Chapter

- ▶ The Spot Card
- ▶ The 3½ of clubs gag
- ▶ Double-backed and double-faced cards
- ▶ The infamous Three-Card Monte
- ▶ Still more impossibilities made possible with gimmicked cards

How many times have you heard—or said—“Oh, it’s just a trick deck”? Most of the time, magicians are not working with trick cards. If you’re a good magician, you should be able to perform with any deck that someone hands you.

But sometimes a specially prepared card, usually called a *gimmicked* or *gaffed* card, allows you to pull off miracles that even the best sleight-of-hand can’t accomplish.

You’ve already made and worked with a trick card in Chapter 9. The short card, which you used as a key card, is one of the most basic gimmicked cards in the magician’s box of tricks.

Some of the prepared cards you’ll make to perform the tricks in this chapter will look downright weird. And a few will be extra thick. But don’t worry—no one in the audience ever touches the gimmicked cards.

All of the gimmicked cards described in this chapter can be found on the tear-card at the beginning of this book. If you prefer to make up the gaffs with real playing cards, pull out your deck, get some rubber cement and safety scissors, and let’s go!

Spots Before Your Eyes

This first gimmicked card is used to perform a classic illusion. My patter line is about seeing spots before my eyes, but you might want to make yours about, say, gambling, dice, polka-dot bikinis, or even about Domino's Pizza.

The Effect: You show a flat card, representing a domino or die, that has a single spot on one side. You show six spots on the other side. You turn the card a third time; the opposite side now has three spots. You turn over the card one last time to show four spots on the other side.



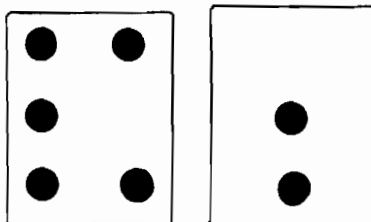
Now You See It

A **gimmick** or **gaff** is a secret device that has been specially prepared to allow you to accomplish a magical effect. Usually, the gimmick is never seen by the spectators; some gimmicks, including many trick cards, are seen, but the spectators never know their true nature and use.

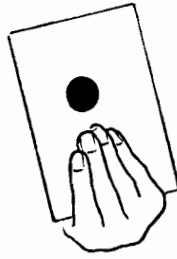
Many etymologists believe that the word gimmick has its roots in carnival slang, where it was spelled *gimac*—an anagram of magic. A gimac was anything that was specially prepared to fool the public, just like a magic trick.

Preparation: This trick requires a special card that is quite easy to make. You need a piece of card stock that is white on both sides. It must be thick enough so that, if you write on it, the drawing will not show through to the other side. It can be any size, from a 3"×5" file card for close-up work up to around 8"×10" for stage use.

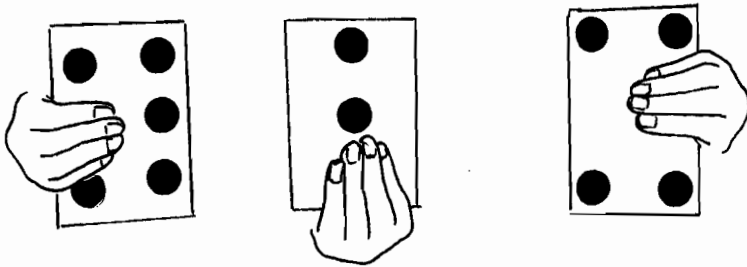
The two sides of the spot card.



With a black marking pen, draw two dots, as shown, on one side of the card. Then, turn over the card as if you were turning the page of a book, and draw five dots, as shown, on the reverse side. Each dot should be the same size, large enough to be easily seen from the audience, yet small enough to be hidden when you cover it with your hand, as shown.



The rotation of the spot card.



The Routine: *When you see a magician, you never know whether you can believe your eyes. Sometimes I can't even believe my own eyes. I went to have my eyes checked the other day, and the doctor held up a big chart in front of me. It looked like this.*

Display the card so that the fingers of your left hand cover the end spot on the two-dot side of the card. The audience will see only one spot.

At first, I wasn't sure what was going on. Where was the big "E"? Then the doctor told me, no, the chart was supposed to look like a giant domino, or a flat die. Needless to say, I guessed the first one correctly.

Then he turned it over and told me to read the other side. No problem. Six!

Turn over the card, holding it so that your right hand covers the empty space in the design. The audience will "see" six spots.

But, wow, was I surprised when the doctor turned over the chart again. Instead of the one spot I expected, now I saw three spots!

Turn over the card, holding it so that your left hand covers the empty space in the design. The audience, familiar with the layout of the dots on dice, will think they see three spots.

But the big surprise came when he turned over the card one last time: four spots!

Turn over the card, holding it so that the audience "sees" only four spots.

To finish the routine, rapidly turn over the card several times, each time changing the hands to cover the appropriate empty spaces or spots.

One, six, three, four. One, six, three, four. Suddenly, all I was seeing was spots before my eyes. My eyesight was fine until I went into the doctor's office, so I got out as quickly as I could!

There are several marketed versions of this trick available from magic shops. The most popular is called "What's Next?"

The store-bought spot cards usually have some sort of final "kicker" to them. For example, on some, you lift your hands to show there actually *are* three spots on one side and six (or even eight) spots on the other.



Say the Magic Word

The **index** of a playing card is the small number or initial letter indicating the value of the card, followed by a miniature reproduction of the card's suit. In magicians' jargon, the plural of index is **indices**. Most modern American playing cards have two indices, in the upper-left and lower-right diagonal corners. Some decks, including many European decks, have indices in all four corners.

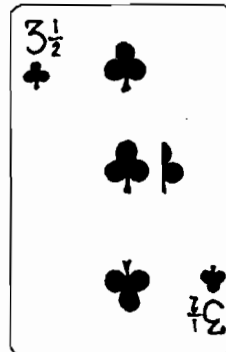
Miko

More of a gag than a mind-reading trick, this cute routine uses an easily prepared gimmick. The $3\frac{1}{2}$ of clubs gaff card, along with its original presentation, was created by Detroit magic dealer Harold Sterling around 1945. The name of the trick, Miko, is an acronym of sorts. Sterling whimsically titled it after his friend and fellow-magician, Milton Kort.

The Effect: You place a playing card face-down on the table as a prediction. You say that the spectator's roll of a die will match your prediction. In a comic twist, they do match, but not as expected.

Preparation: You must make an unusual gimmicked card: a $3\frac{1}{2}$ of clubs. This is fairly simple to do. Remove the regular three of clubs from a deck of cards. Using a felt marking pen, write the fraction $\frac{1}{2}$ next to the three on each *index*. Then carefully draw half of a club next to the center pip. Your result should look something like this figure:

The $3\frac{1}{2}$ of clubs.



Place the trick card back into the deck. Get one die from a pair of dice, and you're ready to begin.

The Routine: Bring out the cards and fan through them, faces toward you. Tell your audience that you're going to make a prediction. Remove the 3¹/₂ of clubs from the deck, and place it face-down on the table.

Hand a die to the spectator, and ask him or her to roll it several times to make sure it isn't loaded. Then, turn your back, and ask your volunteer to roll it one last time.

Okay, so you've rolled the die. But I might have somehow gotten a peek at it. So, do me a favor, pick it up and look at what number's on the bottom of the die. Now hide the die so I can't see it.

Turn around to face your audience.

So you have two numbers, one that you rolled and another that was hidden against the table. Add those two numbers together. Do you have it?

Now, to keep the number kind of low and manageable, divide that number in half. That's right, divide it exactly in half. Do you have it? Good. Don't say it out loud; just think of that new number. Wouldn't it be amazing if I matched that number on my prediction card?

This *would* be amazing to most people, because they don't know that the two opposing sides of a die always add up to 7. So, no matter what number your volunteer rolls, after the addition and division, the result will always be 3¹/₂.

And, even if your audience *does* know that the two sides should add up to 7, they couldn't possibly suspect that you have a playing card with a fraction on its face.

What number are you thinking of? What? 3¹/₂? That's what I predicted: the 3¹/₂ of clubs.

Point to the playing card on the table. Triumphantly, turn over the card to reveal that it's the 3¹/₂ of clubs.



Tip of the Wand

Most playing cards are laminated, so not all marking pens will write on them; with some pens, the ink will never dry and your writing will smear off. Not good. You'll have to test several types of pens at your local stationary or art supply store to find one that will indelibly mark coated card stock. One standard brand many magicians use to mark cards is the Sharpie pen (available in Fine and Extra Fine point), made by Sanford.

Two-Card Monte

This trick, dating to 1909, is credited to magic dealer and card-trick creator Theodore L. DeLand (1873–1931).

The Effect: You show two different playing cards, front and back, and then place one of the cards face-up behind your back. Ask the spectator to name the face-down card that you're holding in front of you. The spectator is wrong, because the cards have switched places.

Preparation: You must prepare two gimmicked playing cards: a card with a face on both sides (known as a *double-faced card* or *double-facer*) and one with a back on both sides (known as a *double-backed card* or *double-backer*).

Professional gimmicked playing cards are prepared in one of two ways: special printing or by modifying already existing cards. An example of the latter technique is separating the paper layers of the playing cards (a technique known as card “splitting”), reconfiguring the sections as desired, and gluing them back together.



Say the Magic Word

As its name suggests, a double-backed card or double-backer is a specially printed or constructed playing card that has a back on both sides. The designs on the two sides may or may not be the same.

Similarly, a double-faced card or double-facer has a face design on both sides of the playing card. The two faces may or may not be of the same value. Magicians sometimes refer to a double-facer that’s the same value on both sides as an S.B.S. card—same both sides.

Fortunately, you don’t have to go to all that trouble for this trick, because no one is going to handle or closely examine the two gimmicked cards.

Take two playing cards of the same back design and color and rubber cement them face-to-face. Make sure to glue all the way to the edges. You can rub away any excess rubber cement after it dries.

Take two more playing cards, and glue them back-to-back. I normally prefer a court card and a low spot card for contrast, but for ease of illustration, let’s say they are the two of clubs and the five of spades.

The Routine: Place the double-faced card (with the two of clubs showing) on top of the double-backer, angled about 45 degrees to the left. Hold the cards in your right hand, with the fingers on top of the packet and the thumb underneath.

Turn over both cards, and, as you do, slide the double-facer a bit to the right. The five will now be showing.

Turn over both cards again, and, as you do, slide the double-facer a bit to the left. The two will now be showing.

With your left hand, pick up the face card (the two), and place it behind your back. Be careful not to flash the other side of the card (the five). Once the card is safely hidden behind your back, turn it over so that the five is facing up.

I put the two of clubs behind my back. Now comes the quiz. What card is behind my back?

They will, of course, say the two of clubs.

No, it’s the five.



Tip of the Wand

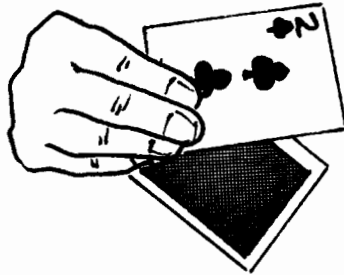
I prefer to use rubber cement over the white or model glues. Rubber cement won’t warp paper. Also, if you make a mistake, you can easily peel the glued pieces apart, rub away the rubber cement, and start over.

Bring out the card from behind your back, revealing that it is the five of spades. Place the five on top of the face-down card in your right hand, angled about 45 degrees to the left. Hold the cards in the same way you did at the beginning of the trick—sandwiched between your right thumb and fingers.

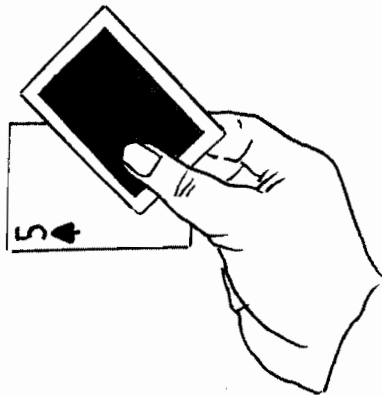
Turn over both cards as before, sliding the double-backer slightly to the right.

Over here is the two.

The trick is now reset, ready to perform again, as often as you want (or as long as the audience can stand it).



The two of clubs.



And the five of spades.

Three-Card Monte

Three-Card Monte is an old-time gambling game, similar to the Three-Shell Game. The sucker (I mean *spectator*) tries to follow one of three cards as they are mixed on a table. The trick is often performed with a queen and two identical spot cards or aces (for contrast). Throughout the game, the spectator is always asked to “find the lady.”

In the real world, this often turns into a high stakes betting game. The version you’re about to learn is not the actual game, just an incredible, magical simulation.



Now You See It

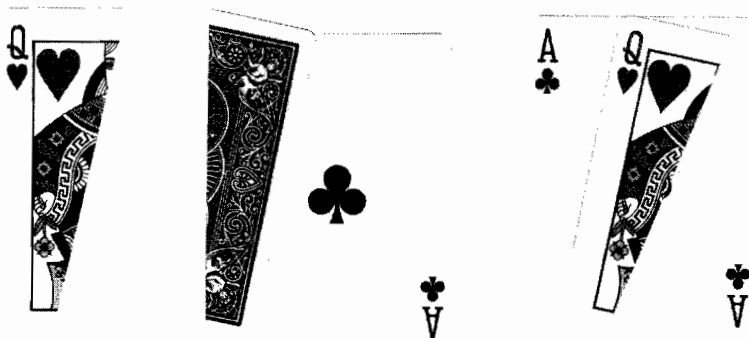
One of the greatest card cons going, this game is still played for big bucks. In a street set-up, like Times Square in New York City, several confederates work with the card handler. No matter how hard you try—even if you *know* you picked the correct card—you will not walk away a winner. Trust me. Don't waste your money!

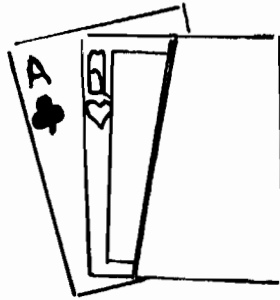
The Effect: You show the queen of hearts sandwiched between two aces of clubs. You turn the fan of cards face-down and slide out the center card (supposedly the queen) onto the table. You turn over the other cards to show that they are still the aces. When you or the spectator turns over the “queen,” it has changed into an entirely different playing card.

Preparation: This requires a fairly elaborate preparation of a gimmicked card, so stay with me. You will need two identical aces of clubs, two identical queens of clubs, an indifferent card, some transparent tape, rubber cement, a pair of scissors, and a piece of blank card stock (such as a file card).

1. Rubber cement the blank card stock to the face of the indifferent card, and then trim around the edges.
2. Next, take one of the queens of hearts and cut off a triangular wedge from the bottom-left corner to the middle of the top edge. You are going to tape this down to the face of an ace to make a *flap card*. The best way is to turn the triangular piece face-down, tape it to the face of the ace, and then fold back the wedge so that it's face-up, as illustrated.

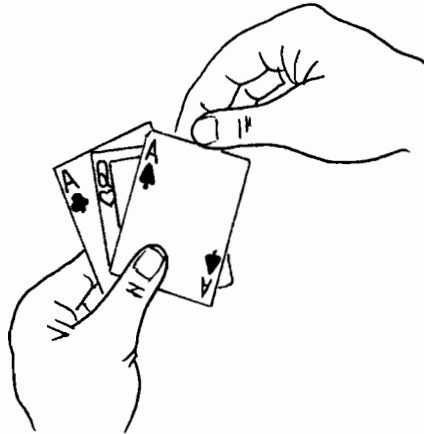
Tape the triangular section of the queen to the face of the ace to create a flap card.





The blank card slips under the flap on the Three-Card Monte gimmicked card.

3. Slip the blank card underneath the flap of the gimmick card so that it lines up with the queen. Lay the other ace of clubs on top of the other cards, and hold the packet as if it were merely a fan of three cards.



The packet appears to be a fan of three cards.

4. Place the second queen of hearts into your pocket, and you're ready to begin.

The Routine: Display the fan of three cards in your hand. Point out the queen of hearts.

We're going to try an old gambling game. You may have seen it at a carnival, or maybe on some street corner in the big city. The con artist usually stacks up some old cardboard boxes, draws in a "tip," and goes to work. The object of the game is "cherchez la femme," to "look for the lady." Pretty soon, money's on the table, and bets are being made.

The con artist would say something like this: "Hey, diddle, diddle. The queen's in the middle. Five'll get you ten. Ten'll get you twenty. All ya gotta do is keep your eye on the little lady."

But, today, all bets are off. Let's try it just for fun. Keep your eye on the queen.

Turn the packet face-down. Pull out the middle card, and set it on the table. The spectators think that this is the queen; it is actually the blank card.

Place one of the aces on each side of the queen. Then, slowly slide around the three cards on the table, mixing them up. But make sure *you* keep track of which card is actually the queen.

All right. Cherchez la femme. Where is she?

If the volunteer points to the ungimmicked ace, turn it face-up to show that he or she is wrong. Turn it face-down and mix the cards again.

If, however, the volunteer points to either of the other two cards, pick up the flap card and the ungimmicked ace, being careful that the audience does not see their faces. Hold the cards so that the faces are toward you, and adjust them into a tight fan with the non-gaffed ace covering the flap on the face of the other ace. Now show the faces of these two cards to the audience, proving that neither is the queen.

I'll make it a little easier. Which one is the queen?

Point to the single face-down card on the table. The audience will, of course, assume that it must be queen. Turn over the card: It's blank. The queen has disappeared! Where did she go?

Show your right hand to be empty, and then slowly pull the duplicate queen out of your pocket.

This is one of my favorite tricks in close-up magic because it has so many variations and uses. Put on those thinking caps! What else could the queen change into?



Tip of the Wand

My personal Three-Card Monte set is made with two jacks of clubs instead of spot cards. I went to a hobby shop and bought four of those tiny frog-like BB eyes made for small dolls. I rubber cemented them over the eyes on the face of the regular jack of clubs. In my patter, I point to the google-eyes of the jack, who is obviously "keeping his eyes" on the queen.

- Before you begin, write "Gone" or "Out To Lunch" on the blank card with a felt marker. Slip this card under the flap. The queen doesn't disappear at the end of the trick: She is either "Gone" or "Out To Lunch."
- Likewise, any other message could be written on the blank-faced card. Maybe "Happy Birthday." Or, if you're performing for a special event or a corporate client, you could use the company name, logo, or slogan.
- Cut out your favorite model from the *Sports Illustrated Swimsuit Issue* and rubber cement the picture to the face of a playing card. Slip this gaffed card under the flap instead of a blank card. The queen doesn't disappear: She's just gone out for a swim!
- Slip the selected card from an earlier "pick a card" trick under the flap. The queen will change into the spectator's chosen card.

Transformo Cards

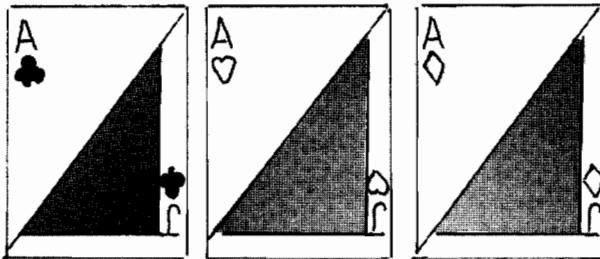
This is one of the oldest-known tricks involving gimmicked cards. It was first described by Sa Rid in his 1612 book *The Art of Jugling or Legerdemaine* [sic]. The trick is still an international favorite, and the gimmicked cards are included in many magic sets. Not long ago, I actually bought a set of the gaffed cards from a pitchman in a marketplace in Istanbul, Turkey.

The Effect: In this version of the trick, you show four jacks. You substitute an ace for one of the jacks. Suddenly, all four cards change into aces.

Preparation: This requires you to prepare three gimmicked cards. You'll need the four jacks and the four aces from a deck of cards, scissors, and some rubber cement.

Take the ace of hearts and cut it in half diagonally, from one of the non-index corners to the other. Then, rubber cement this half-card onto the face of the jack of hearts. Be careful to line up their edges.

Likewise, cut the ace of clubs and rubber cement that half-card to the face of the jack of clubs. Also, cut the ace of diamonds and rubber cement that half-card to the face of the jack of diamonds.



The three double-index cards, jacks and aces.

Stack these three half-and-half cards, place the ungimmicked jack of spades at the face of the packet, and you're set.

The Routine: Spread the four cards in a tight fan so that the spectator sees (what appear to be) the four jacks. Be careful not to spread the fan too wide, or they'll see the gimmicks.

Four jacks. This would be a good hand in poker. But let me show you why gamblers won't play against magicians.

Slide the ace of spades underneath the jack of spades. Then remove the jack of spades from the fan and set it aside. The audience will see a fan of four cards: an ace and the (apparently) three jacks.

Close up the fan. Make some sort of gesture over the packet to indicate "the magic moment."

Spread the four cards in a tight fan. Again, be careful not to spread the fan too wide, or you'll reveal the gimmicks. The cards seem to have changed into the four aces.

Phantom Cards

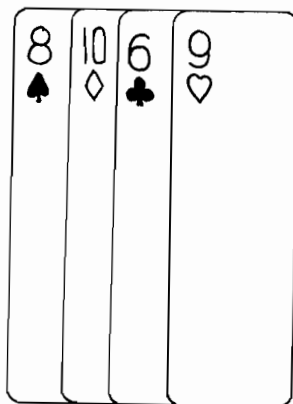
This trick, like Two-Card Monte, is the brainchild of Theodore DeLand. The gimmicked cards required to perform the trick are also included in many magic sets to this day.

The Effect: Five cards are covered with a handkerchief. Two cards are removed. The other three disappear.

Preparation: This requires a special gimmicked card, by far the most complicated you've made so far. You'll need two identical decks of cards, a pair of scissors, and some rubber cement. To perform the routine, you'll also need an opaque handkerchief. Follow these steps to create your special card:

1. Remove any card from one of the decks as well as the same card from the other deck. Rubber cement them together, back-to-back. Be careful to align the edges. This creates a double-facer that is the same on both sides.
2. Remove any three playing cards from one of the decks. Rubber cement them, overlapping, onto one side of this double-facer so that all four indices show.
3. After the glue has dried, carefully trim the gimmick to the size of a regular playing card. You'll wind up with a gaffed card with a face on one side and four overlapping cards, as illustrated, on the other side.

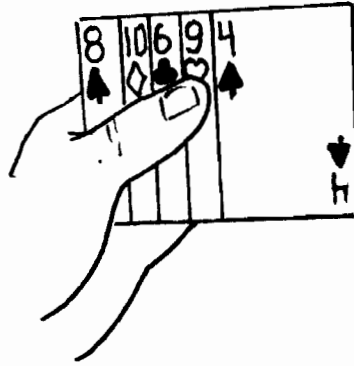
The trick playing card used for Phantom Cards.



4. Hold the gimmicked card in your left hand so that the side with the four faces is facing up. Lay any other card face-up on top of the trick card, and you're ready to go.

The Routine: Hold the two cards squared in your left hand, as if you're ready to deal. Slowly push the top card to the right until all five indices show. This should look as if you're spreading five separate cards.

If this seems too awkward or unconvincing to you, you can start with the cards already “spread” on display in the left hand.



Displaying the Phantom Cards.

Call out the names of the “five” cards. Square up the cards in your left hand, and cover them with a pocket handkerchief or scarf. Reach under the hanky with your right hand, and, under the cloth, turn over the bottom, gimmicked card.

Remove this double-faced card. The side showing a whole face will be uppermost. Call out its name.

Without flashing its other side to the audience, place this gimmicked card into your pocket. The audience must think this is an ordinary card, so you must be very casual in the way you handle it.

Reach under the handkerchief and remove the remaining card. Call out its name. Casually show both sides of the card as you place it, too, in your pocket. Because of the subtlety, the audience will think they’ve seen both sides of two regular playing cards as you placed them in your pocket.

Ask whether anyone remembers any of the other three cards. Regardless of what they say, whisk away the handkerchief. The other three cards have disappeared!

Phantom Poker

Many people associate cards with gambling and games of chance. So, never willing to let well enough alone, let me suggest my own Phantom Cards routine, this one with a poker theme. When you prepare the gaffed card, instead of using indifferent cards, start by making a double-faced 10 of spades. Then rubber cement the jack, queen, and king of spades as your overlapping cards. Use the ace of spades as the ungimmicked card at the face of the packet.

In addition, pre-set by placing yet another 10 of spades in your right pants pocket. Place a duplicate jack, queen, and king of spades in three other pockets.

Perform the trick as already explained. Display the Royal Straight Flush in spades in your left hand. Cover your hand with the handkerchief. Remove the 10, and place it in your right pants pocket. Remove the ace and place it in an empty pocket.

Wouldn't it be great if we could always pull a Royal Straight Flush? Here we have the 10 of spades. And the ace of spades. But we all know that one of the hardest things to do in poker is fill an inside straight, especially for a Royal Straight Flush. Unless you're a magician!

Whisk away the handkerchief. The jack, queen, and king have vanished!

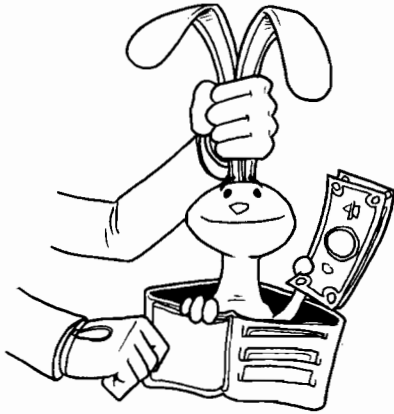
Show that both hands are empty. Slowly, reach into your right pants pocket, and remove the non-gaffed 10 of spades. (It'll be easy to tell the difference between the two cards by their thickness.) Then, remove the other four Royal Flush cards, one at a time, from their respective pockets.

Believe it or not, the effect to a lay audience is that you've made all of the Royal Flush cards disappear from your hands and reappear in five different pockets.

This brief introduction to gimmicked playing cards in no way exhausts the different types of gaffed cards in existence. For example, some have wrong-colored or extra pips. Another type of gaff card, known as a *stripper* or *tapered card*, is more narrow at one end. If such a card is reversed end-for-end in a deck of tapered cards, the single card can easily be "stripped" out. Some magic shops offer individual gaffed cards. An assortment of the more popular gimmicked cards has been packaged together and marketed as the Fa-Ko Deck.

The Least You Need to Know

- Specially prepared playing cards, known as gimmicked or gaffed cards, allow you to perform all sorts of tricks usually not possible by pure sleight-of-hand.
- The 3½ of clubs is a standard fake card used in comedy close-up magic.
- Three-Card Monte, a variation of the Three-Shell Game, is a classic con game that can't be won—even by a magician!
- Some trick cards can be used to perform many different effects and routines.



Money Makes the World Go Around

In This Chapter

- ▶ Simple non-sleight coin tricks
- ▶ Vanishing and reproducing a coin
- ▶ A coin and handkerchief trick dating back to the 1500s
- ▶ The basic finger palm

Tricks with money always draw an audience. Everyone's attracted to money. And if the money's been borrowed, there's another layer of interest: The spectator's wondering "Will I ever get my money back?"

For now, let's get going with some easy tricks using coins and currency. Some require a bit of preparation. There's even a simple sleight or two. But you can master and perform all these tricks in a matter of minutes.

The Cattle and The Rustlers

There are many variations of this old routine. The patter usually involves two thieves and livestock of some sort (such as the robbers and the sheep). I like to tell a tale of cattle rustlers in the Wild West.

The Effect: Coins (representing cattle) jump from hand to hand while you tell a story of rustlers. The coins are seemingly divided equally between the rustlers, yet, at the end of the trick, all the cattle coins are in one hand, and the two rustler coins are in the other.

Preparation: The trick uses seven un gimmicked coins of the same denomination.

The Routine: Lay the coins on the table. Pick up one coin in each hand, and display the coins on your open palms.

Once upon a time, there were two cattle rustlers in the Old West, Billy Bob [show the coin in your right hand], and his partner, Joe Bob [show the coin in your left hand].

They hid behind two trees and looked out over the cattle ranch. The rustlers saw a fine herd of five cattle out grazing in the field.

Billy Bob says to his partner, "Wee-doggies, Joe Bob. We got us a fine bunch of prime ribs out there. Let's split 'em up between us."

Close your hands into fists, hiding the "rustler" coins from view. Pick up another coin with your left hand, adding it to the coin already there. Then pick up a coin with your right hand. Then, quickly, pick up coins back and forth between hands until you have picked them all up.

Keep your hands closed so the audience cannot tell that you have more coins in your left hand than your right.

Joe Bob [shake your left fist] says to his partner, Billy Bob [shake your right fist], "Hey, Billy Bob, did you hear sumthin? I bet it's the cowpokes coming out to check on their cattle. We better put 'em back so we don't get caught."

Without opening your fists, slide out one coin from your right hand and place it onto the table. Set a coin from your left hand onto the table, followed by another from your right, another from your left, and, lastly, another from your right.

Keep your hands closed as if they both held coins. Actually, your right fist should be empty, and your left hand should hold two coins.

They waited for a few minutes 'til the cowpokes were gone. Finally, Billy Bob [shake your right fist] says, "Joe Bob [shake your left fist], I think they're gone. Let's steal 'em back and get outta here."

In an even tempo, pick up a coin, first with your left hand, and then back and forth, right, left, right, left.

Just then, the ranch hands do show up. Just like magic, they rescue their cattle (open left hand to show five coins) and capture the two cattle thieves (open right hand to show two coins), who were off hiding behind one of the trees.

As I pick up the coins and put them back in my pocket, I always add this tag:

So, the story had a happy ending, and they all lived happily ever after. Except, of course, for the cattle rustlers, who got hanged.

Linking Loot

Here's a cute, impromptu trick performed with everyday objects. It links paper clips, so maybe you'll want to use it to amuse coworkers while you patter about teamwork, or working together.

The trick is generally credited to Bill Bowman of Seattle, Washington, who published it in *The New Phoenix* around 1951.

The Effect: Two paper clips are attached to a folded dollar bill. You pull on the ends of the bill, the clips fly off, and then fall linked together.

Preparation: You'll need two paper clips and a dollar bill (or a piece of paper cut to the same size).

The Routine: *One of the oldest tricks in magic is called Chinese Linking Rings. The trick was actually invented in China many centuries ago. You may have seen it—it's the trick where the magician links and unlinks solid rings of steel. I'm going to do that for you today—in miniature!*

Fold the dollar bill in a Z formation. (You don't have to put hard creases in the bill; it can be curved in a backwards S-shape.) Fasten the two paper clips to the bill as shown in the following figure, so that one clip holds together the first and second folds of the bill (the outer end to the center section). The other clip holds together the second and third folds (the center section and the inner end of the bill).



The paper clips attached to the dollar bill.

Quickly pull the two ends of the dollar bill apart, in opposite directions. The paper clips will link together and fly off the bill.

Coin Go

This disappearing-coin trick has probably been performed in one form or another ever since the invention of the coin and the handkerchief. Certainly it was around by the



Say the Magic Word

Concealing an object in your hand is known as **palming**. The item may be hidden in the center of your palm (**classic palm**), but it's also often concealed at the base of your loosely curled middle and ring fingers (**finger palm**). Other palms include the **thumb palm** or **thumb clip** (your thumb holds the object against your palm), the **edge palm** (clipped between two fingers, perpendicular to your palm), and the **back palm** (clipped behind your hand).

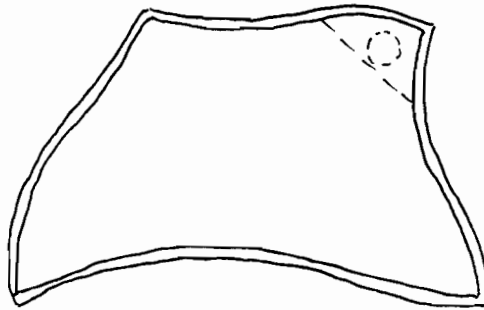
A men's pocket handkerchief with a coin secretly sewn into one corner.

16th century, because Reginald Scot (him again!) explained the trick in his 1584 book *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*, describing it as a way to make a coin “vanish out of a handkerchief very strangely.”

The Effect: You borrow a coin and place it under the center of a handkerchief. A spectator holds the coin through the cloth. You take one corner of the handkerchief, and then with a sudden jerk, tug the cloth out the volunteer's hand. The coin disappears.

Preparation: This trick requires a gimmicked handkerchief, which you must prepare in advance. To make it, you need two men's pocket handkerchiefs and a coin. Cut a corner off one of the handkerchiefs. This triangular piece must be larger than the coin.

Lay the coin on a corner of the other handkerchief. Cover it with the small triangular section of cloth. Sew the small section to the complete handkerchief, trapping the coin between the pieces of cloth. This creates a trick handkerchief with a coin sewn into one corner.



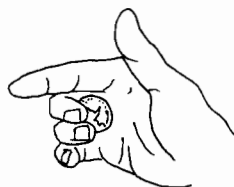
The Routine: Ask to borrow a coin. It should be the same denomination as the one sewn into the corner of the hanky, or as closely matching in size as possible.

Bring out the special handkerchief, holding it so that your right fingers cover the gaffed corner. If you handle it naturally no one will be suspicious of it or ask to examine it.

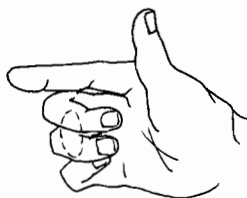
Display the borrowed coin on your right palm. Cover your right hand with the handkerchief, but as you do, sandwich the gimmicked corner between the borrowed coin and the center of the handkerchief.

With your left fingers, feel through the center of the hanky, and grasp the hidden coin secretly sewn in its corner. Lift the hidden coin (and, of course, the hanky) slightly away from your right hand.

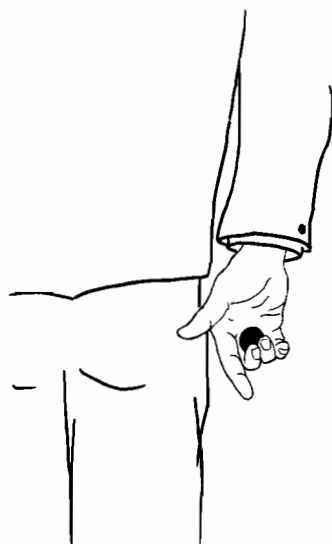
You must now hide, or *palm*, the coin in your right hand, which is still underneath the hanky. With your right thumb, position the coin at the base of your ring finger. (Depending upon the size of the coin, it may extend over your middle or little fingers.) Curl your fingers slightly, closing your left hand into a loose fist in order to hold the coin in place between the second and third joints of your fingers.



The finger palm with open hand; and gesturing with partially closed fist.



Ask the spectator to hold the coin through the handkerchief. As he or she grasps the coin, casually drop your right arm to your side.



Arm held naturally at your side, with coin finger-palmed.



Tip of the Wand

Remember, people's eyes follow motion. Let the volunteer take the handkerchief first, *then* lower your left hand. The audience will watch the motion of the handkerchief, not your hand concealing the coin.



Say the Magic Word

Woofle (pronounced woo'-ful) dust is magician's jargon for an imaginary powder that supposedly has magical properties or powers. Reaching for the dust gives the magician an excuse to place a hand into the pocket (or elsewhere out of the spectator's sight) to obtain or get rid of a palmed object.

Although woofle dust is its most common name, the substance is also variously called "fairy dust," "pixie dust" or simply "magic dust." Magicians usually refer to woofle dust as an invisible substance, but some magicians use actual glitter or confetti for added effect.

Can you feel your coin through the handkerchief?

What your volunteer is actually feeling, of course, is the extra coin sewn into the corner of the cloth.

The audience still believes the coin is under the handkerchief, so now is the time to ditch the coin palmed in your hand. There are several ways to pull this off:

- Have a magic wand within reach but out of sight of the audience. As you pick up the wand, leave the coin behind.
- Casually place your hand into your pocket as you speak. When you take out your hand, leave the coin in your pocket.
- Say that you have to sprinkle some magical "woofle dust" over the hanky. Reach into your pocket. When you bring out the invisible magical "dust," leave the coin behind.

This last method is a classic (and very popular) way to get rid of a palmed object, and you can use it often in any number of situations.

In this trick, for example, the coin is palmed in your right hand, so you must reach into your pocket with that hand, drop the coin, and bring out a pinch of woofle dust. Pantomime the action of sprinkling the dust over the handkerchief. Grab one of the corners of the handkerchief. Pull it sharply, jerking the handkerchief out of the spectator's hand. The coin seems to have disappeared!

Rather than making the coin vanish forever, you may want to reproduce it at the end of the trick. In fact, your volunteer may insist upon it if it's his or her coin!

In that case, rather than getting rid of the coin, keep it finger-palmed in your hand. Here are a few ways to make it reappear:

- Reach behind someone's ear. Once your fingers are out of sight, push the coin to your fingertips with your thumb. When you bring your hand back into view, it is holding the visible coin between the thumb and fingertips.
- Reach into an empty box, under a pillow, or into any other unexpected spot. When you pull out your hand, you can have the coin at your fingertips. The coin can be found anywhere: Let your imagination run wild.
- Act as if you can see the coin floating, invisibly, in the air. Push the coin to your fingertips as you raise your hand upward. Then, pretend to pluck the coin from thin air.



Sawed in Half

Confetti or glitter makes a mess when dropped on the floor. Keep in mind that someone will have to clean up after you. Also, confetti and glitter can make the floor very slick. It could also cause something (including you) to slip and fall.



Sawed in Half

If you're planning to reproduce the coin, you may want to ask the spectator to put some distinguishing mark on it with a pencil or pen before you make it disappear. That way, he or she will know that it's the same coin when it reappears.

Riches from the Rolls

I was going to save this quickie for Chapter 17, but it's also a fun trick with money. Remember how you learned to produce a magic wand from a dinner roll (in Chapter 4)? Well, here's a way to produce, or re-produce, a coin from a bun. If you're a punster, you might call this trick "bread from bread."



Now You See It

Producing coins from baked goods, eggs, or produce was a favorite impromptu trick of the 19th century magician Alexander Herrmann (1843–1896). As a publicity stunt, Herrmann would often stroll into a marketplace, select an egg from a farmer's stall, and break it open to "find" a coin inside. Herrmann would do this with two or three more eggs, until eventually the exasperated farmer would cry "No more eggs!" Knowing that once he left, the farmer would probably break open all his eggs trying to find more coins, Herrmann would secretly slip enough money into the basket to compensate the grocer for his loss.



Tip of the Wand

I usually wait to do this trick until the end of a meal. I produce the coin with the comment, "Do you need any more money for the tip?"

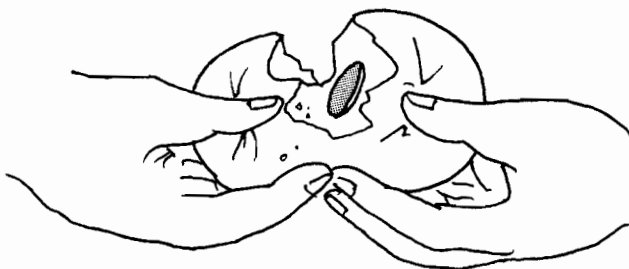
The Effect: You produce (or reproduce) a coin from a dinner roll.

Preparation: Finger palm a coin in your right hand. This looks best with a quarter or a half dollar, but any coin will do.

The Routine: As you pick up a dinner roll with your left hand, use your right thumb to secretly push the coin closer to the tips of the fingers. Transfer the bun to your right hand. Press the coin against the bottom of the roll, being careful not to expose it.

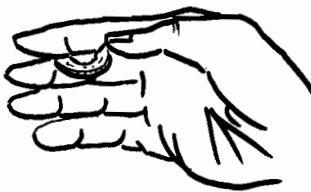
Hold the dinner roll between both hands, with the fingers underneath the bun and the thumbs on top. Slowly bend the roll in half by pressing upwards with the fingers of both hands. As you do, push the coin upward, into the roll, with your right fingers. Break the top side of the bun open to reveal the coin.

Producing a coin from inside a dinner roll.



Here's a different way to get the "dough" into the "dough." Clip the palmed coin by its edge between your forefinger and middle finger (an edge palm). With the back of your hand toward the audience (so that the coin cannot be seen), pick up a dinner roll. Press the coin against the bottom of the roll, forcing it into the bun.

Finger clipped coin in an edge palm.



Without making a big deal out of it, set the roll back onto the table. Continue your conversation. The point is to make the audience forget that you ever touched the dinner roll.

Later, after casually allowing the audience to see that the hands are empty—this is much stronger than overtly showing them to be empty—pick up the roll, break it in half, and produce the money. If you want, your spectator can actually break the bun open to discover the coin.

Coin Confederacy

Audiences often accuse us of using secret assistants (sometimes referred to as confederates, stooges, plants, or shells). Of course, that's almost never the case. Except with this trick. With a friend's help, you can do a version of "Coin Go," without a gimmicked hanky!

The Effect: You place a coin on your open palm and cover it with a handkerchief or napkin. Turning to a member of the audience, you ask him or her to reach under the handkerchief to make sure the coin is there. Several other spectators are allowed to check the coin as well. Then, with a flourish, you whisk away the cloth: The coin is gone!

Preparation: For this trick, you will need a secret assistant to help you. You also need a coin and a hanky, both of which can be borrowed.

The Routine: All you have to do is make sure that your friend is the last person to check whether the coin is still on your palm. When your assistant reaches under the cloth, he or she sneaks out the coin. You pull away the hanky, and the coin has disappeared!

By the way, your assistant does *not* have to be adept at palming or sleight-of-hand to pull this off. All eyes will be on you and the handkerchief, not on your confederate. Still, as with any other magic trick, you should practice beforehand.

Buddha Papers

The Buddha papers is an ancient trick. Among its earliest descriptions in print was a version explained by Reginald Scot in *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584). Although Western magicians once had a habit of claiming that their tricks originated in India or the Far East, the "Buddha" title to this trick seems to have originated with a marketed version by Thayer Magic Co. in 1921.

The construction and handling of this prop is a bit different than the early gimmicks for this routine, so it may even fool those who are familiar with the trick.

The Effect: You fold a coin into a small square piece of paper. That packet is folded into a slightly larger piece of paper, and then a third, larger piece of paper after that. When the folders are re-opened, the coin has disappeared.

Preparation: You must construct a special paper folder in advance. For the sake of explanation, obtain the following:

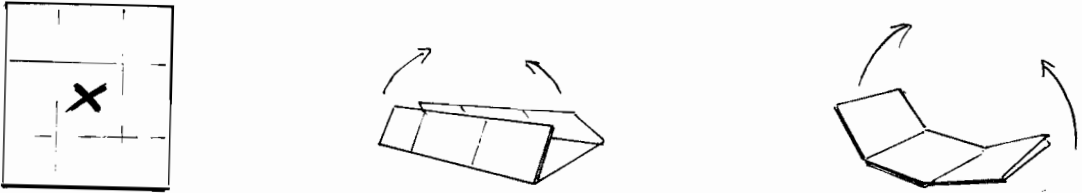
- one 8"×8" piece of paper, say red
- two identical 6"×6" pieces of paper, say blue
- two identical 4"×4" pieces of paper, say white

All of the paper should be thick, like construction paper, and opaque.

Part 3 ➤ *Easy Does It: No Skill Required*

Take one of the pieces of paper, and fold into thirds, both lengthwise and widthwise, as illustrated by the dotted lines, to create a square packet. Fold all five pieces of paper in this manner.

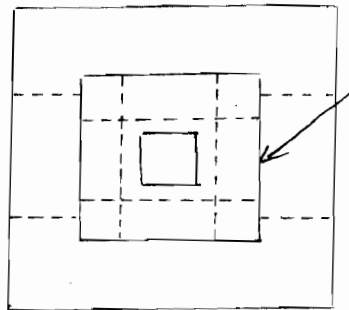
Fold the piece of paper into thirds, both lengthwise and widthwise, to produce a small folder.



Open the red paper and one of the white papers, and set them aside. For now, also set the other folded, white packet to one side.

Now construct the gimmick: Open the two identical blue square pieces of paper, and glue together the center squares of the two sheets of paper. Lay the papers flat. Fold the uppermost paper, along its creases, back into a small packet. Turn the papers over so that the folded packet is underneath the open paper. Fold the open, top piece of paper along its creases, back into a small packet. This creates a double-sided packet, with two separate folders glued back-to-back.

Glue the marked squares together. Then, separately fold the sheets of paper to create a gimmicked packet consisting of two back-to-back packets.



Now that you've constructed all of the individual pieces. Here's how to set-up for the actual routine: Re-open one side of the blue folder into a single piece of blue paper (with a folded, blue packet beneath it). Set the folded white packet onto the center square of the creased blue paper, then re-fold the blue paper around the white folder. (You now have a double-sided packet consisting of two back-to-back blue folders, the upper one of which secretly contains an empty white folder.) Turn over the double-sided blue packet. Open the uppermost folder into a flat, creased piece of blue paper.

The Routine: Introduce the small piece of white paper. Borrow a small coin, and set it in the center square of the white paper. Carefully fold the paper along its creases into a small packet.

Introduce the blue piece of paper, secretly keeping the blue packet hidden beneath it. Set the white packet into the center square of the blue paper, and fold the blue paper along its creases into a small packet.

Introduce the red piece of paper. Secretly turn over the blue packet as you set it into the center square of the red piece of paper. (If you wish, you can turn over the blue packet earlier as you transfer it from one hand to the other.) Fold up the red paper, along its creases, into a packet.



Sawed in Half

Be careful to handle the blue packet in such a way that the audience thinks it's a single piece of paper. If they suspect a second packet, the trick is over!

I've wrapped the coin in a piece of white paper, then into a piece of blue paper, and then into still another piece of paper. My hands are empty. There is no way that coin could have gotten in or out. But watch!



Say the Magic Word

A utility prop (or utility item) can be used to perform many different tricks. Depending upon the prop, sometimes it can perform several of the basic magical effects, such as making something disappear or changing it into something else. Other utility props can only be used to perform one effect, such as making something appear, but can be used in many different tricks or routines.

Slowly open the outer red packet so the paper lays flat on the table. Open the middle blue packet so that the piece of paper lies flat on top of the larger, red paper. (The other blue packet is secretly hidden beneath the blue paper.) Pick up the white folder between your right thumb and forefinger, or ask the spectator to pick it up.

Open it up. I don't want to touch it!

Your volunteer opens the packet. It's empty. The coin has disappeared!

The Buddha Papers is an example of what magicians call a *utility prop* or *utility item*, because the apparatus can be used to perform different tricks.

Instead of making the coin disappear, for example, you could make a coin (or any small object, such as a postage stamp) appear. To set-up, place the item that

will be produced into the small white folder and enclose it in one side of the double blue folder.

You can also use the Buddha Papers to switch one object for another. You could, for example, change a coin from a penny into a nickel, or you could transform a button into a coin.

Be creative, and let your mind imagine the possibilities!

The Least You Need to Know

- If you make borrowed money vanish, you will *a/ways* be expected to make it reappear!
- Consider marking an object that you are going to make disappear so that the audience knows it is the same object when it reappears.
- The finger palm is one of the most basic coin moves and is a frequently used method to palm a coin.
- People's eyes follow motion.
- Everyday objects can be gimmicked yet still appear to be unprepared.



Arithmetricks

In This Chapter

- ▶ Self-working tricks based on arithmetic
- ▶ Making mathematical magic into mental miracles
- ▶ Mathemagic based on the “casting out of nines” principle

Who says there’s no reason to learn algebra? Wouldn’t it be great if there were mathematical anomalies that were so absolute, yet so easy to remember and demonstrate, that they could be translated into effective magic tricks? Guess what? There are!

And it doesn’t take a calculator or a *Complete Idiots Guide to Trigonometry* to figure them out. Just follow each step, and the sums, the quotients—the answers—always come out right.

The real trick is to make the mathematical puzzles appear to be magic. Many of these routines have a mind-reading theme because you’re able to predict what numbers the audience has randomly selected or is merely thinking of.

1,089, Now and Forever

The principle you’re about to learn is one of the most versatile in mathematical magic. With this method, you’ll be able to perform dozens of tricks, just as long as they involve the number 9, 18, or 1,089.

The Effect: You write down a prediction. After a series of calculations, the spectator arrives at the “random” number 1,089. It matches your prediction. The experiment can be repeated, matching a prediction of either 9 or 18.



Sawed in Half

The arithmetic must be correct for these tricks to work. Casually suggest that your volunteer check his or her math. Better still, if you're performing for a group, let everyone watch the calculations. If the math is wrong, the tricks don't work.



Tip of the Wand

If you're performing for several people, you can involve more of your audience by asking three people to each contribute one of the numerals to form the three-digit number.

Preparation: Write down the number 1,089 on a large sheet of paper. Seal it inside an envelope, or simply fold it and set it to one side.

The Routine: Hand the spectator a piece of paper and a pen.

Please write down any three-digit number near the top of the paper. Just to make it interesting, make it three different digits.

I'm going to have you make it into an even more random number, a number that even you didn't know you would choose.

Reverse your three-digit number. If it is now larger, write it directly above your first number. If it is smaller, write it below. Now subtract the smaller number from the larger number.

Casually ask whether the answer is two or three digits. If the reply is two, you know that the answer is 99.

Remember, we need a three-digit number. Write a zero in front of it. If the reply is three, just say, "Fine."

Reverse the digits in the answer and write them beneath the column of numbers. Now add the last two three-digit numbers together.

The result is *always* 1,089. Reveal your prediction to thunderous applause.

You have many choices for your prediction when performing this routine. Here are some other fascinating features of the Nine Principle:

- After the first subtraction, the sum of the two- or three-digit answer is always 18. If you further reduce that number by adding its digits (1+8), the total is 9.
- If the answer to your first subtraction is three digits, the middle digit is always 9.
- If the answer to your first subtraction is three digits, the total of the two end digits is always 9.
- If the answer to your first subtraction is two digits, the result is always 99. (These digits can be totaled to 18; those digits can be totaled to 9.)
- If you total the digits of the final answer (1,089), you get 18. (This, of course, can be further reduced to 9.)

For example, if the original number were 248 or 918, you would have the following results:

842		918	
-248	(Middle digit 9)	-819	
594	(5+9+4=18)(1+8=9)	099	(9+9=18)(1+8=9)
+495	(4+5=9)	+900	
1,089		1,089	(1+0+8+9) (1+8=9)

Thus, you have three possible predictions (9, 18, or 1,089), any of which can be “randomly” generated through mathematical magic.

Nein

Here’s another mathematical miracle based on the “Casting out of nines.” It’s really amazing, and I’m not sure why it works. The great thing is you can do this trick with your back turned. Heck, you can even do it over the radio!

The Effect: The spectator writes down a large number, performs some arithmetic with it, and circles one of the digits in the answer. Through mind power alone, you divine the circled number.

Preparation: None.

The Routine: Hand the spectator a pen and paper.

Write down any number, say, three, four, or five digits. You can make it big, but you’re going to be doing some adding and subtracting. Do you have it?

Great. Now mix the digits of that number, rearranging them in any order, to form another number. For instance, if you wrote 123, you could write 132, 213, 231, well, you get the picture. Anyway, you’ll get a second random number, made up from the same digits as the first random number.

Now subtract the smaller of the two numbers from the larger one. Take your time. I have no other life.

