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Opening extract from

Hocus Pocus

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Paul Kieve

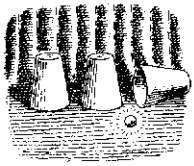
Hocus Pocus



A Tale of Magnificent Magicians and Their Amazing Feats

Bloomsbury

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