Check to make sure your answer’s correct. I know it’s hard without a slide rule.

Okay, here comes the fun part. Look at the answer to your subtraction. You have several digits in that random number that I couldn’t possibly know. I want you to circle any one of those digits in that number.



Sawed in Half

Because of the peculiar “Casting Out of Nines” principle upon which the trick’s based, if the result from your mental subtraction is zero or nine, the circled number could also be either zero or nine. You can’t automatically be certain *which*. To eliminate this possibility, I find it easiest to ask the volunteer in advance not to circle a zero. I say that circling the zero makes the trick too easy for me, that I want to avoid zero because it’s a mystic number, or that zero has a negative vibration.

Oh, but don't circle a zero. That makes it too easy. Circle one of the numerals one through nine.

I can't possibly know how many uncircled digits you have left in that answer or what they are. Concentrate on the number that you have circled. Now slowly call off the remaining, uncircled digits in your answer, one at a time, in any order you like.

Now is when you go to work. As the spectator calls off the remaining digits, add them mentally. If the result is more than a single numeral, add the digits of that number. If the result is still more than a single numeral, add the digits again. Continue to do so until you have reduced the answer to a single numeral.

Here's the unbelievable part. Mentally subtract this single digit from 9. Your result matches the digit circled by the spectator!

Here's an example of how it works:

Your friend's random number	84736
The numerals randomly mixed	<u>-46837</u>
Subtract	37899
Circle any digit ⑦	⑦
Mentally add the other digits	$3 + 8 + 9 + 9 = 29$
Add again	$2 + 9 = 11$
Add again	$1 + 1 = 2$
Subtract from 9	$9 - 2 = 7$

Pretend to concentrate, to be receiving his or her circled number telepathically. If you want, recap how impossible it would be for you to know what number it is: a random number of any size was chosen; it was mixed up to generate a second random number; a random number was then circled and is merely being thought of. There is no way you could possibly know what that number is.

Then, smile triumphantly, and announce the identity of the circled number.

Elephants in Denmark

This mental arithmetrick is as simple as can be, but it boasts a clever three-part ending.

The Effect: The volunteer is asked to think of a country, an animal, and a color that correspond to a number arrived at through some mental arithmetic. You are able to figure out all three through mind power alone.

Preparation: None.

The Routine: All you have to do is repeat these instructions to your volunteer.

Are you ready to take a trip around the world? Fasten your seat belts. It might be a bumpy flight.

Think of a number from 1 through 10. Got it?

Multiply it by 9. Oh, and if your answer is more than one digit, add those two digits together.

Finally, subtract 5. The answer will be your lucky number.

Now I want you to convert that number into its corresponding letter in the alphabet. For instance, if your number is 1, think of A. If your lucky number is 2, think of B, and so on.

All right. Think of a country that starts with that letter. That's where we're going to travel.

Think of how that country is spelled. Get an image of the second letter in the country's name.

Now, quick, think of a large animal that starts with that letter.

Oh, and think of the color of that animal.

Stop suddenly, and make a puzzled expression.

I'm sorry. There are no gray elephants in Denmark.

It works about 99.9 percent of the time. Even if you don't get all three "predictions" right, it's still a lot of fun. True, someone *might* say a brown emu in the Dominican Republic (or a white egret in Djibouti). But if your spectator does, say, "Gee, that's odd, most people think of a gray elephant in Denmark." Trust me, you've still made your mathematical point.

Devil Dice

Have you ever heard the expression, "Life is a crap shoot"? Wouldn't it be great if we could tell in advance what the roll of the dice would be? Well, Lady Luck, look out.

The Effect: The spectator rolls a pair of dice, stacks them, and then adds up the three sides not showing. Without looking at the dice, you are able to tell what the total is.

Preparation: All you need is a regular pair of dice.

The Routine: Give your spectator a pair of dice. Ask him or her to roll them several times to make sure they're not loaded.

Las Vegas, here I come! Let's try an experiment. Roll these dice as often as you like, just to make sure they don't always roll the same numbers. Are you satisfied?

Turn away from the audience.

All right. I'm going to turn my back. Roll them one more time. Pick up either die and set it on top of the other one in a stack. Have you done that?

Take a quick glance back to the table as if to make sure one die is sitting on top of the other. Then turn away again. Get out a piece of paper and a pen.

I'm going to write something down on this piece of paper. I'll fold it up and set it right here.

Set the folded note on the table.

There are three sides of the dice that are not showing, that none of us can see. One's against the tabletop, and two are touching each other. I want you to carefully lift the dice, and add those three hidden sides, the sides you can't see, together.

Ask what the sum is. Open the piece of paper to show that you have correctly divined the total.

How? Most people do not know that the two opposing sides of a die always add up to 7: 1 and 6, 2 and 5, and 3 and 4.

Therefore, if you add the two opposing sides of both dice, you have 14.

After your volunteer stacks the dice, you turn around to look at the dice, supposedly to make sure that the dice are stacked properly. What you are really doing is taking a quick peek at the number showing on the top of the stack. Mentally subtract this number from 14, and you will have the total of the three hidden sides.

This trick is not limited to using only two dice, of course. You could use any number of dice. Don't get crazy on me and try to build the Eiffel Tower. But you *might* try introducing a third die "just to make it more interesting."

It's hard enough to predict the roll of the dice when only two are used. But imagine how much harder it becomes when you use three!

Ask the spectator to roll all three dice, and then pile them up in a single stack. Make your "prediction" by mentally subtracting the number that is showing on the top of the stack from 21 (7×3 dice). Then ask the volunteer to add the five sides that are hidden from view. Their total and your secret message match.

Devil Dice II: The Sequel

If you're still in a gambling mood, hold on to those three dice. This one's a tri-die stunner.



Tip of the Wand

This trick does work with only two dice, but I think that it's seemingly more impossible—and more deceptive—when there are three dice generating seemingly random numbers.

The Effect: The spectator rolls three dice, some more than once, and adds up several of the sides. Without looking at the dice, you know the total.

Preparation: None, but you need three dice this time.

The Routine: *Here are three dice. I am going to turn my back, and while my back is turned, I want you to roll the dice.*

Have you done that? Great. In your mind, add together the three numbers that you've rolled. Don't say the total aloud.

Now, carefully pick up any one of the three dice and look at the number on the bottom of that die, and add it to your total.

Finally, roll that same die. You may get the same or a different number. But add it to your total as well.

Turn around to face the audience. Casually pick up the three dice and place them to one side or in your pocket.

So, let's see. You are now thinking of a number that you've arrived at by adding several numbers from several random throws of three dice. Concentrate on that number. I've got it!

And here's how you know: When you pick up the three dice, nonchalantly look at three numbers that are showing uppermost on the three dice. Add seven to that total to arrive at the number the spectator is thinking of.

Once again, this trick works because adding the top and bottom of a die together always totals seven. This fact is so well hidden by the patter and handling of the dice that your audience almost never figures out the trick.

Mathemental

There is beauty in simplicity. This mental mathematics trick is such a beauty because you are able to reveal a number that someone is merely thinking.

The Effect: The spectator thinks of any low number and performs some mental arithmetic on it. You are able to tell the new number he or she is thinking of. To prove that the answer doesn't always come out the same, you repeat the trick. Then, as a kicker, you perform it a third time. Your assistant is sure that you'll be wrong this time: They're thinking of a fraction. Of course, you pull through.

Preparation: None.

The Routine: Ask your volunteer to think of any number.

Oh, wait, you're going to have to do a little mental arithmetic, so make it a single digit, less than 10. Do you have it? Great. Double the number.

Now add eight. We're not getting in the high numbers yet, so it shouldn't be too hard. Okay?

Great. Now divide by two. I'll give you a few seconds on this one.

Now, finally, subtract your original number.

Fine. Let's recap. You thought of any number. You mixed it up a little by doubling it and so on. However, I think I'm getting an image of your answer.

The number you are now thinking of is four!

Here's why it works. It's true that you have no idea what number the person originally thought of. But the final answer will always be half of whatever you ask them to add on. Because you told your volunteer to add eight, the final answer is always four. Had you added 10, the answer would have been five, and so on.

For example:

$$2 \times 2 = 4 + 6 = 10 \div 2 = 5 - 2 \text{ (the original number)} = 3 \text{ (half of six, the number added)}$$

$$9 \times 2 = 18 + 2 = 20 \div 2 = 10 - 9 \text{ (the original number)} = 1 \text{ (half of two, the number added)}$$

This is one of the few tricks that you can repeat. In fact, maybe you *should* repeat it, because audiences sometimes assume that the answer is always the same. It really can be different every time. It all depends on what you tell the spectator to add on.

Here's a cute kicker. Offer to repeat the trick one last time, but give an odd number rather than an even number to add. That way, the final answer will be a fraction rather than a whole number.

For example:

$$2 \times 2 = 4 + 5 = 9 \div 2 = 4\frac{1}{2} - 2 \text{ (the original number)} = 2\frac{1}{2} \text{ (half of five, the number added on)}$$

You will know you "got" your volunteer when he or she takes on a smug, satisfied expression. He or she might assume that there is no way you could figure out that the answer is a fraction!

Here's where your acting skills come into play. Milk their misconception for all it's worth. At the end of the trick, you're a victorious mathemagician.

CompuCards

Here's an easy self-working bit of mental magic with an up-to-date, computer theme.

The Effect: You ask the spectator to think of any number, from 1 through 63. You show your volunteer seven cards and ask on which cards his or her number appears. Instantly you are able to reveal the number.

Preparation: Create the six cards as illustrated. I make them up on 3"×5" or 4"×6" blank file cards so that they're easy to read. If you want to carry them with you in a wallet, print them on credit-card size card stock.

1	3	5	7	9	11	13
15	17	19	21	23	25	27
29	31	33	35	37	39	41
43	45	47	49	51	53	55
57	59	61	63			

2	3	6	7	10	11	14
15	18	19	22	23	26	27
30	31	34	35	38	39	42
43	46	47	50	51	54	55
58	59	62	63			

4	5	6	7	12	13	14
15	20	21	22	23	28	29
30	31	36	37	38	39	44
45	46	47	52	53	54	55
60	61	62	63			

8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31	40	41	42	43	44
45	46	47	56	57	58	59
60	61	62	63			

16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31	48	49	50	51	52
53	54	55	56	57	58	59
60	61	62	63			

32	33	34	35	36	37	38
39	40	41	42	43	44	45
46	47	48	49	50	51	52
53	54	55	56	57	58	59
60	61	62	63			

The Routine: *Back in the Jurassic Era, long before gigabytes, silicon chips, and 3.5-inch floppies, computers actually used punch cards—little manila cards with holes punched in them—to transmit the binary codes.*

Before that, there was something even scarier: real math and real memory. Let's try an experiment combining two of the earliest forms of computer calculations: numbers and the brain.

Let's enter a number. I want you to think of any number from 1 through 63.

Now, if you have enough RAM left, I want you to take a look at these six index cards, one at a time. All I want you to do is tell me which cards contain the number you are thinking of.

Hand the cards to your volunteer one at a time, keeping track of the card(s) that bear his or her number. Look at the number in the upper-left corner of each indicated card. Add these numbers together; the total is the number he or she is thinking of.

The Least You Need to Know

- Mathematics can be used as a basis for several novel magical and mind-reading routines.
- Use numbered props such as dice and calendars to transform math into mathemagic.
- Mathematics is an exact science: For the tricks to work, the arithmetic has to be correct.

Part 4

Getting Down to Basics: Simple Sleights with Ordinary Objects

In this section, it's time to roll up your sleeves, flex your fingers, and learn some honest-to-goodness sleight-of-hand! This is what professional magicians call "the real work."

Okay, so it's gonna take a little practice. You won't be getting out much for awhile. But soon you'll be able to make your friends pick the playing cards you want them to. You'll be making real coins appear, disappear, and practically do somersaults. In fact, once you master these basic sleights, you can use them to perform magic with just about anything you can get your hands on.

Fire up those fingers! It's time for some digital dexterity. What's your first feat of fancy fingerwork? Turn the page, and let's get going!







You Got the Moves

In This Chapter

- ▶ Basic playing-card terminology
- ▶ How to shuffle cards
- ▶ How to *false* shuffle cards
- ▶ Forcing a spectator to choose a particular card
- ▶ More than a dozen ways to reveal a forced card

If you've actually worked through *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Magic Tricks* page-by-page, trick-by-trick, you've already learned around 50 magic tricks, more if you count up all the variations and subtleties. As you've discovered, some tricks have taken more practice than others, and I'm sure you already have some favorites. But, so far, not one trick has involved what magicians would consider real sleight-of-hand.

Well, all that's about to change.

At this point, most serious students of magic want to learn some fundamental finger-flinging. At least enough to have the gang saying, "I don't want to play cards with you."

Pick up that pack of cards. Before this chapter is over, not only will you know your way around a deck of cards like nobody's business, but you'll have more than a dozen more tricks under your wizard's cap.

Just Whaddaya Mean By that?

Just like every hobby, craft, and occupation, magic has its own slang, jargon, unusual usages of familiar words, and unique vocabulary. You've been seeing some of these words in the "Say the Magic Word" sidebars.

Let's start with some basic terminology magicians use when performing with a deck of playing cards. You might want to run through these with a deck of playing cards in your hands.



Hocus Quote-Us

Cards are the poetry of magic.

—J.N. Ofzinsler



Hocus Quote-Us

There is no branch of conjuring that so fully repays the amateur for his labor and study as [playing] cards.

—Erdnase

A *full deck* of playing cards, also called a *complete deck*, consists of 52 playing cards, with 13 values (ace through king) for each of the four *suits* (clubs, hearts, spades, diamonds). Generally, the one or two Jokers received with the pack are in addition to, not considered part of, the full deck.

Decks of playing cards generally come in two sizes. *Poker-size cards*, used to make up a *poker deck*, measure 2½" in width by 3½" in length. Most professional magicians prefer working with poker-size cards when performing close-up magic. Poker decks are also used in most major gaming establishments and casinos. *Bridge-size cards*, used to make up a *bridge deck*, are slightly smaller than poker-size cards, and measure 2¼" in width by 3½" in length.

A deck is also known as a *pack*. A small bunch of cards, usually less than eight (though this may vary), is often called a *packet*.

There is a whole genre of card tricks in which the magician introduces a small bunch of cards to perform a single, specific effect. These are known as *packet tricks*. Often, some or all of these playing cards are trick cards, even though the audience may not be aware of it. (In Chapter 11, "Two-Card Monte" and "Three-Card Monte" are packet tricks.)

Magicians do use the word *stack*, in the same manner as laypeople, to mean a small bunch or a pile of cards. This does not necessarily mean that the cards have been *stacked* (that is, arranged) in any special order. A *stock* is another common term among magicians, card players, and gamblers for a group of cards, either within or removed from a deck.

The *back* of a playing card is the pattern side, the side that doesn't show the card's value. All back designs are identical in a regular deck of playing cards.

Magicians, gamblers and card players generally prefer cards that have symmetrical back patterns, that is, the design looks the same if you turn it end-for-end. The design may be printed to the edges of the cards to produce an *all-over* back design or be *bordered*, with a thin white edge all the way around the pattern.

Magicians call a deck with an asymmetrical back design (such as a logo or a picture) a *one-way deck*. The term one-way deck is sometimes used erroneously to refer to a special deck in which all 52 playing cards are the same.

The *face* of the card is opposite the back and shows the identity of the card by value and suit. A *spot card*, also called a *number card*, has the value of ace, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine or ten of any suit. The *court cards*, also called *royal cards* or *picture cards*, are the jacks, queens and kings of any suit. Just to confuse the issue, the court cards are also sometimes called *face cards*, because of the royal portraits.

The small number and suit symbol in a corner or the corners on the face of a playing card is an *index* (plural, *indices*). The spots on the central part of the face of a playing card that symbolize the suits (clubs, hearts, spades and diamonds) are known as the *pips*. Generally, the small suit symbol found in the corner as part of the index is not called a pip, unless the word is used as part of the phrase “corner pip” or “index pip.”

When you hold a deck or packet of cards face-down, the *face card* is the bottom or lowermost card, so-called because it’s the face that’s visible. It is also called the bottom card.

Logically, the *top card* is the uppermost card of a face-down deck or packet of playing cards. But if the deck or packet is face-up, the top card is the lowermost card. Just a few more words and phrases, then we’re off to the card table.

If a chosen card has been returned to a deck, or the deck shuffled, so that the card is seemingly in a position unknown to you or the spectator, the card is said to be *lost* in the deck—whether or not *you* know where the card is!

And, finally, among card magicians, a *reversed* card has two different meanings. A card is reversed in the deck if it’s face-up in a face-down deck, or vice versa. However, a card is also said to be reversed if it’s the wrong way, end-for-end, in a one-way deck.



Tip of the Wand

A one-way deck can be used as a trick deck. Start with the backs all facing one way. When the spectator removes a card, secretly turn the deck end-for-end, but make sure the spectator slips the card in facing the same direction in which it was removed. The chosen card’s back will be opposite all the other cards in the deck.



Hocus Quote-Us

The finished card expert considers nothing too trivial that in any way contributes to his success.

—Erdnase

Shuffle Along

Your audiences will assume that you have some degree of skill with a deck of cards, and perhaps nowhere is it more quickly judged than in the way you shuffle the deck.

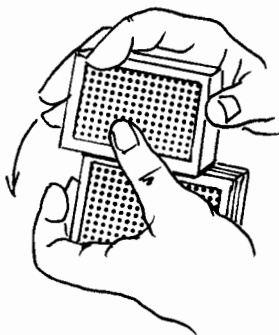
Audiences expect your card handling to look as crisp as a dealer's in a casino, but not so slick that they're suspicious of everything you do. Don't overcompensate and act sloppy and inept: You don't want them to think you've never picked up a deck before. And remember that your shuffles must look natural.

A shuffle is a mix of the cards into some random order. There are many different types of shuffles, some common, some more exotic. Let's riffle through a few.

The Overhand Shuffle

An overhand shuffle is one of the most popular ways to shuffle a deck of playing cards. It's usually the first shuffle Americans learn, and it's the one most often used by casual card players.

The Overhand Shuffle



To perform the shuffle, hold the deck in your left hand so that your thumb rests on the top of the deck, and the bottom (or face) of the deck lies on or against your left fingers. Turn your left hand so that the cards are in a vertical position.

Approach the deck with your right hand. With your right hand, grasp the deck along its narrow edges, thumb at the inner edge (near the heel of your left hand) and fingers along the outer edge (between your left thumb and forefinger). Separate and remove the bottom three-quarters (or so) of the deck with your right hand.

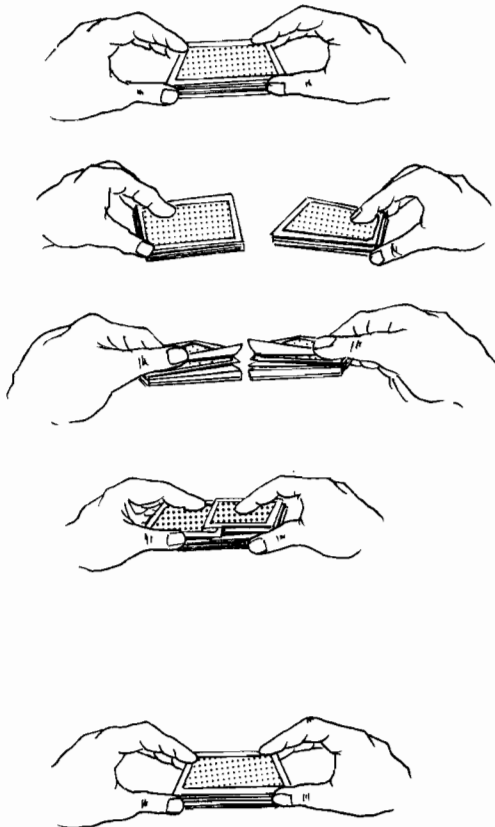
Lift your left thumb away from the top of the cards remaining in your hand. Lower the right-hand cards into the space between your left thumb and the cards in your left hand. With your left thumb, draw a small stock of around five to ten cards off the top of the deck and let them fall into the left hand, where they rest, face-down, on your left fingers.

With your left thumb, draw successive stocks of cards off the top of the deck, adding each packet, in turn, on top of the cards already in your left hand. Continue this series of motions until there's only one small packet of cards remaining in your right hand. Your right hand tosses these on top of the cards in your left hand, completing the shuffle.

The Riffle Shuffle

The riffle shuffle is another common way to shuffle cards. This shuffle, used by most serious card players, mixes the cards more thoroughly than other shuffles, because it interlaces the cards. The riffle shuffle is also sometimes called a dovetail shuffle.

To riffle shuffle the cards, cut the deck into two piles on the table. Position the two halves of the deck side-by-side, so that a narrow edge from one pile butts up against a narrow edge of the other pile. Arch a hand over each packet, with your thumbs holding the two adjacent narrow ends and your fingers along the outer narrow ends. Using your thumbs, slightly bend the packets upward (or back). Then, slowly release the cards, allowing the cards from the two packets to interlace as they fall. Finally, push the two packets together, and square the deck.



The riffle shuffle, in this case a corner riffle shuffle, in five easy steps.

The corner riffle shuffle, also known as a tabled shuffle, is a variation of the standard riffle shuffle. This is the shuffle preferred in casinos, because it's very difficult, if not impossible, to *peek* (or *glimpse*) the faces of any of the cards as they fall.



Say the Magic Word

A **peek**, also called a **glimpse**, is a fleeting look at something, usually the index or face of a playing card. It's also the process of obtaining the momentary view.



Tip of the Wand

When you perform the Hindu shuffle, you can move your left hand (pulling off the cards) or your right hand (pulling the deck back, away from the cards held by your left hand). But move one hand or the other, not both. The shuffle will look "cleaner" and less confusing.

Cut the cards, and set the two packets side-by-side on a table in an inverted V, so that the wide part of the V opens toward you. Rest your fingers along the outer long ends of the two packets. Place your thumbs at the two corners that meet. Use your thumbs to bend their respective corners upward, then let the cards fall and interlace. This riffles the cards together at just the two corners. With the two corners still interlaced, pivot the two halves outward, away from you, until the full narrow edges of the two packets are woven together. Push the two halves of the deck together on the table, until the deck is squared.

The Hindu Shuffle

The Hindu shuffle is the Western magicians' name for a specific shuffle of playing cards, common in Asia, but rare elsewhere except among magicians. The Hindu shuffle is a legitimate mix, also performed in the hands rather than on a table.

Hold the deck in your right hand. Arch your hand over the top of the deck, your thumb along one long edge and the fingers along the other long edge. (Some magicians prefer to position the right forefinger on top of the deck.)

Hold the left hand palm-up, with your thumb and fingers raised upward to form the hand into a sort of U shape. With your left fingers, grasp the top five to ten cards of the deck, as a block.

The Hindu shuffle



Holding your right hand still, move your left hand outward, away from your right hand, carrying away the packet of cards with your left fingertips. Let the cards fall as a group onto your left palm.

Bring your left hand back to the deck. With your left fingers, grasp the top five to ten cards of the deck, as a block, and pull them out and away from the pack. Let these cards fall onto the cards already on the left palm.

Repeat this series of moves in a steady rhythm: Continue to pull off small packets from the top of the deck with your left hand, letting them fall and pile up on the cards already in your palm, until all of the cards have been shuffled off into your left hand.



Tip of the Wand

To prevent the cards from falling out of your left hand, try this: As you pick up the cards with your left fingers, stretch your left forefinger out and around the outer narrow edge. Tilt your left hand down, with your forefinger lower than the heel of your hand. Now, think of your left hand as the tray on a copier, with your hooked forefinger preventing the cards from falling out of your hand.



Now You See It

On my first visit to India, I had the chance to visit Agra and the Taj Mahal. I heard that there was a local magician performing traditional Indian magic at one of the hotels, and I raced over to meet him. After his show, we sat together on the floor, trading tricks and ideas. At one point, I handed him a deck and said, "Please shuffle the cards." He took the pack and immediately performed a quick Hindu shuffle. I commented, "Oh, a Hindu shuffle." Smiling, he clasped a hand to his breast and agreed, "Yes, I'm Hindu."

False Shuffles

A false shuffle is any shuffle that doesn't disturb the desired position of a card or cards, or the order of a card stock within the deck. You can perform a false shuffle to simulate the shuffles you've just learned to keep one or a few cards in position on the top or the bottom of the deck.

The False Overhand Shuffle

There are several false overhand shuffles, but here's the easiest: Let's say the selected card is on top of the deck. As you start the shuffle, pick up the entire deck with your right hand instead of just the lower portion. Then, slide off just the top, single card with your left thumb rather than a small packet. Let this single card fall onto your left palm. Then continue the shuffle as usual. When you get finished, the chosen card will be on the bottom of the deck.



Hocus Quote-Us

In showing feats, and juggling with cards, the principal point consists in shuffling them nimbly, and always keeping one certain card either in the bottom, or in some known place of the stock.

—Reginald Scot, in *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584)

To return a selection to the top of the deck, perform another overhand shuffle. Make sure that you toss the bottom card (the chosen card) into your left hand last, as a single card, rather than as part of a final packet.

The False Riffle Shuffle

When you cut the deck into two piles, remember which pile has the chosen card(s) on top. Riffle the two halves together, but make sure that the original top card (the chosen card) falls last. Push the interlaced cards together, and square the deck. The chosen card(s) is back in place on top of the deck.

Obviously, if you want to keep a card or stock of cards on the bottom, simply let it (or them) drop from their half-deck first when you begin the shuffle.

The False Hindu Shuffle

As you start to Hindu shuffle, pull off the top, single card (rather than a small packet) with your left hand. Let this card fall onto your left palm. Complete the regular Hindu shuffle. The selected card will be on the bottom of the deck.

To bring the chosen card back to the top, transfer the squared deck back to your right hand, and perform another Hindu shuffle. Make sure that, at the end of the shuffle, instead of having a final, small packet in your right hand, you wind up with just one card. Pick up this single card with your left fingertips, and let it drop onto the rest of the deck already on your left palm. The chosen card is back on top of the deck.



Say the Magic Word

A **force** is a technique to secretly make a spectator perform some action that you want them to, either mentally or physically, but without his or her awareness.

May the "Force" Be with You

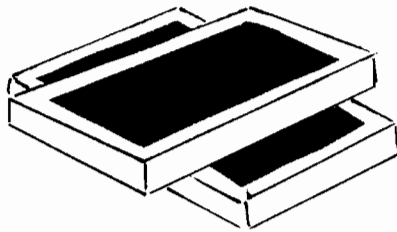
Wouldn't it be nice if you could make the spectator think he or she has a completely free selection as you *force* the spectator to pick the card you want them to—some card that you already know?

It's not only possible; magicians do it every day.

The Criss-Cross Force

There are many different difficult sleight-of-hand and psychological forces in the magician's arsenal, but the Criss-Cross Force, also known as "xing the cut," is perhaps the easiest and most subtle.

The card to be forced is on the top of the face-down deck. Set the deck onto the table. Ask a volunteer to cut approximately half of the deck to one side. Pick up the remainder of the deck to complete the cut. However, when you set the bottom half of the deck on top of the other cards, place it perpendicular to the lower portion, forming an X or cross. As you perform this "criss-cross" (which gives the force its name), comment, "We'll mark the spot where you cut."



The criss-cross force

For the card force to work, you must briefly draw the spectator's attention, either physically or psychologically, away from the deck. For example, if you're using the criss-cross force as part of a mind-reading effect, you might take a few seconds to point to your prediction. Or, briefly remind the audience what's happened so far: The cards have been shuffled and the spectator has freely cut the cards.

Believe it or not, this momentary mental misdirection will be enough to make the spectator forget which portion of the cards was the original top half of the deck.

Draw the spectator's attention back to the deck. Pick up the upper block of cards. Say, "Let's see what card you cut to."

Have the spectator pick up the top card of the packet remaining on the table. Although the spectator won't realize it, this was the original top card of the deck.

The Countdown Force

Secretly pre-set the card you want to force on the top of the deck. If you wish, start the force by giving the deck a false shuffle that retains the top card in position.

Ask the spectator to name a number from one to ten. Let's say that your volunteer says "five." Tell the spectator that you want him or her to deal down that number of cards, one at a time, then look at the last card dealt.

As you're saying this, demonstrate what you want the spectator to do: Deal down five cards onto a face-down pile. Pick up the last card dealt (the fifth card), look at it, then

return it face-down onto the top of the small packet of cards on the table. Pick up that five-card packet and place it back on top of the deck.

The card that you set up, the force card, will now be the fifth card down in the deck. To throw off your spectators, give the deck another false shuffle that keeps at least the top five cards on top of the pack.

Hand the deck to your spectator. He or she deals down the chosen amount of cards (in this case, five), and looks at the last card. It will be the force card that was originally on the top of the deck.

Hindu Shuffle Force

You can use the Hindu shuffle to perform one of the most effective card forces in existence. Don't pass this up!

The card you want to force should be on the bottom of the deck. Begin to Hindu shuffle the cards, and ask your spectator to say "Stop" at any time.

As soon as your spectator calls, immediately stop pulling off cards from your right-hand packet. Let any cards remaining at your left fingertips drop into your left palm. Lift your right hand so that your spectator can see the face of the bottom card of the right-hand packet. Ask your spectator to remember that card.

It is, of course, your force card, the original bottom card of the deck. The force works, however, because the spectator is misdirected by the abrupt manner in which you break off the shuffle, and change the rhythm and the directions in which you're moving your hands.

Drop the cards in your right hand face-down onto the face-down cards in your left hand. This reinforces the belief that the "freely selected card" had come from somewhere in the center of the deck.

Force Decks

Before we leave the subject of forces, I have to at least mention force (or forcing) decks. These are specially prepared (or trick) decks that allow you to easily force a particular card or cards. Some of these decks can be easily made, but it may be less expensive and time consuming to purchase them at a magic shop.

Among the simplest is a one-kind force deck. All 52 cards in the deck are the same. Needless to say, no matter what card the spectator picks, it's the one you want. (As I've noted, some magicians mistakenly call this is a one-way deck, but that's an entirely different creature.)

In a two-kind force deck, the top 26 cards are identical; the bottom 26 cards are different than the top 26 cards, but identical to each other. To force a card, spread only the appropriate half of the deck in front of the spectator for a selection.

With a two-kind force deck, you can either:

- Force either card.
- Force a different card to two separate spectators during the same trick.
- Repeat a trick using a different force card.

And the Svengali deck, a trick deck that I mentioned in Chapter 9, can also be used to easily force a card.

It's a Revelation!

There's an old saying, "It's not where you start, it's where you finish." For magicians performing card tricks, "It's not how you start, it's *how* you finish."

If you know in advance what card the spectator is going to pick (because you're going to force it), you can plan to have the card revealed in a truly amazing way.



Now You See It

Karrell Fox (1928–1998) was one of the first magicians to represent major corporations at their trade and industrial shows and was the very first magician to appear at a national auto show. From Detroit, Fox finally wrangled an interview with Henry Ford II, Henry Ford's grandson and then the president of Ford Motor Company, to discuss how Ford could use magic to introduce their new card models.

Fox performed a card trick, but he seemingly failed to find Ford's selected card. Before Fox left Ford's office, he asked whether he could look out the window to admire the automaker's renowned private garden. When Ford drew back the drapes, he saw the name of his selected card, the two of hearts (2H), in sky-writing. Ford was impressed: He realized that this man Fox thought big! It was the beginning of a 22-year association between Fox and Ford Motor Company.

You may have to start your magic on a more modest scale than Karrell Fox did at Ford Motor Company. But there are hundreds, if not thousands, of ways to say, "Is this your card?"

You're limited only by your imagination.

Revelations

Here are some of my favorite ways to say “Is this your card?” In each case you force a card, and a duplicate, or its name, is found elsewhere. With some of these revelations, you can use either a force card or a card that you’ve discovered by using a key card location. I’m sure that the preparation required for each of these revelations will be obvious. Enjoy!

- ▶ You bring out a second deck of cards. A duplicate of the chosen card is discovered face-up in the face-down cards.
- ▶ Create and wear a temporary tattoo (made with a felt-tip pen) of the chosen card.
- ▶ Have the duplicate in a sealed envelope, which was given to the spectator or set in full view before the card was selected.
- ▶ Take a photograph of you holding the chosen card, and carry it in your wallet. Or, simply carry a duplicate of the force card.
- ▶ Create a fake newspaper headline that reads **MAGICIAN FINDS [FORCE CARD]**. (You can make the headline with your computer, at a print shop, by freehand, or by using stencil or transfer letters from a stationary store.)
- ▶ Have the force card printed or airbrushed onto the back of a T-shirt.
- ▶ Deliberately miscall the chosen (force) card. Remove a pocket hanky to wipe the “flop sweat” from your brow. Open the handkerchief to reveal that it bears an illustration of the card (which you’ve previously drawn with a marking pen).
- ▶ Position the force card on top of the deck. Place the deck into spectator’s shirt or coat pocket. Ask the spectator to name a low number, say, from 1 to 20. As you count to that number, pull out cards, one at a time, from the bottom of the deck. When you reach the number that the spectator has named, remove the card from the top of the deck, and reveal it to be the selected card.
- ▶ **The Voice Detector.** Tell the spectator that you’re able to recognize stress in a person’s voice. Have your spectator call the names of the playing cards as he or she deals them, one at a time, face-up onto the table. When your spectator names the selected card, pretend to notice a subtle change, some stress, in the voice and call “Stop!”
- ▶ Have the card on top of the deck. Set the deck on the table in front of your spectator. Simply ask the leading question, “And the name of your card was...?” As the spectator completes the answer, indicate that he or she should turn over the top card of the deck to reveal the chosen card. Although the effect itself is simple, the fact that the spectator touches the card, and not you, has a stronger-than-expected impact.
- ▶ Have the chosen card on top of the deck. Hold the pack in a vertical position, with the face of the deck toward the spectator and your forefinger resting on the back of the top card. Using your other hand, pretend to remove a hair from your

(or the spectator's) head. Wrap the invisible hair around the deck, and "pull" upward. Push the top card upward with your forefinger, and the card seems to rise from the deck. (This revelation is credited to Audley Walsh, 1894-1957.)

- **The Wizard.** Arrange with a friend who knows what card you'll force to be at home, waiting by the telephone. Give your spectator the wizard's telephone number. The spectator places the call, and the mysterious wizard at the other end of the line immediately names the chosen card.
- **Force the two of hearts.** Say "Every magician has a big book of tricks. Here's mine." Show this book. "And every sorcerer's apprentice has a master wizard." Point out the "About the Author" bio of your "magical mentor," located on the inside back cover of this book. The last line reads "Oh, and by the way, he says you chose the Two of Hearts."

(Some of these forces were suggested in the now difficult-to-locate book *The Living End*, compiled by J.G. Thompson, Jr., 1910-1975.)

The Magician's Insurance Policy

Before we leave the subject of card revelations, here's one of the classics. This routine and comedy prop was devised by George McAthy (1910–1971). The Magician's Insurance Policy is a perfect example of a classic card trick plot: magician pretends to have trouble finding a card, then fails, only to finally reveal it in a comic, surprise ending.

The Effect: The spectator selects a card. You fail to find it but explain that you're covered by an insurance policy. You open the policy to read the conditions of payment as well as the fine print, only to reveal a blow-up of the selected card.

Preparation: Take this book to your local printer or photocopy store. On one side of a piece of stiff, opaque paper, make a photocopy of the oversized five of spades illustrated here. On the opposite side, photocopy the artwork of the Magician's Insurance Policy. (It may take a few tries to position the artwork properly, especially if you are enlarging it to fill a standard or legal-size piece of paper.)

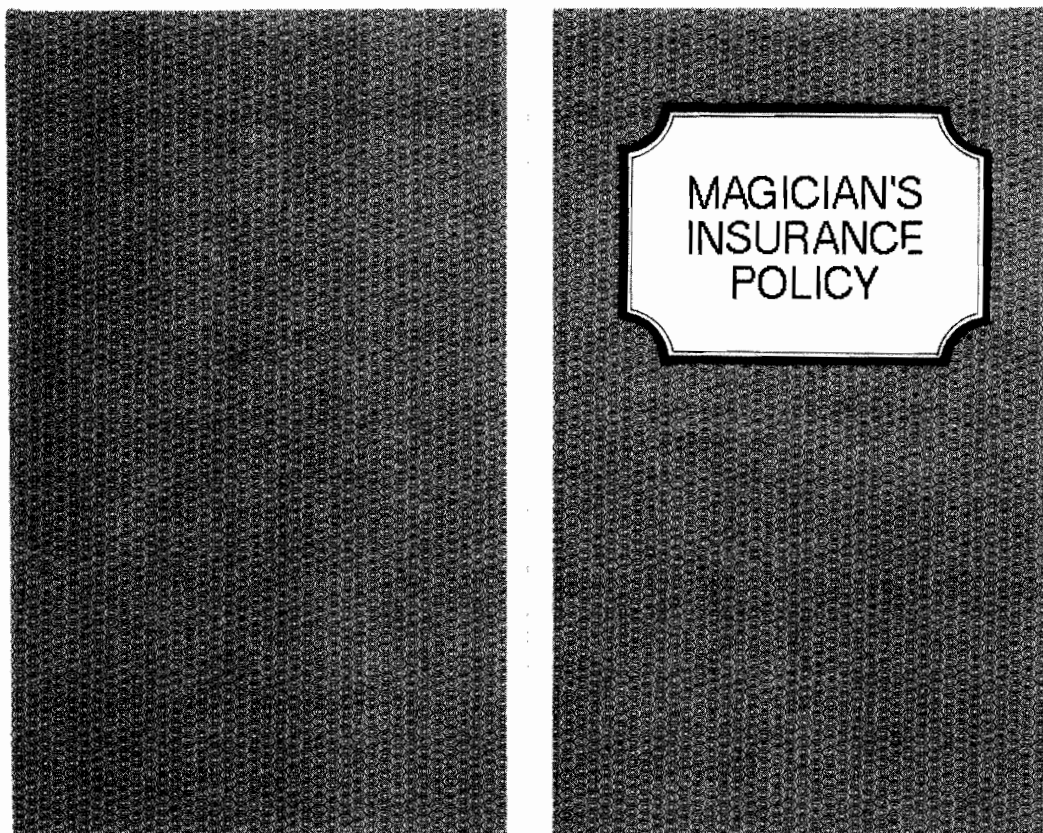
After the paper's printed on both sides, fold it in half, so that the reproduction of the giant card is on the inside.

(If you want a larger, professional prop, the Magician's Insurance Policy is still available from most magical dealers.)

The Routine: Force the five of spades. Have the spectator return the card to the deck and shuffle the pack. Take back the deck.

An amazing miracle is about to take place. You've shuffled the deck, yet if I tap the top of the deck, your card will magically rise to the top of the deck.

Turn over the top card. If it is the five, stop! You really *have* performed a miracle.



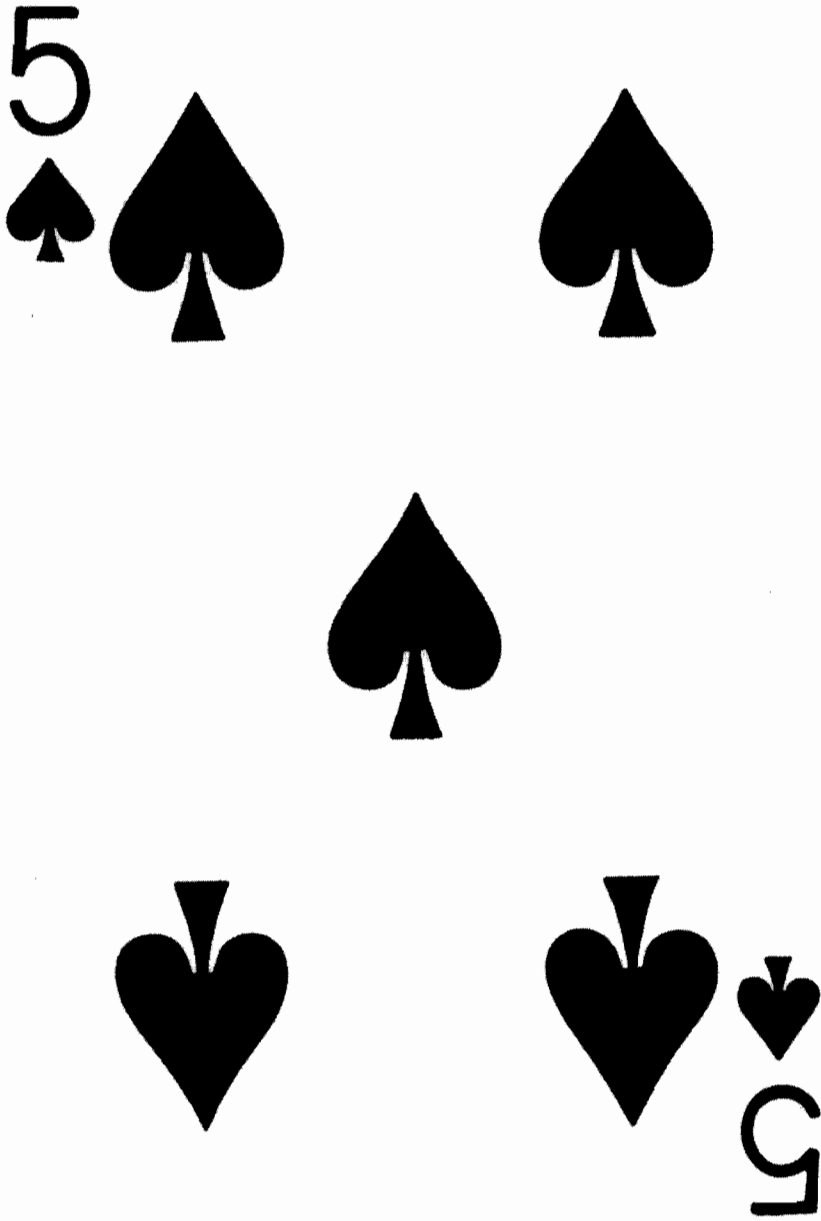
Cover of Magician's Insurance Policy.

Probably, it will not be the five of spades. Stare at the top card.

Now here's where your improvisational skills and magical experience are going to come into play. Pretend to make several attempts to find the chosen card. You might claim that the top card is merely an "indicator card," and use its value to count or spell down to another card in the pack. You might pretend to panic: Pull out several indifferent cards and cry, "Do any of these look familiar?"

Finally, you give up. You tell the audience that, fortunately, you have insurance that will pay off if you can't find the chosen card. Show the folded policy, and open it so that only you can see what's inside.

Fortunately, I carry insurance just in case something like this happens. Let's check the fine print. Oh, here's something interesting. What was the name of your card? The five of spades?



Five of spades.

Turn the piece of paper so that the audience can see the oversized face of the playing card.

Is this your card?

The Least You Need to Know

- A working vocabulary of playing cards is necessary to communicate with your fellow magicians and to properly understand and learn from the magical literature.
- Audiences expect magicians to possess a certain degree of skill when they work with playing cards.
- It's possible to shuffle the deck without disturbing the position of some or all of the cards.
- It's possible to force a spectator to choose any card that you want them to take.
- By knowing in advance what card the spectator will pick, you can reveal the selected card in unusual ways that wouldn't otherwise be possible.



We're in the Money!

In This Chapter

- ▶ Coin passes
- ▶ Palming coins
- ▶ The "coin from the ear" trick
- ▶ How to make coins fly invisibly through the air
- ▶ Making coins penetrate through solids
- ▶ Vanishing coins

If you asked 100 people what the first magic trick was that they ever saw, it would probably be someone pulling a coin out from behind their ear. You're going to learn how to do that, and much more coin magic in this chapter.

A Moving Experience

Almost all of the tricks in this chapter depend on the ability to perform one or two basic coin sleights: a coin pass and/or the ability to palm a coin. This isn't as frightening as it seems. In fact, you've already had some practice with a finger palm (in Chapter 12).

A pass is a basic sleight in which you seemingly transfer, or pass, an object from one hand to the other. Although you'll learn these moves with coins, you can perform the same sleights with almost any small object you can hide in your hand.

There are two categories of passes: the “put” and the “take.” One style is not necessarily better than the other. Knowing which type you’re performing gives you a better idea of what kind of action the sneaky move is *supposed* to look like.



Tip of the Wand

You might want to use different coin passes throughout your routines for the same reason you never immediately repeat a trick: The second and third time they know what’s going to happen, so they know what to look for. Each time the audience sees a move repeated, it gives them another chance to catch you or to figure it out.

In a “put” style of pass, you start by holding a coin in one hand and apparently put it in the other, but secretly keep the coin in the hand where it started. A good example of this would be the classic coin pass, which we’ll look at first.

In a “take” pass, you display a coin in one hand and apparently pick it up, or take it, with the other hand. In actuality, you secretly retain the coin in the hand where it started. A perfect example would be the French Drop.

As with all your magic, the key to performing any pass or other coin sleight is naturalness. It must look like you’re actually doing what you want the audience to believe you’re doing. Think about what the action would look like if you were really doing it, or actually try it, then practice the sleight until it looks the same.

The Standard Vanish

In his classic reference, *Modern Coin Magic*, J. B. Bobo (1910–1996) referred to this move as the Standard Vanish. Although this may not be the easiest pass, I personally consider it to be the most versatile and, perhaps, the most deceptive. In the Standard Vanish, you show a coin in your right hand, then apparently put the coin in your left hand. The coin vanishes from your left hand.

Although the pass is performed in one fluid motion, I’ve broken down the action into three sorta-easy steps.

1. Hold the coin between the thumb, forefinger and middle finger of your right hand. Show the coin to your audience. Hold your left hand open, palm-up. With your right hand, start to place the coin onto your left palm.

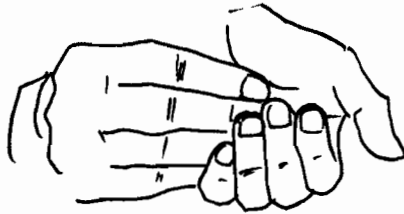
Display the coin in your right hand, and start to place it onto your left palm.



2. Just as your right fingers come in contact with your left palm, curl up your left fingers around the right fingers, as if to encircle the coin. This will shield the right fingertips and the coin from the audience's view.



Raise the left fingers to cover the coin and the right fingers, your view.



Raise your left fingers to cover the coin, audience's view.

3. Under cover of the left fingers, use the right thumb to slide the coin back into a right finger-palm position. Continue to curl the left fingers into a fist, closing around the right fingers. Finally, move the closed left hand to the left, away from the right hand. Follow the left hand with your eyes; the audience's eyes will follow yours. After the left hand has moved away, casually drop your right hand (palming the coin) to your side.



The right hand finger-palms the coin. The left hand pretends to receive the coin, then moves away from the right hand.

Here are three important “Thou Shalt Not”s to help you perform the perfect pass:

1. Don't clench your right hand into a tight fist after you finger palm the coin. It will look like you're hiding something.
2. Don't make any tell-tale movement with your right fingers as you palm the coin. If the audience sees any twitching, they'll know where you're trying to hide the

coin. Either complete the finger palm while your right fingers are still under cover of the left fingers, or wait until your right hand is out of sight, resting at your side.

3. Don't move your right and left hand at the same time. Instead of it looking like you've transferred the coin from your right hand into your left, it looks like you're playing the game "Guess Which Hand."

Remember what's *supposed* to be happening: The coin is on a trip, passing from *here* to *there*, but halfway along the path, you transfer the coin from one hand to the other. The pass should simulate this action. It's just that the coin never makes it all the way across.

At the end of a successful classic pass, the audience believes that the coin from your right hand is now in your left hand.

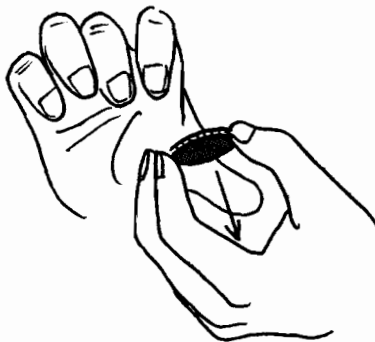
The French Drop

No, the French Drop, also known as the tourniquet, is not something performed by a guillotine. The French Drop is one of the most basic coin moves. It dates to at least the 16th century and it appears in most beginner books of magic. Don't let that stop you from using it—done correctly, the French Drop is a valuable tool in your close-up arsenal.

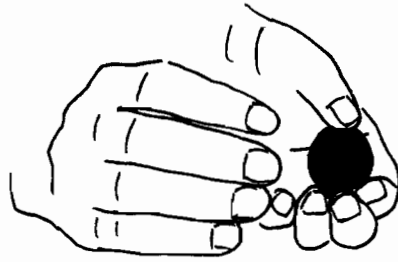
In effect, you show a coin in one hand and seemingly pick it up with the other. In reality, the transfer never takes place. You secretly keep the coin in the hand that was originally displaying it.

Hold a coin by its edge between your left thumb and left middle and ring fingers of your palm-up hand. This puts your hand in a sort of U shape. Hold your left hand so that the back of your fingers are facing toward your audience. Tilt the coin to make it more visible to the audience by pushing upward slightly with your left thumb.

Preparing for the French Drop, exposed view.



Approach your left hand with your palm-down right hand. Stick your right thumb under and past the coin, and let your right fingers cover the coin.



*The French Drop,
audience's view.*

As soon as the coin is out of sight, let the coin drop down into your left hand. With practice, you can get the coin to fall directly onto the base of the fingers, the perfect position from which to finger palm the coin.

Close the fingers of your right hand into a loose fist as if you're grabbing the coin. Move your right fist up and away from your left fist. As you do, follow your right fist with your eyes. The audience's eyes will follow the motion of your hand and eyes.

This is absolutely essential: Don't move your left hand just yet. You don't want the audience's eyes following the left hand. As I explained with the Standard Vanish, don't close your left hand into a fist, or you'll confuse your spectator as to which hand is supposed to be holding the coin.

After the audience's view has followed your right hand away, casually drop your left hand to your side. Slightly curl your left fingers to hold the coin in place in a finger palm.

The move is now complete. The audience believes the coin is in your right hand, but it's really still in your left hand.

The Classic Palm

Palming is a catch-all term that non-magicians (and some magicians) use to mean secretly hiding something in your hand. There are, of course, many different ways to conceal an object, and each has specific hand positioning, advantages, and disadvantages. You've already learned the names of several in Chapter 12.

Here is the classic grip that gives palming its name. In this basic palming position, a coin (or other small object) is concealed and held at the center of the palm. Magicians sometimes call this the classic palm.

To find the correct position for the classic palm in your own hand, place a coin in the center of your



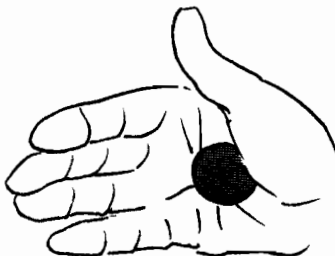
Hocus Quote-Us

The principal place to keep a piece of money is the palm of your hand... The money must not be of too small nor of too large a circumference ... it is to be kept between the fingers, almost at the fingers end...

—Reginald Scot, in *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*

palm. Squeeze the coin slightly between the muscular pads at the bases of your thumb and little fingers. You'll know you have the correct spot when you can turn your hand palm-down, and the coin stays in place.

The classic coin palm.



One way to get the coin into a classic palm is to set the coin near the ends of the middle and ring fingers. Curl your fingers and press them into your palm, carrying the coin along with them. This usually places the coin in the exact classic palm position. Open your fingers, but keep the coin in your palm. Contract your palm muscles to hold the coin in place.

You can also use this method to transfer a coin from a finger palm to a classic palm. To move a coin from a classic palm to a finger-palm position, close your hand into a loose fist, relax your palm muscles, and let gravity drop the coin onto the curled fingers at their base.



Tip of the Wand

After you perform the Standard Vanish or the French Drop, you have to palm the coin. It may be easier and more comfortable (and therefore more deceptive) for you to conceal the coin in a classic or center palm position rather than a finger palm. Experiment and practice with several palming positions to find out which works best for you.

An advantage of the center palm is the fact that you can spread your fingers apart, disarming those who think the coin is hidden behind the fingers. It also makes it easier for the fingers to grasp and manipulate other objects.

The classic palm does have disadvantages: Unless you get the coin into the exact, correct position of the palm, your hand will look gnarled and twisted as it struggles to keep the coin in place. Also, it's sometimes more difficult to get a coin into a center palm position than it is into a finger palm.

Here's a simple way to practice the classic palm: Place a coin into position, then forget it's there. Walk to the store, go to the movies, watch TV, whatever. Pretty soon, holding a coin in a classic palm will seem second-nature. Your hand will do it automatically, and it will look completely natural.

The Old Coin-from-Behind-the-Ear Trick

OK, here it is, in all its glory: How to pull a coin out from behind someone's ear. Back in Chapter 12, I suggested it as a possible ending to "Coin Go" because the coin was

already hidden in your right hand. But here's what you do if you have to start from scratch with just one coin, your two hands, and their two ears.

The Effect: You place a coin in your left hand. It disappears. You reach behind your spectator's right ear and find the missing coin.

Preparation: None.

The Routine: Hold a coin at your right fingertips. Using a Standard Vanish, pretend to place the coin into your left hand, but secretly keep it in your right hand. Let your right hand drop casually to your side, as you hold the coin in a finger-palm position.

Blow, or have the spectator blow, on your left hand. Open your left fist. The coin has vanished!

Pretend to see something behind your volunteer's right ear. Lift your right hand to behind the spectator's ear. Use your right thumb to push the coin to your fingertips. Bring your right hand back in front of the spectator to show the coin at your fingertips.

Coin Flight

Here's the most basic coin trick I know. It's probably one of the first tricks ever invented with coins.

In order to perform the trick, you have to be able to perform a simple pass, any pass. The great thing is, this trick can be done with almost any small object, not just coins. Remember, this is the trick I did with the rocks from a ritual fire mound in Indonesia.

The Effect: You place one coin in each hand. Suddenly, they jump together: Both coins are in one hand.

Preparation: None. You'll need two coins or other small objects.

The Routine: Pick up a coin with your right thumb and fingers. Pretend to place the coin in your left hand, but, using the Standard Vanish, secretly retain the coin in your right hand.

After the pass is completed, your left hand is closed in a loose fist. Move it to the left, about 2 feet from your right hand.



Tip of the Wand

To add the sense of touch to this trick, brush the coin against your spectator's ear as you reproduce the coin. The spectator seems to feel the instant that the coin appears.



Hocus Quote-Us

You seem to put one piece in your left hand, and retaining it still in your right hand, you may together therewith take up another piece, and so with words seem to bring both pieces together.

—Reginald Scot, in *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*



Say the Magic Word

Talking is the sound made by two objects (at least one of which is hidden) when they touch.



Tip of the Wand

When I perform this trick, I try to use quarters. That way, I can patter about the eagles on the back, and how one flies to join the other.

Pick up a second coin with your right hand. Add that coin to the one hidden in your hand. Just be careful that the two coins don't click up against one another and make noise. Magicians call this sound *talking*.

Hold out both fists in front of you, about 2 feet apart. Give a quick shake with your left fist, then, give a quick shake with your right fist. Open your hands to show that the left-hand coin has traveled to join the one in your right hand.

The "Ten Count" and "Countdown"

Here's a longer version of "Coin Flight." It asks to follow along as the coins jump at the count of ten. Or, the audience can count along in Cape Canaveral-style countdown from ten to blast off. The name "ten count" became attached to this series of moves in the 1950s.

The Effect: You variously cover and uncover two coins with your hands as you count from one to ten. At the end of the "ten count," you place one coin in each hand. Magically, they jump together into one hand.

You offer to repeat the trick. This time everyone counts down, as if at a Cape Canaveral launch, from ten down to one. At the end of the countdown, you place one coin in each hand. On "Blast Off," the coins jump together into one hand.

Preparation: None.

The Routine: Set two coins on the table in front of you, about 6-12" apart.

Cover the coin to your right with your right hand, palm-down. Count "One." Cover the coin to your left with your left hand, palm-down. Count "Two."

Lift your right hand, and turn it over, palm-up. Cover the coin to your right with your right hand, still palm-up. Count "Three." Lift your left hand, and turn it over, palm-up. Cover the coin to your left with your left hand, still palm-up. Count "Four."

As you count "Five," pick up the coin to your right with your right thumb, forefinger and middle finger. As you count "Six," turn your right hand palm-up, holding the coin at your fingertips so that everyone can see it.

Perform the pass, pretending to place the coin in your left hand while secretly finger-palming in your right hand. Count "Seven."

With your right hand, pick up the coin remaining on the table, and add it to the coin already in your fist. Don't let the coins touch and make noise. Count "Eight."

As you count “Nine,” turn your left hand palm-up, and open your hand. The coin is gone!

As you count “Ten,” turn your right hand palm-up, and open your hand. As you open your fist, let the two coins click together. The sound will suggest that the coin has just arrived from the other hand *that instant!* The two coins have joined together!

With only slight modifications, you can perform this series of moves while you count-down from ten to one—just like a rocket ship countdown at Cape Canaveral. You might want to ask the audience to count along with you. Like in the Ten Count, you’ll perform the pass midway through the count. At the end, yell, “Blast off!” Open both your hands; the two coins will be together.

Rubaway Coin

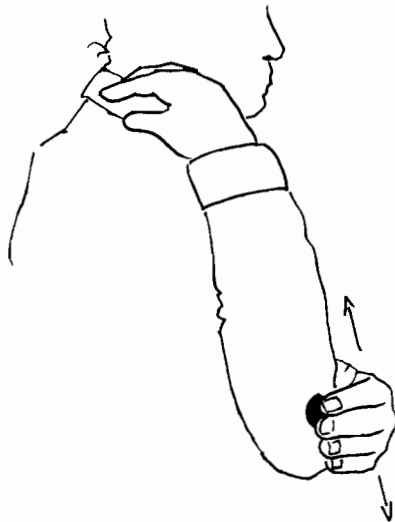
This coin uses the pass on an off-beat, making it particularly deceptive.

The Effect: You tell your spectator that you’re going to make a coin disappear by rubbing it into “nothingness.” You rub the coin against your right forearm, just above the elbow. The coin vanishes.

Preparation: None.

The Routine: Pick up the coin in your right hand. Transfer the coin to your left hand. This should look exactly like the pass you’ll be performing in a couple of minutes, but, for now, you really *do* place the coin in your left hand.

Bend your right arm. Tilt your forearm slightly toward you so that your right hand is nearly touching the collar of your shirt or blouse. With your left fingers, press the coin against your right forearm, just above the elbow. Rub your left fingers in a circular motion. Say that you’re going to make the coin disappear by rubbing it away.



Rubbing the coin against your elbow. Note the position of your right hand.

“Accidentally” let the coin drop from your fingers. The coin falls down to the floor or table. Oops! The trick didn’t work.

Apologize to the audience, and offer to try the trick again.

Pick up the coin with your right hand. Pretend to place the coin into your left hand, but perform a pass and secretly retain it in your right hand. (This should look exactly the same as when you really did place the coin in your left hand earlier.)

Once again, bend your right arm, and, again, tilt the forearm toward you so that your right hand touches the collar of your shirt or blouse. Press your left fingers against your forearm, just above the elbow, and rub the fingers in a circular motion. While attention is on your left hand, use your right thumb to push the coin to the ends of the fingers and drop the coin inside the collar of your shirt or blouse. Then, casually move your right hand away from your collar.

Stop rubbing. Tilt your left hand away from your arm, so that it lies open, palm-up. Let the audience see that your left hand is empty. Hold out both hands in front of you, open, palm-up. The coin is gone!

The Coin Fold

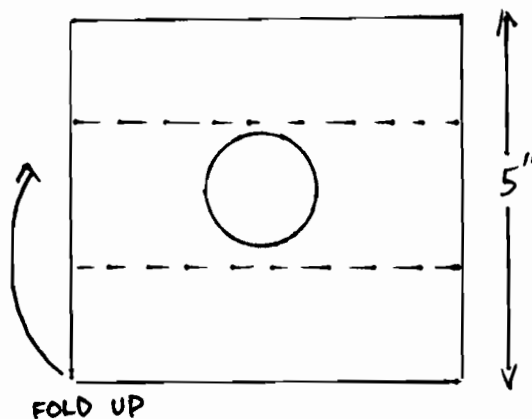
The trick of making a coin vanish from within a folded-up piece of paper is probably as old as paper itself. Dozens, if not hundreds, of different folds have been devised and put in print. This version is devilishly simple, yet totally deceptive.

The Effect: You fold a coin into a square packet of paper. The coin can be seen and felt through the packet. The coin is rapped against the table to prove it is still there. Without any false moves, you rip up the packet. The coin is gone.

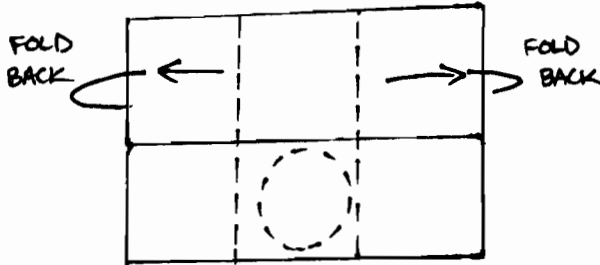
Preparation: You will need a coin, preferably a quarter or half dollar, and a 5" square piece of paper.

The Routine: Place the coin at the center of the paper. Fold the bottom third of the paper up to cover the coin.

Fold up the paper to cover the coin.

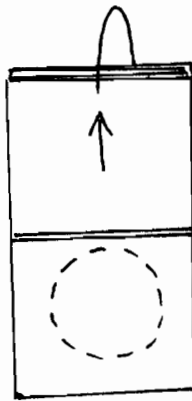


Pick up the paper, and pinch the coin (through the paper) between your left thumb and fingers. Fold the right third of the paper back, away from you. Fold the left third of the paper back, away from you too.



Fold the paper on both sides of the coin.

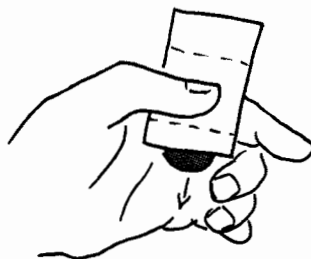
Still pinching the coin through the paper between the left thumb and fingers, fold down the top half of the paper, back away from you.



Fold down the top half of the paper.

At this point, it appears to the audience as if the coin is trapped inside the paper. In actual fact, there is an unseen opening at the top of the packet.

Transfer the packet from your left hand to your right hand between the thumb and forefinger. As you do so, turn the packet over end-for-end so that the opening is along the bottom edge of the packet. Curl your fingers into a loose fist. Relax your pinch on the packet, and the coin will fall down into a finger-palm position.



The coin escapes and is finger palmed.

Once the coin is palmed, transfer the packet back to your left hand. As you reach into your pocket to get your “magic wand” (a pencil or pen) or perhaps some of that all-purpose “magic dust,” leave the coin in your pocket.

Tap or sprinkle the packet. Rip the paper into small pieces. The coin has disappeared!

Coin through Handkerchief

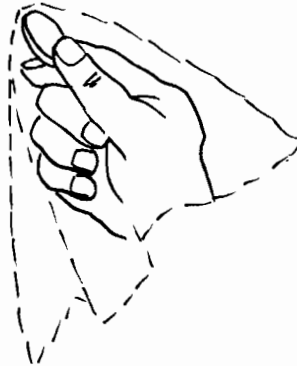
The trick’s name says it all.

The Effect: You hold a coin at your fingertips and cover it with a handkerchief. The coin visibly penetrates the center of the hanky, yet there is no hole in the cloth.

Preparation: None. You will need a cotton handkerchief and a coin. This is probably easiest to perform with a quarter or a half dollar.

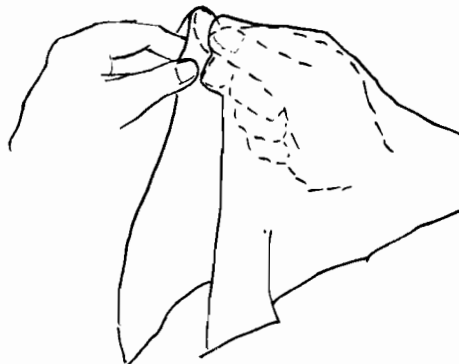
The Routine: Hold the coin between your right thumb and forefinger. Cover your hand with the handkerchief so that one corner lies on the right forearm and the opposite corner hangs down in front.

Cover the coin at your fingertips with a hanky.

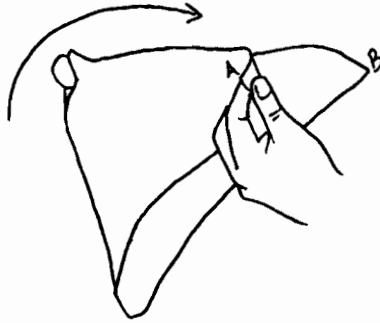


With your left thumb and forefinger, pinch the coin through the cloth as if you are adjusting it. While the left fingers are holding the coin, make a small tuck in the cloth behind the coin with your right thumb, and pinch the tuck against the coin.

Tuck the cloth, and pinch it against the back of the coin.



This next move is supposedly to “prove” that the coin is still under the hanky. Lift the front corner of the handkerchief, and pull it up and over the coin, all the way back until it touches the corner of the hanky on your right arm. During this whole move, your right thumb must hold onto the small tuck of cloth.



“Prove” that the coin is still there.

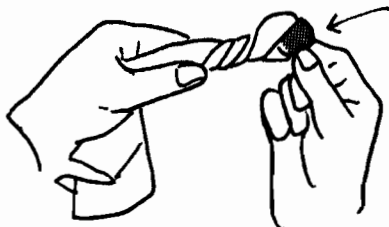
With your left thumb and forefinger, grasp both corners of the hanky resting on your right forearm. Pull them all the way forward up and over the coin. It looks as if you have covered the coin again, but, because of the secret tuck, the coin is now actually outside (but behind) the center of the handkerchief.



Pull the two corners forward “covering” the coin.

Hold the coin against the back of the hanky, out of sight, with your right thumb and forefinger. Grasp the four corners of the handkerchief with your left hand, and give them several twists. Pinch the hanky just below the twists with your left hand. With your right hand, pretend to work the coin slowly through the center of the handkerchief.

The coin “penetrates”
the hanky.



Hand the coin to a spectator, flick the handkerchief open, then spread it to show that there is no hole in the hanky.



Tip of the Wand

I explain how the trick is done in my patter: There’s a trapdoor in the hanky. I often follow-up this trick with “Trapdoor Trickery,” from Chapter 4.

A Bird in the Hand

There are many, many variations of this old favorite in magical literature. I generally refer to it as “Two in the Hand, One in the Pocket.”

This is one of the best impromptu close-up tricks I know, because it doesn’t have to be done with coins. I’ve performed this trick with everything from sugar cubes to pencil erasers. As long as you can hold three of whatever object you’re going to use in one fist, you’re able to do the trick. Oh, and you do have to be able to palm one of them. But by now, that should be no

problem.

The Effect: You show three coins, close two of them in your left fist, and place one in your right pocket. You open your left hand to reveal that there are three coins in your left hand. Magically, the coin has jumped out of your pocket to join the other two. This is repeated. Finally, you place just one coin in your left hand and two in your pocket. You open your left hand, and the coin is gone. Seemingly, all of the coins have disappeared!

Preparation: None, but you’ll need four identical coins or other small object.

The Routine: Bring out three coins, and, as you do, finger palm a fourth one in your right hand. Set the three coins on the table.

Pick up one coin between your right thumb and forefinger. Hold out your open left hand, palm-up. Toss the coin into your open left palm as you count “One.”

Pick up the second coin between your right thumb and forefinger. Toss the coin at your right fingertips into your left hand. As you do, however, uncurl your right fingers enough to let the palmed coin fly into your left hand as well. The instant the coins hit the left palm, close your left hand into a fist. Don’t worry about the loud “clink.” The audience will assume it is merely the two coins talking.

Pick up the last coin from the table between your right thumb and forefinger. Show it to the audience, casually allowing them to see that your right hand is otherwise empty.

Place that coin in your right pocket, but once the hand is out of sight, palm the coin in your right hand. Take your right hand out of your pocket, and let it hang naturally at your side.

Ask how many coins are in your left hand. Regardless of what the audience says, open your left hand. Show the three coins in your left, and dump them onto the table.

Repeat the above series of moves. This time, though, actually leave the coin in your pocket. Take out your empty right hand, casually allow the audience to see that it's empty (without saying so!), then let it hang naturally at your side.

Ask the audience how many coins you have in your left hand. Open your hand to reveal three coins. Dump the coins on the table.

Now the switch: Pick up a coin between your right thumb and forefinger. Pretend to place it in your left hand, but actually perform a pass and retain the coin, secretly hidden, in your right hand. At the end of the pass, your left hand should be closed in a fist.

With your right hand, pick up the other two coins together from the table, and add them to the palmed coin. Place your right hand into your pocket, and drop in all three coins. It doesn't matter if the coins talk in your right hand or in your pocket; the audience will assume that it's just the two coins clinking together. Bring out your right hand, casually let the audience see that your right hand is empty.

Ask the audience how many coins are in your left hand. Regardless of what the audience guesses, say, "None!" Open both hands, palm-up, in front of the audience. The coins are gone!



Now You See It

Although coin tricks have always been popular, T. Nelson Downs (1867–1938), raised coin manipulation to an art form—a distinct branch of magic—when he performed in vaudeville and nightclubs. For many years, his book *Modern Coin Manipulation* was considered the standard work on coin magic. J.B. Bobo (1910–?), on the other hand, began on the Lyceum and Chautauqua circuit, finally specializing in school assembly shows. He has a passion for coin manipulation, however, and his book, *Modern Coin Magic*, supplanted Downs's book as the most important book on the subject. Most magicians would agree that David Roth (b. 1952) is the best coin worker in close-up magic today. Born in New York City, Roth has flawless technique in both classic and his own coin sleights. He reveals his technique and many original coin routines in *Expert Coin Magic*.

Well, that wraps up my short introduction to sleight-of-hand coin magic. If you wish to pursue more advanced coin magic, there are several excellent magic texts that specialize in coin magic available at most major magic shops. I especially recommend J.B. Bobo's *Modern Coin Magic* and David Roth's *Expert Coin Magic*.

The Least You Need to Know

- Tricks with money hold the audience's attention, especially if one of them loaned you the money to use in the trick.
- Passes and palming are basic sleights, the building blocks of coin magic.
- Most coin sleights are versatile and can be used to perform close-up magic with other small objects.
- As in all magic, naturalness in motion and in the handling of props is essential to fool the audience.
- Coin tricks appear in some of magic's oldest texts. Major proponents in the 20th century include T. Nelson Downs, J.B. Bobo, and David Roth.



Magic with Everyday Objects

In This Chapter

- ▶ Rubber-band baffler
- ▶ A kite-string stunner: two into one
- ▶ Safety-pin puzzler
- ▶ Ashes to ashes
- ▶ Tissue trickery
- ▶ Business-card connivery

Perhaps nothing is more amazing than magic with everyday items. Magicians are frequently handed common objects and challenged to “do something.” This chapter explains a few easy tricks, some requiring very simple sleights with such ordinary objects as rubber bands, string, and safety pins.

Stretching Your Imagination: The Jumping Rubber Band

This is one of those weird little tricks that seems to have been around forever. It was invented by British magician Stanley Collins (1881–1966), and it was first written up in *The Magician Monthly* in December, 1911.

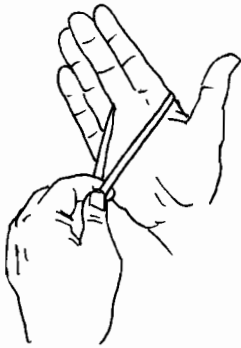
The Effect: You place a rubber band around the first and second fingers of your right hand, and then close your hand into a fist. When you open your hand, the rubber band jumps to the third and fourth finger. You twist a second band around your fingertips, but the first rubber band is still able to jump across.

Preparation: No setup is required. All you need is one or more rubber bands.

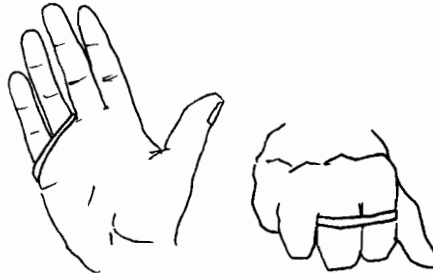
The Routine: Place a rubber band around the first and second fingers of your right hand, moving the elastic all the way to the base of the fingers. Show both sides of your right hand to the audience.

Using your left thumb and forefinger, pinch the rubber band on the palm side of your hand and stretch it outwards, away from your palm, as if demonstrating the elasticity of the rubber band. Close your right hand into a fist, but, as you do, secretly stretch the band around all four fingertips of your right hand.

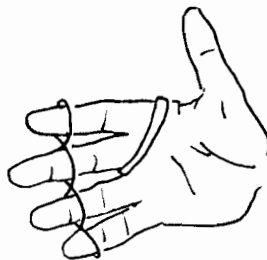
Open your right hand, extending the fingers. The rubber band appears to “jump” to encircle your third and fourth fingers.



Stretch the rubber band on the palm side of your hand outward, away from your palm.



Magician's point of view (left) and audience's point of view (right).



Right hand with two rubber bands.

Here's a follow-up trick: Place the rubber band around the first and second fingers of your right hand. Twist a second band around the tips of your right fingers.

Demonstrate how the upper rubber band makes it “impossible” for the lower band to escape or jump across to the other fingers.

Stretch the lower rubber band around the fingertips of your right fist, as before. Open your right hand, and the lower rubber band jumps across to the ring and middle fingers. The second rubber band doesn’t impede the jumping band. This idea was first published by Harlan Tarbell (1890–1960) in volume one of his *Tarbell Course in Magic*.

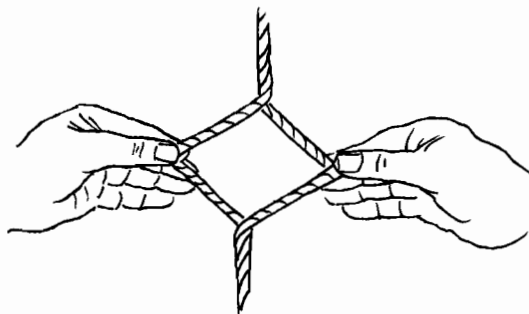
All Strung Up

This simple trick is unbelievably strong because the spectator not only sees it happen, but also feels it taking place—in his or her own hand!

The Effect: You show two pieces of kite string, and then place one end from each string into a spectator’s hand. In the volunteer’s hand, the two strings merge into one!

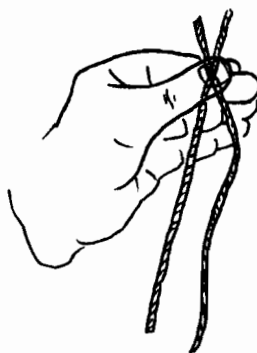
Preparation: You’ll need a piece of twisted cord or string, like kite string, preferably at least 12" long. Pinch the string near the middle and untwist a section of the cord by gently rolling it between your thumb and finger. Separate the strands further by pulling some of the strands to the left and some to the right.

Twist each section of strands (labeled “A” and “B” in the illustration) separately until they resemble the true ends of the string. Then, rearrange the kite string so that it looks like two pieces of string. Hold the “two strings” between your left thumb and forefinger: The two new “ends” should stick up above your thumb and finger; your thumb and finger pinch the point that the two strings cross, and the actual ends of the string dangle down below your thumb and finger.



Separate a 1 to 2" section of the string into two sections.

Hold the re-configured cord so that it looks like two separate pieces of kite string.



The Routine: Show your spectator “two” pieces of string, holding them as described. Ask your volunteer to hold out his or her hand, palm-up.

Hold the two strings over the spectator’s hand. Spread the bottom ends of the “two” strings, and drape one end over the thumb side and the other end over the little finger side of the spectator’s palm. Lay the top “ends” of the strings onto the middle of the spectator’s palm. Keep the secret twist pinched between your thumb and forefinger so that it is hidden.

Ask the spectator to close his or her fist around the two ends that rest on his or her palm. As soon as his or her fingers cover the string, remove your thumb and finger.

Turn the spectator’s hand palm-down. There’ll be one string sticking out of each side of the spectator’s fist. The spectator will think that these are two separate strings.

Pick up one end with your left hand and the other end with your right hand. Pull the string back and forth, a few inches one way, and then a few inches the other. Finally, pull the string all the way through the spectator’s fist.

The two strings have joined into one. The freaky thing is the spectator believes he or she felt two separate strings fuse together.

Rip It!

The Effect: The spectator and you hold adjacent corners of a cotton handkerchief. You pin a safety pin near the spectator’s corner, and then visibly pull the pin through the hanky to your corner. The spectator hears the hanky rip, yet there is no tear in the hanky.

Preparation: You’ll need a pocket handkerchief, preferably one with a narrow hem, and a large safety pin, preferably about 1½" long.

The Routine: Ask a spectator to pinch the corner of the handkerchief between his or her thumb and forefinger. You’re going to pull the handkerchief taut, so caution your volunteer to hold the hanky tightly. (Otherwise, you might yank the hanky out of his or her hand.)

Pinch one of the adjacent corners (not the diagonally-opposite corner) of the handkerchief between your left thumb and forefinger. Pull on your corner so that the upper edge of the hanky is in a straight, taut line.

Open the safety pin and, starting from the side of the handkerchief closest to your right hand, stick the pin through the top edge of the hanky, about 2" from the corner your spectator is holding and no more than a 1/2" down from the edge of the hanky.

There are two ways to remove the pin from the handkerchief. One way is to open the pin. The other is to rip the hanky. But I'm going to move the pin without doing either. You can hear the hanky rip. Listen!

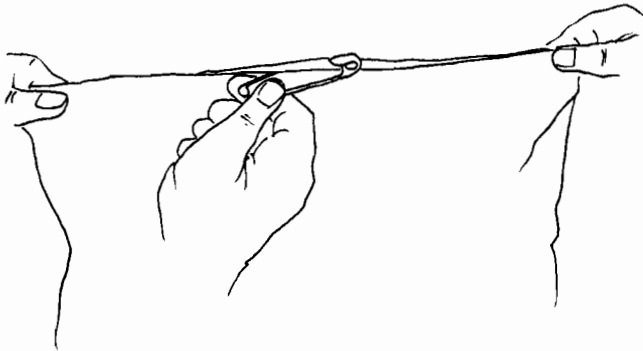
Still holding the hanky taut with your left hand, pinch the bottom furl of the pin between your right thumb and forefinger. Lift the furl upwards, tilting the pin so that the edge of the hanky rides under the curl of the head of the pin. (Although you don't have to hide this action, don't draw attention to it either. After all, it is the reason the trick works!)

Pull the pin toward you in a quick continuous motion. The edge of the hanky will stay within the head of the pin. The audience thinks they hear the handkerchief tearing, but this is merely the sound of the cloth rubbing against the head of the pin. The hanky does not rip!



Sawed in Half

To avoid snagging, use a hanky with a very small hem. Practice this trick with an old handkerchief, just in case something goes wrong. Otherwise, a rip or snag could be an expensive proposition.



Let the edge of the hanky ride under the head of the pin as you pull the pin toward you.

Pull the pin toward you, about three-quarters of the way across the top of the hanky, and then stop abruptly and push the pin away from you, back through the hanky. The pin ends up pinned along the hem of the hanky but at the corner you are holding.

Ashes to Ashes

This is one of the strongest tricks in magic, and it never fails to draw a strong reaction. It's especially powerful for the spectator who is personally involved, because the magic happens on his or her own body.

Although many people have seen the trick, this handling should disarm even the most knowledgeable. The secret to this trick should be carefully guarded!

The Effect: The spectator closes both hands into fists. You place a dab of cigarette ash on the back of one of the fists and say that you'll make the ash penetrate the hand. The ash does travel, but onto the palm of the volunteer's other hand.

Preparation: You'll need an ashtray with some cigarette ash in it.

The Routine: Just before you're ready to perform the trick, pick up a small daub of cigarette ash on the pad (the fingerprint area) of your right forefinger or middle finger. (My personal preference is for the forefinger.)

Here's how to do it without being caught: When you first step up to the table, pick up the ashtray with your right hand, as if to clear a performance space on the table. As you set the ashtray aside, dip in your forefinger and pick up some ashes on your forefinger.



Sawed in Half

The impact of this trick depends upon its impromptu nature, so perform it only when there is already an ashtray on the table (or adjacent to) where you'll be performing.



Tip of the Wand

It's easiest to pick up the ash if your finger is a bit moist. If you have dry hands, you might want to surreptitiously lick your forefinger to wet it before you approach the table.

Hold both of your hands out in front of you, open and palm-down. (The ashes on your finger will not be seen.) Ask the spectator to do the same. He or she should mimic the position of your hands.

Take the spectator's right hand in your left hand, with your thumb lightly resting on top of their hand and your fingers curled underneath their palm. Likewise, grab the spectator's left hand with your right hand, with your thumb lightly resting on top of their hand and the fingers curled underneath their palm.

Spread your (and the spectator's) hands 15–20" apart. As you do, gently press your right forefinger up and onto the palm of your spectator's left hand. It should take just an instant to transfer some ash from your fingertip to the spectator's palm. Close both of your hands into fists, and ask your spectator to do the same. (This prevents the spectator from discovering the ashes prematurely.)

Pick up the ashtray. Stick your right forefinger into the ashtray, and openly pick up some ashes on the end of your finger. (This has the added benefit of covering any residue ash.) Show the spot of ash to your spectator.

Move to your spectator's right side, as far away from his or her left fist as possible. This is a very important subtlety: At the end of the trick, you're far away from the hand in which the magic happens, and the volunteer won't remember that you were anywhere near his or her left hand. Smear or drop a bit of ash onto the back of your volunteer's right hand. (I always apologize as I do it, saying "It's a bit gross isn't it?") Brush the remainder of the ash off your hands.

Claim that as you rub the back of his or her hand, the ashes will penetrate the back of the hand and wind up on the palm. Rub the back of his or her hand, all the while brushing the ashes completely off the back of the spectator's hand.

Ask your spectator to open his or her right hand. Inspect the palm. No ashes! The trick seems to have failed.

Hmm, no ashes. It didn't work.

Pretend to get an inspiration. Still standing to your volunteer's right, point to your spectator's left hand with your right forefinger. Ask your spectator to open his or her left hand.

Wait! Try the other hand!

Your spectator opens his or her hand (a hand that you seemingly never touched), discovers the ashes, and freaks!

Presto Printing

One of the most common objects, something that almost every business person carries in this workaday world, is the business card. When was the last time someone really looked at your business card when you handed it to them?

Well, here are two easy tricks with business cards that are sure to keep them guessing. If you're really lucky, your spectators will hold onto your special "magic" cards and show them around to their friends and coworkers.

The Effect: You offer a business card, only to discover that your entire stack of cards is blank. You push one of the blank cards through your loose fist, and the card visibly prints.

Preparation: Set up by taking a stack of about a dozen business cards, separating them into two



Sawed in Half

Yes, when you perform this trick, you will be holding the spectator's hand. If you're being flirtatious, there's even a standard, if sexist, joke: "Do you feel that? Do you like it?" Flirting is one thing, but, please, don't use this or any other trick as an excuse to maul your volunteer. It's not quite physical assault, but it certainly doesn't give you, or magicians in general, a good name.



Tip of the Wand

Magic with business cards and other everyday items can be used as memorable ice-breakers to introduce yourself to prospective clients. But here's a caveat: Avoid the temptation of overdoing the magic. You run the risk of being perceived as a joker or a prankster.

piles, and placing the two packets face-to-face. This will give you a pile of cards with the bottom half facing printed-side up and the top half facing printed-side down.

The Routine: Bring out the stack of cards and offer one to your spectator. Notice that the top card is “unprinted.”

Holding the stack in your left hand, spread the top three or four cards to the right. Square the entire packet, and turn it over. Again, spread the top three or four cards to the right. Re-square the packet. Performed casually, this move shows that the cards are blank, or, as you refer to them, “unprinted.”

Remove the top card from the stack, printed-side down, and put the others away. Set the card, printed-side down, on the fingertips of your left hand. Begin to turn over your hand, palm-down, and at the same time, close your left hand into a loose fist. Done carefully, the printing on the card will not be exposed.

Push the card through your left fist with your left thumb. With your right thumb and fingers, pull out the card from the little-finger side of your fist. The card’s still blank. The spectator thinks he or she is seeing both sides of the card, but you are actually showing the same (blank) side twice.

Repeat the above actions: Card on the fingertips of your open left hand; hand turns over as it closes into a fist; thumb pushes blank card through fist; right fingers pick up card. The card still appears to be unprinted.

On the third attempt, place the business card, printed-side down, on your left palm. Close your left fingers into a loose fist as you turn over your hand. As you push the card through your fist with your left thumb, the business card will emerge with printing on it.

Pull out the printed card with your right fingers, and give it to your spectator.

Vanishing Pen and Business Card

The Effect: You hold out a business card and offer to make it vanish. You tap it with a magic wand (your pen), but the pen suddenly disappears instead of the card. You explain that this was a joke: You stuck the pen behind your ear. When the spectators look back at your hand, they see that the business card has now disappeared.

Preparation: A pen and business card are required, also a coat or pants with a left-side pocket or an open shoulder bag.

The Routine: This routine is best performed with your spectator standing or sitting to your left side. Hold the business card in your left hand. Hold the pen in your right hand.

Explain that you’ll make the card vanish on the count of three. In a broad arc, raise the pen up beside the right side of your head. Bring your arm down and tap the pen on the card as you count “One.”

Again, swing up your arm, and then bring it down to tap the card as you say “Two.”

Raise your arm up beside your head again, but this time slide the pen behind your right ear. (If this is difficult to do, or if, during rehearsal, the pen repeatedly falls from your ear, try shoving it under the collar of your coat, shirt, or blouse.)

Without pausing, bring your right hand down as if it were still holding the pen. Say “Three” as you pretend to tap the business card. Look at your right hand and say, “Wait! The pen vanished instead!”

Turn your right side to the spectator. With your right hand, point to the pen. Remove the pen from behind your ear, saying, “It was only a joke. I put the pen behind my ear.”

As all eyes are looking at your right hand, your left hand simply drops the business card into your left side coat pocket, pants pocket, or open shoulder bag.

After you retrieve the pen, face the spectator. Hold out your empty left hand as if you were still holding the business card. Say, “Three” and tap the pen against your open left palm. The card has now disappeared!

You can use these same moves to magically print a business card rather than make it disappear. Hold the card, printed-side-down, in your left hand. (If you want, you can show that both are blank using the “through-the-fist” move described in the “Presto Printing” trick.) Make the pen “disappear.” Then, as all eyes are watching you show the pen behind your ear, rather than getting rid of the business card, simply flip it over, printing-side up, in your left hand. The final tap of the pen will seem to “print” the business card.

Finally, you can perform this trick with a small note pad instead of a business card. You patter about how every time you need to take a message, the pen seems to be missing. You try to write down a note, but the pen disappears. You find the pen, but then the note pad disappears.

Ah, Choo!

Most of the tricks in this section of the book have to be performed as close-up magic, standing right next to one or two spectators. This trick with a napkin or tissue has the advantage of also being able to play to a larger audience. It looks just as good when performed onstage in front of a large audience.

The Effect: You rip up a paper napkin and put it back together.

Preparation: Two identical paper napkins or pieces of tissue are required. Before beginning the performance, roll one of the napkins into a ball, and



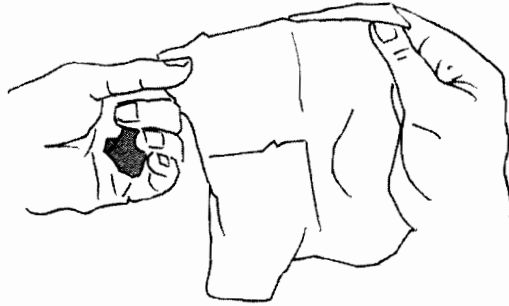
Sawed in Half

Don't proclaim "Look, it's an ordinary, everyday household napkin." Even though it *is*, calling attention to the napkin will make the audience suspicious. Just show the tissue. The innocent action will speak for itself.

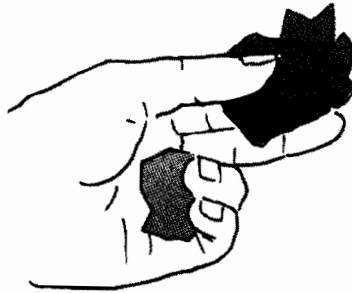
secretly finger palm it in your left hand. Hold your left hand in a loose fist.

The Routine: With a napkin secretly palmed, pick up the other napkin from the table with your left hand. (Holding the tissue gives you a reason to keep your hand partially closed.)

Wave around the visible tissue in your left hand to prove that it's "just a napkin."



Rip up the napkin that you're holding at your fingertips. (The original balled tissue is still secretly finger-palmed in your left hand.) Roll the ripped pieces into a tight ball and hold it at your left fingertips.



Squeeze the ball at your fingertips with your right fingers. Under cover of this action, secretly switch the two balls of tissue in your left hand. To do so, simply roll the two balls over one another. Be careful to keep them separated as you exchange them. After the switch, the "whole" ball is at your fingertips and the balled-up pieces are in a left finger palm position. To the audience, this should look as if you're compacting the pieces into a tighter, smaller ball.

After a magical gesture (such as a snap of the fingers) to signal the "magical moment," use your right fingers to unfold the whole paper ball. Keep the pieces hidden in your left hand. It appears to the audience as if the torn napkin has been restored.

Casually roll the whole tissue into a ball, but, as you do, secretly add the ripped pieces that are hidden in your left hand. Discard the tissue ball, or place it in your pocket.

Ah, Choo Two

The torn-and-restored tissue routine can also be performed as a sucker trick. In fact, if you have enough tissues, you can have the entire audience try the trick, following along as you perform the routine. In the end, your tissue will restore, but theirs won't. (Magicians call a routine in which the spectator duplicates your actions but fails to make the trick work a "You Do As I Do.")

The Effect: You offer to explain how the torn-and-restored tissue is done. You show how you secretly hide a ball of tissue in your right hand before the trick begins. Then, you show how you switch the ripped pieces for the hidden balled-up tissue. Finally, you surprise the audience by also restoring the ripped pieces.

Preparation: Take a tissue, roll it into a small ball, and tuck it under the top tissue in a box of facial tissues. The ball must not be seen by the audience.

The Routine: *Would you like to learn how to do a trick? I'll teach you how to do the torn-and-restored tissue. Before you begin, take a tissue, roll it into a ball, and hide it in your left hand.*

Show your left hand to be empty. Pick up the top tissue from the box with your right, and, as you do, also pick up the balled-up tissue hidden behind it.

Transfer the tissue and the ball to your left hand. Finger palm the ball, but hold the whole tissue at your left fingertips.

(If you prefer, you may start the routine at this point, with the rolled-up ball finger-palmed and the other tissue held at your fingertips.)

Roll the tissue at your fingertips into a ball, and place it next to, but separate from, the ball already hidden there. Briefly flash the two tissues to the audience; they will look like one ball of tissue. Close your left hand slightly into a claw-like position, and hold out your left arm deliberately-awkward.

Roll up the tissue and secretly keep it hidden in your left hand. The technical term for this: "secretly keeping it hidden in your left hand." Try to hold your hand as naturally as possible. Now you're ready to begin.

Pick up another tissue, and then hold it at your left fingertips. Wave it around in a flamboyant manner. Rip up this tissue, roll the pieces into a ball, and hold it at your fingertips.

Now, all you have to do is switch the pieces, here at your fingertips, with the ball secretly hidden in your hand. One way is to get the audience to look the other way. The other way is to simply switch the two wads of tissue as you pretend to squeeze the ripped pieces into a tighter ball.

Use both hands to switch the ball of ripped pieces with either one of the two tissue balls hidden in your left hand. After the switch, you'll have a whole-tissue ball at your fingertips and two tissue balls (one made up of ripped pieces, the other of a whole tissue) palmed in your left hand.

Open the tissue at your fingertips. Display it between the fingers of both hands. The tissue is completely restored.

Roll up the tissue at your fingertips, but, as you do, secretly add the palmed torn pieces into the ball. Transfer this large tissue ball to your right hand. Turn your left palm toward the audience to show the other tissue ball hidden there.

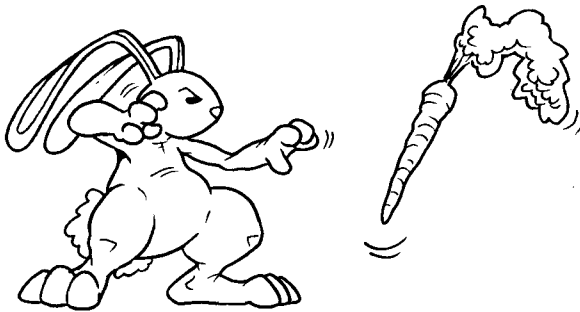
Just don't let the audience see the other pieces.

Stick the restored ball into your pocket, or otherwise set it out of sight.

Of course, if you're a good magician, you do this (make a magic gesture over the ball remaining in your hand), and the pieces go back together again too.

The Least You Need to Know

- Tricks with ordinary objects are all the more amazing because the audience assumes that the items are real and ungimmicked.
- As long as the magic isn't overdone, tricks with items such as rubber bands, notepads, and business cards can be used as ice-breakers in corporate situations.
- Some close-up magic tricks can be performed from a stage and are equally effective with a larger audience.



Playing with Your Food

In This Chapter

- ▶ Bending spoons and bouncing buns
- ▶ Toothpick trickery
- ▶ A solid-through-solid miracle at the dinner table
- ▶ Using your lap to make things appear and disappear
- ▶ The paddle move: learning the basics
- ▶ The legendary Cups and Balls trick

Remember how your mom always told you, “Don’t play with your food!” You were supposed to eat it, not have fun with it. Well, guess what? Sometimes moms can be wrong. Food can be fun, too! And so can playing with things found on the dinner table, at home or in restaurants.

And sometimes—and this is the devil in me talking—the fancier the restaurant, the more fun it is to play with the things on the table. Oh, I’ve gotten a few raised eyebrows from people eating at other tables, but I’ve never been thrown out...

Bend-Away Spoon

This is an old chestnut that’s been in beginner magic books since, well, almost forever. Still, it bears repeating here because, performed properly, it really does fool people.

There’s been increased interest in this trick, usually performed as a throwaway, because of psychic entertainers, such as Uri Geller (b. 1946), who claim to be able to bend

silverware, keys, and other metal objects through telekinesis (the movement of objects by the power of the mind).

The Effect: You visibly bend the handle of a spoon, yet it is instantly restored to its original shape.

Preparation: None. Although I perform this with a teaspoon, you could perform the trick with a soup spoon or almost any piece of cutlery.

The Routine: Pick up the spoon in your right hand, with your thumb pressing the handle against the inside of your fingers. Hold the spoon in a vertical position to display it. The bowl of the spoon should extend downward below your right little finger. Also, the handle of the spoon, which points upward, must not stick out above your right forefinger.

Clasp your left fingers in front and over the top of your right fingers. Under this cover, slip your right little finger behind the handle of the spoon.

Press the bottom of the bowl against the table top. Slowly, bend your wrist, tilting the hands upward away from your body. Let the handle of the spoon slide down between your palms. From the audience's point of view, it appears as if you're bending the spoon.



Your hands, ready to bend spoon, from the audience's point of view.



Exposed view of the spoon "bending."

If you prefer, rather than using a slow, fluid motion, you can pretend to bend the spoon with a single, hard push; either way, make sure the "bend" registers in the audiences' minds.

To restore the spoon, lift it with both hands. Grab the bowl of the spoon with your left fingers, and gently slide your right fingers along the handle, toward and off its end. It will appear as if you magically and effortlessly straightened the spoon.

Alternately, you can lift the spoon, and simply drop it onto the table. The spoon is restored, and the clatter makes for a nice climactic sound.

A very deceptive variation was invented by Dai Vernon's younger son, David Derrick Vernon. It was first published as "Nickleplated" in *The Phoenix* (April 17, 1950 issue):

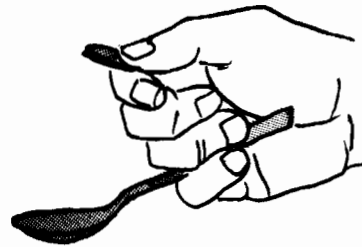
To prepare, get a small silver coin. I use a dime or a nickle, depending upon the size of the handle I'm trying to match. Palm the coin between (or near) the first and second joint of the right forefinger.

To start the trick, pick up the spoon with your right hand, as indicated above, but, as you do, use the right thumb to push the rounded edge of the coin upward so that it peeks above the right forefinger. The coin will look like the end of the spoon's handle. The real end of the handle, of course, rests somewhere behind the right forefinger or middle finger.

Continue with the routine as already described, but keep the coin visible. This creates the powerful illusion that you're bending the handle almost double.



Your hands holding the bent spoon with the "end" of the handle showing, from the audience's point of view.



Exposed view of the spoon "bending" with the end of the handle showing. A coin substitutes for the end of the spoon's handle.

As you restore the spoon, as already suggested, use the right thumb to pull the coin back into a right finger-palm position. Ditch the coin while the audience is examining the spoon or later when the audience is not watching your hands.

Levitating Buns

As magicians, we're frequently asked to make something float. Here's your chance to rise to the occasion. This table trick uses the same basic method as several very popular floating effects performed by professional magicians. The best-known version, in which a ball floats while covered by a scarf, was called "The Zombie Ball" by its inventor Joe Karson.

The Effect: A dinner roll floats behind a raised napkin.

Preparation: None, though you'll need a dinner roll (or basket of buns), a fork, and an opaque (preferably cloth) napkin or handkerchief.



Sawed in Half

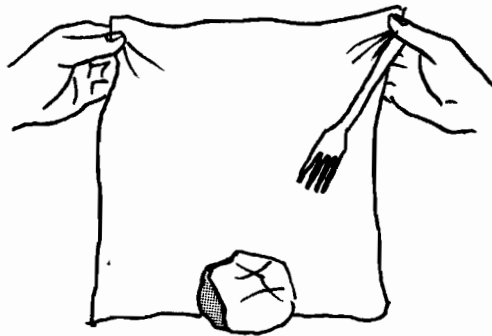
Because of the similarities between this and the various Zombie effects, you must be very careful not to expose this method. If you do, other magicians will not be happy campers.

The Routine: Place the dinner roll or basket of buns directly in front of you on the table.

Hold an open cloth napkin in front of you, like a curtain, stretched between your hands. Your hands should be at the top two corners of the napkin, with your fingers on the audience side of the napkin and your thumb on your side of the cloth.

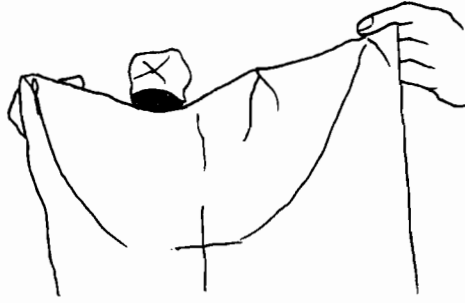
Also, hidden from the audience, hold a fork between your right thumb and the cloth, with the tines of the fork pointing downward toward the center of the napkin. Your fingers (on the front side of the napkin) and your thumb hold the handle of the fork in place.

Picking up the dinner roll, your view.



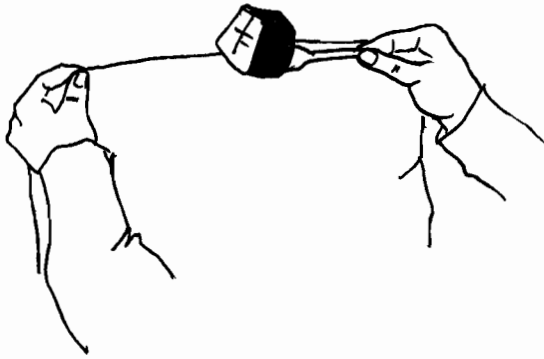
Cover the roll(s) with the cloth, and jab the tines of the fork into one of the buns.

Under cover of the napkin, raise the fork upward. It will appear as if the bun is levitating underneath the napkin.



*The “levitating bun,”
audience view.*

Experiment with other motions to make the dinner roll seem to be alive, floating under its own power. For example, raise both arms as if the roll is pulling you upward. Act as if the bun is lifting you out of your chair. Wave your hands to the left and to the right a few times as if the dinner roll is zigzagging under the cloth. Struggle as you pretend to have difficulty reining in the bun. Make the bun peek up above the napkin or ride the roll along the top of the cloth.



*Dinner roll floating
along the top edge of
the napkin, audience’s
view.*

Finally, let the bun settle back down to the table. Let go of the napkin with your left hand, and press down on the roll through the cloth as if to prevent it from floating away. With your right hand, pull the napkin back toward you, still hiding the fork under it, and set the napkin (and fork) on your lap.

Pick up the dinner roll with your left hand, and display it. Pick up the napkin with your right hand, leaving the fork in your lap. Give the cloth a shake or toss it back onto the table. Finally, cut or break the bun in half so that no one can see the holes left from the tines of the fork.

Bouncing Baby Bun

This dinner-table trick is older than God. It’s a perfect lead-in or follow-up to the “Levitating Buns,” although it’s lots of fun all by itself. I first saw it performed 20 years

ago by a master of such gags, Jay Marshall (b. 1919), comedy magician, ventriloquist, and proprietor of the Chicago Magicshop, Inc.

The Effect: You toss a dinner roll on the floor. It bounces back up, as if it were made of rubber.

Preparation: None.



Tip of the Wand

This trick can be performed with any similarly-shaped object that doesn't ordinarily bounce, such as an apple or an orange. If you really like this type of stunt, it's described, along with hundreds of other similar items, in Martin Gardner's *Encyclopedia of Impromptu Magic*.

The Routine: This has to be performed while you're seated at a table. So that I'm not directly facing the audience, I turn my chair slightly to the right, away from the table, to about a two o'clock position. You'll have to experiment to find the angle that's most comfortable (and most deceptive) for you.

Pick up a dinner roll with your right hand, and comment on how hard the bun is. Tap the bun once or twice on the table top. At the same time, rap the underside of the table with the knuckles of your left hand. Timed correctly, it will look and sound as if you're banging a rock-hard dinner roll on the table.

Position your left hand near your knees, below the edge of the table and out of the audience's sight. Pretend to throw the dinner roll onto the floor, but secretly catch it in your left hand.

Pause just a second, then stamp or tap your foot as if it were the dinner roll hitting the floor. Then, with an immediate flick of your left wrist, toss the bun back up into view above the table. Catch the roll with your right hand.

If the foot stomp and upward toss are timed correctly, it will appear as if the bun actually bounced off the floor.

Toothpick Pulse

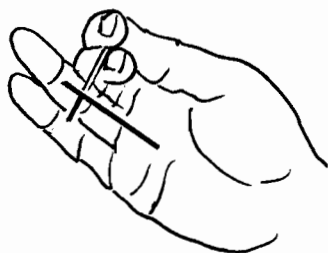
The Effect: You offer to take a spectator's pulse. You balance one toothpick across another in your right hand. You feel for the spectator's pulse with your left hand, and, as soon as you find the pulse, one of the toothpicks begins to move, matching its rhythm.

Preparation: None. You'll need two round (rather than flat) toothpicks.

The Routine: Tell your audience that you've learned an unusual way to take a person's pulse.

Pinch one toothpick between your right thumb and forefinger, and lay it horizontally across the nail of your middle finger. Set one end of the other toothpick into one of the lines that cross your right palm, somewhere near the base of the ring finger.

Finally, extend your ring and little fingers to increase the spectators' visibility of the toothpicks. This will result in two balanced toothpicks, as illustrated.



Two toothpicks, balanced and ready to take your spectator's pulse.

With your left hand, take hold of one of your spectator's wrists, as if feeling for a pulse.

Slowly, imperceptibly, slide the toothpick that you're holding between your thumb and forefinger out toward the end of the nail of your middle finger. Keep the toothpick pressed up against the nail.

As the toothpick crosses each small ridge of the fingernail, it sends a very small vibration down the length of the toothpick. This results in the other toothpick making a series of pronounced jumps. With practice, you can time these to simulate the rhythm of a pulse.

Needless to say, the audience must not be aware that you're moving the toothpick held between your thumb and forefinger. This shouldn't be a problem, however, because very little movement is needed on the horizontal toothpick to cause a very large reaction in the other toothpick.

Salt Shaker through the Table

There are many versions of this table trick. I've even seen it done with a newspaper wrapped around a drinking glass. All of the variations depend upon momentarily misdirecting the audience away from the item you're going to make disappear.

This version uses a coin for misdirection. You make the audience believe that the trick is about the coin. They're so focused on it that they don't notice when you sneak away the salt shaker.

The Effect: You offer to make a coin disappear. As part of a guessing game, you cover a coin with a salt shaker, then cover the shaker with a napkin. You slap down on the napkin, and it crushes flat to the table. The salt shaker, rather than the coin, has disappeared.

Preparation: None, but you'll need a coin, a salt shaker and a paper napkin large enough to cover the shaker. The salt shaker should be on the table, but it shouldn't be placed in such a position that it's obvious in advance that you're going to use it.

The Routine: Toss a coin, let's say a quarter, onto the table.

Want to play a game? Great. What coin did I just put on the table? A quarter? Are you sure? Of course you are, because you can see it. But what if I cover it with a napkin?

Cover the coin with the paper napkin so that it can't be seen.

Now what coin's on the table? Are you sure? Lift the napkin with your right hand. Lift the coin with your left hand to show that it's still a quarter. This handling is important, because it sets up your later misdirection.

Of course it's still the same. If I wanted to change it, I would have had to lift the napkin. But, let's cover the coin with something that's even harder to see through.

Pretend to notice the salt shaker for the first time. Set the coin onto the table, and cover it with the salt shaker.

How about ... the salt shaker? I know you can't see through the salt shaker. But, just to make sure, I'll cover it with the napkin as well.

Place the napkin over the top of the salt shaker, and press the napkin down so that the paper conforms to the shape of the shaker. The napkin is now a sort of shell or mold, covering the salt shaker. Wrap your right fingers and thumb around the salt shaker.

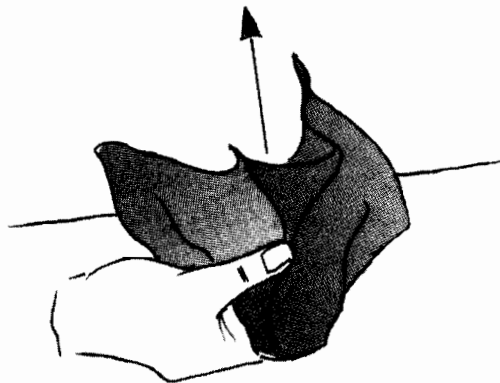
Now what coin is it? A quarter? I think I got you this time.

Pick up the salt shaker, grasping it through the napkin, and hold it close to the table top.

No, it's still a quarter. One last time, let me bring it real close to you.

Now comes the secret move: With your left forefinger, slide the quarter across the table toward your spectator. As you do, bring your right hand back toward your body. As soon as your right hand clears the edge of the table, relax a bit of your pressure on the salt shaker. The napkin will retain the shape of the salt shaker, but the shaker itself will drop into your lap.

*Drop the salt shaker
into your lap.*



Three warnings:

1. Don't lower your right hand (and napkin) below the table to get rid of the salt shaker. The audience will get suspicious if the napkin goes out of sight. Keep your hand level with (but just off) the edge of the table top, and let gravity do the work for you.
2. Don't shake the napkin to make the shaker fall out: it'll give away the trick.
3. Be careful not to squeeze the napkin after the shaker has dropped out. This will give away the fact that the shaker is gone prematurely. You must continue to handle the napkin as if it contains the salt shaker until you actually make it vanish at the very end of the trick.

Cover the coin with the shaker-shaped napkin, which you're still holding in your right hand.

Now you're going to lead your spectator on a wild-goose chase full of double-talk:

Now what coin is it? A quarter? What quarter? The one under what? Under the salt shaker?

Lift your right hand, and immediately slap it down, crushing the napkin flat against the table. Pick up the napkin, and tear it into shreds.

What salt shaker?

I prefer to let the salt shaker stay in my lap until I'm able to secretly place it into my pocket. That way, I can return it later when no one's looking. (If you're in a restaurant, don't forget and walk out of the place without returning it!)

If you must reproduce the salt shaker while you're still at the table, bring the shaker up from under the table while saying, "I hit it so hard, the salt shaker went right through the table."

Here's an even better way to reproduce it if you're wearing a jacket: Pick up the salt shaker with your right hand, but hold it below the edge of the table. With your left hand, grab the left lapel of your jacket, and pull the left side of your coat open. At the same time, run your right hand up inside the coat until it's at the level of an inside coat pocket. Pretend to pull the salt shaker out of the inside pocket, and set the shaker onto the table.

I always keep it up here for safe keeping.

As you might suspect, ideally, the spectators should be seated across from you at a table when you perform this trick. After sufficient performance experience, however, you'll find that the misdirection is so strong in this trick that the audience can literally surround you.



Say the Magic Word

Lapping is a technique used by a seated magician to secretly drop something into the lap to dispose of it (usually to make it disappear) or, less frequently, to pick up something (usually to make it appear).

The success of this trick depends upon the fine art of *lapping*, which is the technique of secretly vanishing items into (or producing objects from) your lap.

Here are a few tips to make your lapping easier and more deceptive:

- To prevent things from slipping between your legs, sit with both feet flat on the floor and the knees pressed together.
- If there is a space between your thighs, cover your lap with a handkerchief or cloth napkin.
- To retrieve objects, let your hand(s) fall comfortably into your lap, as if you're momentarily resting. Palm the item(s), then bring your hand(s) back to the table top. Alternately, place your elbow at the edge of the table and let your forearm and hand hang down into your lap to pick up and palm the object.
- Never look down into your lap when dropping or retrieving objects. The audience's eyes will follow yours, and it'll give away the secret.

Dot's Crazy: The Paddle Move

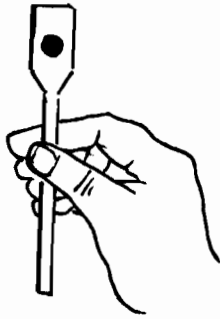
I know that, by now, it seems to you that every other magic trick in existence first appeared in Scot's *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* in 1584. Well, believe it or not, this basic principle did, too!

The Effect: You show both sides of a paddle-shaped coffee stirrer. It's plain wood, with no printing on it. Suddenly, a small dot appears on one side of the paddle. You introduce a second unmarked paddle. A spot appears on it. A second dot appears on the back side of both paddles, then all of the dots disappear.

Preparation: First, you have to find a swizzle stick, coffee stirrer, or some similarly shaped object, preferably with a thin shaft or handle and a "paddle" area at one end. Although you'll only need one paddle to practice the secret move, you'll need two of them for this routine.

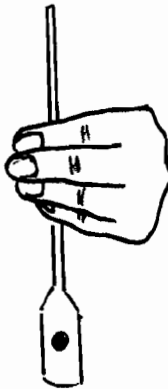
Before you can perform this trick, you must learn one of the most versatile and basic moves in all of magic. The "paddle move," as it's known, allows you to apparently show two sides of an object when, in fact, you're showing the same side both times. (You've already learned a variation of it in "Presto Printing," in Chapter 16.)

To try the move, hold out your right hand, palm-up, fingers together, as if your hand were a tray. Lay the shaft end of the paddle across your right forefinger and middle finger, and hold it in place with your right thumb. For better visibility, you may want to curl the ring and little fingers into your palm.



The paddle is held in position across your forefinger and middle finger by your right thumb.

First, try this: Rotate your wrist to turn your right hand toward you, palm-down. You're now looking at the back of your hand and, of course, the back of the paddle.



Showing the back side of the paddle.

Got it? Great! Now turn your hand over, back to the way it was, palm-up. That's half of the move. Easy, huh?

Now, try the other half: You're holding the paddle in position, pressing down with your thumb. Push your thumb toward the ends of your fingers, allowing the shaft to rotate under your thumb. This flips over the paddle so that its back side is now facing you.

Were you able to do it? If not, the shaft of the paddle may be too wide. Find one that's a bit thinner, and try again.

O.K., once you're able to flip the stick, try this: Still pressing down with your thumb, pull your thumb back toward your palm. As you do, the stick will rotate under your thumb, flipping over the paddle to its original position.

The paddle move combines both of these actions. So, let's try them together:

Start with the paddle in position in your right hand. Turn your hand over, palm-down, and at the same time push outward with your thumb to flip over the paddle. Because

the big action (turning your hand) covers the small action (flipping the paddle), it looks as if you have shown both sides of the paddle. In fact, you've shown the same side twice.

Reverse your actions, turning your hand over, palm-up, at the same time as you flip over the paddle. Ta da! You're back where you started.



Tip of the Wand

Once you get the hang of the paddle move, you'll be able to adjust your handling to do it with broader objects, such as a butter knife or a popsicle stick, or non-flat items, such as dice.

Practice the move with a paddle in your left hand. You'll find that, even if you're not ambidextrous, it's pretty simple to perform the paddle move with either hand.

Now that you've got the move down, let's get ready for the routine itself: Take two paddles and make a small dot (using a pen or felt-tipped marker) in the middle of the paddle area of each one, on one side only.

The Routine:

Phase One: Hold one of the paddles in your right hand, as described, with the blank side facing up. Do not let the audience see or know about the dot on the back side of the paddle as you set it into position.

Perform the move to show that both sides of the paddle are unmarked.

Pick up a marking pen with your left hand, and wave it over the paddle like a magic wand. Make a single quick shake of your right hand (or a flick of the wrist), and at the same time, push outward with your thumb to flip over the paddle. (The larger motion of the shake will hide the smaller motion of the flip.) A spot magically appears on the paddle!

Turn your hand over, palm-down, but don't perform the paddle move. The audience sees the back of the paddle, unmarked. Turn your hand palm-up, again without performing the paddle move. The single spot is still there on the front of the paddle.

Phase Two: Introduce a second paddle in your left hand, held in place by your left thumb, forefinger and middle finger. The unmarked side of the paddle should face upward; the marked side is face downward, unseen by the audience.

Turn over your left hand, palm-down, and at the same time, perform the paddle move. The "back" of the paddle also appears to be unmarked. Turn your hand palm-up, again performing the paddle move at the same time. A blank paddle still shows.

Tap the bottom of the left-hand paddle against the spot on the right-hand paddle. Turn over your left hand without performing the move. The audience sees a dot on the back side of the paddle. Readjust this paddle so that you're holding it, with the dot showing, in your palm-up left hand, with the dot showing face upward.

Now turn over both hands simultaneously, palm-down, without performing the move. Turn over your hands, palm-up, without performing the move. You've now shown both paddles, each with a spot on one side.

Phase Three: Tap the bottom, unmarked side of the right-hand paddle against the dot on the left-hand paddle. Turn over both hands, palm-down, simultaneously. As you do, perform the paddle move with your right hand only: Don't perform it with your left hand. There appears to be a dot on the back of the right-hand paddle, but not on the back of the left-hand paddle.

Turn over both hands simultaneously, palm-up. As you do, perform the paddle move with your right hand, but don't perform it with your left hand. The audience believes that there are a total of three dots on the paddles.

Phase Four: Tap the bottom, unmarked side of the left-hand paddle against the dot showing on the right-hand paddle. Turn over both hands simultaneously, palm-down, then back over, palm-up, while performing the paddle move with both hands, both times. There now appears to be a dot on both sides of both paddles.

Phase Five: Make a single quick shake of the hands or flick of the wrists, and, at the same time, pull inward with your thumbs to flip over both paddles. (The larger motion of the shakes will hide the smaller motion of the flips.) The spots magically disappear!

Turn over both hands, palm-down, then back over, palm-up, while performing the paddle move with both hands, both times. All sides of the paddles once again appear to be unmarked!

Put the paddles in your pocket or otherwise out of sight.

The Cups and Balls

The Cups and Balls, still regularly performed by magicians all over the world, is one of the oldest magic tricks in existence. Every magician should have a working knowledge of the method and, I think, some practical experience performing the trick.

By the time of the ancient Greeks and Romans, the Cups and Balls was so well known that there was actually a name for street magicians who performed the trick: acetabularii.

The Cups and Balls were also popular in Egypt, where magicians known as gali-gali men produced baby chicks from beneath the cups. Mice were often produced from beneath the cups in China.

In ancient China and Japan, relatively shallow bowls were used rather than cups. The East Indian version of the trick use cups that resemble small wooden goblets, with the stems ending in tiny knobs. Since these cups are not generally stacked during the trick, the Indian version of the Cups and Balls relies upon the fakir's ability to palm the balls in and out of the cups.

Itinerant magicians in Europe often performed the Cups and Balls standing behind a table. The trick was so common and so closely associated with magicians that famous artists of the time, such as 15th century painter Hieronymus Bosch and 16th century artisan Peter Breughel the Elder, depicted the Cups and Balls in some of their works.

Even today, despite its long history and frequent exposure, the trick still has the power to fool laypeople. And, in the hands of such 20th century experts as Dai Vernon, Tommy Wonder and Paul Gertner, the trick even fools other magicians!



Now You See It

Penn & Teller, "The Bad Boys of Magic," perform the Cups and Balls, then repeat the trick using transparent plastic cups. Nevertheless, because of their extraordinary skill, timing, and misdirection, they still fool the spectators.

The brief, bare-bones routine I'm going to describe does not even begin to do the Cups and Balls justice. A full description would fill this entire book. Indeed, whole books *have* been written on the subject.

I hope, however, that this short introduction will give you some inkling of just how powerful a trick the Cups and Balls can be.

The Effect: Three balls penetrate and appear under three solid cups.

Preparation: None, but you'll need four little balls and three cups. Professional sets of Cups and Balls use everything from cork balls to knitted pompoms. To perform this trick impromptu, you can use small pieces of tissue. Roll them up into four small balls. The audience must only be aware of three of these at any given time.



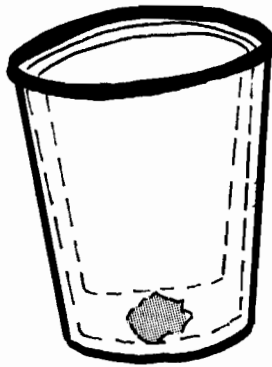
Tip of the Wand

The cups stack better if they have concave or recessed bottoms. That way, a ball can rest in the cavity when the cups are nested. Otherwise, you'll have to compensate by loosely stacking the three cups and holding them slightly apart when they are nested.

You'll also need three paper or opaque cups, preferably with concave or recessed bottoms. The cups must be large enough that three of the paper balls will easily fit into one cup.

To set up for the trick, hold one of the cups mouth-up. Nest a second cup into the first cup. Next, drop in one of the paper balls. Then, set in the third cup. Finally, drop in the three other balls.

If you prefer, you can have the cups pre-stacked and loaded with the tissue ball, but roll up the other three tissues to create the paper balls in front of the audience.



Cups and Balls stacked, prior to performance.

The Routine:

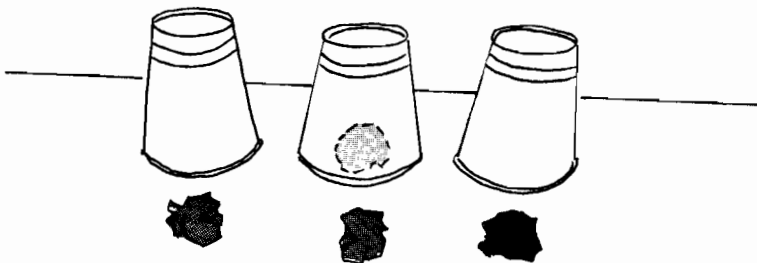
The Lay-Out: Hold up the three stacked cups, and tilt them together to dump out the three balls. Place the three balls in a row, a few inches apart. Let's call their positions, from left to right, A, B, and C.

Hold the stack of cups, mouth-up, in the left hand. Remove the bottom cup from the stack (or let it drop into your right hand). In one motion, turn it over, mouth-down, and set it on the table in front of ball A.

Remove the next cup from the bottom of the stack (or let it drop into your right hand). This cup secretly has a ball in it, so don't let the audience see inside of it. In one motion, turn the cup over, mouth-down, and set it on the table in front of ball B. Centrifugal force will keep the ball from falling out of the cup.

Finally, turn over the last cup, mouth-down, and, in the same fluid motion, set it on the table in front of ball C.

Tap the bottoms of the cups to show that they are solid.



The Cups and Balls, unstacked, laid out, and ready to begin the series of penetrations.

Round One: Pick up ball B. Set it on top (that is, on the recessed bottom) of cup B. Pick up cup A, and nest it, mouth-down, on top of cup B and the ball. Pick up cup C and nest it, mouth-down, on top of the stack. Tap cup C with your right forefinger, or make some magical gesture (such as running your forefinger from the side of cup C down to the table) to indicate that the ball is moving downward.

Pick up the stack of cups, mouth-down, with your left hand. The ball appears to have penetrated the cup.

Turn the stack of cups mouth-up. Repeat your opening series of moves: Remove the lowermost cup with your right hand, turn it mouth-down, and place it in position A. Next, turn the bottom cup (secretly containing the ball) mouth-down; but this time cover the ball at position B. Set the remaining cup mouth-down in front of ball C.

Round Two: Pick up ball A. Set it on top of cup B. Pick up cup A, and nest it, mouth-down, on top of cup B and the ball. Pick up cup C and nest it, mouth-down, on top of the stack. Tap the bottom of cup C.

Pick up the stack of cups, mouth-down, with your left hand. There are now two tissue balls under cup B.

Turn the stack of cups mouth-up. Again, remove the lowermost cup with your right hand, turn it mouth-down and place it in position A. Next, turn the bottom cup (secretly containing a ball) mouth-down; but this time cover both balls at position B. Set the remaining cup mouth-down in position C.

Round Three: Pick up ball C. Set it on top of cup B. Nest cup A, then C, mouth-down, on top of cup B (and the ball). Tap the bottom of cup C with your right forefinger.

Pick up the stack of cups, mouth-down, with your left hand. All three tissue balls are now under cup B.

Alternate Ending: Round Three, Take Two

If you're really intrigued with the Cups and Balls, I highly recommend that you seek out the copious amount of magical literature available on the subject and consider purchasing professional apparatus.

The Least You Need to Know

- Used properly, sleeving is a practical method to make small objects vanish and reappear.
- The "Levitating Buns" is an entry-level version of the popular "Zombie" floating ball performed by professional magicians.
- Lapping is a highly useful technique that a close-up magician can use to vanish or produce objects when seated at a table.
- The paddle move is a standard technique a magician can use to make the audience think they are seeing both sides of a small, hand-held object.
- The Cups and Balls, known throughout the world, is one of the oldest tricks in magic still performed today.

Part 5

Life Is a Cabaret

If you've been showing around your magic tricks, you may be getting requests. No, not to stop, but to do a really big show. For an audience. And that means you'll need some bigger tricks.

Here are the tricks you'll need. And none of them require you to buy expensive, special equipment. Well, maybe some rope and a few silk scarves, but no big boxes or fancy tin tubes.

Most of these tricks are classics, tricks like the cut and restored rope, and the good old torn and restored newspaper. Read all about it! Soon you'll be plucking coins and dollar bills out of mid-air. And, if all this isn't enough, you'll even learn a quick and easy way to saw someone in half. Don't worry: they almost always get back together.

Life is a cabaret. Now it's time to make you the floor show!







Give a Magician Enough Rope...

In This Chapter

- ▶ The no-sleight cut-and-restored rope trick
- ▶ The no-gimmick cut-and-restored rope trick
- ▶ The Three Rope Trick—aka “Professor’s Nightmare”
- ▶ The East Indian Rope Trick
- ▶ Sawing a Person in Half—with rope!

There’s an old saying, “Give a man enough rope, and he’ll hang himself.” Well, there’s a magician’s corollary: “Give a magician enough rope, and he’ll do a rope trick.”

Rope tricks are a staple of magic. Although any rope will work for most tricks, it’s easier to work with a soft cotton rope.

Magicians generally prefer a special ultra-pliable cotton rope, commonly referred to as “magician’s rope.” The rope is, in effect, a woven tube with a threaded core of several thick, separate cotton strands running from end-to-end inside its entire length. Magician’s rope is available from almost all magic shops and is usually sold in 25’ or 50’ hanks. Often there’s a choice of ½” or ¾” diameter rope; the larger size is, of course, more visible for stage use.

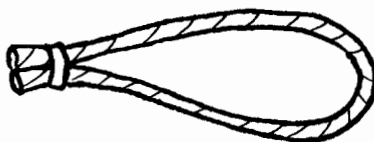
The E-Z Way Cut and Restored Rope

In his 1584 book *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*, Reginald Scot explained how “to cut a lace asunder in the middle, and to make it whole again.” Believe it or not, what you’re about to learn is basically the same trick using the same non-sleight-of-hand method.

The Effect: You cut a rope in half and restore it into one piece.

Preparation: You'll need a long piece of rope, approximately eye-to-knee length, and scissors. You also have to prepare a secret gimmick. Bend a separate 6"-8" piece of rope in half, and tape the two ends together to create a loop of rope. Set this loop to one side with the scissors, out of sight of the audience.

Prepare a loop from a small piece of rope.

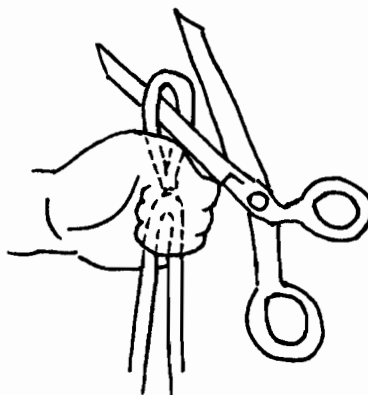


The Routine: Pick up the piece of rope. You may allow the audience to examine it, if you wish. You might want to give the rope a small tug to prove that it's solid.

Fold the rope in half, and place the bend in your left hand. Make a fist. The bend in the rope should rest against your left palm, with the ends of the rope extending out of the little finger side of your fist. The bend should not be visible to the audience.

Turn to pick up the scissors with your right hand, and, at the same time, secretly pick up the extra loop with your left hand. The taped end of the loop should rest against your left palm, and the loop should stick out of the forefinger side of your left fist. Turn back to the audience. The audience won't notice that just a moment before there wasn't a loop sticking out of your fist.

The small loop appears to be the center of the long rope.



Cut the loop in half, or allow an audience member to cut it. Explain that you have to "trim" the ends of the rope. In actuality, with two or three snips of the scissors, cut away the remaining bits of the loop—including the ends joined by tape. Let the pieces fall to the floor.

To indicate the "magic moment," make a magical gesture, such as snapping your fingers over the rope or waving the scissors like a magic wand. Then, with a flourish, show that the rope has completely restored.

The Cut and Restored Rope: The Real Work

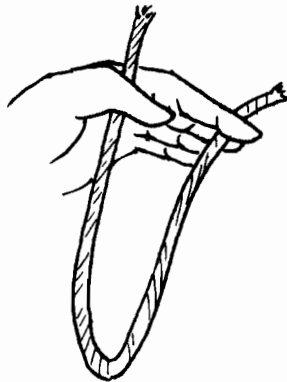
There are so many different ways to cut a rope in half and put it back together that it's impossible to cover them all in this short introduction to rope magic. Those of you who are really into rope will probably want to seek out the available magical literature on the subject.

I think the cleanest versions are those that require no preparation. In most of these variations, it only appears as if you're cutting the middle of the rope: You're really cutting off one of the ends. The following routine is perhaps the most common handling.

The Effect: You openly display (and can have examined) a long piece of rope. You cut it in half, then tie the two pieces together. Finally, you slide off the knot, restoring the two pieces into one rope.

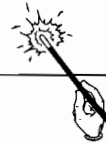
Preparation: None. You'll need a long piece of soft (or easy-to-cut) rope. You'll lose about 2-3" of the rope during the trick, so start with a rope that's long enough that the difference won't be noticed. I use a rope that reaches from the floor to my eye level. You'll also need a sharp pair of scissors.

The Routine: Clip one end of the rope between your left thumb and forefinger, so that about 1" of each end extends above the hand. Hold the other end between your left forefinger and middle finger. (For the sake of explanation, let's call these ends A and D, respectively.) The center of the rope hangs down on the palm side of the hand. (Take note of where the rope crosses the center of your left palm. It'll be important in a moment.)



Sawed in Half

Warning: Be careful not to snip your fingers rather than the rope! I've accidentally done it, and it smarts! Plus, it discolored the rope!



Tip of the Wand

In many descriptions of this routine, both ends of the rope are clipped between the thumb and forefinger at the beginning. For ease of performance, I personally prefer to keep the ends further separated at the start of the trick.

Holding the rope in preparation for the cut-and-restored rope trick.

Stick your right thumb and forefinger through the loop, at its lowest point, from the audience side of the rope. Raise your right hand toward your left hand. The rope will drape across the back of your right thumb and forefinger.

Lift the center of the rope toward the center of your left palm.



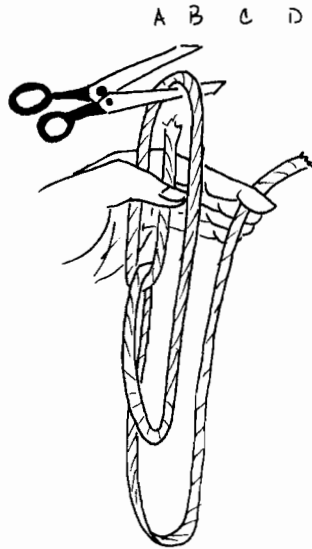
This next series of moves must be done in one, fluid motion:

Using your right thumb and forefinger, pinch the rope hanging from your left thumb and forefinger at the point where it crosses the middle of your left palm. Still holding the rope, lift your right hand slightly upward and away from your left hand. The true center of the rope will slip off the back of your right hand, and a small loop forms in the rope you're pinching with your right thumb and forefinger.

Continue to lift your right hand just high enough that the small loop can be seen by the audience. Using your left thumb, press this loop against your palm. Needless to say, the point where the sections of the rope cross (somewhere near the middle of the left palm) should remain hidden from the audience.

If performed successfully, you've secretly switched the center of the rope for a point about six inches from one of the ends. The audience believes that the small loop peeking out of your left hand is the center of the rope.

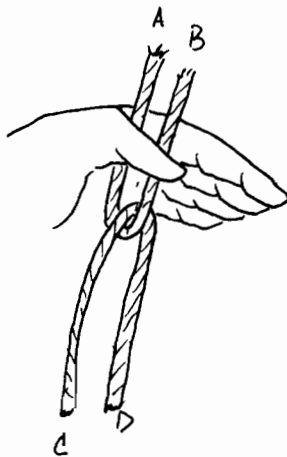
Cut the rope at the center of the small loop. If you prefer, have a member of the audience cut the rope. This is very effective to prove that the rope is real and is actually cut, but be sure to warn whoever's doing the cutting that the scissors are sharp.



The position of the rope after the “secret move” has been completed. Note where the new “center” of the rope will be cut.

After the rope is cut, there will be four ends sticking out above your left hand. There are the two original ends (A, still clipped between your thumb and forefinger; and D, still clipped between the first and middle fingers) and two new ends that were part of the small loop (let’s call them B, the end closest to A; and C, the end closest to D).

With your left thumb, press A and B against your left palm. Let the other two ends drop. The junction between the small and large sections of rope should remain hidden, hanging somewhere near the middle of your left palm. From the audience’s point of view, you’re holding two pieces of rope, one slightly longer than the other.



After the rope has been cut, from your view.

The hard part’s done. Now all you have to do is put the rope back together. Perhaps it’s overkill, but I’ll give you three different methods to do so, each and every one a crowd-pleaser.

Restoration Number One

The ropes aren't quite equal. Let me trim the ends.

Holding the ropes in the left hand and the scissors in your right hand, cut a small piece off the A end of the rope. Next, snip a small bit off B. Then maybe a little piece or two off A, then B. Finally, there'll be only one small piece left to the A-B section of the rope. Clip it between the blades of the scissors, and toss this last small bit of rope to the floor.

This series of snips and clips should simply look as if you're trimming away the top ends of the two ropes. What you've actually done is get rid of the small A-B loop.

You're still holding the long C-D piece of rope in your left hand, folded in half with its center in your palm.

If you merely open your hand to reveal that the rope is "restored," nobody will be fooled. You need to be just a bit more deceptive: Lift up the two ends of the rope with your right hand, and clip them between your right thumb and forefinger. The middle of the rope is still held in your left palm. (Alternately, bundle up the entire rope into a big ball in the left hand.)

Wave the scissors over the rope as if it were a magic wand, or make some other magic gesture.

Take one end of the rope in each hand, and spread the hands apart in a broad gesture (a perfect applause cue!). The rope has miraculously restored!

Restoration Number Two

Openly tie the ends A and B together with a single (or double) knot. This should appear as if you're tying the two long ropes together. You're actually tying the small piece of rope *around* the longer piece.

Grab the two free "ends" of the ropes (C and D), one in each hand, and give a tug. This "convincer move" gives the illusion that you're tightening the knot. In actuality, you're merely pulling on the two ends of the long rope.

Hold one end of the seemingly "tied" ropes between your left thumb and forefinger, and let the rope dangle. Point to the knot with your right forefinger. Using your right hand, slide the knot downward until it's about 6" from the bottom end of the rope. Pause.

Two ropes, tied together with a single knot. Of course, if you don't like the knot here, you can always move it down to here.

Grasp the lower end of the rope with your right hand. Let go with your left hand, and allow the rope to dangle. Point to the knot with your left forefinger. Using your left hand, slide the knot downward until it's about 6" from the bottom end of the rope. Pause again.

Or, if you don't like it there, you can always move it down to there.

Finally, slide the knot completely off the lower end of the rope. If you wish, you may toss the knot and the rope into the audience.

Of course, if you don't like it there, you can always take the knot off completely. The rope has magically restored!

Restoration Number Three

Openly tie the ends A and B together with a single (or double) knot. "Tighten" the knot by pulling on the two free ends of the "ropes."

Hold one end of the rope between your left thumb and forefinger, with the rope hanging down across the left palm. Using your right hand, coil the rope around your left hand. When your right hand comes to the knot, gently close your right fingers around it. Secretly slide the knot along the length of the rope, hidden in your right fist, as you continue to wind the rope around your left hand.

As you finish coiling the rope, slide the knot off the end, keeping the knot finger-palmed in your right hand. Reach into your pocket with your right hand to get some "woofle dust" (or reach for a wand), and dispose of the knot. Make a "magic gesture" toward your left hand. Uncoil the rope. It has magically restored!

The Professor's Nightmare

Other than the cut-and-restored rope, Professor's Nightmare is the best-known and most-often-performed rope trick in modern times. There are several reasons:

- It's easy to perform.
- The props are inexpensive.
- The trick's very deceptive.
- It's versatile, with any number of patter possibilities.

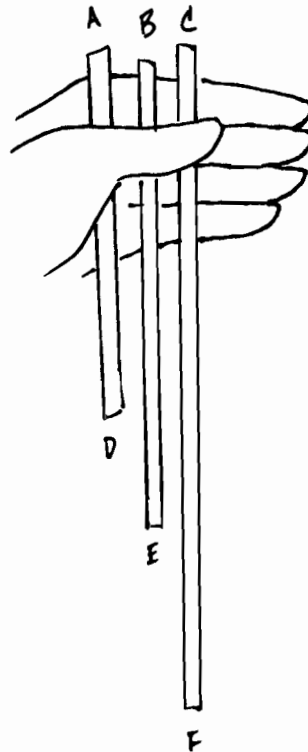
In 1943, Hen Fetsch (1912–1961) invented Rope Epic, a multiphase rope route that inspired Bob Carver to create this three rope routine in the 1950s. In his book *Gene Gordon's Magical Legacy*, Gordon (1904–1994), a magic dealer, inventor and performer, explains that he named the trick The Professor's Nightmare because of his patter about a befuddled geometry professor. He also marketed the trick. Today, the trick's original handling, patter and manufacturing rights are owned by magician Karl Norman.

The Effect: You introduce three ropes of different lengths. With a gentle tug, you stretch the three ropes until they're all the same size. You count and further display them as three equal ropes. Then, after a magic gesture, the ropes return to their original lengths.

Preparation: To get ready for the trick, cut three pieces of pliable rope to the following lengths: 12", 26", and 38". (The ropes do not have to be these exact lengths, but the lengths of the small and medium ropes added together must total the length of the long rope.) You might wish to tape or glue the ends of the rope to prevent unraveling; but otherwise the ropes are completely unprepared.

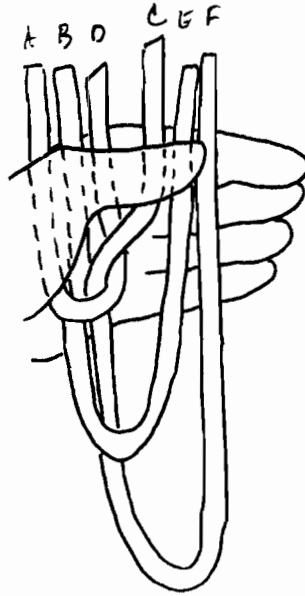
The Routine: Hold the three ropes in your left hand, clipped by your thumb against your palm. The small rope is clipped to the inside of the crotch of your thumb. Next comes the medium-size rope, then finally the long rope to the outside.

The three unequal ropes.



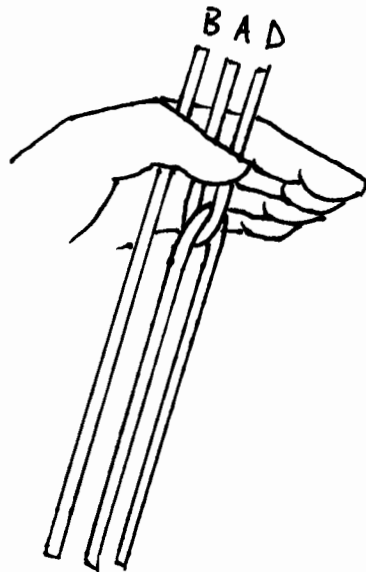
Bring up the bottom end of the small rope, and set it next to the upper end of the long rope. Give these two ends (labeled in the illustration as C and D) a half-twist counter-clockwise, away from your body: This will interlock the ends of the small and long ropes.

Bring up the bottom end of the medium rope and set it to the right of the upper ends already held by your left fingers. Finally, bring up the bottom end of the long rope, and set it to the right of all the other ends.



The ends of the ropes, held in the left hand, after two ends are interlocked and the others are brought up into place.

Clip the right three ends between your right thumb and forefinger. The three left ends remain clipped between your left thumb and forefinger. Pull the three left ends to the left, and pull the three right ends to the right. Be careful to keep the secret looped junction of the small and long ropes hidden in your left palm. The ropes will appear to stretch to the same length. Let go with the right hand, allowing the three “equal” ropes to dangle from the left hand.



The three “equal” ropes.

In order to “prove” that the ropes have all become the same length, you have to show them one at a time—separate and equal. Of course, this will require a sneaky move: a false count.

Clip the top end of the medium rope (B in the illustration) between your right forefinger and middle finger. Pull the rope slowly out of your left hand, trailing it over the top of the left forefinger. Count “One.”

Now comes the tricky part. You’re going to switch the single rope in your right hand for the interlocked ropes in your left hand. As you pass your right hand in front of your left hand, shove the upper end of the single rope between your left forefinger and middle finger. At the same time, your right thumb and forefinger pinch the ends of the interlinked ropes in your left hand. Move your right hand back toward the right, leaving the single rope in the left hand and trailing one of the two ends of the interlocked ropes over your left forefinger. The junction of the two ropes should be hidden by your slightly curled right fingers. Count “Two.”



Sawed in Half

Be sure that your right hand places the single rope back in your left hand at the same time as it picks up the interlocked ropes. Otherwise, the move looks like a “put-and-take,” and the audience will know you’ve switched the ropes.

Performed smoothly, without hesitation, it won’t look like you switched ropes; it will look like the right hand has picked up a second rope to add to the rope already there.

Finally, your right hand picks up the single rope in your left hand, drags it across your left middle finger, and adds it to the interlocked ropes already in your right hand. Count “Three.”



Now You See It

This subtlety of dragging the rope over the left forefinger during the false count enhances the deception that the three ropes are totally separate. The move is credited to New York magician Slydini (1901-1991). Born Quintino Marucci in Italy and raised in Argentina, Slydini came to the United States around 1930 and established himself as a master of misdirection, especially in his close-up magic, and lapping.

Here’s a basic handling to return to three ropes of different lengths. Transfer the three ropes to your left hand. Bring up the three bottom ends and place them next to the

upper ends. Then pull out the ropes one at a time, calling them by their appropriate lengths. Or, if you prefer, simply roll the three ropes into a ball and pull them out one at a time.

Professor's Nightmare can be performed with simple descriptive patter ("I have three ropes, small, medium, and large," and so on), or you can come up with an amusing or even educational line of patter. Some magicians tell the story of "Three Little Pigs." British magician and television celebrity Paul Daniels (b. 1938) has made this one of his feature tricks with his patter about "Goldilocks and the Three Bears." Some Gospel magicians (magicians who use magic to illustrate Christian teachings) let the ropes symbolize the Trinity. For motivational speakers, trade-show workers, and corporate entertainers, the ropes can represent three products, three parts of a slogan, or the equal importance of three departments or levels of management in the organization.

Rigid Rope

This routine is based on a legendary trick that is supposedly performed by the street magicians of India. The fakir throws a rope, or it rises, into the air. The rope becomes rigid, and the magician's young assistant climbs the rope. In one version of the tale, the boy disappears at the top of the rope, then reappears in the crowd back on the ground. I use the more gruesome version of the story to set up my patterline.

Here's the Indian Rope Trick—in your own hands.



Now You See It

The story of the Indian Rope Trick was mentioned in religious writings in India more than a thousand years ago. The legend reached China by the T'ang dynasty (A.D. 618-906) and was known in Europe by the early 17th century. In fact, the story of "Jack and the Beanstalk" may be its European counterpart.

Although everyone has heard of the Indian Rope Trick, no one seems to have personally witnessed it, and no performance has ever been authenticated. Many famous illusionists, including Harry Kellar (1849-1922), Doug Henning (b. 1947), Howard Thurston (1869-1936), and Omar Pasha have featured stage versions of the famous trick in their shows.

The Effect: You display a long piece of rope. You stroke one end, and it becomes rigid. Then, the entire rope seems to turn into a stiff solid rod. Finally, the ends go limp, and you coil the rope around your hand.

Preparation: You'll need a 24" piece of "magician's rope," the soft, cotton rope that has a threaded core. You'll also need two 7-8" plastic drinking straws.

Remove the core from the rope by pulling out the long strands. Stick a straw into one end of the rope, just far enough that the straw doesn't protrude out the end. Similarly, stick a straw into the other end of the rope. Tie a knot at each end of the rope.

This will give you a rope that is actually a cotton sheath with a plastic drinking straw hidden inside each end, with about 8-10" of "empty" rope between them. To the audience, this will appear to be simply a 24" piece of rope, knotted at both ends.

Coil the rope around your open left hand, and you're ready to begin.

The Routine: *Have you ever heard the tale of a Hindu fakir in India, who tosses a rope up into the air? It stands straight up, rigid. A small boy climbs to the top and disappears above the clouds. The magician climbs the rope, chops up the boy with a giant scimitar and drops his dismembered body into a basket. The magician descends, the rope falls, and the boy pops out of the basket, none the worse for wear.*

Do I have any volunteers?

No? Well, I was lucky enough to get ahold of just a small piece of a rope that was reputedly used to perform the trick in India. Watch!

Unwind the rope from around your left hand. Hold the center of the rope between your left thumb and fingers, and allow the ends to dangle and sway. This must be done carefully, but casually, so that the audience does not see or suspect that the rope is gimmicked.

Pinch one of the knotted ends between your right thumb and forefinger. Raise that end of the rope until the section between your right and left hands is vertical.

Let go of the rope with your left hand. The rope will hang from your right fingers. With your left fingers and thumb, gently stroke the upper half of the rope several times, from the top knot downward. On the last stroke, stop at the bottom of the upper straw, and pinch it through the rope. (You'll be able to feel the straw through the rope quite easily.)

Slowly and tentatively remove your right hand from the rope, as if you're unsure whether the rope will stand up on its own. Sway your left hand slightly, and the rope will appear to be balancing as well as being a rigid rod.

With your right thumb and fingers, stroke the rope from where your left fingers are holding it down to the bottom knot, as if trying to hypnotize the rope. Turn your right hand palm-up, and hold it just to the left of the hanging rope. With the right thumb and forefinger, pinch the top of the lower straw through the rope. (Again, you'll be able to feel the straw through the rope quite easily.)

This position of your right hand is a bit awkward, but only momentarily: Raise your right hand, still pinching the rope, to the same level as your left hand. At the same

time, spread the two hands apart, palm-up, as far as the rope will allow. Timed properly, it will appear as if the entire rope suddenly goes rigid. It should look as though you're holding a horizontal, solid bar of rope in your two hands.

To make the rope appear to droop and go slack, tilt both hands so that the palms face each other as you move your hands slightly together. At the same time, release the pressure with which you're pinching the rope. The ends of the rope will drape over the backs of the hands.

Remove your left hand, letting the rope drape over your right hand. Grab one of the knotted ends of the rope between your left thumb and fingers. With the left hand, lift the rope upward as you lower your right hand. Finally, perform this "convincer move": Using your right hand, coil the rope from end-to-end around the left hand. This "proves" that the rope doesn't have a solid bar running through it.

Sawed in Half the Hard Way

Like so many other tricks, this basic effect appeared in Scot's *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584). A similar routine was published the same year in a French magic book, *Le Premiere Partie des Subtiles et Plaisantes Inventions (Clever and Pleasant Invejtions, Part One)*, written by J. Prevost. Despite the latter book's title, no sequel was ever published. In both versions of the trick (today known as the "Grandmother's Necklace," two cords were threaded through beads but magically came free.

The Effect: You offer to visibly saw a person in half. For the fainthearted in the group, you'll use two lengths of rope rather than a buzzsaw. You wrap two long ropes around a volunteer, and two more spectators hold the ends of the ropes. Suddenly, the ropes come free as the volunteer passes through them.

Preparation: Two ropes, each approximately 7' long are required. Before performing, set the ropes side-by-side, and tie them together near their middles with a single piece of white thread. Each rope is then folded back on itself, so that you have, in effect, two folded lengths of rope, tied at their curved centers by a thread. This junction, held in the palm of your hand, will give the illusion of two long single pieces of rope.

The Routine: Ask for three assistants, and place them in a row. Let's call the volunteers, from your left to right, A, B and C. Have B face the audience. Hand the ends of the ropes to A and C while centering the secret junction behind B at the middle of his or her back.



Tip of the Wand

I usually present this trick as a weird way of sawing someone in half, but another possibility is performing it as a modern-day Houdini routine: A volunteer from the audience is tied up in ropes and escapes.

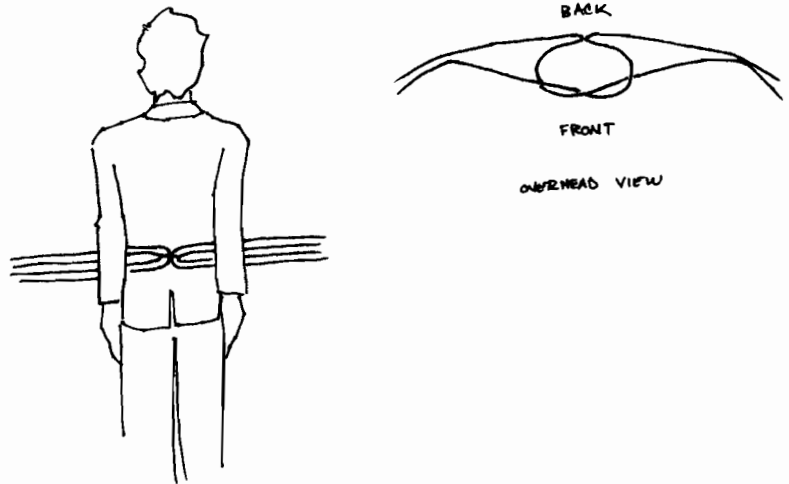
Tie two rope together near their middles.



Hide the junction of the two ropes in your left hand.



The secret junction of the ropes is centered behind your middle volunteer.



The illusion to the audience is that A and C are holding two long ropes that pass behind the back of B.

Take either one of the two ends that A is holding and either one of the two ends that C is holding, and tie the two ropes in a single, loose knot around and in front of B. Give the ends of the ropes back to A and to C. (Note that tying the knot will switch the ends: A will receive the end formerly held by C, and vice versa.)

Ask A and C to hold both of their ends tightly with both hands. Caution them not to drop the ropes.

And now, we're going to try to saw this person in half, using only two razor- sharp pieces of rope. On the count of three, I want you two to gently pull the ends of your rope taut. At the same time, I want you, in the center, to take one step backwards. If we're lucky, and the trick works, the rope will pass through your waist, sawing you in half, and you'll be instantly healed back together.



Sawed in Half

If the ends of the ropes are yanked out of your volunteers hands, or if they drop them, the effect is ruined.

Ready? One! Two! Three days ago ... I was performing this trick. The ropes passed through his body, his upper torso fell to floor, and, well, now we're visiting him in the hospital ... in rooms 207 and 208.

But don't worry. I'm sure that, today, everything will come off okay. Ready? One! Two! ... Two-and-a-half! ... Three!

The spectators A and C pull on their ropes, the hidden thread breaks, and the ropes appear to pass through the body of spectator B.

The Least You Need to Know

- There are numerous ways to perform the standard cut-and-restored rope trick, some using gimmicks, others using sleight-of-hand.
- Professor's Nightmare, the modern classic rope trick in which three different lengths of rope become the same size, was invented in the 1950s.
- The legend of the Indian Rope Trick, in which a rope magically rises into the air, is more than a thousand years old. No one has ever authenticated a performance, but many modern illusionists have tried to recreate it on stage.
- Two pieces of rope passing through a spectator's body can be presented as an unusual way to saw a person in half or as a Houdini-like escape.



Silken Sorcery

In This Chapter

- ▶ The history of silk
- ▶ The first use of silk handkerchiefs in magic
- ▶ The most common silk handkerchiefs used by magicians today
- ▶ Magical effects with silk handkerchiefs, including making silks appear and disappear
- ▶ The Sympathetic Silks, a popular effect in silk magic

Tricks performed with silks now make up a complete genre of magic. Silk has a beautiful luster, handkerchiefs made from it are fairly durable, and, perhaps most importantly for magicians, they are highly compressible. This allows one or more silks to be easily hidden in a very small space.

Tricks with silk handkerchiefs weren't common in magic until the latter part of the 19th century, but the story of silk goes back almost 5,000 years. Ready to take a trip?

The Silk Route to China

The development of silk—the cloth fiber made from the filament of the silkworm cocoon—dates back to 2700 BC in China. For centuries, the way it was produced was a secret. Eventually, its method of manufacture, along with some of the worms and mulberry trees on which they feed, were smuggled out of China. Today, the silkworm industry is still centered in China and Japan, although silk and silk synthetics are also produced elsewhere.



Say the Magic Word

Among themselves, magicians usually refer to a silk handkerchief or scarf as simply a **silk**. You should avoid doing so when performing, though, or your spectators (who aren't in on magic jargon) will think, "A silk what?"



Tip of the Wand

Because even strongly woven silk is delicate, great care should be taken when handling and storing it. One of the best ways to store silk handkerchiefs and keep them relatively wrinkle-free is to wrap them around a paper tube from a roll of paper towels, aluminum foil or plastic wrap.

Magic tricks with handkerchiefs date back to at least medieval times. Reginald Scot, for example, teaches several in his seminal work *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*. French magician Jean Eugene Robert-Houdin (1805–1871) was one of the first illusionists to recognize the unique properties of handkerchiefs made of silk. Another French magician and inventor Joseph Buatier de Kolta (1845–1903) probably did more than any other magician to pioneer the use of silk handkerchiefs in magic. Writing at the turn of the century, Professor Louis Hoffman (1839–1940) taught several silk handkerchief tricks in his now-classic books, *Modern Magic*, *More Magic*, and *Later Magic*. Some 20th century performers have specialized in silk magic, performing their entire acts with silk handkerchiefs. One of the best known was Ade Duval (1898–1965), who called his act "A Rhapsody in Silk."

Psst—Wanna Buy a Silk?

Although it's possible to buy raw silk, then hem and dye it, it's certainly easier and probably more cost effective to buy silk handkerchiefs. The standard sizes are 12", 15", 18", 24", and 36" squares. By far, the most common size is the 18×18" (referred to as an *18 silk*). Long strips of silk, called streamers, often dyed in bands of colors, are also popular as production items.

In a pinch, of course, you can probably use scarves made out of cotton or other materials to perform the tricks explained in this chapter, but they will work better—and look better to the audience—if you're able to find silk (or in a real pinch, rayon, or silk/rayon-blend) handkerchiefs.

Whippersnapper

The Effect: You tie a knot at the end of a silk scarf just by whipping it in the air.

Preparation: You'll need a silk scarf, preferably 18" or 24" in size. Tie a knot about an inch from one end, large enough so that it's clearly visible from a distance.

The Routine: Pick up the silk with your right hand, hiding the knot in your right fist. The long end should extend from the thumb side of your fist, and the short end should peek out of the other side.

I'm going to try to tie a knot in this silk scarf using only one hand.

Pick up the long end with your left hand and clip it between your right thumb and forefinger. Holding the knot tight in the hand, release the other end of the silk with a snap of your wrist.

Darn, I missed. Let me try again.

Bring up the long end, clip it between the fingers, and whip it out again. No knot.

Let me try one last time. Third time's usually the charm.

Lift the long end of the silk and clip it between your thumb and forefinger. This time when you flick out the silk, hold on to the long end, but open your other fingers to let the knotted end fly out of your fist. The knot appears in mid-air!



Tip of the Wand

This doesn't have to be a silk trick. It's just as effective when performed with a men's pocket handkerchief or even a piece of rope. With either, you could patter about learning how to tie knots in the Scouts or on a cattle ranch in the Old West.

Silk from Nowhere

The Effect: You show that both hands are empty, pull up your sleeves, and then produce a silk handkerchief at your fingertips.

Preparation: You need the largest handkerchief you can find that can still be hidden in your hand when it's rolled into a ball.

Roll the silk into a small ball. Here's an easy way to do it: Place one corner of the hanky in the center of your left palm. Press your two palms together, and then rub your right hand in a clockwise motion against your left palm. The silk will be pulled up between your palms and be rolled into a ball.

Place the rolled silk on your left sleeve, at the inside bend of your elbow. Bend your arm slightly to hold it in place. Make sure it's completely hidden within the folds of your shirt or jacket.



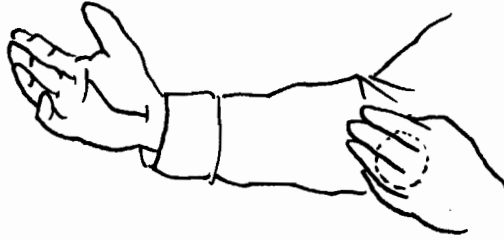
The rolled-up silk is hidden at the bend of your elbow.

The Routine: For obvious reasons, this trick is usually performed as an opener (the opening trick of an act). Walk on-stage with both of your arms slightly bent and your hands wide open. Slowly and deliberately show that both sides of your hands are empty.

The following actions should look like you're just pulling up your sleeves. In one continuous motion, place your right hand directly on the silk ball, palm it, and pull up your left sleeve with your partially closed right fist. Then pull up your right sleeve with your left hand, also from the elbow.

Nothing up my sleeves.

Palm the silk as you pull up your sleeve.



Bring both hands together, and then separate them to reveal the silk hanky.

Presto!

If you prefer, you can produce the hanky from the fingertips of your right hand. After you pull up your sleeves, turn so that your right side is toward the audience. (This will help hide the palmed silk.) Look into the air to a spot about 12 inches in front of your eyes. Pretend to see something.

Reach out with your right hand as if to pluck a piece of fruit off a tree. Stab the air with your fingers, and then stop abruptly, releasing the silk from your palm. The motion will thrust the hanky out. Catch it with your fingertips.

To the audience, it looks like you spotted something floating, invisibly, in the air. You reach for it, and the instant you touch it, it becomes a visible silk scarf!

Pocket Prestidigitation

There are many, many ways to make a silk appear or disappear. Here's a perfect example of how one basic method can be used to perform several different effects. (However, because the handling is very similar, you probably should not perform more than one of these in-the-pocket tricks at the same sitting or show.)

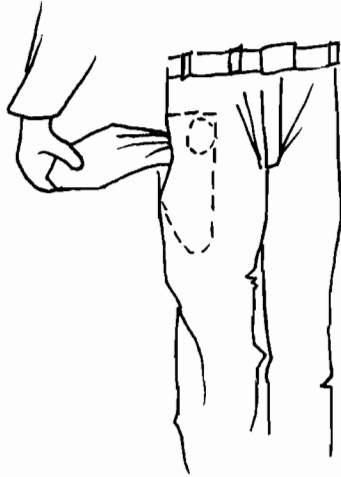
The Effect: You place a silk handkerchief in your pocket. You instantly pull the pocket inside out. It's empty. So is your hand. The hanky has disappeared.

Preparation: None, but you have to be wearing pants with empty side pockets.

The Routine: Show a silk handkerchief, and then openly put it into your pants pocket. What the audience can't see, however, is this: Rather than placing the silk all the way down into the bottom of the pocket, stuff it into the triangular area at the top corner of the pocket. (Naturally, you'll have to practice to do this smoothly.)

Remove your hand, and let the audience see that it's empty. This proves (without your having to say so) that the silk really is in the pocket.

Then, reach all the way down into the pocket and pull the bottom all the way out. The hanky will remain hidden out of sight, tucked way up into the top corner of the pocket.



The pocket appears to be empty. The silk handkerchief has vanished!

So much for the vanish. Are you ready for the inevitable variations? Here they are: a production, a transformation, and a transposition....

Production

To produce the silk from an empty pocket, prepare by hiding the silk in the upper-inside corner of your otherwise-empty pocket.

To perform the trick, pull out the inside of the pocket to show that it's empty. Show that your hand is empty. Tuck in your pocket. Show that your hand is still empty. Then, reach into your pocket and pull out the silk handkerchief.

Transformation

You can make a silk handkerchief change colors. You'll need two silk handkerchiefs that are the same size but different colors—say, red and green. To prepare, hide the green handkerchief in the upper corner of your pants pocket.

Reach into your pocket and pull out the inside to show that it's empty. Show that your hand is also empty. The green silk will remain hidden in the corner of the pocket.

Tuck in the pocket, but as you do so, move the green silk from the top corner to the bottom of pocket. Remove your hand from the pocket, and allow the audience to see that it's still empty.

Show the red silk and place it in your pocket, tucking it into the top corner where the green hanky was a moment earlier. Remove your hand and casually let the audience see that it's empty, and then gesture to signify the magic moment.

Reach into your pocket and pull out the green scarf. The silk has changed colors! Pull out the inside of the pocket to show that it's otherwise empty. The red silk remains hidden.

Transposition

You can make a silk travel from one pocket to another. You'll need two identical silk handkerchiefs. Prepare by hiding a red silk in the upper-inside corner of the otherwise-empty left pocket.

To perform the trick, pull out the insides of both pockets to show that they're empty. Show that both of your hands are empty. Tuck in both pockets.

Place a red silk in your right pocket, but secretly stuff the silk into the upper corner. Remove your right hand and show that it's empty.

Make a magic gesture to indicate that the silk is traveling from your right pocket to your left pocket.

Pull out the inside of your right pocket, keeping the silk hidden in the top corner. The hanky is gone! Once again, show that your left hand is empty. Reach into the left pocket and pull out the silk from the top corner of the pocket. For symmetry, you may want to pull out the inside of the left pocket also, to simultaneously show that both pockets are empty.

Sympathetic Silks

The trick known as Sympathetic Silks dates back to at least the beginning of the 20th century, perhaps even earlier. Certainly one of the precursors was a trick featured by Alexander Herrmann in which knotted scarves seemingly untied themselves. A similar trick is mentioned in Edwin Sach's 1885 book *Sleight of Hand*. Hatton and Plate called the trick The Mysterious Knots when they explained it in their 1910 book *Magicians Tricks: How They Are Done*, but they did not claim to have invented it. In their version, three separate silks thrown in the air came down tied together; the knotted silks were then tossed back into the air, and they came down untied.

In his book, *Magic of the Hands*, Edward Victor claimed that he was performing an original version of the Sympathetic Silks, which he developed with his friend G.W. Hunter, in his act at St. George's Hall in London in 1913. The origin of the trick will probably never be known, but the Sympathetic Silks remains popular to this day.



Now You See It

Interestingly, the name "Sympathetic Silks" is a misnomer in the version of the trick most commonly performed today. Sympathetic magic is the belief that what happens to one thing can magically influence another similar thing because the two are acting "in sympathy" with each other. This isn't what occurs in Sympathetic Silks. Rather, either the knot transposes from one place to another, or one knot vanishes as another knot forms.

The Effect: You show four separate silk scarves. A spectator holds two of them. You tie the other two together. You perform a magic gesture and the knot changes places. Your silks are separated and the volunteer's silks are tied together.

Preparation: You need four identical (preferably 18" or 24") silks. Tie two of them together at about two inches from the corners of the handkerchiefs.

The Routine: Hold the four silks in your left hand. Make sure the four ends are visible above the thumb and forefinger, but that the knot is hidden by the fingers.

You have to use a false count to show the silks as four separate handkerchiefs. There are many different false counts for the Sympathetic Silks, but for this routine, I suggest a false count similar to the one used in The Professor's Nightmare rope trick. (You might want to refresh your memory by looking back at Chapter 18.)

Pick up one of the single silks between your right right forefinger and middle finger. Count "One." Now secretly switch the single silk in your right hand for the tied silks in your left: Shove the silk in your right hand between the forefinger and middle finger of your left hand. At the same time, pick up the two tied silks between your right thumb and forefinger. Count "Two." Make sure that the knot is not seen during the switch.

Without pausing, pick up either of the single silks in your left hand between your right thumb and forefinger. Count "Three." Finally, pick up the remaining silk from your left hand between your right thumb and forefinger while counting "Four."



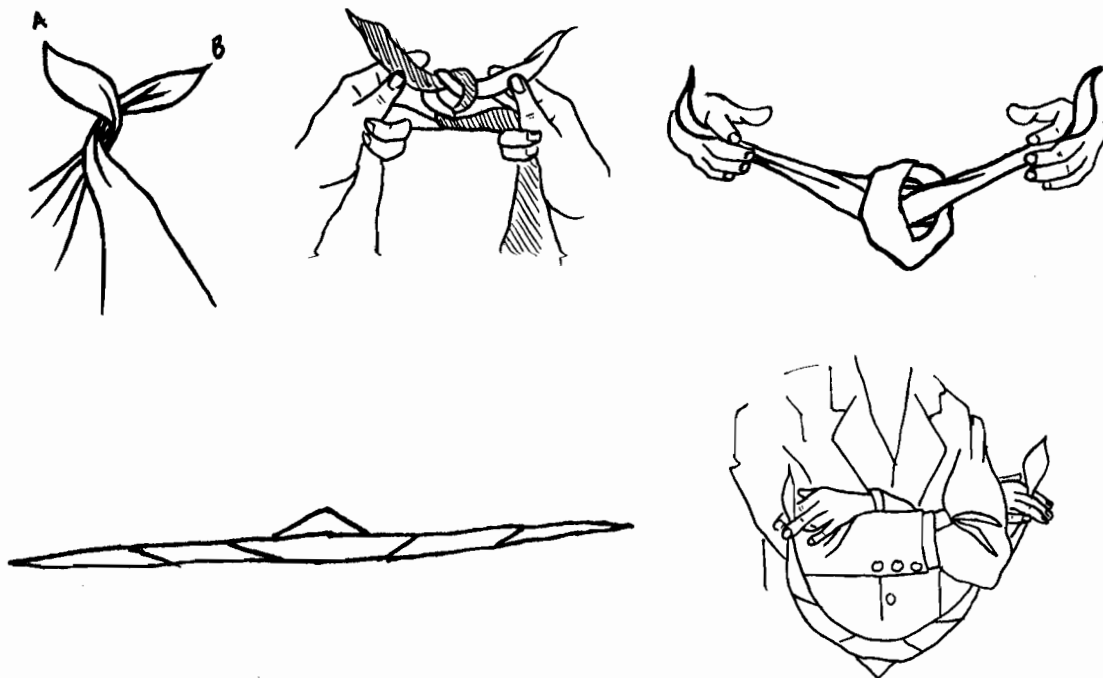
Sawed in Half

It's not the speed, but the rhythm, of the false count that's important. Count the four silks evenly, without any pauses. There's a natural tendency to hesitate between "One" and "Two" because of the fancy fingering, but if you pause, the audience will notice. They may not know what you did, but they'll know something sneaky happened.

Transfer the two separate silks back to your left hand. With your right hand, tuck the knotted ends of the other two silks into an opaque tumbler or a spectator's shirt pocket. If you're daring, place the silks, bundled up so that the knots cannot be felt, into a spectator's fist. Let the two ends of the secretly tied silks dangle from the spectator's pocket, hand, or a glass.

Hold one of the separate silks in each hand. You're now going to tie them in a false knot, frequently referred to by magicians as the *Sympathetic Silk knot*.

Lay the end of your right-hand silk across the end of the silk in your left hand, making an X. Give the two ends a single twist, but do not interlock them. Then, tie a single knot on top of this twist. Give the knot a good tug; this will look like you've tied a solid, double knot. In fact, you can briefly hold on to one of the silks and dangle the other below it. The silks will remain tied. Because of the initial twist, however, this is a fake knot that can easily be pulled apart.



Twist the two ends, followed by a real single knot, to produce the false "Sympathetic Silk knot."

Gather up these two silks and tuck them into a second pocket or glass. If you prefer, hold the knot in your hand and let the ends hang out of your fist. As you set the silks down or place them in your fist, secretly pull the two silks apart, untying the false knot. This takes a bit of practice, but it's fairly simple to do without the audience noticing.

Make a gesture to indicate that you are magically transferring the knot from your two silks (which the audience thinks are tightly tied) to the spectator's two silks (which the audience believes are separate).

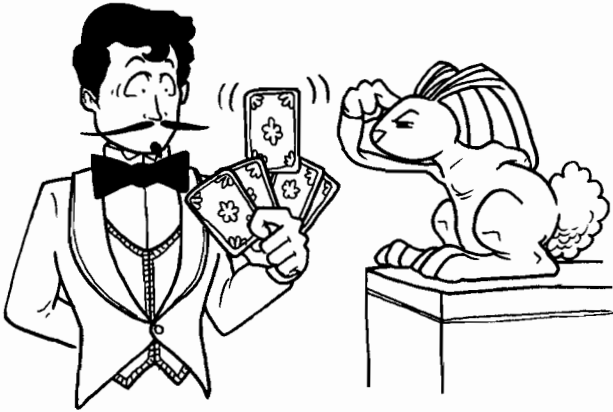
Grasp a corner from one of your silks and pick up it up with a snap. This flourish will separate the silks, just in case they're not already completely apart. The knot has vanished!

Pick up the other two silks, or remove them from the spectator's pocket or hand. They are now knotted together. The knot has traveled from one set of silk handkerchiefs to the other!

The must-read reference work for those seriously interested in tricks done with silks is the three-volume *Rice's Encyclopedia of Silk Magic* by American magic dealer Harold R. Rice (1912–1987). In addition to these volumes, first published in 1942, 1953, and 1962, respectively, Rice also authored several manuscripts of silk routines, including *Naughty Silks*, *More Naughty Silks*, *Capers with Color*, and *Selected Sympathetic Silk Routines*. He was the founder of Silk King Studios, which for many years supplied the highest quality silk products for magicians.

The Least You Need to Know

- The colorful history of silk dates back almost five millennia.
- Magic with silk handkerchiefs did not become fashionable until the latter part of the 19th century.
- *Silks*, as magicians call silk handkerchiefs, are highly compressible, making it possible to hide them easily.
- Sympathetic Silks, the transference of knots from one group of scarves to another, is a classic trick in silk magic.



It's All in Your Mind

In This Chapter

- ▶ Our fascination with prophecy and mind-reading
- ▶ Coincidence and psychological choices vs. extra-sensory perception
- ▶ Mental miracles: mind-reading as magical entertainment
- ▶ How to “force” someone to make a particular selection
- ▶ How to find out secret information

We live in an uncertain world; full of surprises. The clichè “Nothing in life is certain but change” has never been more true. We all want to know what’s around the river bend.

History is filled with tales of wizards, enchantresses, and soothsayers trying to predict the future. In the Old Testament, Saul visited the “Witch of Endor.” Ancient Greeks consulted oracles. Roman augurers predicted that, on the Ides of March, Julius Caesar would have a very bad day.

Mental magic is an umbrella term for any entertainment or theatrical experience that involves the mind. The field includes demonstrations of psychic ability such as telepathy (direct communication between minds) and clairvoyance (the ability to perceive distant or hidden objects), as well as prediction, divination, and prognostication (all forms of foretelling the future). Some performers also include memory tests, lightning mathematical calculations, telekinesis, and psychokinesis (moving and/or bending objects by mind power) in their acts. Some performers include hypnosis and spiritualism as forms of mental magic.

Psychological Sorcery

There may be some real telepaths and clairvoyants out there somewhere; I don't know. I just haven't met one who can guarantee that, say, next Saturday at 8 pm they'll be able to do a one-hour after-dinner show at Bernie's bar mitzvah.

When I perform mentalism, I try to psychologically prepare my audiences by explaining what I'm going to attempt before performing any mind-reading "tricks."



Hocus Quote-Us

If we accept the premise that the world is difficult or problematic, then of course it makes sense that people want to know what's coming.

—Max Maven, contemporary mind-reader



Say the Magic Word

The branch of mental magic in which the performer demonstrates his or her supposed ability to read minds is sometimes referred to as **mentalism**. More recently, some mentalists, especially members of the Psychic Entertainers Association, have begun to call themselves **psychic entertainers**.

The Effect: You prove to the audience members that their thoughts might not be all that random.

Preparation: None.

The Routine: *Many people wonder whether ESP actually exists. Is it possible to read another person's mind? Or is it all just an accident, a coincidence, that our minds could share a single thought at the same time? And if they do, are you sending the message to me, or am I sending the message to you?*

The answer depends, to a great extent, upon human nature. Let's try a test to see how susceptible you are to my psychological influence.

Everybody, take out a piece of paper and jot down your answers to these five questions. Or, just keep it all in your mind. Ready?

Read the following list:

- > Name a color.
- > Name a number from 1 to 10.
- > Name a flower.
- > Draw two geometric shapes, one inside the other. But don't pick a square. That's too easy.
- > Think of an odd number between 1 and 50, with both digits odd, but digits different, not the same, like 11.

Here are the answers that most people give: Red, 7, a rose, a triangle inside a circle or maybe a circle inside a triangle, and 37. How did you do? If I caught you on more than three or four, you're going to be easy!

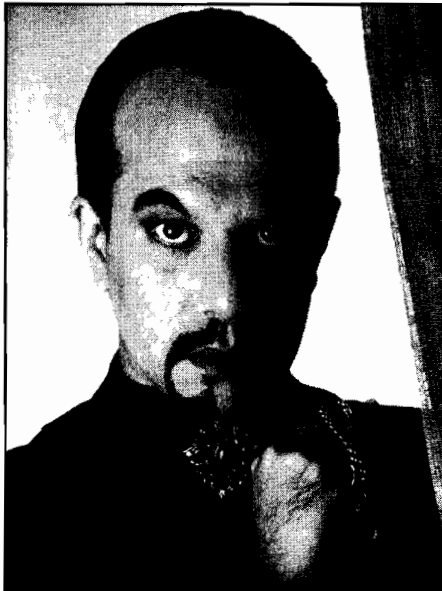


Now You See It

There have been many celebrated entertainers in the field of mentalism. Joseph Dunninger (1892–1975) appeared on both radio and television as a mind-reader and authored books on magic, mentalism and spiritualism. Theodore Annemann (1907–1942) is remembered for his contributions to mental magic, many of which first appeared in *The Jinx*, a magazine he published from 1934 to 1942. Many of his mental effects were collected into his posthumous 1944 book *Practical Mental Effects*.

Another author on mentalism was Tony Corinda, from England, best-known for his book *13 Steps to Mentalism*. Dr. Stanley Jacks (1903–1960), a German entertainer who worked in America, was known for performing close-up mentalism. English performer Maurice Fogel (1911–1981) was a headliner in British music halls in the 1950s and 1960s.

Pakistani mentalist Kuda Bux (c. 1904–1981) could read messages with his eyes covered by coins, dough, tape and a hood; today, Glenn Falkenstein does a similarly-themed blindfold act. Among the most popular performers of mental magic in recent decades are The Amazing Kreskin and Max Maven.



Max Maven, noted performer, author, director and historian.

The 1089 Book Test

There is a whole genre of mental magic known as “book tests,” in which the mind-reader predicts a word, phrase, or illustration that a spectator will select from a book. In Chapter 13, you learned a clever way to generate the number 1089. Let’s apply it to a book test to perform a stunning mental miracle.

The Effect: You write down a prediction. After a series of mathematics, the spectator arrives at the number 1089. He or she opens a book, turns to page 108, and finds the ninth word on the page. It matches your prediction. The experiment can be repeated to match the first word on page 9 or 18 of the book.

Preparation: A book, a paper, and a pen are all that’s required. Before beginning the performance, secretly open a book and find out the ninth word on page 108.

The Routine: *Have you ever heard the expression “I can read you like a book”? Well, life is like a book: It has an introduction, a first chapter, lots of exciting stories, and then, finally, the big ending and the denouement. Most of us go through life just hoping our binding holds up.*

But, as we go through the book of life, we never know what’s on the next page, or in the next chapter. Well, let’s look into the future of this book. First I’ll make a prediction of something that I think will happen in just a couple of minutes.

Write down the word you have memorized from page 108. Seal it inside of an envelope or set it to one side. Hand the spectator the book, a piece of paper, and a pen.

Using the mathematical formula from “1089 Now and Forever,” guide the spectator to arrive at the random number 1089. As we’ve seen, the result is *always* 1089. But you don’t want to tell the audience that.

You have an answer, probably in the thousands, right? Circle the first three digits. That gives you a circled number in the hundreds and another, single-digit number, which is not circled.

The three-digit number that you have circled will be a page number in this book. For the first time, what is that number? 108? Turn to page 108 in the book. I hope there are at least 108 pages.

The uncircled number will be a word on that page. What number do you have? Nine? Please count across the first line and tell me what the ninth word on page 108 is in that book.

Would you look at my prediction?

Needless to say, the words match.

You can repeat this book test, or have a different ending, if you stop the arithmetic after the first subtraction. Because the total of the two or three digits of the answer is always 18, you could “predict” the first word or an illustration on page 18 of your book. Alternatively, your “prediction” could be found on page nine if you cared to generate that number instead.



Now You See It

During a tour of summer camps, I regularly performed this routine, but at one church-sponsored camp I couldn't find books in the auditorium—only Bibles. I did the routine anyway with a King James edition, a Revised Standard version, and a Good News Bible. After the show, one of the head counselors, in collar, came up to me. I readied myself for eternal damnation, but much to my surprise he said "You know, I figured out how you did that trick, and I must congratulate you. Obviously, you have completely memorized all three versions of the Bible word for word."

Equivoque: The Magician's Choice

"The 1089 Book Test" can be even more amazing by offering your volunteer a choice of several books. Of course, that means the spectator must "freely select" the book that you want them to. To accomplish this, you must use a secret force called "Magician's Choice," more technically called "Equivoque" (which means "to use ambiguous language to deceive or mislead"). It is one of the magician's most valuable and basic secret weapons.

To practice this technique, lay three books in a row on the table. The book you want to "force" (that is, force the spectator to choose) is in the middle.

In performance, you would say to the volunteer, "I have three books to choose from. Please pick up two of them."

There are now three scenarios possible.

In the first scenario, the volunteer picks up the two end books. (For some psychological reason, this happens more than 50 percent of the time.) Take them and set them aside without commenting on them. Pick up the remaining book and say, "You have chosen to use..." and read the title of the book you're holding. The implication is that your assistant has chosen a book by eliminating the other two. This is the cleanest of the Equivoque variations.

If you are not so fortunate, however, and the volunteer picks up one of the end books and the middle book, do not panic. Casually add, "...and hand one of them to me," as if you were completing your previous sentence.

Once again, there are two possibilities. If your volunteer hands you the "force" book, look at its title and casually say, "You have handed me...", and read the title. Ask, "Is there any reason you've chosen this one?" The implication is that the volunteer has performed a two-step elimination to arrive at a selection.

But let's back up. What if the volunteer keeps the "force" book and hands you the other one? Nonchalantly set this book aside and say, "You have chosen to hold onto..." and read the title.

There are dozens of versions of this forcing method, some involving more than three objects, but this is the simplest and most straightforward handling. The key is the casual way you deal with the "selected" and "eliminated" books. If done properly, your volunteers will never suspect that you are manipulating them. In fact, they will think you're giving them a completely free choice.

Mental Vacation

Wanna take a trip? Climb aboard: we'll take a ride on a flying carpet.

The Effect: You lay three picture postcards from popular vacation spots on the table and a spectator selects a destination. You reveal that you have previously predicted your volunteer's dream vacation.

Preparation: You will need three postcards, an envelope to hold them, and a small slip of paper. For the sake of explanation, let's say the postcards are from Disney World, London and Paris.

Write **YOU'LL GO GOOFY OVER DISNEY WORLD** on the address side of the Disney World postcard. Write **SEE YOU SOON, BIG BEN** on the small piece of paper. Write **I'LL MEET YOU ON TOP OF THE EIFFEL TOWER AT NOON** on the front of the envelope. (If you prefer, the messages could have blander, but more definite, wordings: **YOU WILL CHOOSE....**)

The Routine: Remove the three postcards from the envelope, being careful not to show the inside or the front of the envelope. Set the envelope, flap-side up, to one side. Lay the cards on the table face-up.

I want you to look at the three postcards on the table. Let your eyes drift back and forth, and then finally settle on which one of these vacation destinations you would most prefer to visit. Do you have it? All right. Where do you want to take your dream vacation?

At this point, the spectator announces a choice, but it really doesn't matter which he or she makes. Whichever postcard your volunteer picks, you can show that you knew in advance because you've prepared what magicians refer to as a "multiple out." Let's say your volunteer picks Disney World.

Turn over the Disney World postcard. Boldly printed on the back of the postcard is **YOU'LL GO GOOFY OVER DISNEY WORLD**. The other two postcards may, of course, be examined. There is no message on the back of either of them.

Let's say your volunteer selects London.

Inside the envelope is a folded up piece of paper. Take it out. Is there only one paper in the envelope? All right, unfold the paper. What does it say?

The note reads **SEE YOU SOON, BIG BEN**.

And if they think of Paris? Turn over the envelope. Boldly written on the front of the envelope are the words I'LL MEET YOU ON TOP OF THE EIFFEL TOWER AT NOON.

A winner every time!

Color Me Magic

This is a fun impromptu mental marvel with a bunch of crayons. Although it's perfect to perform for children, it's a real fooler for adults, too.

The Effect: You're able to tell the color of a crayon, seemingly by touch alone, while you hold it behind your back.

Preparation: None. You will need several crayons with bold, easily recognizable colors such as red, yellow, blue, or green. No, fuchsia, ochre, or puce.

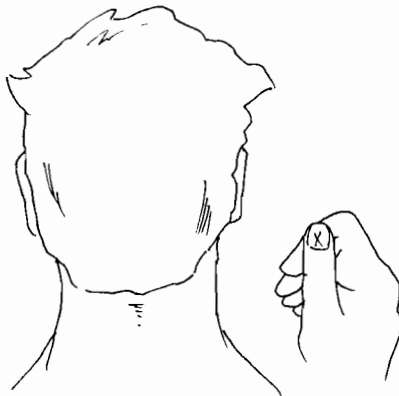
The Routine: Announce that you have the uncanny ability to read colors through your fingertips. Turn away from your spectator and ask him or her to hand you just one of the crayons behind your back.

I'm going to turn back to face you again, so hide the other crayons. I don't want to see them.

Look into your spectator's eyes and concentrate. Finally, announce the color of the chosen crayon. Bring it out to prove that you were correct.

When you turn to face your audience, both hands will be holding the crayon behind your back. Secretly put a small smudge or mark of the crayon on your right thumbnail.

Hold the crayon in your left hand. Bring out your right fist and hold it to your forehead as if concentrating. As you raise your hand, casually peek at your thumbnail to see the color.



While raising your fist to your forehead, peek at the color of the crayon smudge on your thumbnail.

Or touch your volunteer's forehead with your right forefinger while saying, "Just think of the color." Or, make a loose fist and point to your own eyes, saying, "Look right here and think of the color." Regardless of which handling you use, you have ample

opportunity to glance at your thumbnail to discern the color of the crayon. Later, at the first opportunity, secretly rub the crayon mark off your thumbnail.

The Center Tear

This is a classic of mentalism. It was first used by fraudulent mediums to obtain information about the “dearly departed” who were being asked to appear at seances. This is spooky stuff!



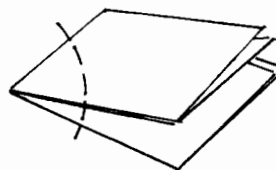
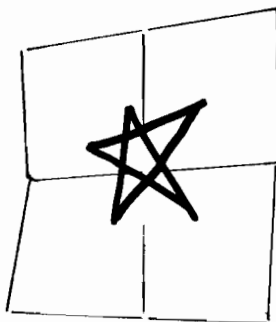
Say the Magic Word

When used in magic, a **billet** is a small piece of paper, often folded, upon which a message has been written, usually for a mind-reading effect.

The Effect: The spectator writes a word, message, question, or illustration on a small piece of paper, and then folds the note into quarters. You rip it up and burn the pieces, yet you’re able to discern the inscription.

Preparation: This requires a bit of rehearsal to understand how the trick works. Take a piece of paper, about 2"×3". Write a small word in the exact center of the note, and then fold the paper in quarters. One corner of this folded packet has no open edges. This is the center of the *billet*. Rip the folded billet into small pieces but do not tear up this “center” section. If you unfold this little piece, you will discover the word that you wrote is still intact.

A message written inside a billet, which is folded and torn.



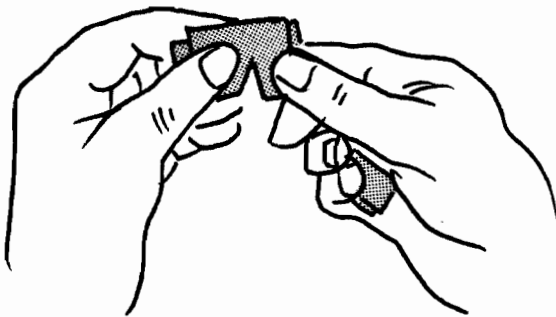
To perform, all you'll need is a billet and a pen. The ink should be bold but not so thick that it bleeds through the paper.

The Routine: Draw a circle or star in the exact center of a small, square piece of paper. Ask the volunteer to write his or her message inside this inscription. (This guarantees that the message will be positioned at the center of the note—also that the word or message will be short.)

In ancient times, wizards and sorcerers used to conjure inside of a mystic circle or pentagram. Don't worry: This isn't black magic. I just want you to print a word, a short message or question, or perhaps make a simple drawing, inside the circle. The magic circle [or star] will help you focus on your image. As soon as you're done, fold the paper in half, and in half again, so that I can't possibly see what you've written.

Take back the folded paper. Rip it into pieces, but be careful not to tear the corner that contains the message. Finger palm this section. Dispose of the pieces or, if you prefer, allow the spectator to rip them into even smaller pieces.

Now, all you have to do is secretly open the folded paper, read the spectator's message, and divine the billet's contents. Some magicians open the paper under cover of a notepad as they write the word or draw the illustration. Others open the billet just below the edge of the table where they're seated. I prefer to just turn my back to the audience, open the billet, and read it:



Tip of the Wand

Although I don't make a big deal of it, I use the word "print" instead of "write" when I ask my volunteer to inscribe something on the billet. He or she is much more likely to print the word, which is easier to read than cursive script.



Sawed in Half

Some magicians burn the pieces, and then stare into the flame to divine the message. If you do burn the pieces, be very, very careful that no one gets burned. No sense getting scorched or maimed over a silly mind-reading stunt.

Finger palm the center of the torn billet.

Turn your back while the spectator discards or burns the pieces. Quickly remove the section of torn billet from your finger palm, open it, and read the contents. Roll the paper into a small pellet and discreetly drop it on the floor (or re-palm it to discard later). Turn back to face the spectator.

Divulge the word(s) or illustration, or answer the question, that you secretly saw on the paper only moments before.

Living or Dead?

Because of its supernatural overtones, the “living or dead” test is another classic theme in mentalism. Plus, it has real theatrical possibilities. You can make the presentation as straightforward or as spooky as you want. It can also be done with one person or in front of a large audience.

The Effect: Your spectator is given several pieces of paper. He or she writes the name of a different living person on all but one piece; on that last piece, the spectator writes the name of someone who is dead. Without reading the papers, you are able to tell which one contains the name of the person who is dead.

Preparation: None. All you need is a sheet of paper and something to write with.

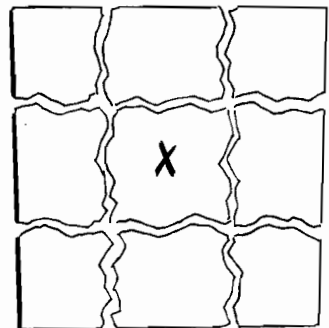
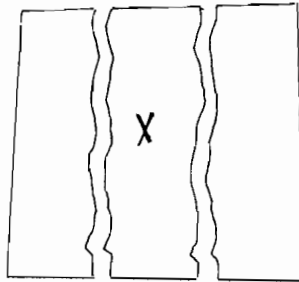
The Routine: Rip a piece of paper into three sections. Hand your volunteer two of the sections, and ask him or her to write the name of a living person on each piece.

Hand over the third piece and ask your volunteer to write the name of a someone who is dead on that paper. Tell your volunteer that the experiment will have extra resonance or “vibrations” if the names are those of personal friends or relatives.

Next, ask the spectator to mix up the three pieces of paper so that you won’t know which is which.

You pick up each piece one at time, raise them to your forehead, and discern which persons are living and which is dead.

The name of the dead person is written on the center section of the paper.



The secret is simple. If you rip a piece of paper into three pieces, either vertically or horizontally, two of the three pieces will have only one jagged edge. One of the pieces will have two jagged edges. Have the spectator write the name of the dead person on this last section. Later, it will be easy to separate it from the other two.

If you prefer, this trick can be performed with three volunteers from the audience. Simply hand one of the three torn pieces to each of the spectators. Ask the audience member who receives the piece with two jagged edges to write down the name of someone who is deceased; the other two write down the name of a living person.

If you have a larger audience, rip the original piece of paper into nine pieces by tearing the page twice across and twice down. All of the small pieces will have two or three jagged edges except for the center section. All four edges will be jagged on that piece, and this is the one that should be inscribed with the name of someone who is dead.

Billet Reading: The One-Ahead Principle

The Effect: Members of the audience write words, questions, or other messages onto small pieces of paper. The papers are folded up and dropped into a hat or bowl. You reach into the hat, pull out one of the folded slips, and hold it to your forehead. You reveal what is written inside. To confirm your “second sight,” you then open the billet and read the exact message. This can be repeated with several notes.

Preparation: None.

The Routine: Magicians call the secret of this effect, which dates to at least the 17th century, the “one-ahead principle.” Somehow, you must find out what is written on any one of the slips. Avoiding that billet, pick up any *other* paper and hold it to your forehead. Announce the message, or answer the question, on the note that you already know. Ask who was thinking of that message.

Casually open up the folded paper and glance at the writing as if to prove that you were right. What you are *actually* doing is obtaining your next message, getting “one-ahead” of the billets—and the audience. The slip you’ve just read is then crumpled and tossed aside.

Pull out a second slip and hold it to your forehead. Divine the message. The message is, of course, what was written on the first paper you read. Again, open the second paper to “verify” your accuracy.

This can be repeated as often as you desire. Because you will know one extra message, however, you have the option of a special ending: You can try mind-to-mind communication without touching the papers! Of course, the final message you actually “receive” comes from the last paper you’ve read.



Tip of the Wand

It is much stronger to ask “Who was *thinking* that?” rather than “Who *wrote* that?” You want the audience to forget that they ever wrote down anything.

But how do you get the first secret message in advance? Here are six methods you can choose from:

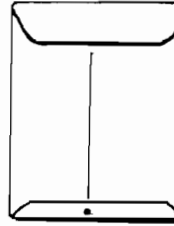
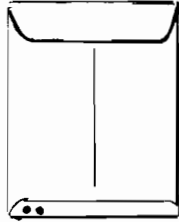
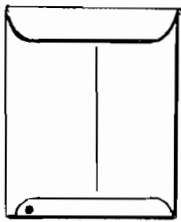
- For your first “reading,” provide a simple message or answer a general question, one that is sure to appear on at least one billet. *Someone* from the audience will think that it was the note he or she wrote. There is a danger to using this method: When or if that message actually does turn up, you must end the routine. You will no longer be “one-ahead.”
- Give a vague answer or message for the first reading. If no one admits that it was theirs, say, “That’s all right. You don’t have to acknowledge it.”
- I’m very big on blame. If no one concedes that it’s their message, say, “Come on, now, if you don’t verify your message, we’ll have to move on. Let’s try another one.” The audience will think the author is too shy to answer.
- After your first “reading,” just *pretend* to see someone in the back of the room acknowledge the message. Say, “Oh, was it yours?” By the time the audience turns to see whose message it was, you have already continued on to divining the next message.
- Collect the folded notes in a hat or opaque container. As you mix the billets, secretly unfold one of the papers and quickly glance at the message. Then, simply avoid picking out that billet as you go through your “one-ahead” readings. Choose that billet for your last message.
- Use a confederate or stooge. Ask some trusted member of the audience or a friend to give you a message in advance. In fact, if you use a confederate, he or she does not actually have to place a billet in the hat. When you ask whose message you divined (the prearranged message), the confederate simply has to own up to it.

Pseudo-Psychometry

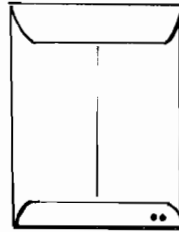
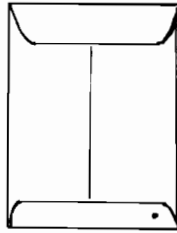
This effect, popularized and titled by Theodore Annemann, was a favorite of William Larsen, Sr. (1904–1957). Larsen, a lawyer by profession, also actively performed magic. He founded *GENII Magazine* in 1936 and authored several manuscripts on magic, many of which were later collected into book form by his son William (Bill) Larsen, Jr. (1928–1993). For many years, Larsen dreamed of a clubhouse for magicians: His sons, Bill and Milton (b. 1931) Larsen, founded the Magic Castle in 1963.

The Effect: Out of your sight, five spectators seal a small, personal item in a large envelope. You’re able to tell which object belongs to which person.

Preparation: This trick is simple. In fact, it is *so* simple that the performance takes great showmanship to pull off. Each envelope is secretly marked in some unique manner, making it possible for you to tell them apart. The most common marking is a small pencil dot or dots at some corner of the envelope.



Give each of the envelopes a secret, distinct mark only you will notice.



The Routine: Ask five spectators to come onto the stage. Hand an opaque envelope to each of them. Needless to say, it is essential that you remember which envelope you hand to each volunteer.

Turn your back. Ask each person to drop a small, personal item into his or her envelope, and then seal the envelope. Have one of the spectators mix the envelopes.

Face the audience. Take back one of the envelopes, and, as you open it, take a quick peek at its marking. You now secretly know which spectator had that envelope.

Take the object out of the envelope. Look at it. Look at the spectators. Pretend that you are unsure; then correctly hand the item to its owner. Ask the spectator to return to his or her seat, accompanied by your thanks and the audience's applause.

Repeat this feat with a second envelope and spectator.

Pick up a third envelope, but keep it sealed. (This seems more difficult to the audience, because this time you don't see the object.) Act like you're having real difficulty deciding among the three volunteers remaining on stage. Finally, hand the envelope to one of them. Ask the spectator to open the envelope. The spectator acknowledges the object and leaves the stage.

Two envelopes and two volunteers are left. Hold one envelope in each hand. Mentally "weigh" each envelope. Hand one envelope to each spectator. Then, before they have a chance to open them, change your mind. Dramatically take back the two envelopes, switch them, and hand each back to the other person. Ask the volunteers to open the envelopes and, if you correctly matched them to their possessions, to return to their seats. (When they do, trust me, it will prompt a strong audience response and applause.)

You have correctly divined all five items!

Needless to say, anything can be placed into the envelopes and sometimes the results are quite comical. Be prepared to be shocked and amused.

Second Sight

Two-person mind-reading acts, sometimes called “second sight” or “code” acts, were very popular as psychic entertainment in vaudeville and, later, in nightclubs. Such acts date back at least to the 19th century. French magician Robert-Houdin performed such a code with his son around 1846. In early-20th-century America, the Zancigs were a popular team. In the 1950s, the Piddingtons, from Australia, were huge stars in England, especially on radio. Two-person mind-reading acts in America include Tommy (1915–1991) and Liz Tucker, who worked from the 1950s onward, and currently, Danny and Jan Orleans.

One member of the team, the “medium,” is either blindfolded, turns away from the audience, or is sent out of the room. The other performer receives a message, written or whispered, from someone in the audience and transmits it, supposedly by telepathy, to the medium.

Most acts of this type use an elaborate code, often involving key words, phrases, or questions. Sometimes the speed or rhythm of their delivery, and the pauses between words, have to be taken into account.

Here’s a simple code act you can do with a friend that is still a real fooler. In fact, it will even fool many magicians.

The Effect: Your friend leaves the room. Someone in the audience merely points at some visible object in the room. The “medium” returns and is able to discern which of the several items you point to is the selected item.

Preparation: This works with a simple color code. Far in advance, decide on a color, say blue, with your friend. Agree that the first object you point to *after* something that is blue is the audience’s selection.

The Routine: Explain that you’ve discovered that your friend is clairvoyant, and you want to offer a demonstration. After your friend leaves the room, ask someone to select any visible object in the room.

Don’t say it aloud. I don’t want our medium to accidentally overhear anything.

Your friend returns. Point to some random object in the room.

Is this it?

The medium replies with a no. You point to something else and repeat the question. Again, no. Finally, point to some object that is blue.

Is this it?

Again your friend says no. Finally, point to the object that was selected by the member of the audience.

Is this it?

Yes, your friend confirms, that's it!

This is one of those rare tricks whose effect is actually increased by repetition. At first, the audience always suspects that you point to things in the same *order*, that it's always, say, the third or the fourth thing you point to. Make sure that the second time you do the trick you point to the selection sooner or much later.

Or, the audience will suspect *how* you indicate the objects, *what* you say to the medium, and *how* you say it. Make sure that these are always the same.

The audience will suspect almost everything *except* color. If you plan to do this for the same audience more than two or three times, be on the safe side. Arrange with your assistant beforehand to change colors (say, to red) after a certain number of demonstrations.

The Least You Need to Know

- Audiences want to believe that it is possible to read minds and foretell the future.
- Magical tricks with a mind-reading theme hold an age-old allure for audiences.
- Many people think and act in predictable ways. Most can be "forced" into making specific selections.
- Mental magic depends as much or more on showmanship and delivery as it does on secret methods.



It's Just A Stage You're Going Through

In This Chapter

- ▶ The Afghan Bands
- ▶ Clippo, a cut-and-restored newspaper column
- ▶ A classic: The Miser's Dream
- ▶ Finding a dollar bill in an orange

So far in this part of *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Magic Tricks*, we've looked at all types of tricks that you can perform on a platform or stage, from rope tricks and silk tricks to mind-reading miracles. The tricks in this chapter use a variety of materials; some have established themselves as enduring magical standards.

The Afghan Bands

This is the best kind of story trick: It's a cute, tall tale, and it gives you a very logical reason to hold (and do magic with) an unusual prop.

The Afghan Bands, which was originally performed with paper, received its name from Professor Hoffmann. Carl Brema (1864–1942) is credited with first performing the trick with cloth bands that were ripped apart rather than cut. This routine is a modification of the more modern variation of the Afghan Bands credited to Philadelphia magician and attorney James C. Wobensmith (1879–1973).

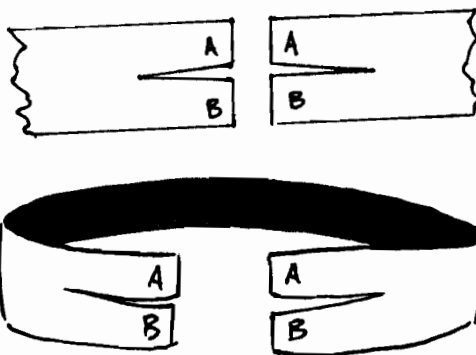
Why this trick works is a mystery to me. They tell me it's because of topology. I just know it has something to do with the loops being all twisted.

The Effect: You show a large loop of cloth and rip it lengthwise into two rings. One of these loops is ripped in two, and it produces a single giant loop, twice the size of the original. You rip the other loop in half, and it produces two separate, but linked, rings of cloth.

Preparation: Find some cloth that tears easily. A lightweight, inexpensive cotton is best, but experiment with different weaves and weights of cloth.

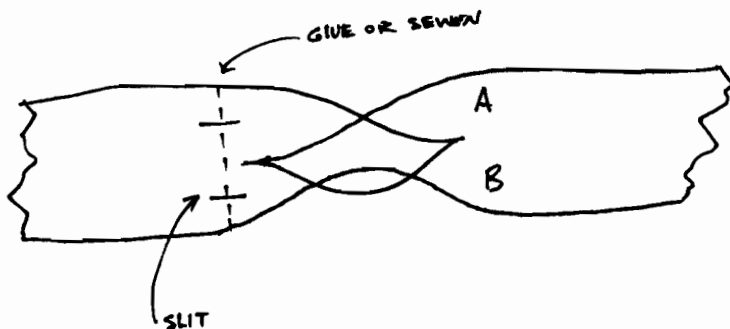
To make the large, gimmicked ring of cloth, cut a strip about 36" long and 6" wide. At each end, cut a slit about 3" long, dividing each end into two 3" sections (marked A and B in the illustration).

Cut a 3" long slit at the middle of each end of the strip.



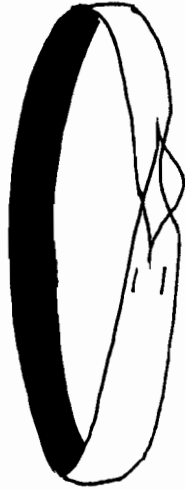
Give one of the A sections a 180-degree turn (a half-twist) and glue or sew it to the A section on the opposite end of the strip. Give one of the B sections a 360-degree turn (a full twist) and glue or sew it to the B section on the opposite end of the strip. Finally, cut a two-inch lengthwise slit across the glued or sewn junction in the middle of the A and B bands. (This last slit is required so that, later, you can tear or cut the cloth across the junction.)

One side of the strip has a half twist A; the other side has a full twist B. A small slit is cut across the junction on each half.



You *can* make up the loop with paper rather than cloth, but during the performance, you'll have to cut the loops with scissors rather than rip them. Also, if you make up your loops with a heavy cloth or one with a tight weave, you may need to use scissors as well.

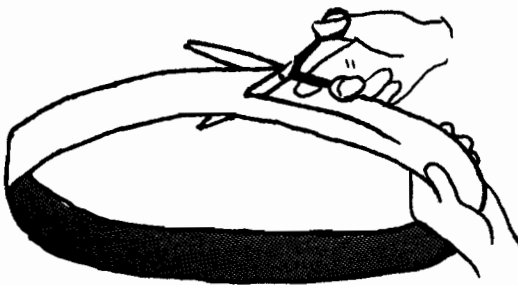
The Routine: Hold up the loop of cloth. Although it's not critical, it's better if the audience doesn't see the small tears and twists in the cloth. Simply hold the circle of cloth so that the tears face away from the audience.



The Afghan Bands.

Several years ago, I was at a circus, and I visited the sideshow. I saw two performers complaining to the sideshow magician. It seems the costume department only provided one tattered belt for both acts. "No problem," said the sideshow magician. "I can help you out." He promptly tore the belt in half, making two separate belts.

Rip or cut the loop of cloth in half, lengthwise, all around the circumference, to produce two rings.



Rip or tear the loop in half, lengthwise around its circumference.

This will produce two separate loops of cloth, one with the ends glued together with a half twist and the other with the ends glued together with a full twist.

"That doesn't solve anything," they cried. "Just look at us!" One of the acts was the Fat Lady. "No problem," said the magician. He tore one of the belts in half, and as if by magic, the belt doubled in size! "How's that?"

Tear or cut the loop prepared with a half turn or twist, lengthwise in half, around its circumference. This will produce one loop, twice its original diameter.

"That's fine, but what about me—or, should I say, us?" cried the other performer. Sure enough, they were the Siamese Twins. "Don't worry," said the magician. "I know just what to do." He tore the other ring in half, and, as if by magic, their problem was solved.

Tear or cut the other loop, the one with a full turn or twist, lengthwise in half, around its circumference. This will produce two separate but linked loops.

Clippo

There are many, many versions of the torn and restored newspaper, but Clippo uses only a single column of text. The effect, at first called Magic Shears, was invented and marketed by Kolar (1883–1949) in 1929. Kolar also included the instructions in the book *My Best*, a collection of many well-known magicians' effects edited by J.G. Thompson, Jr. Harlan Tarbell, in Lesson 65 (now in Volume 5) of his *Tarbell Course in Magic*, claimed that he was the first magician to perform the trick with newspaper. (According to Tarbell, Kolar had performed the trick with strips of red paper.) Later, Will De Sieve made the cut-and-restored newspaper strip a feature in his act. He gave the trick its current name, Clippo, and was the first to mass-market it through magic dealers.

The Effect: You show a single column from a newspaper, fold it in half, and cut away a small section at its folded center. You let the column of paper fall open, and it's back in one piece. You do it again, but this time the pieces restore at an angle. You repeat the process one last time, and the paper is restored to a single straight column.

Preparation: Cut out one full, single column from a newspaper. The trick works better when this column is all text rather than photos, headlines, or illustrations, so you might use a column from the classified section.

Lay down the newspaper column and lightly coat the middle 12" of the strip with rubber cement on one side. Allow it to dry completely. Then, brush the rubber-cemented area with a light dusting of talcum powder to prevent the coated paper from sticking together prematurely.

You'll also need a pair of scissors for this trick.

The Routine: Hold up the newspaper column to display it. You can freely show both sides. The audience won't notice that one of the surfaces is gummed.

I wanted to get a job at the newspaper, so I had an interview with the editor. He held out a piece of newspaper and said, "If you want to be an ace reporter, first you have to learn to write like an ace reporter. Short and to the point! No extra words!" And with that, he folded up the newspaper, and cut it in half.

As you patter, fold the newspaper column in half so the rubber-cemented sides touch. Hold it in your left hand so that the fold is uppermost, and the two ends dangle. Take

a pair of scissors and cut straight across the paper near the fold, about $\frac{1}{4}$ " to $\frac{1}{2}$ " from the crease. A small, folded piece—the center of the newspaper column—will visibly fall to the floor.

"If the words don't belong there to begin with," the editor explained, "the story reads as good as new!"

Carefully reopen the newspaper column into a long strip. It appears as if the newspaper has been restored. In a sense, it has: The rubber cement is holding the paper together at the cut edges.

"Another thing," the editor told me, "ya gotta have an angle. Anyone can write a good story. But what's your angle?"

Continuing with the patter, fold the newspaper column in half again, making sure that the coated sides meet. Hold the strip in your left hand, with the fold uppermost. Take the scissors and cut across the paper near the fold, about $\frac{1}{4}$ " to $\frac{1}{2}$ " from the crease, but at about a 45-degree angle. Again, a small piece from the center will fall.

Carefully unfold the newspaper column into a long strip. Once again, the rubber cement will hold the cut ends together, but they will be joined at an angle.

"But what we need here at the paper is a real straight-shooter! Ya think you can do that?" I took the newspaper from him, folded it up, and cut it myself. I opened it up, and proudly showed it to him. "Yes, sir, I think I can." And you know what? I got the job!

As you patter, fold the angled newspaper column in half again, making sure that the rubber-cemented sides meet. Hold the strip in your left hand with the fold uppermost. Take the scissors and cut straight across the paper near the fold, about $\frac{1}{4}$ " to $\frac{1}{2}$ " from the crease. The usual small piece from the center of the column will fall.

Carefully unfold the paper for its final restoration into a long newspaper column. As a finale, you may want to quickly snip the strip into tiny pieces, and toss them over your head. (If you are using my patter, you can throw them up as you "celebrate" getting the job.)

Needless to say, you can cut and restore the newspaper strip over and over, as often as you want—as long as you keep cutting within the rubber-cemented portion of the strip.

Many magicians use a comedy patter when they perform this trick. As they cut and restore the newspaper, they pretend to read funny classified ads.



Sawed in Half

You lose a bit of the newspaper column each time you cut and restore it, so start with as long a strip as possible. Also, cut off a very small piece from the center each time, or, by the end, the newspaper column will be pretty short.

The Root of All Evil

If money is the root of all evil, magicians and their audiences must truly be demons. Audiences find magic performed with money endlessly fascinating, as you've probably discovered by performing the coin tricks you've learned. These next two tricks, the Miser's Dream and the Dollar Bill in Orange, are classics.



Hocus Quote-Us

The Miser's Dream offers the best example in all magic of a convincing reason for doing the trick. What else would a real wizard ever do besides catch money?

—Henry Hay, in *The Amateur Magician's Handbook*

Miser's Dream

The Miser's Dream is one of the most famous tricks in all of magic—with good reason! Who wouldn't want to be able to pluck money out of thin air? And this trick has something extra going for it: Not only does the audience *see* the coins being produced, they *hear* the coins being dropped into an ice bucket or pail.

The trick is ancient and has been known by a number of names: Aerial Treasury, Aerial Mint, Coin-Catching, Shower of Money, and Rain of Silver, to name just a few. It received its current name from T. Nelson Downs (1867–1938), who placed it in his vaudeville act in 1895.



Now You See It

Downs, one of the greatest sleight-of-hand magicians in modern times, elevated coin manipulation to a separate branch of magic. Born Thomas Nelson Downs in Iowa, the celebrated showman toured as "The King of Koins." His two books (mostly written by their editors) are *The Art of Magic*, edited by John Northern Hilliard (1872–1935), and *Modern Coin Manipulation*, edited by William J. Hilliar (1876–1936). (Hilliard is best known for his extraordinary book *Greater Magic*, and he was also a publicist for illusionist Howard Thurston. Hilliar is noted for having founded the *Sphinx* magic magazine and creating the first column about magic news for *The Billboard*, a theater trade magazine.)

The Effect: You show an empty bucket or cup. You "see" an invisible coin floating in midair. As you reach up and grab it, the coin appears at your fingertips. You drop it into the bucket. You repeat this until you have a pail full of coins.

Preparation: You need a deep, opaque cup with a wide brim, a small pail or an ice bucket that will make a lot of noise when you drop a coin in it. Most professional magicians use an ice bucket, but the pails are quite heavy. Although they will not look as luxurious onstage, a child's sand bucket, a metal cup, or an empty coffee or juice can may work just as well.

Set the bucket on or behind your table. Place a small stack of coins (about six to twelve or as many as you can finger-palm easily in your left hand) and a separate, single coin next to the bucket. Neither the stack nor the single coin should be seen by the audience.

Most magicians use half dollars, because they're visible from a distance, but you can still palm several of them without too much difficulty. Quarters are a bit too small to be seen. Some magicians prefer silver dollars.

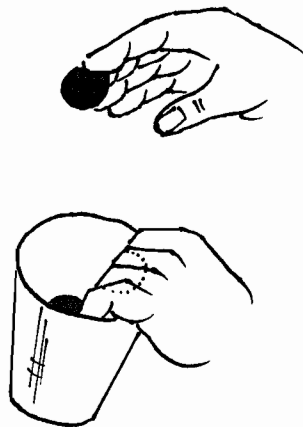
Still other performers use thin, highly reflective silver discs, sometimes called "palming coins," rather than actual money. You can palm more of them, and they're shinier. The sides of palming coins are often engraved for realism, and the edges are often milled to help the magician in gripping the coin.

The Routine: Reach behind your table to pick up the bucket. As you do, finger-palm the stack of coins in your left hand. Also finger-palm the single coin in your right hand. Pick up the bucket with your left hand, with your thumb outside the pail and your fingers (and the coins) pressed against the inside of the bucket.

Remember the way you produced a Silk from Nowhere in Chapter 19? You're going to use a similar move to produce a coin from midair.

Focus your eyes on a spot about 12" in front of you. Pretend to see a coin floating in the air. Reach out with your right hand, and, as you do, use your right thumb to work the palmed coin up to your fingertips. Stop your hand suddenly and "pluck" the coin from the air.

Display the coin between your right thumb and first two fingers. Wiggle the coin a bit to make it shimmer under the stage lights. Bring your right hand over to the rim of the bucket, ready to drop the coin inside.



The left hand, concealing palmed coins, holds the bucket. The right hand is ready to drop in the newly produced coin.

Dip your right hand into the bucket, just below the rim and out of the audience's sight. Don't release the coin in your right hand. Instead, drop one of the coins in your left hand, pressed against the inside of the bucket. Practice this timing so that it looks and sounds as if you've dropped the coin from your right hand.

While your right hand is still in the bucket, thumb-palm the coin. To do this, clip the coin between your forefinger and middle finger at the extreme ends. Curl in your fingers so that the coin is shoved into the crotch of your thumb (at the webbing at the base of your thumb and forefinger). Open your fingers, but keep them slightly curled.



The thumb palm, in three easy steps.

With your "empty" palm still turned toward the audience, pretend to see another invisible coin floating in the air. Reach up to grab it. As you thrust your right arm forward, reverse the motions of the thumb palm to produce the coin: Curl in the fingers, clip the coin between your right forefinger and middle finger, and then straighten your fingers. Push upward on the bottom of the coin with your right thumb, tilting the coin to a vertical position. Pinch the coin between your thumb and your first and middle fingers just as your hand stops. The coin "appears" at your fingertips.

"Drop" the coin in the bucket, and repeat the whole thing as often as you want!

You don't have to produce the invisible coin from midair. You can "find" it in all sorts of places. Many magicians bring a volunteer onto the stage or walk into the audience and "find" coins all over the spectators: behind an ear, under an arm, behind a leg, under a lapel, or even in someone's hair.

After you drop all the coins in your left hand, you can produce the coin at your right fingertips one last time. Drop it for real into the bucket. You can then dump out all the coins, proving you actually did produce them all. Or, for a flashier ending, reach into the bucket with both hands, scoop up all the coins, and then let them noisily fall in a shower back into the bucket.



Sawed in Half

With the coin hidden in a thumb palm, you can turn your open right hand toward the audience members so that they can see your empty palm. Be careful, however, with the angle at which you tilt your hand, or they'll see the coin. Don't fool yourself when you rehearse: the audience may be watching you from a different angle than what you see in a practice mirror, especially if you're performing on a stage, when they're lower than you.

You may want to do a longer routine or produce more coins than you can with one stack of palmed coins. You can have a second stack sitting on or behind the table from the beginning of the routine. After you use the first stack, palm the second stack and keep going!

Dollar Bill in Orange

This trick, usually performed on a stage, is a true classic of magic—it's been featured in performers' acts throughout the ages. Often it's described as Bill in Lemon. I happen to prefer using an orange because of the fruit's size (visibility) and ease in preparation. It may well become a favorite of yours and become a standard piece in your repertoire.

The Effect: A spectator from the audience loans you a dollar bill. You copy down its serial number for later identification. You make the dollar bill disappear from underneath a handkerchief. The spectator selects a piece of fruit from a bowl on the table and cuts it open. Inside is the dollar bill bearing the same serial number.

Preparation: Gather together three oranges (or any three pieces of fruit, at least one of which is an orange), a bowl to hold them, a dollar bill, scissors, a pencil, a stack of blank 3×5 file cards, a pen or marker, and some napkins. You'll also need a small knife, sharp enough to cut the orange in half.

You need to make a gimmicked handkerchief similar to the one you sewed together for the Coin Go trick (Chapter 12). Cut a piece of paper to the same size as a dollar bill. Roll this long, narrow strip of paper into a cylinder or tube-shape. Now, sew this rolled-up paper under a triangular piece of cloth at one corner of a handkerchief. The hanky must be opaque or thick enough that the paper cannot be seen through the cloth.

Copy the serial number of the dollar bill onto a blank file card. Place the file card, writing-side-up, on top of a stack of blank file cards. Turn the entire stack over, so that the writing is facing down.

With your finger or the tip of the knife, remove the navel of the orange (if it has one). Take the pencil and poke a hole all the way down, straight across the diameter of the orange, but do not puncture the peel on the other side.

Take the dollar bill bearing the serial number you copied and roll it into a cylinder. Poke the bill into the hole in the orange. Cover the end of the hole with the navel you removed. You may want to stick it back in place with white glue or rubber cement. (If you used a navel-less orange, gingerly close up the hole as best you can, and keep this side facing away from the audience.)

Place this orange along with two other pieces of fruit into a bowl on your table. Arrange them so that the orange containing the dollar is on top.



Sawed in Half

Be careful at all times not to cut yourself when handling the knife, especially when you slice open the orange. No trick is worth losing blood!

The Routine: Bring out the bowl of fruit and set it on the table.

Borrow a dollar or piece of currency that matches the denomination and “wear” of the bill you’ve hidden in the orange. You don’t have to be too picky about the “wear” of the bill.

Pick up the stack of file cards. Be careful that no one sees the writing on the bottom card of the stack. Hand the top, blank card along with a pen to your spectator.

We’ll need to identify the bill later, so would you please write down the serial number on this card?

After the volunteer records the serial number, take back your pen and place it in a pocket. You won’t need it again. Take back the card and set it, writing-side-up, on top of the stack of file cards.

Walk to the other side of the room or stage, casually turning over the stack of file cards. Be careful so that no one sees the writing on the bottom file card. Hand the file card now on top (the one that you secretly prepared) to someone in the front row. *Would you hold onto this for later? Guard it with your life!*

Place the remaining file cards in your pocket or behind the table out of sight. Later, you won’t want the file cards around to remind the audience that there was more than one.

Return to your first volunteer. Show both of your hands empty, and then take the dollar bill. Roll up the bill. Hold it at your right fingertips, pinched between your thumb, forefinger, and middle finger.

Pull out the gimmicked handkerchief and cover your hand (and the bill) with the hanky. Using the same handling that you learned in *Coin Go*, tuck the gimmicked corner of the hanky up and under the center of the cloth. As you place the gaffed corner of the hanky between your right thumb and fingers, let the dollar bill drop into a right finger-palm. (You may want to refresh your memory on this move by turning back to Chapter 12.)

Ask the owner of the dollar bill to hold on to the dollar bill through the handkerchief.

Reach behind your table with your right hand to pick up the knife. As you do, leave behind the palmed dollar bill. Wave the knife, like a magic wand, over the top of the hanky held by the spectator. (Alternately, reach into your pocket for some woofle dust to sprinkle over the hanky, and leave the bill behind in the pocket.)

Say “Go.”

The spectator says, “Go.” Grab one of the corners of the handkerchief, and whisk it out of his or her hand. The bill has disappeared!

Gone! Remember, I told you to hold onto the bill. It’s your fault. Well, the least I can do is offer you a consolation prize, a nice parting gift. Perhaps a lovely piece of fruit? Pick a fruit, any fruit, any fruit at all.

Gesture to the three pieces of fruit in the bowl. You now have to “force” the prepared orange. Most people will simply grab the orange on the top: It’s easiest to get to, and they have no compelling reason to do otherwise. If it appears as if your spectator is not immediately going for the gaffed orange, use the Magician’s Choice method to make

him or her “freely select” the orange. (To brush up on this technique, you may want to reread “Equivocate: the Magician’s Choice” in Chapter 20).

Take the knife and cut the fruit in half on the 90-degree axis from the direction in which the dollar bill was inserted. Do not cut through the bill; on the contrary, as you cut, rotate the knife around the orange as if the dollar bill were a solid center pole.

Or, you might let the spectator cut the orange in half. To get your volunteer started in the right direction, you might want to make the initial poke into the orange with the knife, and then let the spectator cut the rest of the way around.

Ask the spectator to pull the two hemispheres of the orange apart. A dollar bill will be revealed, still sticking into one half of the orange.

Who’s holding the serial number? I don’t want to touch the dollar. Would you come over here, and take the dollar bill out of the orange? I know it’s a little gross. Unroll it, and compare the two serials numbers. Do they match? They do?

While the audience applauds, take back the dollar bill and the file card from the person who checked the serial numbers, and offer him or her a napkin. Roll up and discard the file card so that the volunteer who loaned you the dollar bill doesn’t see the writing (because it’s *your* writing, not theirs).

Take back the orange (and knife, if applicable) from the person who loaned you the dollar and offer a napkin in exchange. Realize that you forgot to return the money. Start to hand back the wet, sticky dollar bill. Then, as an afterthought, substitute it for a clean, dry, crisp dollar bill. This makes you seem the model of courtesy, but it also keeps the spectator from being able to compare the dollar bill from inside the orange with the one that he or she loaned you at the beginning of the trick.



Sawed in Half

This trick has a bigger impact when the spectator cuts the orange in half. If you do this, however, make sure that the volunteer is an adult and that he or she uses extreme caution. You don’t want to be responsible for anyone getting cut!

The Least You Need to Know

- The Afghan Bands is an age-old magic trick based on topology.
- Clippo, a cut-and-restored newspaper trick, dates to the 1920s.
- Everyone enjoys magic with money, especially if it’s making money appear out of thin air.
- The Dollar Bill in Orange (or Lemon) is one of the oldest tricks in magic and is a standard in most magicians’ stage repertoires.

Part 6

Past, Present, and Future Perfect

There you have it! More than 101 different magic tricks that you can do, tricks to entertain and fool your friends, family, or folks at the office.

But let's take one last look at the story of magic: the history of our ancient art and how it's affected modern culture, the things we see on the stage, on TV, and in the movies. Then we'll study the professional ethics, standards, and practices that will bring you the admiration of your audiences and the respect of your peers.

By now, people may be asking you to perform at their parties and events. You might even be thinking about doing it for—gasp—money! Here are some insider business tips that will put you on the path to better bookings.

And finally, some last ideas on how to take all this stuff you've learned and make the magic your own. Because you're the future of magic. The Magic is You!







Magical History Tour

In This Chapter

- Magic vs. religion vs. science
- Merlin, the alchemists, and the Inquisition
- Magic dynasties
- The grand illusion show
- Twentieth-century stars of magic

I know what you're thinking: Not a history lesson! Isn't history just a lot of dates and dead people?

Well, yes. But understanding how magic developed, from its occult roots into a form of entertainment, is almost as fascinating as knowing the tricks themselves.

In the Beginning...

Magic is as old as humanity itself. Humans have always tried to comprehend and control the laws of nature and the universe.

Some people sought out higher powers, which led to the beginnings of formal religion. Others tried to manipulate both the physical and the supernatural forces around them. This led to the creation of magic. Eventually, the use of early folk remedies and rudimentary medicines branched away from magic and evolved into a new discipline: the physical sciences.

In ancient times, anyone who could explain or command the terrors of the world around them was thought to have special gifts.



Hocus Quote-Us

There have always been people who were the wise men and the wise women who, through performance or story-telling or song or perhaps even magic illusions, were able to share hidden knowledge.

—Jeff McBride



Hocus Quote-Us

Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic.

—Arthur C. Clarke (British author and futurist, b. 1917)

Today, it's hard to appreciate the awe and special treatment these wonder-workers received (although there are still vestiges of it in some modern-day tribal societies). The secrets of these shamans were jealously guarded and passed on orally from master to apprentice over generations.

Mummies, Oracles, and Other Old Stuff

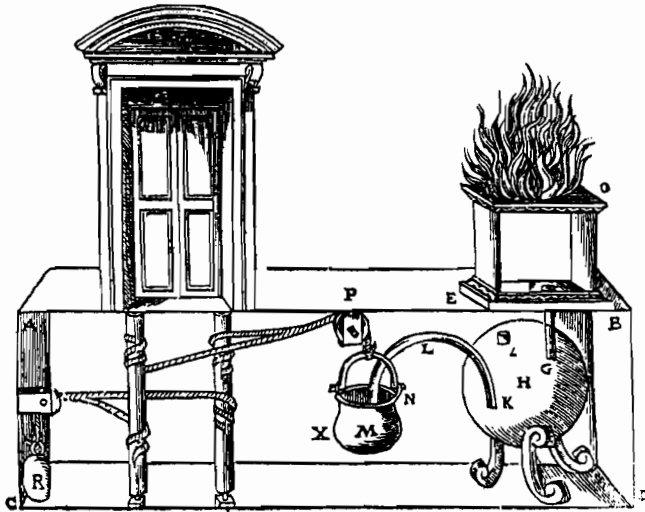
Thousands of years ago, the studies of magic, religion, and science were intimately interwoven. The paintings inside ancient Egyptian tombs, for example, were actually magical spells (sometimes collectively referred to as the Book of the Dead) to help the deceased cross over into the afterlife.

The first recorded magicians were in Egypt at the time of the Pharaohs. Three were named in the famous Westcar Papyrus, written around 1700 BC. Dedi of Ded-Snefru, the most notable of these, lived around 3700 BC and was the court wizard to the pharaoh Cheops.

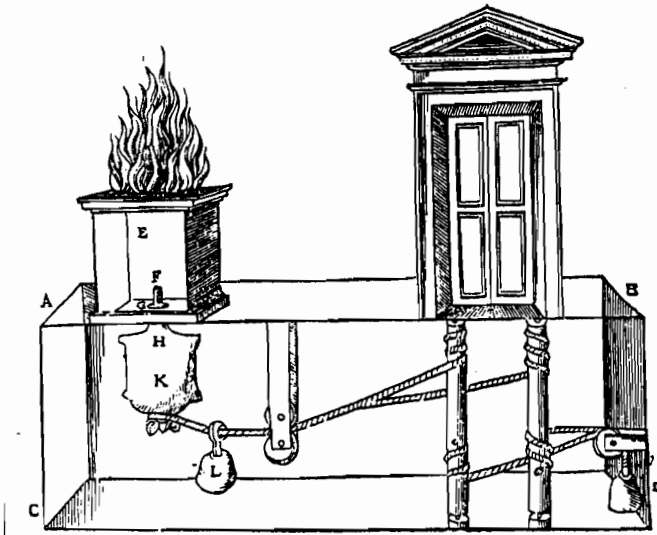
Magic was still a major force in Egypt at the time of the Exodus. Moses won the first-known "magic contest" when he confronted the Pharaoh's wizards. Also detailed in the Old Testament is King Saul's visit to the Witch of Endor, who produced the spirit of Samuel.

Only in the past few centuries have the abilities to perform magic and to foretell the future been recognized as two different gifts. In ancient times, it was expected that all magicians also be skilled in prophecy.

Special magic effects were used by the Grecian oracles, such as the celebrated Oracle of Apollo at Delphi, to impress their visitors. Priests at other shrines also used magic to inspire awe in their supplicants. In some temples, the massive doors opened on their own shortly after the altar fires were lit. An early scientist, Hero of Alexandria, exposed the secret: pneumatics.



Temple doors opened on their own through a complicated rigging of ropes and pulleys. The heat from fires on the altars inflated leather bags with hot air or filled cauldrons with liquid. (From a 1589 Italian edition of a Hero of Alexandria manuscript.)



Extra! Merlin and the Alchemists

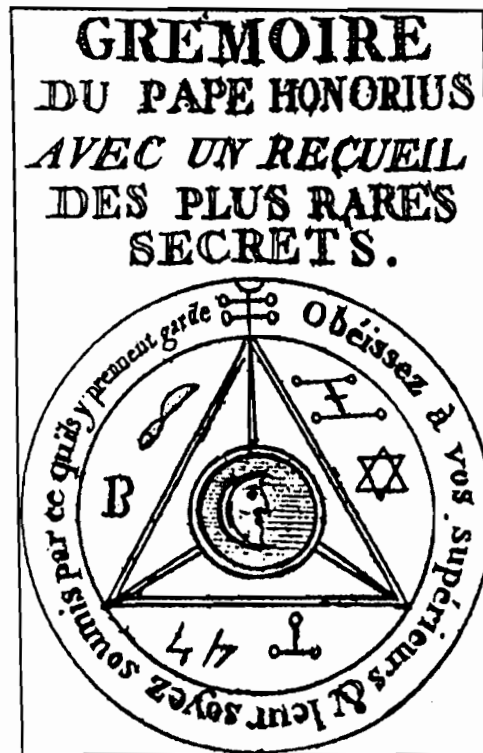
The most famous magician in Western culture is the legendary Merlin, who was both the mentor and tutor of young Arthur, who later became king of England. Merlin is a mythical figure from the Middle Ages, but there may have been an actual person upon which the legends are based: A wandering troubadour and seer named Myrddhin who lived in late fifth-century Britain.

Alchemy, a blend of magic, mysticism and science, traces its roots back to Egypt about 200 years before the birth of Christ. Best known for its quest to turn lead into gold, alchemy was, in fact, a magical, religious, and philosophical system of beliefs that sought to control the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. As alchemists heated, cooled, decomposed, and combined elements in their metaphorical search for purity and perfection, they noticed how the minerals' properties changed. In the process, the modern science of chemistry (which shares a root word with alchemy) was born.

That Old Black Magic

By the Middle Ages, occult writings were surfacing in the form of *grimoires*, or “black books.” Some purportedly dated from as far back the times of King Solomon. Their pages were filled with spells and *sigils* (mystic drawings such as magic squares and pentagrams) to be used during incantations to invoke spirits, angels, demons, and other supernatural forces. Collectively, these manuscripts became known as *The Kaballah*.

Grimoires, called “black books” because they purportedly contained dark, magic secrets, surfaced during the Middle Ages.



No one knows when magic was first performed as a form of entertainment, divorced from its occult overtones. One of the earliest records, however, is that of the Roman Stoic philosopher Seneca the Younger (circa 4 BC–AD 65), who described seeing a magician entertain with Cups and Balls.

Another magician, Apollonius of Tyana, was such a popular performer in the first century that he developed a cult following and was worshipped as a god. So practice up on those card tricks!

Over the next several centuries, itinerant magicians traveled the world. Some of the more skilled entertainers became attached to the courts of European monarchs. Nevertheless, many people, unaware of the magicians' skills at sleight-of-hand, misdirection, and other deceptive methods, suspected them of being in league with the devil.

Often, it was just one small step from pulling a coin from someone's ear to being denounced as a sorcerer or a witch. And who was there to listen? The Inquisition!

Nobody Expects the Spanish Inquisition

Although the Catholic Church first forbade the use of witchcraft in AD 906, it was not until 1233 that the Pope instructed his *inquisitors* to seek out the use of unnatural magic within the German clergy.

Between 1400 and 1600 AD, more than 30,000 "witches" were burned in Europe by the Inquisition. No doubt hundreds, if not thousands, of these victims were merely magical entertainers.

In 1584, Reginald Scot published *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*, which offered the revolutionary suggestion that many of the people being condemned for witchcraft were actually magicians, jugglers, and sleight-of-hand artists. To back his claims, Scot exposed many of the methods used by street entertainers of his time to fool the public. As we've seen, many of the tricks explained by Scot are still performed by magicians today.

The persecution of magicians as witches did not end overnight. In fact, arrests and executions continued well into the 17th century.



Hocus Quote-Us

[Religion] insulated itself from magic through its vocabulary. They do magic; we have miracles. You're doing divination; we have prophecy.

—Eugene Burger

Are You Going to Scarborough Fair?

As the Middle Ages drew to a close, more enlightened societies began to accept magic for what it was: pure escapist entertainment. Mountebanks strolled from village to hamlet.

In England, magicians set up booths at large street fairs, such as Bartholomew Fair and Southwark Fair, where they would demonstrate their skills. Perhaps the best-known and most-successful of these showmen was Isaac Fawkes (b. c. 1675–1731).

Isaac Fawkes, in an engraving attributed to Sutton Nichols, performing his most famous trick, in which he produced eggs, money, and birds from an empty bag.



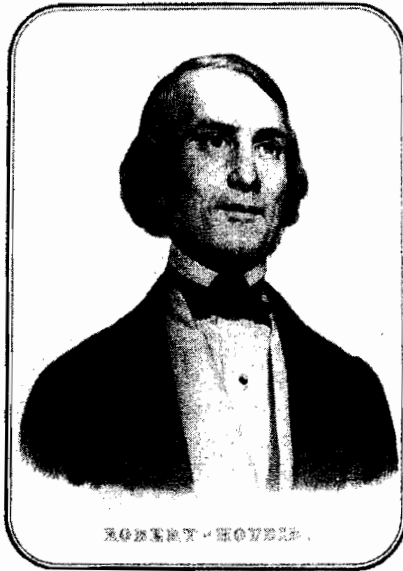
By the mid-18th century, magic was an accepted performance art. Although audiences were still wary of the wonder-workers, the average onlooker no longer believed that the entertainers were in league with the Devil.

Interestingly, though, most magicians never really denied their occult roots. The ancient and cabalistic mysteries that surrounded their art played to the audience's imagination. Even today, vestiges remain. Many magicians still dress in black; some use caricatures of playful devils and other supernatural images in their posters.

Come Into My Parlor, Said the Spider

Robert-Houdin, a French magician, is often called the father of modern magic because he was one of the first illusionists to raise magic from mere street entertainment to a legitimate art form accepted by the upper classes.

Born Jean Eugene Robert, he later added Houdin, his wife's surname, to his own. Robert-Houdin was a watchmaker by trade until he was 40 years old. In 1845, he opened his own theater of magic in the Palais Royal, and then toured extensively until his retirement in 1852. In 1856, he helped quell a rebellion in Algeria when the French government sent him to prove that French magic was stronger than that of the Marabout shamans. Robert-Houdin devised the Light and Heavy Chest, secretly operated by electromagnetism, that could be lifted only by French soldiers.



Jean Eugene Robert-Houdin, the Father of Modern Magic.



Now You See It

A generation after his death, Robert-Houdin's memoirs influenced an American magician who hoped to become as famous and successful as his idol. Thinking that an "i," when added to the Frenchman's name, would mean "like Houdin," young Ehrich Weiss changed his name to Houdini. Years later, after being rebuffed by Robert-Houdin's widow on a visit to Paris, Houdini wrote the bitter biography *The Unmasking of Robert-Houdin*.

Magical Dynasties

Around 1873, John Nevil Maskelyne (1839–1917) and George A. Cooke took over the Egyptian Hall, to present full-evening magic shows. In 1867, Maskelyne introduced *alevitation*, in which a woman rose upward in full view of the audience. (His son Nevil is credited with introducing the passing of a steel hoop around the floating lady in 1898.)

Maskelyne later partnered with David Devant, whom many consider to have been the greatest British magician of the early 20th century. After the closing of the Egyptian

Hall in 1904, Maskelyne and Devant moved their shows to St. George's Hall. Nevil Maskelyne took over his father's role in managing St. George's Hall, and he co-wrote *Our Magic* with Devant. Nevil's three sons, Clive, Noel, and Jasper, also became magicians.



Now You See It

The British magician, magical creator, and illusion builder P.T. Selbit (d. 1938), born Percy Thomas Tibbles, Selbit caused a sensation in 1921 when he introduced the first modern version of sawing a woman in two.

American magician Horace Goldin (1873–1939) performed his own version of this now-classic illusion just months before Selbit himself arrived in the United States. Both claimed to be the true inventor of the effect. (A similar version was also created about the same time by another American magician, the Great Leon.)

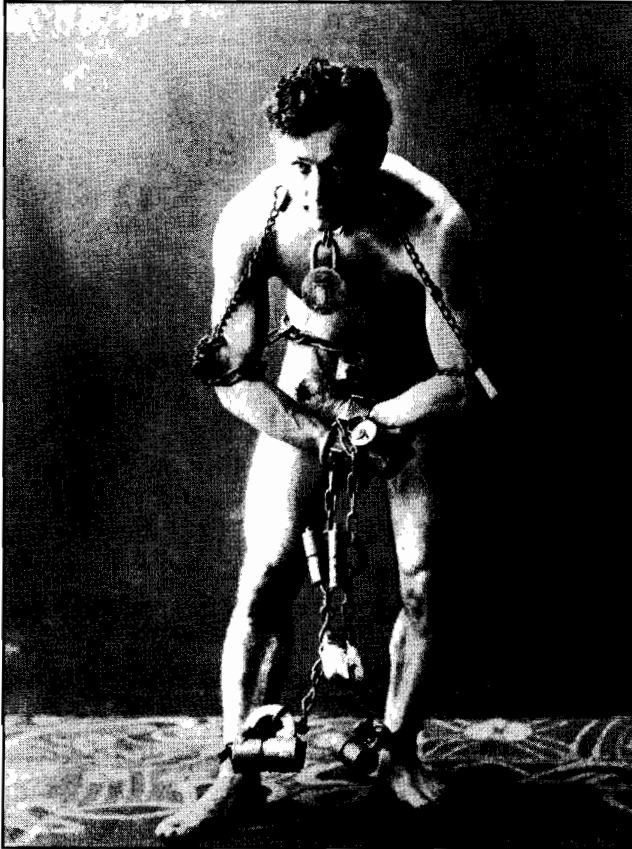
Another great magic dynasty, the Bamberg family, also hit its zenith during this period. Eliaser Bamberg (1760–1833), was born in Leyden, Holland; he and his son David Leendert (1786–1869) were noted for their sleight-of-hand. David's eldest son, the magician Tobias Bamberg (1812–1870), was named "court mechanic" to the Dutch monarchy. His son David Tobias Bamberg (1843–1914) made his magic debut in 1866 and was later named court conjurer in Holland. The clan's two most famous magicians, however, were David Tobias Bamberg's son Theo (1875–1963), who appeared in Chinese garb as Okito, and Okito's son David (1904–1974), who toured as the Chinese magician Fu Manchu.

Chinese magic acts were all the rage. Ching Ling Foo (1854–1918), born Chee Ling Qua, moved to the United States and became a headliner in vaudeville following a successful career in his native China. Magician William Ellsworth Robinson (1861–1918), angered when he discovered a magic challenge issued by Ching was only a publicity stunt, created his own Asian-themed act, adopted the name of Chung Ling Soo, and took his act to Europe. Robinson played the role of a Chinese magician 24 hours a day: It was only years later, when Robinson's make-up was removed at the hospital following a fatal performance of the bullet-catching routine, that the public found out he was not Chinese.

Samuel Herrmann, a German doctor and amateur magician, was the father of two of the greatest illusionists of the 19th century: Carl (also known as Compar) Herrmann (1816–1887) and Alexander (1843–1896), later known as Herrmann the Great. After Alexander's death, his widow Adelaide (1853–1932) continued the act.

Ties That Bind

Although he started his career billed as the “King of Cards,” Harry Houdini (1874–1926) became the most famous, and certainly the greatest, escape artist in history. He was born Ehrich Weiss in Hungary, although he always claimed to be a native of Appleton, Wisconsin. A major portion of Houdini’s show consisted of magic and illusions and, in later years, debunking spiritualism. It was his performance of miraculous escapes, however, that secured his place in magical history.



Harry Houdini, one of the world’s most famous magicians and the greatest escape artist in history.

(From the collection of Mark S. Willoughby)

Houdini’s challenge escape act, in which he allowed himself to be restrained by any device brought by the audience, remains unrivaled to this day. In addition, Houdini was a pioneer aviator, the first to make an elephant disappear onstage (January 7, 1918, at the New York Hippodrome), and an early film-maker. From 1917 until his death nine years later, Houdini was the President of the Society of American Magicians. Houdini died of a ruptured appendix and peritonitis on Halloween 1926, four days after having been struck in the stomach by a Montreal university student who was

visiting him backstage. The young man mistakenly believed that Houdini had given him permission to test the strength of the great escape artist's abdominal muscles.



Now You See It

One of Houdini's favorite effects was the Needle Trick, first introduced to America by the East Indian fakir/magician Ramo Samee in the early 19th century. In Houdini's version, he apparently gulped down 50 sewing needles and a length of thread, only to regurgitate all of the needles intermittently threaded on the string. Houdini always had his mouth examined before the trick to prove that it was empty. On one memorable occasion, the man he invited onto the stage was Groucho Marx. Houdini didn't recognize him because the comedian wasn't wearing his trademark fake eyebrows and mustache. The master illusionist opened his mouth and inquired, "What do you see?" to which Marx quipped, "Pyorrhea!"

The Really Big Show

Houdini's career happened during the start of the era of the grand illusion show. In the years before television, the touring illusion show was a major form of live theatrical entertainment. Here are just a few of the period's great performers:

Harry Keller (1849–1922), born Harold Keller, was the most popular American illusionist between Herrmann the Great and Howard Thurston (1869–1936). When he retired in 1908, Keller literally passed his mantle on to the already successful Thurston. (Thurston, in turn, had taken up magic after seeing Herrmann perform.)

Dante (1883–1955), born Harry Jansen, traveled the world with Thurston's second unit before touring his own illusion show, playing an extended run on Broadway and appearing in films (perhaps most notably in *A-Haunting We Will Go*).

Harry Blackstone, born Harry Boughton, became interested in magic when he saw Keller perform in 1898. Blackstone's show featured a dancing handkerchief, a lighted bulb which floated over the heads of the audience, and sawing a woman in half with a gigantic circular buzz saw.

Following his father's retirement, Harry Blackstone, Jr. continued the family business. With his wife Gay, Blackstone appeared internationally, performing in theaters, revue showrooms, and on television. His show *Blackstone! The Magnificent Musical Magic Show* was the first non-book illusion show to play Broadway since Dante's. It still holds the record for the longest run of a non-book illusion show on the Great White Way.



Now See You See It

On September 2, 1942, a fire broke out in the drugstore adjoining the Lincoln Theater in Decatur, Illinois, where Blackstone was about to start his Saturday children's matinee. Told that the theater had to be evacuated immediately, Blackstone prevented panic by calmly telling the audience (who knew nothing of the danger) that he was going to perform a great illusion outside and that everyone—children *and* adults—would have to line up, row by row, and leave the theater. Blackstone even had the presence of mind to have the audience exit through the side doors so that no one would see the fire trucks out front. Only after the theater was empty—in about 15 minutes—did Blackstone and his crew return backstage to save their props.



Harry Blackstone, Jr., continued in his father's magical footsteps.

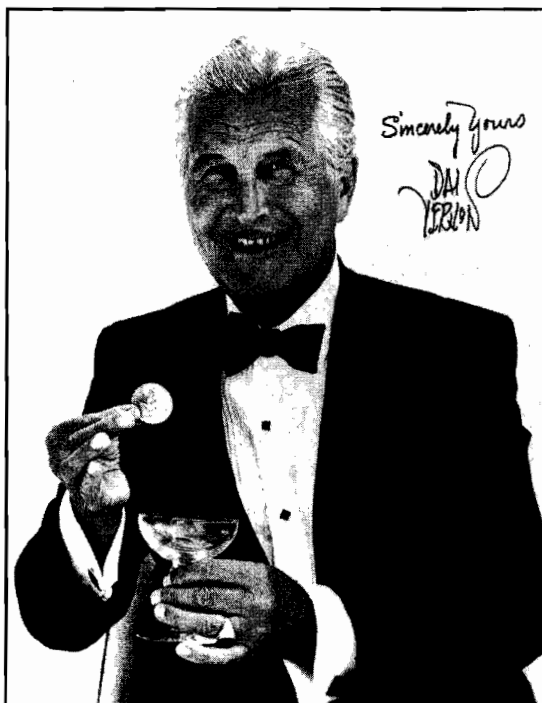
Right Under Your Nose

Close-up magic, in which magic is performed, well, up close, right under the spectator's watchful eyes, has been performed for centuries. The first close-up magic trick of record is the Cups and Balls. Close-up magic didn't develop as a recognized art

form separate and distinct from stage magic until the start of the 20th century. It was once called pocket or vest pocket magic; today, it is also referred to as table or micro magic, the latter almost exclusively in Europe.

It would be impossible to name all the “greats” in close-up magic, but no one would dispute the inclusion of Dai Vernon on such a list.

Dai Vernon, known as “The Professor,” revolutionized close-up magic.



Canadian magician Dai Vernon, affectionately called “The Professor,” became a confidant to magicians and gamblers alike. His magic routines, based on principles and sleights he had created or acquired were revolutionary.

The Millennium Approaches

Much of magic’s history in the 20th century has been reflected in other performing arts, especially television. One of the magicians to pioneer use of magic on television, and the first to have a national weekly magic TV series, was Mark Wilson.

But the tradition of the grand touring show continues. In addition to Blackstone, Jr., Canadian illusionist Doug Henning (b. 1947), David Copperfield (b. 1956), and Penn & Teller, among others, have all toured major illusion shows.

Early in his career, Doug Henning received a \$4000 grant from the Canadian government to study the art of magic. He traveled the world and worked with such masters as Vernon and Slydini. Henning then framed “Spellbound,” a glam-rock illusion show that caught the attention of several New York producers. “The Magic Show,” a musical comedy that took Broadway by storm in 1974, was written to showcase his talents.



Doug Henning became famous as the star of Broadway's The Magic Show.

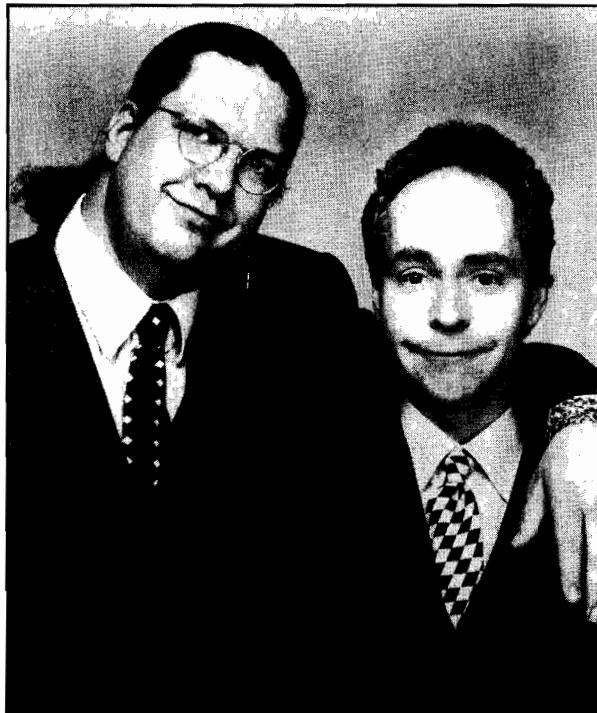
A series of national tours and annual television specials followed for Henning, along with another Broadway musical, *Merlin* (1983). In 1987, Henning retired from the stage to pursue his interest in transcendental meditation (TM). Meanwhile, David Copperfield (b. 1956), born David Kotkin in New Jersey, surfaced in Chicago as the star of the musical *Magic Man*. By the time of Henning's retirement, Copperfield had firmly established himself as a premier illusionist. Today, David Copperfield is perhaps the most famous magician in the world, and he is certainly the most financially successful magician in history. As of 1998 he has had 18 television specials and still performs up to 500 live shows a year.

No list of contemporary magicians would be complete without mentioning the “Bad Boys of Magic,” Penn & Teller. The pair teamed in 1975 as part of the three-person troupe called Asparagus Valley Cultural Society. In 1982, the loud and verbally abusive Penn Jillette (b. 1955) and his silent partner Teller (b. 1948) restructured their act as a duo. Despite their reputation for giving away magic's secrets, the exposure is minimal, and they have developed a unique, hip brand of magic.

David Copperfield is perhaps the most famous contemporary magician in the world.



Penn (l) & Teller (r), the "Bad Boys of Magic," are extraordinary magicians themselves, despite their reputation for exposing magic's secrets.



During the past 20 years, magic has become a staple of Las Vegas entertainment. Once relegated to short guest spots in revue shows, illusionists are now headliners. Siegfried & Roy, for example, have been a Las Vegas institution for more than a quarter of a century, and they perform in their own namesake showroom at The Mirage. They became famous for their use of wild, exotic animals, especially big cats, in their illusions. Lance Burton, who had performed for years at the Tropicana and in his own show at the Hacienda, now performs in a theater named for him at the Monte Carlo Casino Hotel.

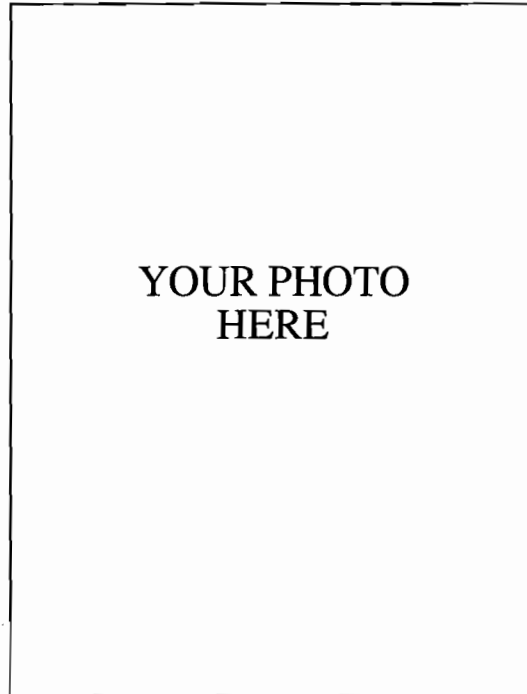


Siegfried (r) & Roy (l) introduced wild animals into magic on the Las Vegas stage.

Wow, more than 6000 years of magical history in about a dozen pages! Literally thousands of magicians, more than can be covered in any single book, have been a part of magic's fascinating and colorful history.

And as for tomorrow? Who knows who will carry on the tradition, taking us—and magic—into the next millennium. It could be you!

Your name here:



The Least You Need to Know

- The history of magic dates back far beyond written records to the beginning of humanity.
- The earliest recorded magicians were those mentioned in Pharaonic Egyptian texts, the Old Testament, ancient manuscripts from Greece and Rome, and the Kaballah.
- Magicians such as Robert-Houdin, the father of modern magic, ushered magic into popular acceptance, allowing magicians to perform in theaters and the homes of society.
- The touring major illusion show, a tradition that dates back to the turn of the century, has been carried on by such magicians as Blackstone, Jr., Henning, Copperfield, and Penn & Teller.



Magic and the Performing Arts

In This Chapter

- ▶ Magicians on TV
- ▶ The magic of the movies
- ▶ Magical characters in plays and musical theater
- ▶ Mystical themes in opera and ballet

The performances of magical entertainers are shaped by the culture in which they flourish. Likewise, magic is also reflected in other art forms. Magical characters have appeared in every other medium, from film and television to theater, opera, and dance. Often, the work of actual stage entertainers has been preserved for future generations.

Let's Go to the Movies

Although it was only two minutes long, Georges Mèliès's *Conjuring a Lady at the Robert-Houdin's* (1896) was perhaps the first film to show a magic trick. By the time Mèliès's film *A Trip to the Moon* (also seen as *Voyage to the Moon*), a mix of live action and animation, appeared in 1902, the new medium of film was *itself* magic. How else could a rocketship crash into the eye of the Man in the Moon? Interestingly, Mèliès was a stage magician before entering the new medium.

George Mèliès explores the magical possibilities of “trick photography” in his 1902 film *A Trip to the Moon*.



Although there are literally hundreds of movies with magical themes and supernatural characters, there are only a few films that feature characters who are stage magicians. Here are my favorites:

- ***A-Haunting We Will Go*** (1942) A coffin under the care of Laurel & Hardy gets mixed up with a prop in the touring show of real-life illusionist Dante, who is featured.
- ***Chandu the Magician*** (1932) Chandu (Edmund Lowe) saves the world from a death-ray stolen by the evil Roxor (Bela Lugosi). In the sequel, *The Return of Chandu* (1934), Lugosi portrays Chandu.
- ***The Escape Artist*** (1982) Danny Masters (Griffin O'Neal), the son of Harry Masters (magician/actor Harry Anderson), “the greatest escape artist since Houdini,” tries to follow in his father’s footsteps. Danny’s Aunt Sibyl (Joan Hackett) and Uncle Burke (Gabriel Dell) also performed a magic act. Jackie Coogan played the owner of Meyers Magic Shop.
- ***Eternally Yours*** (1939) The wife of the illusionist The Great Arturo (David Niven) becomes disillusioned when he spends too much time with his magic.
- ***F for Fake*** (1973) Orson Welles talks to the camera about deception in art and life.
- ***Fairy Tale*** (1997) Harry Houdini (Harvey Keitel) is drawn into the lives of two British girls who claim that they have photographed fairies.
- ***The Geisha Boy*** (1958) A comically inept magician (Jerry Lewis) tours with a USO show in Japan.

- ***Get to Know Your Rabbit*** (1972) A tired businessman (Tom Smothers) enrolls at a magic school. Orson Welles portrays the owner of the school.
- ***Houdini*** (1953) Tony Curtis portrays the famous escape artist, and Janet Leigh plays his wife Bess in this highly fictionalized film biography.



Now You See It

Probably the biggest error perpetuated by the film *Houdini* surrounds the escape artist's death. Curtis is shown struggling to escape the Torture Cell, and while he isn't actually shown drowning in it, the implication is clear. There's a quip among magicians, "Houdini didn't die in the Water Torture Cell. Tony Curtis died in the Water Torture Cell." Houdini died of peritonitis.

- ***Lady in Distress*** (1942) A man thinks he sees the magician Zoltini (Paul Lukas) stab his wife, but it is only the rehearsal of a magic trick...at least, at first.
- ***Lili*** (1953) An orphan falls in love with Marc (Jean Pierre Aumont), the magician in a traveling circus.
- ***Lord of Illusions*** (1995) Stage magician Philip Swann (Kevin J. O'Connor) and his wife Dorothea (Famke Janssen), both of whom were apprentices of the sorcerer Nix (Daniel Von Bargaen), are caught up in a web of illusion. The movie examines the boundaries between the performance of stage tricks and the existence of true magic. The Magic Castle, Hollywood's private club for magicians, is seen in early scenes.
- ***The Mad Magician*** (1954) Gallico (Vincent Price), a stage illusionist, goes mad when his rival, Rinaldi (John Emery), steals his tricks and his wife. Gallico uses his illusions, including a buzz saw, for murder.
- ***The Magician*** (1959) Director Ingmar Bergman's classic film in which Vogler (Max von Sydow), a 19th-century magician, heads a troupe of wandering illusionists who visit a town of non-believers.
- ***The Magician of Lublin*** (1979) Yasha Mazur (Alan Arkin) is a magician touring through Eastern Europe.
- ***Mandrake the Magician*** (1939) Warren Hull portrays the top-hatted and caped illusionist, created for comic strips by writer Lee Falk and artist Phil Davis in 1934.

- ***The Mask of Dijon*** (1946) Dijon (Erich Von Stroheim), a magician-hypnotist, turns to murder, but he is eventually killed in a trick guillotine devised by magic-shop owner Sheffield (Edward Van Sloan).
- ***Miracles for Sale*** (1939) Michael Morgan (Robert Young), an illusionist, uses magic (some of which he exposes) to solve a murder.
- ***Mystic Circle Murder*** (1939) A reporter investigates fraudulent mediums. The film is of interest to magicians primarily due to a cameo appearance by Houdini's widow, Bess.
- ***New York Stories*** (1989) A stage magician (portrayed by real New York magician George Schindler) makes a mother disappear in director-writer Woody Allen's segment of the film anthology.
- ***The Phantom of Paris*** (1931) The magician Cheri-Bibi (John Gilbert) is wrongly accused of murdering the father of his girlfriend.
- ***Rough Magic*** (1995) In 1952, private eye Alex Ross (Russell Crowe) is sent to Mexico to find a magician's assistant, Myra Shumway (Bridget Fonda) after she has fled a Los Angeles murder scene. Soon, Myra discovers she has real magical powers. Kenneth Mars also portrays a magician. The film is based on James Hadley Chase's novel *Miss Chummy Waves a Wand*.
- ***Siren of Bagdad*** (1953) The itinerant magician Kazah (Paul Henreid) and his bumbling assistant Ben Ali (Hans Conreid) help return a sultan to the throne.
- ***The Spider*** (1931) Chartrand (Edmund Lowe), a stage magician, finds the killer of a member of his audience. The film is based on a popular play by Fulton Oursler.
- ***The Strange Mr. Gregory*** (1945) A magician (Edmund Lowe), who has supposedly been killed, pretends to be his brother.
- ***Terror Train*** (1980) David Copperfield portrays an illusionist in this genre slasher film set aboard a train. The magician is eventually skewered in his own sword box.
- ***Those Wonderful Movie Cranks*** (1978) An illusionist (Rudolf Hrusinsky) adds movies to his touring show.
- ***Two on a Guillotine*** (1965) Mad magician John "Duke" Duquesne (Cesar Romero) "accidentally" decapitates his wife during his act. Twenty years later he "returns" from the dead to do in his daughter.

Harry Houdini was fascinated by the medium of film. After appearing in the adventure serial *The Master Mystery* (1918), *The Grim Game* (1919), and *Terror Island*, Houdini was hooked. He formed his own movie studio, Houdini Picture Corporation, which produced *The Man from Beyond* and *Haldane of the Secret Service*. The movies were not successful, so Houdini's foray into the world of film was short-lived; but the visual legacy of Houdini performing his own escapes still exists on film.



Houdini in Terror Island.

The Small Screen

Over the last 50 years, hundreds of magicians have performed on variety format shows, such as those hosted by Ed Sullivan. Although infrequent guests, magicians have also made appearances on all of the major television talk shows. In addition, there have been dramatic television series and made-for-television movies with magician characters, portrayed by actors but trained by magicians as technical advisors.

The Real Thing

Stage magicians have appeared on television since its earliest days. Kuda Bux, billed as “The Man with the X-Ray Eyes,” was featured in *I’d Like to See* (NBC, 1948–1949) and *Kuda Bux, Hindu Mystic* (CBS, 1950). In both series, Bux seemed to be able to see through a blindfold and other coverings over his eyes.

Masters of Magic (CBS, 1949) and *It’s Magic* (CBS, 1955) both featured popular magicians of the day performing their routines live. Perhaps the nation’s best-known female magician, Dell O’Dell performed her own variety format program, *The Dell O’Dell Show* (ABC, 1951) for one season. Geraldine Larsen’s *The Magic Lady* (Telemount Pictures, 1951) and Don Alan’s *Magic* (WBKB Chicago, 1952–1953) also appeared in local television markets.

In 1960, *The Magic Land of Allakazam*, starring Mark Wilson and his wife Nani Darnell, with Bev Bergeron as “Rebo the Clown,” became the first weekly half-hour magic program to air on national television. By combining his magical skill with his business education, he was able to sell his original concept of magic on television to his local Dallas station in 1954. *Allakazam* soon followed. It was taped live before a studio audience and aired weekly on Saturday mornings for five years, beginning in 1960 (CBS, 1960–1962 and ABC, 1962–1964).

Mark Wilson, Nani Darnell and Rebo the Clown—the cast of The Magic Land of Allakazam.

(Photo courtesy of Mark Wilson, Magic International)



A series of six one-hour specials entitled *Magic Circus* (sponsored by Pillsbury Company) starring Wilson, Darnell and Bergeron followed in the 1970s. In addition to his own personal appearances, Wilson has also been a magic consultant for innumerable episodes of television shows as well as for the series *Blacke's Magic* and *The Magician*.

During this period, Johnny Carson became host of television's most popular talk show, *The Tonight Show*. During his 25 years as host (from 1962–1988) Carson, an amateur magician himself, had many magicians on the show as guests. He also created three of his own comic magic characters: the cape and silver-turbaned mind-reader “Carnac the Magnificent” (debuting 1962), the seer “Carswell” (1967) and stage magician “The Great Carsoni” (1967).

Mind-reader The Amazing Kreskin was a frequent Carson guest. Kreskin also starred in his own series *The Amazing World of Kreskin* (produced 1971–1975 in Canada for CTV and later U.S. syndication). Additional episodes were shot for syndication in 1975 under the title *The New Kreskin Show*.



The Amazing Kreskin, well-known mind reader.

In the past three decades, several illusionists have starred in their own magic specials. Doug Henning, who first created a sensation in the 1974 Broadway musical *The Magic Show*, aired eight annual one-hour television specials, beginning in 1975. Charles Reynolds assisted as magic consultant for the specials, as well as for Henning's touring shows.

David Copperfield has aired 18 television specials, beginning in 1978. Other illusionists who have had their own television specials include Lance Burton, Seigfried & Roy, and Rudy Coby.

A variety of magic specials produced by Gary Ouellet began to appear in the early 1990s; the best-known title is the series called *The World's Greatest Magic*.

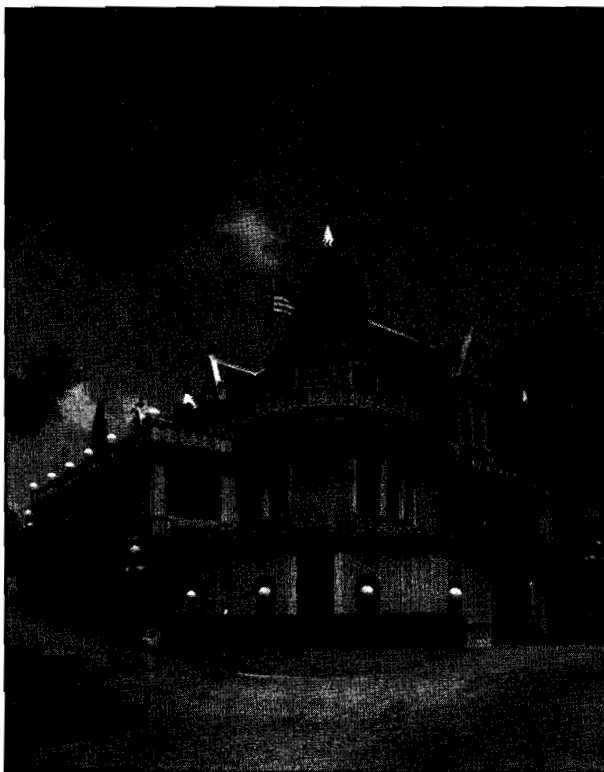
In 1997, Fox television drew the wrath of both amateur and professional magicians (but also received some of its highest ratings ever) when it televised *Breaking the Magician's Code: Magic's Biggest Secrets Finally Revealed*, the first of several specials aired by the network exposing magical illusions. The illusions were performed by the so-called Masked Magician.

Dramatic License

Only two regular television series have featured characters who were stage magicians (that is, magical entertainers rather than supernatural characters). Airing almost 15 years apart, these two shows are still remembered fondly by magicians:

- *Blacke's Magic* (NBC, 1986–1988) Hal Linden portrayed Alexander Blacke, a retired stage magician-turned-detective. Harry Morgan played Leonard Blacke, his father, a con-artist and master of disguise. Though trained by Mark Wilson, Linden performed his own magic.
- *The Magician* (NBC, 1973–1974) starred Bill Bixby as Anthony Blake, an internationally-famous illusionist. After an unjust imprisonment, he became a magical crime-fighter. In the series' mid-season overhaul, Blake supposedly moved his headquarters and residence into The Magic Castle, a fictionalized version of the real private club for magicians in Hollywood, California. Bixby, trained by Mark Wilson, performed his own magic on the series.

The Magic Castle™
(Photo courtesy of *The Magic Castle™*)



In addition to these two series, there have been a number of original made-for-television movies about magicians, including *Escape* (1970), *The Magician* (1973), *The Great Houdinis* (1976) and *Mandrake* (1979).

Just Playin' Around

There's a tradition of magical characters that reaches back to the earliest recorded theatrical productions. It is unusual, however, for the mystic character to be a performing magician, a stage entertainer. Some of the more interesting American plays and musicals that feature magician characters or which starred actual stage magicians in the roles include the following productions.

In *Around the World* (1946; music, Cole Porter; libretto, Orson Welles), Welles interpolated an illusion show, which he called a Japanese Magic Circus, into his adaptation of the Jules Verne novel *Around the World in 80 Days*. Orson Welles was an avid magic enthusiast; he often performed magic on television talk shows and appeared on magic specials.

Carnival (1961; music/lyrics, Bob Merrill; book, Michael Stewart), an adaptation of the film *Lili*, tells the story of an orphan girl who joins a traveling European circus as the assistant to a lame puppeteer. Lili is mesmerized, however, by the flashy magician Marco the Magnificent.

The Floating Light Bulb (1981; Woody Allen) tells the story of a shy, young amateur magician in Brooklyn overshadowed by his mother. The title refers to an illusion created and made famous by Harry Blackstone, Sr. The magic consultant was Robert Aberdeen.

Houdini (music, William Scott Duffield; book, James Racheff; lyrics, Duffield and Racheff) premiered at the Goodspeed Opera House (East Haddam, CT) in October 1997, with magic provided by Peter Samelson.

The Magic Show (1974; music/lyrics, Stephen Schwartz; book, Bob Randall) tells the story of a young, "hip" illusionist who replaces a pompous, old-fashioned, top hat-and-tuxedoed magician at The Passaic Top Hat nightclub in New Jersey. Most notably, the musical featured an actual illusionist, Canadian Doug Henning, in the starring role. Three tours followed: the U.S. national tour starring magician Peter De Paula, the Australian tour headed by Larry Anderson, and an international production featuring Robert Aberdeen. A made-for-TV film version starring Henning aired on Canadian television.

Merlin (1983) returned illusionist Doug Henning, who first conceived the show in 1976, to Broadway in a book musical. Although the story told of young Merlin's apprenticeship and his magical battle against the Evil Queen, it was really just a great excuse for Henning to perform almost 30 major illusions. Adding to Henning's own expertise, Charles Reynolds acted as magic consultant.

Houdini weaves in-and-out of the story of *Ragtime, The Musical* (1996, Toronto; 1997, Los Angeles; 1998, New York; music, Stephen Flaherty, lyrics, Lynn Ahrens; book, Terrence McNally). Franz Harary created the magic for *Ragtime, The Musical*, including Houdini's escape from handcuffs, a strait-jacket and a locked trunk. In this last effect, the box explodes before Houdini escapes, but he reappears in the audience.

Charles Reynolds, magic consultant on Merlin, Blackstone!, Into the Woods, Mind Games, and other theater productions, as well as innumerable television and touring shows.

(Photo courtesy of Charles Reynolds)



Franz Harary, who created the magic for Ragtime, The Musical as well as for rock performers such as Michael Jackson, Boyz II Men, Whodini, and Earth, Wind & Fire.

(Photo courtesy of Franz Harary)



In *Sleight of Hand* (1987; John Pielmeier), a stage musician attempts to “accidentally” murder his girlfriend on-stage while they perform a death-defying illusion. Charles Reynolds was magical consultant for the Broadway production. Illusions included a sword box (in which the magician apparently stabs his assistant) and a pendulum illusion (which eventually beheads the magician).

Several illusionists have also performed their acts in concert on the Broadway stage, most notably Dante, Doug Henning (“Doug Henning’s World of Magic”), Harry Blackstone, Jr. (“Blackstone!”), Milbourne Christopher, David Copperfield (“Dreams and Nightmares”), Penn & Teller (“Penn & Teller”) and Joseph Gabriel (“Magic on Broadway”).

Until just a few hundred years ago, almost all of the fairy-tales, fables, and other legends of magic and wizardry were passed orally from one generation to the next. It is only natural, then, that these stories and characters began to appear on the stage. This section looks at some of the more interesting American plays and musicals that featured stage magicians as characters.

It Isn’t Over ‘Til the Fat Lady Sings—or Dances

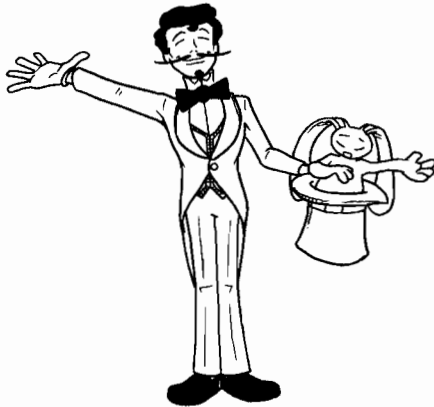
Elements of magic and the supernatural run through many more grand operas and ballets. Although both have stories that feature wizards and enchanters, and many have occult storylines, the characters are usually mystic beings rather than stage entertainers.

The Consul (1950), composed by Gian-Carlo Menotti of his own libretto, is, perhaps, the only opera to have a stage magician as a character. In act one, the conjurer Nika Magadoff entertains the consul’s secretary with magic tricks, hoping that it will speed his visa process. In act two, he hypnotizes everybody in the waiting room.

Petrushka, composed by Igor Stravinsky in 1911, may be the only ballet to have a character who is a stage magician (although he may be a wizard as well). The Charlatan, as he is called, operated a puppet theater in 1830 St. Petersburg. To draw a crowd to his stage, the Charlatan performs several simple tricks before introducing his magically animated, dancing dolls. The puppets, particularly *Petrushka*, seem to acquire lives on their own.

The Least You Need to Know

- Magic and magicians are seen in every form of the performing arts.
- Georges Méliés, an early filmmaker, pioneered the use of magic and special effects in movies.
- Television, especially the variety-show format, provided wide exposure for magicians. Mark Wilson, performer and magic advisor, was one of the pioneers of the use of magic on TV.
- The Magic Castle™, created by Bill and Milt Larsen, is a private club for magicians in Hollywood, California.
- Magicians are often consulted to provide illusions for theatrical productions.



There's No Business Like Show Business

In This Chapter

- ▶ Places magicians perform
- ▶ Booking shows
- ▶ Setting fees
- ▶ Using promotional materials and advertising
- ▶ Getting free publicity

You've got the talent. You've got the tricks. All your friends like what you do. Now it's only a matter of time before someone walks up to you and asks how much you would charge to perform at a party.

STOP! WAIT!

Are you really ready to ask money for what you do?

If you are, this chapter offers some simple guidelines on how to turn your hobby into a paying proposition.

But, before you rush out and have business cards printed, take a long, hard look at yourself and your magic. Be honest with yourself. Do you need more practice and more rehearsal before you can, in good conscience, ask money for what you do?

If, after careful examination, you truly believe you're ready to enter the ranks of the semi- or part-time profession, read on!

Where Do I Go From Here?

Wherever one or more people gather, there is a possible audience that might want to be entertained. Your opportunities are endless.

Here's a list of places where magicians most often perform, from "entry level" to "top professional" venues:

Children's birthday parties	Variety shows
Adult private parties	Circuses
Strolling magic in restaurants	Company banquets, parties, and events
Bar/bat mitzvahs	Trade shows
Schools	Hospitality rooms
Country clubs	Conventions and conferences
Summer camps	Cruise ships
Scouts and other youth organizations	Nightclubs
Churches	Theaters
Fraternal organizations	Casino/hotel showrooms
Civic groups	Television
Charity benefits	



Now You See It

You can create your own market. In the mid-1970s, I was approached to perform in a planetarium in upstate New York. My first response was, "What? Card tricks under the stars?" Well, we created a unique children's theater piece, with which I toured successfully for three years around the United States. Anything is possible.

Now We're Just Dickering Price

Almost every call for a show starts something like this:

"Hi, is this Nerdo the Great?"

"Yes, it is."

"How much do you charge?"

Well, that depends on many factors. Before you can make the proper response, there's a lot of information you have to find out:

- ▶ What's the date and the time of the event?
- ▶ In what town will it be held? How far must I travel?
- ▶ What type of event is it? A reception, a party, an after-dinner show?
- ▶ How big of a show do they expect? Close-up magic or stage tricks? Just me? Or assistants, too?
- ▶ How long of a show do they want?
- ▶ Do I have to write or rehearse anything new or special, say, to honor a particular audience member?
- ▶ How long must I be at the event, including early arrival, set-up time, and wait time?

Then, there are additional questions I just ask myself:

- ▶ How much will it cost me to do the show, including travel costs, assistant's salary (if any), expendables (rope, confetti, cards), giveaways (balloons, candy), and investment in props?
- ▶ How much do I want to do this show?
- ▶ Am I willing to compromise on price if they can't afford my standard fee?

With the answers to all these questions in mind, decide on a price below which it is not even worth your time to go out of the house. Fix that price in your mind.

Ya Gotta Do What Ya Gotta Do

At some point, you will have to quote a price. How do you decide what to charge?

Except for the rare occasion when the client offers you a set fee to perform, you must get "insider information" on what other fees magicians at your age and level of experience are asking. Let me share several ways you can find such information in your area:



Sawed in Half

You have only one chance to make a good impression. Your reputation as a magician, good or bad, will quickly precede you, especially if you live in a small or mid-size town. If you start to ask a fee before your act is ready, it may be a long time before you're asked to perform again.



Say the Magic Word

Originally, the phrase used to describe professional entertainment was not "show business." Rather, performers in vaudeville referred to it as "the show business." In other words, professional entertainment was thought of, first and foremost, as a business.

- Ask a fellow magician who is a trusted friend, but take the answer with a grain of salt. In any industry where ego and self-worth are measured in earnings, no one wants to have others thinking that they charge too little.
- Ask around to find out what others have paid magicians at your level of expertise.
- Ask the client, “What sort of budget have you set aside for entertainment?” They might just tell you. This is a bold but often successful negotiating strategy.

Going Down

Many magicians offer two shows from the start—the standard show and the “big” show—with two different prices. If you do this, however, make sure that there *is* a difference between the two shows. The more expensive show must be noticeably better. Clients meet each other more often than you think; they do talk. Inconsistencies and bad word-of-mouth will come back to haunt you.

Remember, you can always lower your price. But once you quote a fee, it is almost impossible to talk it back up, even if you discover that the client would have been willing to spend more. But if you do drop your fee, you have to give the client a legitimate reason for doing so. Here are several valid reasons for offering a discount or for quoting a lower fee:

- A shorter show.
- A less elaborate show (no assistants; less or smaller props; no giveaways).
- You’re already in the area.
- The client compromises on the show’s date or time to accommodate your schedule.
- You’re already doing a show that day, so this will allow you to “double” (showbiz jargon for doing a second show in a different location on the same day). There is less expense to you if you’re already packed and out on the road.
- A last-minute show. If a client calls only a day or two in advance, they know that you were probably totally free. An extra show is found money for you.

Raise Them Rates

A pretty good rule of thumb is this: If you’re getting too many shows too easily, you’re working too cheaply. You’ll know when. You’ll quote your fee, and the client will gleefully reply, “No problem.” If this starts happening with any regularity, it’s time to raise your price. Let’s say you’re a magician just starting out in an average-sized town. You’re asking \$50 to perform at birthday parties and you’re having no trouble booking two or three shows every weekend. It’s time to look at those fees.

But you can't just raise your price to \$150. The market in which you've established yourself (through word of mouth) expects you at a third that fee. Try a smaller increase, such as \$10 or \$25 increments. If no new clients refuse to hire you because of the increase, great! If more turn you down than you would like, you can always ease your price back down.

Bah! Humbug!

Let's take a quick look at charity and benefit shows. You'll be approached early and often about doing free shows for good causes. I'm sure that, like most people, you sincerely like to help out when you can.

There are many good reasons to donate your services to a charitable organization:

- You believe in the cause or the organization
- You want to gain experience
- You want to try out new material
- You want exposure and future contacts

If you truly believe in the cause and want to help, whether to perform is not an issue. You will when you can. But your time may be limited, so you must choose the performances wisely.

Also, every charity organizer will offer you exposure, but you will probably have to take it upon yourself if you want to publicize your appearance.

Teen Talk

If you're a teen or pre-teen, you have special challenges when handling negotiations and booking shows.

Your biggest problem as a teen-age magician is probably going to be getting adults to take you seriously. After all, if you're "just a kid," how much experience can you have? How good could you be?



Tip of the Wand

I feel that I'm at the right fee when 50 percent of my prospective clients have to "think about" whether they can afford me rather than immediately saying "yes." I also expect to lose 10–25 percent of my shows because the fee is too high. I work less, but earn more, and I am constantly easing myself into a higher-paying client base.



Sawed in Half

You will meet and be seen by society movers and shakers at benefit functions, but more often than not, appearances at charity events lead to more requests to appear at charity events. Remember, anyone who sees you there assumes that you have donated your services.



Hocus Quote-Us

Nobody knows kids like kids.

—Marketing strategy slogan developed by Mark Sicher and Brian Mayer as teen-age magicians



Sawed in Half

Forgive me if I sound like an adult here, but school work and family come first. You may think now that you'll never need an education to fall back on, but you'll find highly educated, knowledgeable, and worldly people at the top of whatever field you eventually enter. You'll need that schooling to work with them on their level.

Turn what could be perceived as a liability into an asset. Yes, you *are* a kid, but:

- If it's a kids' show, you know better than anyone what kids like.
- You can talk to kids in their own language.
- Obviously, you are able to work with adults; you do it all the time.
- You have more free time to rehearse than adults.
- You keep up with the "cutting edge" of new magic.
- You probably invest more of your money in new props, wardrobe, and other paraphernalia than adult magicians.
- Even so, you're probably more reasonably priced than adult magicians are.
- You're also good, clean, reverent, honest—a model for today's youth.

You'll probably want to spend all your time behind closed doors practicing magic. But balance your "magic time" against your school work and family obligations.

You'll need to get to and from shows. Find a reliable person—a parent or some other adult, family member, or friend.

Be patient. I know you want to go into magic full-time *yesterday*. But, practically speaking, only a few venues hire teenagers. Be content to develop your act locally until that big break comes. Professionally speaking,

being a teenager is only a temporary obstacle. Use it now to your advantage. Make the most of these years to develop your act, your style, and your professionalism.

Tools of the Trade

Even if you're only a one-person operation, you must look like a professional operation from your first contact with a client.

At the very least, you'll need a business card with a telephone number where people can contact you. You don't need an address; nobody *writes* you for a show. And you don't really want anyone stopping by your house.

Any reliable print shop will have lots of business card samples to give you ideas. If you're computer literate, you can punch out a few business cards at a time, as needed, and you can add your letterhead to each document. There are lots of design programs available for both of these needs.

As part of your promotional materials, you may want a reproducible photograph, either a head shot or one with props that gives an idea of what you do on stage. Black-and-white photos are probably fine; often, they are actually preferred over color if they are going to be used in newsletters, advertising, or newspapers.

Your promotional materials such as flyers or brochures must be attractive with good graphics. Whatever you design, remember the importance of the first impression. A talent agent with PBS told me, "I get so many proposals across my desk that if the package doesn't look good, I don't even bother to read it."

If you're designing your first flyer, or want something new and festive, you might consider the work of Ed Harris. A professional graphic artist, Harris has created a whole line of one-page flyers, folded brochures, giveaways, clip art (those small illustrations seen on business cards and in advertising), and more, specifically for magicians. All of his designs have a cartoon, fun flavor, and the artwork is reasonably priced. What you receive is a camera-ready piece of artwork. You take it to your printer, who adds your name, contact information, maybe a photo, and you'll have a professional mailing piece. (I've even had agents ask for copies of my Harris-designed flyers instead of my other press materials.) To get a free catalogue, send a first-class stamp with your request to:

Ed Harris
Ed Harris MagiArt
5901 Drew Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55410
(612) 922-4021

Check the Classifieds

You've heard of the expression, "What if you gave a party, and nobody came?" Well, what if you have a great act, but nobody knows about it? That's why you have to advertise or otherwise generate publicity.

For most hobbyist magicians, radio, TV, and daily-newspaper ads will be prohibitively expensive unless you are sure of immediate return. You might consider an ad in the



Sawed in Half

You may not want to put a home address on a business card, even if you work out of your home. An entertainer is not home a lot. Do you want people to know where to find your empty house? If you feel you have to put an address on your card, consider renting a post-office box.

Yellow Pages, especially if you intend to be a part-time professional in a fairly local area. A free listing is usually included when you sign up for a business telephone line.

If you find a magazine that targets your immediate market, it might be worth investing in an ad. (Some communities, for example, have local magazines aimed at parents of young children: an ad might result in birthday party shows.)

My best recommendation for a part-time professional who wants to work in a limited area near his or her home is to organize a mailing list of the groups in your area (or the area you want to cover) that would want to book your type of act. Start with the Yellow Pages. There are also lists of clubs and organizations available from your local Chamber of Commerce. Put together a simple, short (I'm talking two-paragraph) letter explaining who you are and what you have to offer. Enclose a simple flyer or brochure that provides more details about your show and how to contact you.

If you're lucky, two to five percent of those people will actually call you for more information. But this is a list that you will mail repeatedly, perhaps up to four or five times a year. Send a different flyer around October, when people are planning for December holiday parties. Send something around March; they'll be setting up for spring parties and awards banquets. You'll soon discover what times of the year result in the most return calls in your area.

Free, Free, Totally Free

Think about it. Your local newspaper has to fill up blank pages every issue. My philosophy is that somebody's name and face has to be on those pages. It might as well be yours.

You're not asking the paper for free publicity: You're giving them news. Did you win an award at a magic convention? Have you performed a benefit show for a charitable cause? Will you be providing an assembly program at an area school? Do you have an interesting story you could tell about magic, the supernatural, and ghosts at Halloween? Stop the presses.

Write up 100–200 words in a newspaper style. The first sentence should tell the who, what, where, and when. The rest is all "color." Give the article a headline and type it double-spaced. Enclose a good glossy photo of yourself. If the event has already occurred and you have a photo from that, enclose that as well. Send it to the editor of the newspaper or, better yet, the editor of the appropriate section.

You might get a paragraph listing. You may get a full column article. Maybe they'll run a photo. You might even intrigue someone at the newspaper enough to have them send out a reporter and a photographer.

And it's all free!

As we've seen, magic's not just fun and games. Yes, you can perform magic forever as a complete amateur, just for the love of it. In fact, most people do.

But, magic can also be a great part-time or—if one day you want to go for it—a full-time profession.

First, you have to have an act that people think is worth watching. Then, they have to believe it's worth paying to see. And you have to be able to deliver the goods!

So, practice your magic. Be the best magician that you can be! Then, and only then, start to consider whether you want to try to make a *business* out of this wonderful art that we call *show*.

The Least You Need to Know

- You have a valid, important, and desirable service to offer.
- Know what your act is worth and set a basic fee.
- If you change your fee, up or down, you must have a valid reason. Clients do talk to each other.
- Use your teen years to your advantage.
- If the clients don't come to you, you can go to them through advertising, publicity, and direct mailings.



Join the Professionals

In This Chapter

- ▶ What makes a magician a “professional”
- ▶ Being a good audience for magic
- ▶ Making the magic your own
- ▶ What makes a success

I hope that, in addition to learning more than 100 magic tricks, you’ve grown to respect magic for the art it truly is. With that in mind, let’s take one last look at what it takes to be a pro.

One of the most frequent comments I get from people after a show is, “You were so, well, professional.”

This used to upset me, in a way. Were they ignoring the obvious years of practice it had taken me to develop all my fancy finger flicking? Didn’t they think my jokes were funny? Weren’t they entertained? *Of course* I was “professional,” I thought. At the very *least* I was professional. Or *should* have been.

Then I realized that we magicians are being judged not only for our performance on the stage, but also for our attitude and actions with members of the audience, our clients, and other performers, both before and after the show.

Look It Up, Dude

So just what makes a professional?

The dictionary defines “professional” as the following:

- One who engages in a learned vocation.
- One who engages in a vocation for pay.
- One who possesses the qualities and characteristics of a professional, as distinct from an amateur.

But what do *laypeople* mean when they say “professional”? First of all, it’s pretty clear that we’ve learned our craft. Even if the level of our technical skill isn’t obvious on the surface, the audience certainly can tell whether the tricks work.

Also, they’re probably not talking about the monetary aspect of being a professional. Most audiences assume we are being paid, whether we are or not.

No, when laypeople talk about professionalism, they are usually referring to those “qualities and characteristics” we exhibit while performing. These include:

- Respect for the audience.
- Courtesy in dealing with volunteers.
- Your language.
- Cleanliness and hygiene.
- General stage deportment.
- Your command of the situation.

The audience is only a small percentage of the people you will be dealing with in your years as a magician. There are also the clients, other magicians, and (if you go to another magician’s show) your fellow audience members. All of them will also be judging your professionalism.



Hocus Quote-Us

He who pays the piper may call the tune.

—Old English proverb

Another Satisfied Customer

Your quest for professionalism starts long before the audience gets its first glimpse of you. The first person you need to convince of your professionalism is the one who has asked you to perform.

The absolute necessity for professional courtesy when dealing with your clients is frequently overlooked. Here are a few quick tips for instantly raising yourself out of the ranks of the amateur.

Give 'Em What They Paid For!

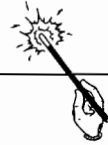
When you book your show, represent yourself honestly. Don't promise you can make elephants disappear if you're really working with animal crackers. Don't promise a Vegas-style revue if it's just you and a deck of cards.

In the good old days of vaudeville, an act was often hired to perform the act "as seen" by the talent scout or booker. In fact, this was often specified in the contract. Today's client will also be expecting a certain quality and length of show, perhaps even with specific tricks.

How Time Flies

Arrive on time, or be early. People worry. Check in with your contact at the event the moment you arrive. Everyone will breathe easier.

Of course, that means you must leave plenty of time to get to the gig. A rushed arrival causes a poor performance. Audiences don't want excuses. Neither does the person who's asked you to perform. They just want the best possible show you can give.



Tip of the Wand

Call from the road if you are running late; that's why God invented the car phone.



Now You See It

Amateur magician and magic fan Johnny Carson used this suspense and "anticipation" to his advantage. After Ed McMahon called, "Here's Johnny!" and the curtains parted, Johnny deliberately waited several "beats" before walking out. He felt that the audience, worried that he might not be there, gave him a stronger response when he finally did appear.

Give a Little, Take a Little

Once you're at the venue, be flexible. Things happen.

Be prepared to start early or a few minutes late. If the whole evening is running long, the event planner may want you to drop part of your act.



Sawed in Half

If the client and party-giver aren't happy, they won't hire you again. And they certainly won't recommend you to other event planners.

Depending upon logistical needs of other performers or presenters, the show line-up may change. Sound equipment, music, or lighting may not be there as promised. Deal with it.

Don't change your act to such an extent that your show suffers, but be willing to compromise as much as possible to help make the evening a success. Your professionalism will be appreciated and remembered.

When you're booked, the client expects you will be good. When you walk onstage, the audience expects you to be entertaining. But when the show is over, the remark you want to hear is, "I can't wait to work with you again. You are so *professional!*"

Can't We All Just Get Along?

Get along with the other acts. It's surprising how much tension can be created backstage when one of the acts is uncooperative or egomaniacal. Set-up space is often small; frequently, you must share dressing rooms, if you have them at all. The whole show runs smoother when you give the other performers the same courtesy that you would like to receive.

This is especially true if there are other *variety* acts performing with you. Chances are, somewhere down the road, you will work with that act again. Also, novelty acts often have the chance to recommend one another. Get along with the other acts if only for your pocketbook's sake.

Giving "Good Audience"

Attending another performer's show is a true test of professional courtesy. Should you be especially enthusiastic to rev up the audience? Or should you just nod, knowingly, to yourself? Probably something in between. This section is designed to help you watch another magician work without acting like a putz.

Dress appropriately for the occasion. You're going there to be an audience member, not a performer, so don't wear your tuxedo. Perhaps as embarrassing as overdressing is under-dressing. Sloppy or outrageous dress won't impress anyone in the audience but yourself.

Buy your own ticket in advance. Yes, professional performers often do have a guest list or *comps* (complimentary passes), but the numbers are often severely restricted by management. The performer may want to hold any passes for potential clients, current sponsors, close friends, or family.

In many cases, performers are given no free passes at all, and the cost for “freebies” comes out of their pockets. Don’t put them in the awkward position of feeling they have to offer you a free seat or even a *house seat*.

While you wait for the show to start, don’t try to upstage the star. If you absolutely *must* do some magic for friends, do it quietly. It is not “your” evening.

You’re there as an audience member, so don’t solicit work at another performer’s show. Keep your business cards in your pocket. If someone comes up to you who already knows you’re a magician, talk to them discreetly, away from public view.

Be a good audience. You’re there because you love magic. Have a good time. Laugh. Applaud. Enjoy.

After the show, keep a low profile. If you’re asked your opinion, be as positive as possible. As a general rule, keep any negative comments to yourself. If you put down a performer that other people like, you’re telling them they have bad taste. Your cavalier remarks might turn off someone from magic forever.



Say the Magic Word

House seats are seats reserved for special guests of the artists, the show’s creative team, and the theater management. They are not free seats; they are merely withheld from general sale until a predetermined time before showtime.

Miss Manners Visits Backstage

An intriguing question: How do you get to visit, or at least meet, the star performer if he or she is not a friend? Do you approach the magician before or after the show? And, if you do get backstage, how can you act as professionally as possible?

The magician will probably enjoy meeting you. Really. But never go backstage unannounced, especially before a performance. The magician needs privacy to set the props, dress, and mentally prepare for the show. Don’t you?

Send word through the ticket office, the stage door manager, the house manager, or someone on the service staff. Write a brief note to the magician, perhaps on the back of a business card, that you’re in the audience and would like to meet him or her after the show. Your message will be delivered.

If a reply hasn’t come back to you by the end of the performance, politely ask the same person to check whether your name has been placed on a guest list to visit backstage.

If you want to increase your chances that the magician will meet you after the show, include these three things in your note:

- Who you are (a local magician, a big fan)
- What you want (perhaps an autograph; to have your photo taken with him or her)
- Most importantly, that you will be brief

Don't be too disappointed if the magician has very little time to spend with you or even sends back regrets. He or she may have close friends or family visiting. They may have a long drive ahead, repairs to make, or they may be just plain exhausted.

Many times, the magician will come into the house to meet you after a show. If you're allowed to visit backstage, however, remember that, for the evening, this space is the magician's "home." You're a guest.

Respect the performer's and any assistants' personal privacy. Let common rules of courtesy apply: Don't enter a dressing room unless invited. Don't pick up or examine props.

Give your regards. Give your compliments. Get your autographs. But don't give unasked-for criticism. If there were problems that night, the magician knows this and doesn't need to be reminded by you. But if the magician does ask for suggestions, be tactfully honest.

Finally, as I've already mentioned, be brief. The magician does have another life beyond the theater. The company may even have to leave the building by a certain time due to union or house rules. If they want you to go with them for dinner or drinks, they'll let you know.

The Thief of Thoughts

Two of the biggest ethical issues among magicians are the exposure of secrets to the public and the theft of another performer's material.

We've already talked about the reasons you want to keep the secrets of the tricks to yourself. But as a quick refresher:

- The spectators really want to be fooled; they want to see and believe in magic.
- Exposure takes the mystery and fun out of the magic.
- The audience can be insulted if they find out how simple some of the methods are.

The heated discussion among magicians over "borrowing" jokes, stories, and tricks from another performer is an "in-house" issue. The theft of material is about professional courtesy among your peers. Let's cut to the chase:

Don't steal another magician's material. Period.

Most of us decided to learn magic because we saw a magician perform. And, to be as much like our inspirations as possible, many of us, either consciously or subconsciously, "lifted" lines and routines of performers we liked.

I know when I first started out, I didn't know any better. I didn't realize that, until performers release their material by putting it into print or selling the routine, they own their tricks and patter. It never occurred to me that I was stealing the years of hard work they had put into writing and honing their acts.



Now You See It

For more than 30 years, Bob and Ginny Lewis were a popular magical/musical duet on the fire hall and Moose Lodge circuit throughout the Midwest. One day, they arrived at a small hall for that night's show and noticed that several of the props that they used in their act were already on stage. The evening's opening act, who had been rehearsing earlier, walked in, took one look at Bob and Ginny, and screamed in recognition, "You're the ones!" Turns out he had seen Bob and Ginny's act years before, had copied it, and was doing many of the same routines word for word, bit by bit. He thought that the two acts would never run into each other, much less be booked together on the same bill.

Of course it's easier to copy another magician's act than to come up with your own stuff. Unfortunately, you can never really develop your own, unique style as long as you're doing an act that belongs to somebody else.

If you cannot borrow another magician's tricks and patter, what *can* you learn from them? Watch and study what works for the good magicians, as well as for variety performers and actors. Analyze their gestures and mannerisms, their timing and stage movements. Look at the roles that lighting, music, and wardrobe play.

Here are some questions you might ask yourself:

- How do they generate interest?
- How do they command attention?
- How does the performer evoke laughter or applause?
- What causes you to react, physically or emotionally, to their performance?

You can then utilize the techniques—the tricks of the trade—by adapting them to the routines you want to perform. Without mimicking another performer's exact gestures, try some similar actions of your own—ones that might create the same effect and cause the same response.

When you hear great patter from another magician, analyze why the script is effective. How was it constructed? Why does it make you laugh, or clap, or become enthralled?



Tip of the Wand

Sometimes it pays to watch the bad performers as well. Why aren't they going over? What are they doing wrong? It's a good way to learn what mistakes to avoid.

How much of it was due to the patter itself, and how much was due to the performer's delivery? Use the techniques, not the actual words and gestures, to write, and then practice aloud, your own story and your own jokes.

Besides basic stagecraft skills, learn as much as you can about the magical arts. This book is a good start. But there are literally hundreds of books available in bookstores and in libraries that explain and teach tricks. Some include jokes and full patter for the routines. Feel free to use them: That's why they're there. Better still, let what you discover jump-start your imagination so you can create your own material.

Making Magic Your Own

So, is it wrong to perform the same tricks as another magician? Of course not. As you've learned, some tricks are classics, such as the cut and restored rope. They've been around for centuries. Almost every magic trick ever invented has been explained in print somewhere. Every magic shop sells the same marketed magical apparatus to magicians the world over. The tricks come with instructions for their use, performance rights, and, often, suggested patter.

Regardless of what magic you choose to perform, the real "trick" is to make this magic your own. Create your own story or patter for it. Present it in a novel, original, and entertaining way.

In Part Two of this book, we've already examined a few of the things you can vary to make a standard trick your own:

- Your basic character
- Patter and its delivery
- Music
- Costuming

Early in my career, I tried to get one of the best agents in Philadelphia to represent me. He took one look at my portfolio and said, "All this tells me is that you have a great printer. I book Scalzo, Tom & Sherri, and Dick Gufstason," (all popular magicians who were working clubs in the Northeast at the time) "What do you do that's any different?" I didn't know how to answer. I did a rope trick, a card trick; the same as everybody else. What could I say to convince him how well I did them?

He didn't book me after that interview, and I learned this lesson: Have an act that's uniquely you. You have to offer something unique to an audience; if you do the same tricks, you have to do them better or at least in a recognizably different way than anyone else.

You're a Success!

We've looked at how you can be more professional. But how do you know when you're successful?

Everyone has to find his or her own definition of success. To some, it's just being able to do the best show they know how to do. To others, it means being able to get a great response, every time, anywhere. To others, it means working Las Vegas. To others still, it's making the biggest bucks possible.

When will *you* feel that you have become a success at what you set out to do?

When I was a young man, just starting out and touring in a circus sideshow, I met Fantasio, a top cabaret magician. He was performing at the Fontainebleu hotel in Miami Beach at the time. He was everything I wanted to be: class and skill personified and working in a top night club. He and his family came out to see me perform, and I was, quite honestly, embarrassed that he was seeing me work in what is lovingly but accurately referred to as a "mud show."

After my set, Fantasio came up to me and confided, "You know, since I was a little boy, I always wanted to work on a circus." My head did a 360. Suddenly I realized that there is no single correct goal, no ultimate venue, show, or credit that means "success."

Success is what satisfies you, what makes you happy, and what makes you proud to say you're a magician.

Go Thou and Do Likewise

I don't want to end this chapter and finish the book. There is so much more I want to share with you.

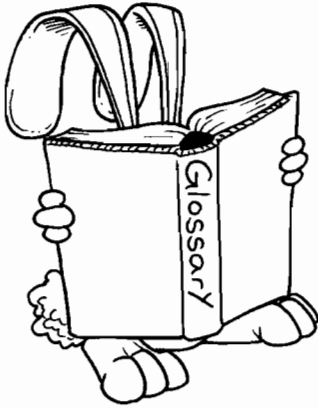
But, as the old adage goes, experience really is the best teacher. You know the skills; you have your first tricks. The rest is up to you.

On my 21st birthday, the man who gave me my early guidance in magic (my mentor Ed Cashmore) took me out to celebrate. He gave me a "wishbone ring," the traditional ring worn by magicians since the 19th century. It had been given to him on his 21st birthday by the man who started him in magic. I hope that with this book I am, symbolically, passing on that ring to you.

Now go out and have fun! Make magic!

The Least You Need to Know

- Professionalism is a quality, a characteristic, and an attitude, both on and off the stage.
- Be a good representative of the magic community when seeing and meeting other performers.
- Thou shalt not steal from another magician's act!
- It's essential to do tricks that are "you" as you build a unique on-stage character.
- Success is what you decide it to be.



Say the Magic Words

The following is a selective list of the jargon commonly used among magicians, many of which you'll find throughout *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Magic Tricks*. As in any specialized field, there are hundreds, if not thousands, *more* unusual words and phrases that you'll learn as you continue to study magic.

act The collected *tricks* and routines that you present at a single seating or performance.

amateur From the Latin *amare* ("to love"), an amateur magician practices the art for pleasure rather than as a profession or for money.

apparatus A prop, seen by the audience, often specially prepared or crafted in some way to allow you to achieve an *effect*.

assistant Someone you've trained to help you onstage during your *act*, as opposed to a *volunteer* member of the audience.

back (of a playing card) The pattern side of a playing card, on the opposite side from the *face*. All back designs are identical on a regular deck of playing cards.

billet When used in magic, a *billet* is a small piece of paper, often folded, upon which a message has been written, usually for a mind-reading effect.

book test An act of *mental magic* in which a spectator selects letters, words, illustrations or pages from a book, and you divine or predict them.

bottom card The lowermost card in a face-down deck. Also called the *face card*.

break A *break* is a small space between two cards, or two sections of cards, in a deck. A *break* is used to *control* or locate cards.

bridge-size cards, bridge deck *Bridge-size cards*, slightly smaller than poker-size cards, measure $2\frac{1}{4}$ " in width by $3\frac{1}{2}$ " in length.

broad-tossing Slang term for Three Card Monte, a con game and popular card trick.

capper A last, extra bit or punch that finishes off or tops the previous magical effect or routine.

center tear A technique by which you secretly rip up a folded paper, obtain and read the original center of a *billet*.

character The *character* is the attitude or special persona portrayed by the magician onstage or the role adopted. A *character act* is based on the role (the *character*) portrayed by the magician.

clean As used by magicians, a *method* or technique is *clean* if it's straightforward without complicated distractions or free of *gimmicks*. A *trick* finishes "clean" if everything (including your hands) can be examined at the end.

closer (*clo'-zer*) The last (i.e., closing) *trick* or *routine* performed in a *act* or at a single seating. Also, a trick strong enough to be used as the closing spot.

close-up magic Magic that requires the spectators to be close to you for the effect to be seen and appreciated properly. Formerly known (around the 1920s) as vest-pocket magic, then pocket magic. Also known in Europe as micro magic.

club act An *act* suitable for performance in a nightclub. Performance conditions often require that the act be angle-proof, leave nothing behind on the dance floor, be able to overcome frequent distractions, and be visible by patrons at the rear of the club.

code, code act In magic, a *code* is any secret communication between performers, usually in a two-person *mental magic* act (a *code act*).

comp A complimentary (free) ticket to a show.

confederate A secret *assistant*, someone you've let "in" on the *trick* in advance, then placed in the audience. Also known as a "stooge," "plant," or "shill."

control, controlled, controlling A *control* is any *method* that moves a specific playing card or cards to a known position in the deck. When you secretly move a chosen card to where you want it, you're *controlling* the card.

convincer An action that seemingly "proves" an implied condition is called a *convincer* (because it convinces the audience). Sometimes seen as convincer move.

court card Also called a royal card, picture card, or *face card* in a deck of playing cards: a jack, queen, or king of any suit.

crimp To slightly bend (but not fold or crease) a playing card, often at a corner, used to hold or mark a position in a deck.

cut, complete the cut To magicians, a cut consists of removing the upper portion of cards from the deck and setting them beside the lower portion of the deck. The cut is *completed* by placing the lower portion of the deck on top of the cut-off portion.

dealer's position *Dealer's position* is holding the deck in your hand, ready to deal cards from the top.

ditch To secretly get rid of an object.

double-backed card, double-backer A *double-backed card*, or *double-backer*, is specially printed or constructed to have a back on both sides. The two backs may or may not have the same design.

double-faced card, double-facer A *double-faced card*, or *double-facer*, has a face design on both sides. A double-facer with identical sides is sometimes referred to as an S.B.S. card, short for Same Both Sides.

effect As used by magicians, what the spectators think they see happen when a *trick* is performed.

exposure Revealing the secret *method* to a magic *effect*, either deliberately or accidentally.

face The side of a playing card that shows its identity by value and suit.

face card The *face card* is the bottom or lowermost card of a face-down deck or *packet* of cards, so-called because its *face* can be seen. *Court cards* (jacks, queens, kings) are also sometimes referred to as face cards.

finger-flinging Slang term for *sleight-of-hand*, sometimes with a negative connotation when used among magicians.

flash act A *flash act* is a fast-paced act, often performed as a *silent act* and usually around 8–10 minutes in length, comprised of several quick, visual *tricks* or sequences.

flash effect A quick, visually stunning *trick*, such as an instant appearance or sudden *transformation* of an object.

flourish Any obvious display of skill, especially with a deck of cards.

force To secretly make an audience member perform a desired action (either mentally or physically) without his or her awareness, especially with regards to selecting a particular playing card. Also the action itself.

force deck A specially prepared deck that allows you to easily *force* a particular card or cards.

full-evening show A complete stage show, generally up to around two hours length and often incorporating several big *illusions*, and a troupe of assistants, fronted by a star magician.

gimmick A *gimmick*, or "gaff," is a secret device that's been specially prepared to allow you to accomplish a magic *trick*. Usually, a gimmick is never seen by the audience; if it's visible, the gimmick's nature and use is never known by the spectators.

handling The *moves*, *methods*, and techniques (not limited to hand movements) used to achieve a magic *effect*.

house seats Seats set aside for guests of the artist and the company. They're not "*comps*," but they're held back from general sale until a predetermined time before the show.

illusion, illusionist Among magicians, illusions are the large-scale stage tricks, usually involving a human body. The magicians who perform them are called *illusionists*.

impromptu magic *Tricks* or *effects* that can be done without any special advance preparation.

index, indices The small number and suit symbol in the corner or corners on the *face* of a playing card is the *index* (plural, *indices*).

indifferent card An *indifferent* card is an arbitrary playing card used in a *set-up* or during a card *trick*.

jog A playing card is said to be *jogged* when one of its edges is deliberately extended out of the deck, usually about a quarter of an inch. An *out-jog* protrudes from the outer or front side of the deck (the edge toward the audience); an *in-jog* sticks out of the inner or back side (the edge toward you); a *side-jog* protrudes from either side of the *pack*.

key card Also called a "locator card." A known card or a card in a known position that's used to help find a *selected card*.

kicker An extra, unexpected new *effect* at the end of a *trick* or *routine*.

lap, lapping *Lapping* is secretly dropping an object in the *lap* to vanish or *ditch* it, or, less frequently, to obtain an object from the lap (usually to later produce it).

legerdemain Used interchangeably with "magic," from the French *léger de main*, meaning "light of hand."

levitation The magic *effect* in which a person or object rises (and usually descends) in the air.

load To secretly introduce an object into a particular place or position, usually for a later *production*. Also the object itself.

lost Short for "lost in the deck." The apparent condition of a *selected card* after it's returned to a deck and the *pack* is shuffled.

magician's choice A technique to control or *force* a spectator's choice through verbal, psychological or physical means. Also known as Equivoque.

magic word A *magic word* is a single word or phrase that supposedly causes a magical *effect* to take place. Common magic words are "Abracadabra," "Hocus Pocus," and "Presto."

manipulation, manipulator In magician's parlance, *sleight-of-hand*, *flourishes*, and *tricks* performed by manual dexterity. A magician whose act uses a great amount of sleight-of-hand is known as a *manipulator*.

mathematical magic Magic *effects* that are achieved through mathematical principles, either overtly or in secret.

mental magic Sometimes referred to as mentalism (performed by a mentalist or psychic entertainer). Any theatrical entertainment that purports to demonstrate extra-sensory powers of the mind.

method The means by which a magic *effect* is accomplished.

micro-magic(*mee'-kro ma'-jic*) A term used almost exclusively among European magicians to mean *close-up magic*.

misdirection *Misdirection* is any diversionary technique to make the audience look, think, or perceive in the way that you want them to.

move An action performed, usually secretly, to attain a magical *effect*. Also called a *sleight*.

natural A *move* or *sleight* is natural if it looks exactly the same to the audience as the action it's mimicking.

one-way deck A deck with a picture or asymmetrical *back* design, allowing the cards to be arranged so that they all face "one way." The term is sometimes wrongly used to mean a *force deck* in which all 52 playing cards are the same.

opener The first (i.e., opening) *trick* or *routine* performed in an *act* or at a single seating.

ordinary As used by magicians, an *ordinary* object is one that is unprepared and examinable.

out An alternate ending, which may be prepared in advance or improvised, depending upon circumstances. Also refers to a procedure used to get out of a situation when something goes wrong, generally to bring a *trick* to some sort of satisfactory conclusion even though it's not the *effect* you intended. Also, a multiple option.

pack A deck of playing cards.

packet A small bunch or group of playing cards, usually from four to a dozen cards.

palm, palming *Palming* is concealing any object in the hand. *Palms* are named according to where or how the item is held, such as the *classic palm* (concealed in the center of the palm), the *finger palm* (held at the base of the middle and ring fingers), the *thumb palm* (with the object held in the crotch of the thumb, parallel to the fingers), the *thumb clip* (with the thumb pressing the object flat against the palm), the *edge palm* (clipped between two fingers, perpendicular to the palm) and the *back palm* (clipped behind the hand).

palming coins Shiny, flat, circular pieces of metal, often engraved and having milled edges, that are the same size as coins, sometimes used as substitutes for real coins in stage *manipulation*.

parlor magic Generally archaic usage except among magicians. Stand-up magic between *close-up* and stage magic that can be performed effectively in a small room.

part-time professional A term coined by Gene Anderson. A person who performs magic on a *professional* level but has a different full-time occupation.

pasteboard *Pasteboard* is slang among magicians for a playing card, derived from the process used to construct playing cards.

patter The words used or stories told by the magician while performing a *trick* are known as *patter*.

peek To obtain a fleeting look at something, usually the *index* or *face* of a playing card, or the actual look itself. Also known as "glimpse" (v.), or "a glimpse" (n.).

penetration One of the basic *effects* in magic, in which one person or object passes through another, solid-through-solid, without harm to either.

pip The spots that symbolize the suits (clubs, hearts, spades and diamonds) on the central part of the *face* of a playing card. Generally, the *index* is not called a pip.

platform act, platform magic An *act* or style of magic that can be performed, yet still be effective, on simply a raised platform.

pocket trick Generally used for *close-up magic*, any small piece of magical *apparatus* that could be carried about in the pocket. Generally, a deck of cards isn't referred to as a *pocket trick*.

poker-size cards, poker deck *Poker-size cards* measure 2½" wide by 3½" long.

practice The repetition of a *sleight* or, sometimes, an entire *trick* until the movements become flawless and second-nature. *Practice* is less complete and often more informal than full *rehearsal*.

prediction In *mental magic*, a *prediction* is a recorded result, made at the beginning or in advance of the *effect*, something that you hope to achieve.

preparation What you do to get ready to perform a *trick*. This includes the construction of special *apparatus* or *gimmicks* and the collection of equipment (gimmicked or not) that must be on hand in order to perform the *trick*. Also known as the *set-up*; less often, the "get-ready" or the "pre-set."

prestidigitation, prestidigitator Magic, more specifically, *sleight-of-hand*, performed by a *prestidigitator*.

produce, production A *production* is the act of making something appear.

professional, professionalism A *professional* magician makes a full-time living as an entertainer. *Professionalism* includes such concerns as attitude, ethics, and businesslike behavior.

props Short for the theatrical term *properties*. In magical usage, your *props* are your pieces of *apparatus*.

rehearsal The repetition of a complete *trick*, *act* or show, as if an audience were present, to get ready for performance.

reset To *set-up* again for a *trick* or *routine*. Tricks that end in the same condition in which they begin are said to automatically *reset*.

revelation In magical terms, the conclusion of a "pick a card" *trick*, when you show or tell the identity of the *selected card*.

reverse, reversed card Most often, *reversing* a card means turning a card face-up in a face-down deck, or vice versa. It can also mean turning the card end-for-end in a *one-way deck*.

ribbon spread A long, ribbon-like display of playing cards on a table, or the *move* to produce such a *spread*.

riffle To *riffle* (or riffle through) a deck of cards, you hold the *pack* in one hand, bend back one of the edges or corners with the other hand (or thumb of the same hand), then release the cards, one at a time.

routine A series of magic *tricks* that seem to follow naturally one into another, often as a section of a longer *act* or show. Also, to place tricks in a particular order for a show.

run-through An informal *rehearsal* of an *act* or show for the purpose of settings light, sounds, and other cues, to check *blocking*, and to eliminate problems.

second sight A two-person act of *mental magic*, usually a *code act*.

secret In lay terms, the method by which a *trick* or *effect* is achieved.

selection, selected card Also called the "chosen card," the *selection*, or *selected card*, is the playing card picked by a spectator for use in a card *trick*.

self-working trick In the most general terms, a *self-working trick* requires no *sleight-of-hand* or even *moves* to achieve the *effect*.

semi-professional Someone who performs magic shows for pay as a secondary occupation.

set, set up To arrange or prepare special *gimmicks* or put the *props*, such as playing cards, in some special order to perform a magic *trick*.

set-up, setup Usually synonymous with *preparation*, *set-up* is the actual condition of the materials after they've been specially prepared to perform a magic *trick*.

shell In magician's usage, a hollow object that matches, as closely as possible, a solid object, so that it can substitute for the "real" object in the course of the *routine*.

short card A *short card* is a playing card that has its length trimmed shorter, usually about $\frac{1}{16}$ ", than the rest of the cards in the deck.

shuffle To mix the cards into some random order.

sight gag A *sight gag* is an action(s) or a prop that provokes laughter without the need for words.

silent act A magic *act* in which the magician does not speak, often performed to music.

silent script A term, probably coined by Henning Nelms in *Magic and Showmanship*, for the unspoken patter that a magician recites in his or her mind while performing. Also known, to actors, as an "interior monologue."

silk, silk magic Magicians refer to a silk handkerchief or scarf as a *silk*. *Silk magic* uses *silks* as the main props or central focus of the act.

sleight, sleight-of-hand From the Old Norse word *slægth*, meaning slyness, *sleight-of-hand* is any cunning or crafty trickery performed with the hands. The actual action performed (the "move") is called a *sleight*.

spot card In magician's parlance, a playing card that is not a *court* or *face card*; that is, an ace, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, or ten of any suit. Also called a "number card."

spread A wide display of cards, held between the two hands or on a table, to allow the audience to pick cards from anywhere in the deck, or the move to produce such a display.

square the deck To even up all edges of a deck of playing cards, so that all four edges are straight and smooth.

stack To *set-up* a portion of a deck of playing cards, or the entire deck, in a special arrangement.

steal In magician's terms, to secretly obtain an object for later use or for *production*, or to secretly remove an object from use. Also the object that's stolen.

stock A *packet* or group of playing cards, especially one that has been *set up* in a specific order, within a deck.

sucker trick In a *sucker trick*, you perform an *effect*, explain how it was accomplished, then fool the audience by repeating the trick using a different method.

suspension An *illusion* in which a person hangs in the air without moving, either partially supported (such as at the end of a pole) or unsupported (as opposed to a *levitation*, in which a person or object rises).

suspension of disbelief A theatrical term suggesting that the audience knows that what they're seeing isn't true, but they're willing to ignore that fact in order to enjoy the performance.

switch A technique by which two items are secretly exchanged. This is a *method*, as opposed to a *transposition* (which is an *effect*).

talk, talking When two or more objects (as least one of which is hidden) touch and produce a sound, they are said to be *talking*.

thaumaturgy Magic, or the working of wonders. From the Greek root *thauma*, meaning “a wonder.” Though seldom seen, a *thaumaturge* is the worker of the miracles (i.e., the magician).

theme act An act based around a central premise or *prop*.

timing *Timing* is the pace of an act; the tempo at which you deliver a *patter* line or at which an act is performed.

top card The uppermost card of a face-down deck or *packet* of playing cards, or, conversely, the lowermost card on a face-up deck or packet of playing cards.

transformation One of the basic *effects* in magic, in which an object changes into an entirely different item or changes one or more of its properties (such as color, shape, size).

transposition One of the basic *effects* in magic, in which two or more objects or people exchange places.

trick *Laypeople* generally refer to an *effect* or *routine* performed by a magician as a *trick*.

trick card Specially printed or altered playing card. Also known as a “gimmicked card.”

trick deck A deck of playing cards containing one or more trick cards, sometimes used to mean any deck that’s been *stacked* or otherwise *set-up*.

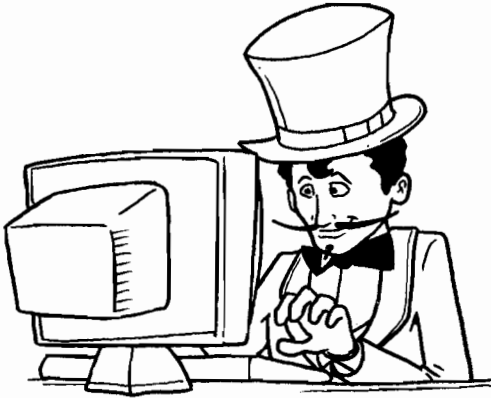
utility prop, utility item A *utility prop* (or *utility item*) can be used in different tricks or to perform many different effects.

vanish As used by magicians, a disappearance or the act of making something or someone disappear.

vest-pocket magic Archaic term for *close-up magic*, dating to the time when vests were popular men’s apparel. Magicians used the vest pockets to carry small *props* and to secretly *steal* and *ditch* objects.

volunteer A member of the audience, not in league with the magician, who offers or agrees to help in a magic *trick*.

woofle dust *Woofle dust* is an imaginary powder with magical properties. Magicians use woofle dust as an excuse to reach into a pocket to obtain or get rid of a *palmed* object.



Where to Learn More

Learning magic is a never-ending process. There are always more tricks, new ways to perform them, and endless variations. Then there's the practical experience that can only be gained by actually performing for an audience.

Here are some of the many ways to learn even more about your craft.

Be a Bookworm

Books are probably your best single source for learning magic. Magic books for beginners are available in almost all bookstores (check the "Hobby" and "Games" sections).

You'll also probably find a slew of magic books in your school or community library. You'll find most of the magic books shelved under 793 in the good old Dewey Decimal System.

For books containing more advanced tricks or specialized areas of magic, you'll probably have to visit a magic shop or order through one of their catalogues.

What You See Is What You Get

Watch other magicians to get your creative juices flowing. What kind of magic do you enjoy seeing? What performance and stagecraft tips are you able to pick up? Remember, you can learn from both good and bad performers.

Be a Sorcerer's Apprentice

Find a *magical mentor*—another magician with whom you can share your ideas and someone to look to for inspiration and advice. Find out through your family, friends, school, or church if there's a hobbyist magician in your area who might be willing to act as your sounding board.

Could You Put That On Rewind?

Instructional videotapes of magic are a fairly recent phenomenon. As you mimick the performer on tape, you must be careful not to become locked into the instructor's style of performing. Use the moves and tricks you learn as a springboard for your own creativity and experimentation.

Remember: Dubbing someone else's magic tape rather than buying your own original tape is no different than photocopying copyrighted material or performing a trick out of another magician's act. Don't do it!

Several dealers are noted for their instructional videotape series. These dealers include:

Brad Burt's Magic Shop (See the section, "Shop 'Til You Drop," that follows.)

Louis Tannen Inc. (See "Shop 'Til You Drop.")

Stevens Magic Emporium (See "Shop 'Til You Drop.")

A-1 Multimedia Magic Supplies

3337 Sunrise Boulevard, # 8

Rancho Cordova, CA 95742

(916) 852-7777

(916) 852-7785 (fax)

(800) 876-8437 (orders)

GR8TRIX@aol.com

<http://www.A1multimedia.com>

Mail order

L&L Publishing (also listed as L & L Publishing)

P.O. Box 100

Tahoma, CA 96142

(530) 525-5700

(530) 525-7008 (fax)

(800) 626-6572 (orders)

LLPUB@aol.com

<http://allmagic.com/llpub>

<http://www.uelectric.com/amazing/l.html>

Mail order

Class Consciousness

In some towns, there are organized magic classes taught by a local hobbyist or part-time professional. The classes are usually for beginners, but sometimes more advanced magic is taught. Often the classes are held at a YMCA, YWCA, a community college, or some similar institution. Check out continuing education calendars in your area. Also, many magic shops offer classes. Or, consider the possibility of arranging private lessons from a local magician.

Then there is the *Chavez Studio of Magic*, a one-of-a-kind school that offers resident and home-study instruction in sleight-of-hand with such objects as cards, coins, cigarettes, thimbles, and billiard balls. The course also covers showmanship, routining, and stagecraft.

The Chavez Studio of Magic, the first bona fide school of magic, was founded by Ben (d. 1961) and Marian Chavez (d. 1978) in 1941. After their deaths, the school was continued and co-owned by Neil Foster (1919–1988) and Dale Salwak (b. 1947), both former students. Foster, by then associated with Abbott’s Magic Company, taught his classes in Colon, Michigan. Salwak continues the West Coast branch in California.

More information on the Chavez Studio of Magic can be obtained by contacting:

Dale Salwak
P.O. Box 8054
La Verne, CA 91750
(909) 593-5374
(909) 596-8596 (fax)

Tread the Boards

Even though you won’t learn magic tricks per se, there are few activities that can make you a better performer than taking acting classes or taking part in school or community theater. You’ll learn acting technique in the classes; you’ll gain first-hand stage experience performing in a play. The theatrical skills you acquire will transform your presence as a magician, whether you perform on a stage or close-up.

Also, experience *is* the best teacher! Perform wherever you can, as often as you can—well, without making a pest of yourself. Perform for friends, for your family picnic, at your office party, at school, and at church. Offer your services to charity benefits and to retirement facilities and hospitals.

Learn from every show you perform. After each show, ask yourself these questions:

- What worked, and what didn’t?
- Why did or didn’t it work?
- How can I use what I experienced and learned to improve my magic even more?

Many performers—even some full-time professionals—audio- or videotape their shows so they can review and critique themselves later.

Shop ‘Til You Drop

You’ll no doubt want to seek out a magic shop or magic dealer in your area as soon as possible. First of all, it’s the perfect place to see what kind of tricks and magic props are available. Secondly, if you become a “regular,” they’ll get to know the type of magic

you like and help advise you. Magic shops sometimes sponsor their own magic clubs. They are also a great place to meet other local magicians. (Saturday afternoon is often a good time to “hang out” to meet the gang, but remember that the shop is a place of business, not a clubhouse.)

Some shops are notorious for selling magic that is outrageously overpriced. This is especially true of shops located in resort areas, amusement parks, casino hotels, and other high-rent areas. These businesses depend on impulse buyers, not on repeat customers. As with any line of products, do some comparative shopping.

Find a shop near you by looking under “Magician’s Supplies” in the Yellow Pages. Or, if you’re on-line, you can do a Yellow Pages web search to find shops in your area.

Remember, even though a shop is listed in the Yellow Pages, it doesn’t necessarily mean it’s a physical store that you can visit. It might sell by mail order only, or it might be a manufacturer or wholesaler only. To avoid disappointment, always call the store to check before you hop in the car and just show up.

There are more than 500 sources for magician’s supplies in the United States, ranging from store-front shops and mail order dealers to manufacturers and wholesalers. The following is a brief, representative list of shops from various parts of the country. These are established dealers with good reputations with actual physical locations that you can visit.

Abbott’s Magic Company

124 St. Joseph Street
Colon, MI 49040
(616) 432-3235 or (616) 432-3236
(616) 432-3357 (fax)
(800) 92-MAGIC (orders)
gbord@aol.com

Al’s Magic Shop

1012 Vermont Avenue Northwest
Washington, D.C. 20005-4901
(202) 789-2800
alcomagic@aol.com
<http://www.clark.net/pub/alsmagic>
<http://www.clark.net/pub/to bias/alsmagic.html>

Brad Burt’s Magic Shop

4204 Convoy St.
San Diego, CA 92111
(619) 571-4749
(619) 571-7943 (fax)
(800) 748-5759 (orders)
bburt@magicshop.com
<http://www.bradburt.com>

Callin Novelties House of Magic

412 Southwest 4th Avenue
Portland, OR 97204-2202
(503) 223-4821 (tel/fax)

Daytona Magic Shop

136 South Beach Street
Daytona Beach, FL 32114-4402
(904) 252-6767
(904) 252-9037 (fax)
(800) 34-MAGIC (orders)
daytonamag@aol.com

Denny & Lee Magic Studio

325 South Marlyn Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21221
(410) 686-3914
Dennymagic@unitedmall.com
<http://www.dennymagic.com>

Eagle Magic & Joke Store

708 Portland Avenue
Minneapolis, MN 55415
(612) 333-4702

Eagle Magic is the second oldest continuing operating magic shop in the United States—the oldest west of the Mississippi.

Hank Lee's Magic Factory

Showroom:
127 South Street
Boston, MA 02111
Mail Orders:
P.O. Box 789
Medford, MA 02155
(617) 482-8749/-8750
(781) 395-2034 (fax)
(800) 874-7400 (orders)
MagicFact@aol.com
<http://www.hanklee.com>
<http://www.uelectric.com/magicfactory.htm>
<http://allmagic.com/magicfactory>

Hollywood Magic, Inc.

6614 Hollywood Boulevard
Hollywood, CA 90028
(323) 464-5610
<http://www.swifty.com/MW/shop/hwood.htm>

House of Magic

2025 Chestnut Street
San Francisco, CA 94123
(415) 346-2218
hayhay@aol.com

Flosso Hornmann Magic Company

45 West 34th Street, #607
New York, NY 10001
(212) 279-6079

Flosso-Hornmann (as seen as Flosso Hornmann) Magic Company is the oldest continuously operating magic shop in the United States. It was established around 1875 as Martinka's (Magic Shop) by Francis J. Martinka (1843–1924) and his brother Antonio (d. 1915), two German emigrants who had supplied apparatus to European stars of magic such as the Hermanns and the Bambergs. The Society of American Magicians (see the section “Magic Clubs, Organizations, and Associations” that follows) was founded there in 1902.

Since 1917, when Francis Martinka sold the shop to Charles Carter (1874–1936), who toured his illusion show internationally as Carter the Great, the shop has had many owners, including, for about nine months, Harry Houdini. “Professor” Otto Hornmann (b. 1869) took over the store in 1920, changed its name to The Martinka-Hornmann Magic Company during his ownership (from 1920 to 1927 or 1928). Al Flosso (1895–1976) bought the store in 1939, changed its name to The Flosso-Hornmann Magic Company, Inc., and operated the store for 37 years. Jack Flosso, Al's son, is the current owner and proprietor.

Ken-Zo's Yogi Magic Mart

1025-29 South Charles Street
Baltimore, MD 21230
(410) 727-5811

La Rock's Fun & Magic Outlet

3847 Rosehaven Drive
Charlotte, NC 28205
(704) 563-9300
(704) 568-8434 (fax)
(800) 473-3425 (orders)
<http://user.aol.com/larocks1>

Louis Tannen Inc. (commonly referred to as Tannen's)

24 West 25th Street, 2nd Floor
New York, NY 10010
(212) 929-4500
(212) 929-4565 (fax)
(800) 72-MAGIC (orders)
spinamagic@aol.com
<http://www.tannenmagic.com>

Magic, Inc. (also seen as Magic Inc.)

5082 North Lincoln Avenue
Chicago, IL 60625
(773) 334-2855 (tel/fax)
(773) 334-7605 (fax)
<http://members.uss.net/magicinc/>

Magicland

603 Park Forest Center
Dallas, TX 75234-4137
(972) 241-9898

Mecca Magic, Inc.

49 Dodd Street
Bloomfield, NJ 07003
(973) 429-7597
sorcerer@meccamagic.com
<http://www.meccamagic.com>

Stevens Magic Emporium

2520 E. Douglas
Wichita, KS 67214
(316) 683-9582
(316) 686-2442 (fax)
sme@southwind.net
<http://www.uelectric.com/stevensmagic>

Twin Cities Magic & Costume Co.

241 W. 7th Street
Saint Paul, MN 55102
(612) 227-7888
(612) 227-1297 (fax)

James K. Yoshida

99-579 Ulune St.
Aiea, Oahu, Honolulu, HI 96701
(808) 487-0590

Zeezo's Magic Castle

9 East Bijou Street
Colorado Springs, CO 80903
(719) 633-2571
(719) 633-7858 (fax)

Magic Clubs, Organizations, and Associations

The International Brotherhood of Magicians, known as the I.B.M. (also seen as IBM), is the world's largest magicians' fraternal organization. It has more than 14,000 members and more than 300 local chapters, known as *Rings*, in 73 countries. Among its member benefits are a monthly magazine, *The Linking Ring*. The I.B.M. also sponsors an annual convention, usually held over the July 4th weekend somewhere in the United States.

The I.B.M., with world headquarters now located in St. Louis, Missouri, was founded in 1922 by Len Vintus, Gene Gordon, and Don Rogers. Active and International Affiliate members must be sponsored into the organization and must be at least 18 years old; junior members may join at 12 years of age.

The I.B.M. can be contacted at:

The International Brotherhood of Magicians

11137-C South Towne Square
St. Louis, MO 63123-7819
(314) 845-9200 (voice)
(314) 845-9220 (fax)
<http://www.magician.org>
No1inMagic@aol.com

The Society of American Magicians, or S.A.M. (also seen as SAM), started with just 21 members and was founded on May 10, 1902 in Martinka's magic shop in New York City. One of its early luminaries was Harry Houdini, who became a member in 1903 and was elected National President in 1917. He held the post until his death in 1926.

The S.A.M. meets in approximately 250 chapters known as *Assemblies*, located throughout the world. The clubs' official journal is *M-U-M*, which in an acronym for Magic-Unity-Might. The S.A.M. holds an annual national convention, usually in July and usually somewhere in the United States. The S.A.M. has several categories of membership, determined by the magician's age and local assembly affiliation.

In 1984, five members of the S.A.M. founded the Society of Young Magicians (the S.Y.M.) for magicians between the ages of 7 and 17. In 1988, S.A.M. changed its constitution to extend membership to Young Members (Y.M.) and adopted the S.Y.M. as its official youth program. There are now more than 100 chartered S.Y.M. Assemblies. Their official publication is the *Magic SYMBOL*.

The S.A.M. and the S.Y.M. can be contacted at:

The Society of American Magicians (S.A.M.)

The Society of Young Magicians (S.Y.M.)

Richard Blowers, National Administrator
P.O. Box 510260
St. Louis, MO 63151
(314) 846-5659
information: www.uelectric.com/sam
applications: rmblowers@aol.com

The Magic Castle is a private club for magicians and their friends in Hollywood, California. Entrance is by invitation of a member only. The Magic Castle is the clubhouse for The Academy of Magical Arts, Inc., which is dedicated to the advancement of the art of magic. The Academy was conceived by William Larsen, Sr., his sons, Milt and William W., Jr., converted a 1908 Victorian mansion into the Magic Castle and opened its doors in 1963 with 150 charter members. Today, the active membership (divided into Magician and Associate, or non-magician, members) numbers more than 5,000.

Today, the Magic Castle features a restaurant with several dining rooms, Irma's room (where a ghost pianist takes requests), several bars, a library (for magician members only), a seance room, and three showrooms, in which five to seven acts perform weekly.

For membership information, contact:

The Magic Castle
7001 Franklin Ave.
Hollywood, CA 90028
(323) 851-3313
(323) 851-4899 (fax)
<http://www.magiccastle.org>

Magic Magazines

The 20th century has seen a number of notable American magic magazines come and go. Some of the early journals, such as *The Jinx* and *The Phoenix*, were so revolutionary for their time that their original issues are now collector items; in recent years, bound reprints have been published. Other magazines, such as *The New Tops* (published by Abbott's Magic Company) and *Magic Manuscript* (at first independent, later published by Louis Tannen Inc. as *Tannen's Magic Manuscript*) were published by magic shops.

Perhaps the most intriguing magic magazines of the past 20 years have been aimed at specialist performers. *Apocalypse*, which began publication in the 1970s and ceased publication as of December 1997, offered cutting-edge close-up magic. Its editor and major contributor was card magician and memory expert Harry Lorayne. *The New Invocation* and *The Altar Flame* offer occult-themed routines for practitioners of so-called *bizarre magick*. *Syzygy* caters to mentalists. Jim Sisti's *The Magic Menu* is specifically aimed at magicians who perform in restaurants and bars. (*The Magic Menu*, 21 Noe Place, Beacon Falls, CT 06403, telephone (203) 729-4278, magicmenu@aol.com.)

The Linking Ring and *M-U-M* are available only through membership in the I.B.M. and the S.A.M., respectively. The two major independent magic magazines are:

Genii, The International Conjurers' Magazine

Erika Larsen, Editor
P.O. Box 36038
Los Angeles, CA 90036
Offices: 929 S. Longwood Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90019
(323) 935-2848
(323) 933-4820 (fax)
TheGenii@aol.com
Monthly

MAGIC, An Independent Magazine for Magicians

Stan Allen, Editor
7380 S. Eastern Avenue, Suite 124-179
Las Vegas, NV 89123
Circulation: (702) 798-4893
(702) 798-0220 (fax)
E-mail: stan@magicmagazine.com
Subscriptions: subscriptions@magic-mag.com
Web site: <http://www.magic-mag.com>
Monthly

Magic Conventions

There are few events more exciting than a magic convention. Just imagine 1,000 magicians all together in one place, all saying, "Pick a card" to each other. You'll see A-1 talent in organized close-up, stage shows, and lectures, but there's also usually magic happening all over the lobbies, the coffee shops, and at late-night parties. Plus, you'll get a chance to make new friends, spend too much money in the magic dealers' room, and hob-nob with the professional performers. You'll also probably pull a few all-nighters; don't worry, you can catch up on your sleep the following week.

In addition to the I.B.M. and the S.A.M., there are several regional associations of magicians and magic clubs that hold annual conventions. Because they have no headquarters, there are no fixed addresses at which to contact them. Their conventions are usually advertised, however, in the magic magazines and at local magic shops and club meetings. Among the larger groups that sponsor conventions are the following:

- Texas Association of Magicians (TAOM)—The TAOM convention is always held Labor Day weekend
- Pacific Coast Association of Magicians (PCAM)
- Magicians Alliance of Eastern States (MAES)
- Southeastern Association of Magicians (SEAM)
- South Carolina Association of Magicians (SCAM)

- ▶ Florida Magicians Association—Their convention is always held Memorial Day weekend
- ▶ Michigan Magic Day
- ▶ Magician's Alliance of Western New York
- ▶ New England Magicians Conference

In addition to the conferences organized by national and regional magic associations, there are several independent conventions held all across the United States. Some, such as the Seminar of Platform & Parlor Magic, the Conference on Magic History, Comedy College for Professional Family Entertainers, the International Festival of Children's Magicians, the Women-in-Magic Conference, the Fellowship of Christian Magicians (FCM), and the Christian Clowning, Illusion, Juggling & Puppetry conference are relatively new to the magic scene and appeal to special interest groups.

The following is a list of established magic conventions that have a permanent address that you can contact for more information:

Abbott's Magic Get-Together—Sponsored by Abbott's Magic Company (see "Shop 'Til You Drop"), the Get-Together is a four-day family-oriented gathering, always held in the small town of Colon, Michigan, in early August. One of the amazing idiosyncrasies of this convention is the fact that about 1,000 people descend on a hamlet that has no hotels and only a few restaurants.

Tannen's Magic Jubilee—Sponsored by Louis Tannen Inc. (see "Shop 'Til You Drop"). The first Jubilee was held in 1962. It's now an early October tradition with 750 to 1,000 attendees every year. This four-day convention, held in a Catskills resort, is especially noted for its close-up show. A highlight of the convention is the presentation of the "Louie" award, given in honor of the shop's founder, who passed away in 1982.

Hank Lee's Cape Cod Magic Conclave—Sponsored by Hank Lee's Magic Factory (See "Shop 'Til You Drop"). Hank Lee's Cape Cod Magic Conclave, which takes place each year in April, celebrated its 10th annual conference in 1998. Held on the Massachusetts Cape in brisk April, the Conclave always offers an eclectic mix of strong performers.

Columbus Magi-Fest—With more than a 30-year history, the Columbus Magi-Fest is one of the great regional magic conventions. It's held each year, by tradition, in February. Once a small, friendly gathering, it's now a big, friendly gathering, with almost 1,000 attendees.

Contact:

Jep Hostetler
193 E. Frambes Ave.
Columbus, OH 43201-1409
(614) 299-8995
email: hostetler.2@osu.edu

Fechter's Finger Flicking Frolic (FFFF)—In 1951, Eddie Fechter, a bartender, ex-Marine, and close-up magician extraordinaire, took over the Forks Hotel outside Buffalo, New York. It soon became a Mecca for close-up magicians, and in 1971, Eddie had his first "convention." The informal weekend really consisted of close-up magicians "hanging out" and performing magic for each other. Eddie passed away in 1979, but the convention continued to meet at the Forks Hotel through 1991. FFFF, as the convention is now known, is still being held. It meets during the last full weekend of April under the aegis of Obie O'Brien. The convention is *by invitation only*. By tradition, Obie sends invitations each year to the original regular attendees from the Forks days. There is a waiting list, but it's quickly filled by newcomers, some of whom have waited for several years for an opening.

Contact:

Obie O'Brien
50079 Smith Lane
Redwood, NY 13679
(315) 482-9068

World Magic Seminar—Co-sponsored by Stevens Magic Emporium (see "Shop 'Til You Drop") and Collectors Workshop. Two of the country's most popular magic conventions in the 1990s were the Desert Magic Summit (founded by Joe Stevens of Stevens Magic Emporium and held in Las Vegas) and the World Magic Summit (founded by Rich Bloch and Nick Ruggiero of Collectors Workshop and held in the greater Washington, D.C. area). They joined forces in 1999 to sponsor the World Magic Seminar. Like the Desert Magic Seminar before it, the World Magic Seminar is held in Las Vegas in April.

Contact:

World Magic Seminar
4200 Wisconsin Ave., NW
Suite #106-379
Washington, DC 20016
(800) 219-2200 (in U.S.)
(202) 364-3020
<http://worldmagicseminar.com>

Bob Little's Super Sunday—Sponsored by Bob Little of Guaranteed Magic. Comedy magician and magic dealer Bob Little has organized one-day magical extravaganzas called Super Sundays, just outside Philadelphia, for more than a decade. The schedule varies, but there are usually two each year, one in the spring and another in the fall. Events are usually centered around one headliner, and area professionals also appear.

Contact:

27 Bright Rd.
Hatboro, PA 19040
(215) 672-3344
(215) 674-2826 (fax)

Magic Collectors' Weekend—As its name suggests, the Magic Collectors' Weekend is primarily of interest to collectors of magical apparatus, magicians' memorabilia, and ephemera. Attendance usually tops 200, and events include performances, demonstrations, and the expected lectures.

Contact:

Magic Collectors' Association
P.O. Box 511-M
Glenwood, IL 60425

International Battle of Magicians—Founded as an independent convention by magicians Deremer and Durian, the International Battle of Magicians celebrated its "Lucky #7" convention in 1998. In addition to the regular shows, lectures, and dealers, the emphasis of this conference is on the stage and close-up magic competitions.

Contact:

P.O. Box 2392
N. Canton, OH 44720
Sponsored by Larry Durian (330) 830-2206 and
Tim Deremer
Tim Deremer Productions
11117 Cleveland Avenue Northwest
Uniontown, OH 44685
(330) 494-2623

Houdini Club of Wisconsin—The Houdini Club, a fraternal group of magicians that meets every other month, held its first annual convention in 1938. Typically, about 200 people attend the Labor Day weekend event.

Contact:

Ed Litt
5455 N. Sheridan Rd., #810
Chicago, IL 60640
(773) 271-8489
(414) 796-1058 (fax)

Wizard's Weekend—This annual Midwestern convention was absent for a few years recently, but it's back, apparently as strong as before. It draws attendees of all ages primarily from greater Minneapolis.

Contact:

Gerald Smith
7336 Lyndale Ave.
South Richfield, MN 55423
(612) 861-3240

Close Encounters of a Magic Kind—Began in 1982 by Keith Walker, Close Encounters of a Magic Kind draws about 50 close-up magicians to Webster, New York each year. Attendees perform in the three evening shows at this informal get-together, always held the second weekend in November.

Contact:

Keith Walker
78 South Estate Drive
Webster, NY 14580
(716) 872-4019

East Coast Magic Spectacular—The ECMS celebrated its 10th convention in 1998. The event, usually held in the Philadelphia-southern New Jersey area, features three lectures and an evening show in its one-day format.

Contact:

Mike Miller
4751 Weldon Ave.
Trevose, PA 19053
(215) 364-8132

Magic on Manhattan—Steve Rodman, John Harrison, and Carol Rodman, producers. This new one-day magic convention premiered in 1997, and is held (as its name suggests) in Manhattan, New York City. Events include a Future Stars of Magic competition, a Mega Magic Auction, a close-up and an evening show, lectures, and approximately two dozen magic dealers. For information and registration, call (800) 358-6207.

Here are two more offerings that fall more into the category of magic “retreat” rather than “convention”:

Mystery School—A very recent entry in the game, Mystery School was conceived and founded by magical artist Jeff McBride. Mystery School is advertised as “a conference for the advanced study of the magical arts.” During the four-day retreat, small groups meet for intensive study in magic, mythology, performance, and creative play. Web site: www.mcbridemagic.com/ms.

The Professional Performer's Workshop—Each year, Bob Markwood puts together an impressive group of theatrical and magic professionals to share their expertise with enrollees. In addition to the regular workshop, advanced students may attend a subsequent retreat in Mexico.

Contact:

Bob Markwood
1022 Olancho Drive
Los Angeles, CA 90065
(213) 257-4433

Magic Camps

Over the years, many summer camps, especially those that specialize in theater or arts training, have offered magic classes as part of their programs. Two “camps,” however, are really schools for teenage magicians, set in camp-like atmospheres.

- ▶ **Tannen’s Magic Camp**—Sponsored by Louis Tannen Inc. (see “Shop ‘Til You Drop”). 1999 will mark the 25th year for Tannen’s Magic Camp. Each year, more than 100 students—boys and girls aged 12–20—converge for intensive classes in close-up and stage magic at this one-week summer camp, now held on the grounds of the New York Institute of Technology on Long Island, New York. In addition to the resident instructors and counselors, visiting pros also offer lectures and performances. Several of the camp’s students have themselves gone on to become professional magicians.
- ▶ **Dave Goodsell’s West Coast Wizards Magic Camp**—West Coast Wizards is a one-week summer camp for boys and girls ages 9–17, held each year in Idyllwild, California. The camp started under the guidance of Goodsell, the editor of *M.U.M.*, in 1991. In just seven years, the camp has grown to accommodate more than 100 students. In addition to its regular teaching staff, the camp also draws on professional magicians from nearby Los Angeles as guest performers and lecturers.

Contact:

West Coast Wizards Magic Camp
P.O. Box 1360
Claremont, CA 91711
(800) 645-1423 (in U.S.)
(909) 625-6194

The Web

Still not satisfied? You say you still need to find out more? Well, that’s why there’s the Internet and the World Wide Web.

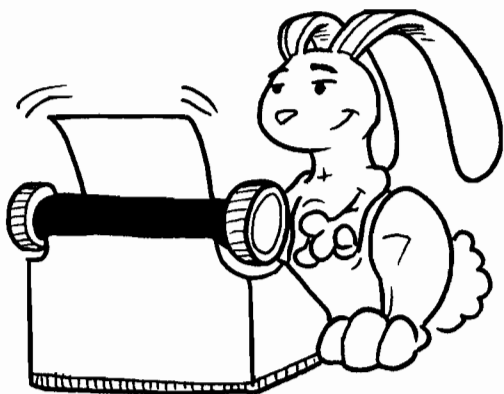
I’m not even going to try to list or rate the literally thousands of web sites dedicated to magic. On a recent crawl through cyberspace, I searched the single word “magic.” Various search engines brought up from 2,645 to an incredible 390,040 sites.

Of course, almost all of the sites you’ll find under a general “magic” search will have nothing to do with “our” type of performance magic. Many, for example, are dedicated to the occult and mysticism; most of the pages simply use the word “magic” so often that search engines bring them up.

But don't be discouraged. There are plenty of magic sites out there for us. There are online magic magazines, online magic dealers, magic dealer web sites, bulletin boards, newsgroups, and sites for individual magicians.

To get you started on your cyber-search, I'll list just two sites that you might want to check out. Both offer more than 1,000 links to other web sites of interest to magicians:

- ▶ The All Magic Guide: <http://www.uelectric.com/allmagicguide.html>
- ▶ The Linking Page (also known as The White Rabbit): www.linkingpage.com



Recommended Reading

Your magic library will naturally reflect your special interests within this very diverse craft. The following list consists of books considered to be classics, of great historical interest, one of the best in their specialization, mentioned in the text of this book, or are just very popular.

Some of the editions are quite rare and can be found only in private collections or libraries, but many are available from magic dealers in modern reprints. Even those that are out of print may still be sitting on a magic dealer's shelf. It pays to ask.

I have tried to list the original bibliographic information for the books' original editions, along with that of the current reprints that will be most available through magic dealers. Some of the books, such as the Dover Publications trade paperbacks, can often be found at general book stores. And, of course, it's always worth a web search through Internet booksellers.

A caveat: Although it is seldom the author's intent, some information in these works can be misleading or, sometimes, just plain wrong. Serious students of magic history should read all available materials, cross-reference their findings, and make their own judgments.

General Magic

Devant, David. *Magic Made Easy*. First published in 1903. New York: Cassell & Co., 1910.

Elliott, Bruce. *Classic Secrets of Magic*. New York: Galahad Books (Harper & Row), 1953.

Fischer, Ottokar. *The Magic of J.N. Hofzinsler*. Trans. by Richard Hatch. Omaha, NE: Walter B. Graham (Modern Litho, Inc., 1985).

Hay, Henry. *The Amateur Magician's Handbook*. New York: New American Library (Signet), 1950. The most recent editions were a 1983 New American Library paperback and a 1996 Book Sales hardcover.

———. *Cyclopedia of Magic*. First published in 1949. New York: Dover Publications, 1975.

———. *Learn Magic*. Garden City, NY: G.C. Publishing Co., 1947. The 1975 Dover Publications hardcover edition is currently available.

Hilliard, John Northern. *Greater Magic*. First published posthumously in 1938. The work was begun by Hilliard but was greatly expanded by Jean Hugard and published by Carl W. Jones. A recent edition was published by Kaufman and Greenberg (Silver Spring, MD, 1994).

Hoffmann, Professor Louis (Angelo John Lewis). *Later Magic*. First published in 1904. A 1997 edition was published by Sterling Paperbacks.

———. *Modern Magic*. First published in 1876. There was a Dover Publications (New York, 1978) edition, as well as a 1992 Biblio-Moser paperback.

———. *More Magic*. First published in 1890. The most recent edition is by Dover Publications (New York, 1978).

Maskelyne, Nevil and David Devant. *Our Magic*. First published in 1911. Pomeroy, OH: Lee Jacobs Productions, 1992.

Rigney, Francis J. *Cub Scout Magic*. North Brunswick, NJ: Boy Scouts of America, 1960. Currently available in a 1996 paperback reprint edition.

Sachs, Edwin. *Sleight of Hand*. First published in 1877. Currently available is the Dover Publications edition (New York, 1980) reprinted from the book's second enlarged edition (London: L. Upcott Gill, 1885).

Severn, Bill. *Magic Shows You Can Give*. New York: David McKay Company, 1965.

Bill Severn (1913–1992) was a prolific author of magic books for both magicians and the general public. This book, which offered full routines of standard as well as original tricks with props you could make yourself, is typical of his oeuvre.

Tarbell, Dr. Harlan. *Tarbell Course in Magic*, Vols. 1–6. New York: D. Robbins & Co., 1993.

Volumes 1–6 are hardcover editions of tricks chosen by Tarbell from his original home-study magic course, which was mailed out, hole-punched, in individual lessons beginning in the 1920s. Their original dates of publication were Vol. 1, 1941; Vol. 2, 1942; Vol. 3, 1943; Vol. 4, 1945; Vol. 5, 1948, and Vol. 6, 1954. Tarbell proposed a seventh volume and even prepared a few tricks for it before his death. Harry Lorayne included these few tricks along with other material in Vol. 7 (New York: Lou Tannen, 1972). This volume also included an index to all the material in Volumes 1–7. Volume 8, edited by Steven Burton and Richard Kaufman, included material from the original home course not included in previous volumes, Tarbell material that had

appeared in magic magazines, and other Tarbell tricks which were remembered and contributed by his contemporaries.

Tarr, Bill. *Now You See It, Now You Don't!* New York: Vintage Books (div. of Random House), 1976.

———. *The Second Now You See It, Now You Don't!* New York: Vintage Books (div. of Random House), 1978. Reprinted by Kaufman and Greenberg (Silver Spring, MD, 1994).

Thompson, J.G., Jr. *'My Best'*. Brooklyn, New York: D. Robbins & Co., 1959. Originally published by Charles H. Hopkins & Co. (Philadelphia, PA, 1945).

Wilson, Mark. *Mark Wilson Course in Magic*. North Hollywood, CA: Mark Wilson, Mark Wilson Course in Magic, 1975. Reprinted in a hardcover edition as *Mark Wilson's Complete Course in Magic* by Ottenheimer Publishers (NY).

This is a gargantuan work, and Wilson was assisted in his efforts by co-author Walter Gibson, special contributing author U.F. Grant, contributing writers Fr. Jim Blantz, Earl Nelson, Tom O'Lenick, Peter Pit, David Roth, Brick Tilley, and Alan Wakeling, Course Coordinator Larry Anderson, Assistant Course Coordinator Don Wayne, among many others. Six books of tricks excerpted from this excellent course have since been published in association with Mark Wilson by Ottenheimer Publishers: *Mark Wilson's Cyclopedia of Magic* (in a 'Big Little Book' format), *Mark Wilson's Greatest Card Tricks*, *Mark Wilson's Greatest Close-up Magic Tricks*, *Mark Wilson's Greatest Magic Tricks*, and *Mark Wilson's Greatest Instant Magic Tricks*.

Magic for Children

Ginn, David. *Professional Magic for Children*. Norcross, GA: Scarlett Green Publication, 1976.

———. *Children Laugh Louder*. Norcross, GA: Scarlett Green Publication, 1978.

———. *Kidbiz*. Norcross, GA: Scarlett Green Publication, 1982.

Marshall, Frances. *Kid Stuff*, Vols. 1–4. Chicago: Ireland Magic Co. (Vol. 1, 1954; Vol. 2, 1959; Vol. 3, 1963; Vols. 1-4, 1968).

Vol. 5 was published by Magic, Inc.(Chicago, 1975). Volume 6 is a 1978 reprint of Arnold Furst's *Magic For Monsters*, originally published by the author in 1960. Its second edition was published in Japan. Magic, Inc.'s reprint is actually the third edition of the book.

Miscellaneous Specializations, Stage Magic

Adair, Ian. *Encyclopedia of Dove Magic*, Vols. 1–3. Bideford, Devon, England: The Supreme Magic Company (Vol. 3, 1972).

Anderson, Gene and Frances I. Marshall. *Newspaper Magic*. Chicago: Magic, Inc., 1968.

James, Stewart. *Abbott's Encyclopedia of Rope Tricks*, Vols. 1–3. Colon, MI: Abbott's Magic Novelty Co. (Vol. 1, 1941; Vol. 2, 1969.; Vol. 3, 1975), Dover Publications reprinted Volume 3 (NY, 1976) as *Abbott's Encyclopedia of Rope Tricks for Magicians*.

Rice, Harold. *Rice's Encyclopedia of Silk Magic*, Vols. 1–3. Cincinnati, Ohio: Silk King Studios, 1974. Volumes 1–3 were reprinted by EMS Publishing (Medford, MA) in 1986.

Trimble, Mark. *Encyclopedia of Silk Magic*, Vol. 4. Medford, MA: EMS Publishing, 1993.

General Close-Up Magic

Downs, T. Nelson. *The Art of Magic*. Edited and largely written by John Northern Hilliard. First published by Downs-Edwards Co., Buffalo, New York, 1909. There is a Dover Publications edition (New York, 1980) available.

Ganson, Lewis. *The Art of Close-up Magic*. London: Harry Stanley (Unique Magic Studios), 1967. Also available in a new edition by L&L Publishing (Tahoma, CA, 1996).

———. *The Art of Close-up Magic*, Vol. 2. London: Harry Stanley (Unique Magic Studios), 1957. Also available in a new edition by L&L Publishing (Tahoma, CA, 1996).

———. *The Dai Vernon Book of Magic*. London: Harry Stanley (Unique Magic Studios), 1957. Reissued by L&L Publishing (Tahoma, CA, 1994).

Gardner, Martin. *Encyclopedia of Impromptu Magic*. Chicago: Magic, Inc., 1978.

Although this is a fascinating book, it teaches stunts, puzzles, bits of business, and bar bets (“betchas”) with everyday objects rather than magic tricks. Gardner originally published much of the material in his long-running column in Hugard’s *Magic Monthly* magazine.

Schindler, George. *Magic with Everyday Objects*. New York: Barnes & Noble, 1976.

Starke, George, ed. *Stars of Magic*. New York: Louis Tannen, 1961.

Stars of Magic began as a series of manuscripts, edited by Starke, detailing routines by noted close-up magicians. The manuscripts were released intermittently beginning in 1946, and they were compiled, along with two new lessons (one by Vernon, another by Slydini), by Louis Tannen into a hardcover edition in 1961. Contributors to the original series included Bert Allerton, Ross Bertram, Francis Carlyle, Dr. Jacob Daley, S. Leo Horowitz, Emil Jarrow, Nate Leipzig, Max Malini, John Scarne, Slydini, and Dai Vernon.

Coins

Bobo, J.B. *Coin Magic*. First published in 1952. There have been several revised editions, most notably those by Magic, Inc. (Chicago, 1966) and a currently available 1982 reprint by Dover Publication (Brooklyn, NY).

Downs, T. Nelson. *Modern Coin Manipulations*. Edited and largely written by William J. Hilliar. First published in 1900.

———. *Tricks with Coins*. Edited and largely written by William J. Hilliar. Chicago: Frederick J. Drake & Co., 1902.

Kaufman, Richard. *David Roth's Expert Coin Magic*. New York: Kaufman and Greenberg, 1985.

Cards

Buckley, Arthur. *Card Control*. (Part of the so-called Buckley Trilogy.) First published 1946. There was a 1973 edition by Gambler's Book Club (Las Vegas, NV) and a currently available 1993 edition by Dover Publications (NY).

Erdnase, S.W. *The Expert at the Card Table*. First published in 1902 as *Artifice, Ruse and Subterfuge at the Card Table*. *The Expert at the Card Table*, the title by which the book has always been known, appeared on its original binding. The available editions are by Dover Publications (New York, 1995) and Gambler's Book Club (Las Vegas, NV, n.d.).

Fischer, Ottokar. *Hofzinsler's Card Conjuring*. Trans. by S.H. Sharpe. Originally published in English by George Johnson (The Magic Wand Office, London, 1931). Its first American edition was published by The Gutenberg Press (Karl Fulves, Teaneck, New Jersey, 1973). Dover Publications (New York) published a reprint in 1986.

Ganson, Lewis. *Dai Vernon's Inner Secrets of Card Magic*. London: Harry Stanley (Unique Magic Studios), 1959. The Supreme Magic Company purchased Harry Stanley's publishing branch and reprinted many of his most-popular titles. Reissued by L&L Publishing (Tahoma, CA, 1996).

———. *Dai Vernon's More Inner Secrets of Card Magic*. London: Harry Stanley (Unique Magic Studios), 1960. Reissued by L&L Publishing (Tahoma, CA, 1996).

———. *Dai Vernon's Further Inner Secrets of Card Magic*. London: Harry Stanley (Unique Magic Studios), 1961. Reissued by L&L Publishing (Tahoma, CA, 1996).

———. *Dai Vernon's Ultimate Secrets of Card Magic*. London: Harry Stanley (Unique Magic Studios), 1968. Reissued by L&L Publishing (Tahoma, CA, 1996).

Garcia, Frank. *Million Dollar Card Secrets*. New York: Million Dollar Productions, 1972.

———. *Super Subtle Card Miracles*. New York: Million Dollar Productions, 1973.

Garcia, Frank and George Schindler. *Magic with Cards*. New York: David McKay Company, 1975. A Barnes and Noble (NY) reprint was published in 1998.

Giobbi, Roberto. *Card College*, Vols. 1–2. Trans. by Richard Hatch. Seattle: Hermetic Press, Vol. 1, 1995; Vol. 2, 1996. Based on, but expanded from, the German edition, Grosse Kartenschule (1993). Volume 3 is forthcoming.

Haines, Ronald, comp. *36 Tricks with Fa-Ko Cards*. Norwood, OH: Haines' House of Cards, 1963.

Hugard, Jean. *Encyclopedia of Card Tricks*. First published by Max Holden (New York, 1937), the book was reprinted by Dover Publications (New York, 1974). Dover's 1976 reprint is currently available.

Hugard, Jean and Frederick Braue. *The Royal Road to Card Magic*. First published in 1948. The popular Faber and Faber edition (London, 1975) is out of print but still available at many magic shops.

———. *Expert Card Technique*. (Subtitled *Close-up Table Magic*.) First published in 1940. There is a Dover Publications (New York, 1974) reprint available.

Lorayne, Harry. *Close-up Card Magic*. New York: Louis Tannen, 1962.

Mentzer, Jerry. *Counts, Cuts, Moves and Subtlety*. Greenville, SC: Jerry Mentzer, 1977.

Scarne, John. *Scarne on Card Tricks*. New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1950. There is a New American Library (New York, 1995) paperback reprint available.

Mentalism

Annemann, Theodore. *Practical Mental Effects*. Edited posthumously by John Crimmins. New York: Holden's Magic Shops, 1944. The book has been reprinted in several editions and with various titles by different publishers. The available 1983 edition by Dover Publications (NY), for instance, is titled *Practical Mental Magic*.

Cook, John Brook and Arthur Buckley. *Gems of Mental Magic*. (Part of the so-called Buckley Trilogy.) First published in 1948. Most current edition available through Gambler's Book Club (Las Vegas, NV, 1973).

Corinda (Tony). New York. *Thirteen Steps to Mentalism*. First published in 1958. Reprint editions have appeared by Louis Tannen (New York, 1968) and later D. Robbins & Co. (Brooklyn, NY).

Mathematical Magic

Fulves, Karl. *Self-Working Number Magic*. New York: Dover Publications, 1983.

Simon, William. *Mathematical Magic*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1964. Available in a 1993 Dover Publications (NY) paperback reprint.

Gardner, Martin. *Mathematics, Magic & Mystery*. Available in a 1956 Dover Publications (NY) paperback edition.

Performance, Showmanship, and Theory

Many of these books also offer magic tricks to illustrate their theater techniques and principles.

Layden, Joseph and Carl Waldman, with Jamy Ian Swiss. *The Art of Magic: The Companion to the PBS Special*. Los Angeles: General Publishing Group, 1998.

- Booth, John. *Forging Ahead in Magic*. Philadelphia: Kanter's Magic Shop, 1939. An early 20th century book on magical style, press, and publicity.
- Buckley, Arthur. *Principles and Deceptions*. First published in 1948. (Part of the so-called Buckley Trilogy.) Most current edition available through Gambler's Book Club (Las Vegas, NV, 1973).
- Burger, Eugene. *The Experience of Magic*. New York: Kaufman and Greenberg, 1986.
- Burger, Eugene and Robert E. Neale. *Magic & Meaning*. Seattle: Hermetic Press, 1995.
- Fitzkee, Dariel. *The Trick Brain*. First published in 1944. (Part of the so-called Fitzkee Trilogy.) Now available through Lee Jacobs Productions (Pomeroy, OH, 1989).
- . *Magic By Misdirection*. First published in 1945. (Part of the so-called Fitzkee Trilogy.) Now available through Lee Jacobs Productions (Pomeroy, OH, 1987).
- . *Showmanship for Magicians*. First published in 1945. (Part of the so-called Fitzkee Trilogy.) Now available through Lee Jacobs Productions (Pomeroy, OH, 1988).
- Kaye, Marvin. *The Stein and Day Handbook of Magic*. New York: Stein and Day, 1973. Kaye's *The Complete Handbook of Magic* is scheduled for release by Scarborough House in 1998.
- Marshall, Frances and Jay. *The Success Book*, Vols. 1–4. Chicago: Magic, Inc. (Vol. 1–2, 1973)
- Nelms, Henning. *Magic and Showmanship: A Handbook for Conjurers*. First published by Peter Smith Pub. in 1911. Dover Publications (NY) issued a paperback reprint in 1969.
- Ortiz, Darwin. *Strong Magic*. Silver Spring, MD: Kaufman and Greenberg, 1994.
- Wonder, Tommy and Stephen Minch. *The Books of Wonder*. Seattle: Hermetic Press, 1996.

History and Biographies

- Christopher, Milbourne. *The Illustrated History of Magic*. New York: Crowell, 1973. An updated edition by Milbourne Christopher, Maurine Christopher, and David Copperfield was published in 1996 by Heinemann (Trd).
- . *Panorama of Magic*. New York: Dover Publications, 1962. The book was reissued by Dover Publications in 1991 as *Magic: A Picture History*.
- . *Houdini: The Untold Story*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1969. Currently available in a 1988 Amereon Ltd. edition.
- Frazer, James George, Sir. *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic & Religion*. New York: Macmillan Co., 1940. Currently available in a 1990 St. Martin's Press hardcover edition and in a 1998 Penguin USA paperback edition.
- Gresham, William Lindsay. *Houdini: The Man Who Walked Through Walls*. New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1959.

Houdini, Harry. *The Unmasking of Robert-Houdin*. New York: The Publishers Printing Co., 1908.

Jay, Ricky. *Learned Pigs & Fireproof Women*. New York: Villard Books, 1986.

Ogden, Tom. *Wizards and Sorcerers*. New York: Facts On File, 1997.

Randi, James. *Conjuring*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992. The hardcover is out of print, but the 1993 paperback edition is available.

Robert-Houdin, Jean Eugene. *Memoirs of Robert-Houdin*. (Also known as *The Secrets of Stage Conjuring*.) Trans. into English and ed. by Professor Hoffmann. First published in English by George Routledge & Sons (London, 1900). Reprint editions include those by Carl W. Jones (Minneapolis, MN, 1944) and Magico Magazine (New York, n.d.).

Scot, Reginald. *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*. First published in 1584. Although now out of print, the most common modern edition was by Dover Publications (New York, 1972), which was an unabridged reprint of the 1930 John Rodker (London) printing. The 1989 Dover Publications reprint is currently available.

Silverman, Kenneth. *Houdini!!!: The Career of Ehrich Weiss*. NY: HarperCollins Publishers, 1996. Also available in a 1997 Harperperennial Library (NY) paperback edition.

Waters, T.A. *The Encyclopedia of Magic and Magicians*. New York: Facts On File, 1988. The 1989 Facts on File paperback edition is currently available.

Whaley, Bart. *Bart Whaley's Encyclopedic Dictionary of Magic 1584-1988*, Vols. I-II. Oakland, CA: Jeff Busby Magic, 1989.

———. *Bart Whaley's Who's Who in Magic*. Oakland, CA: Jeff Busby Magic, 1990.

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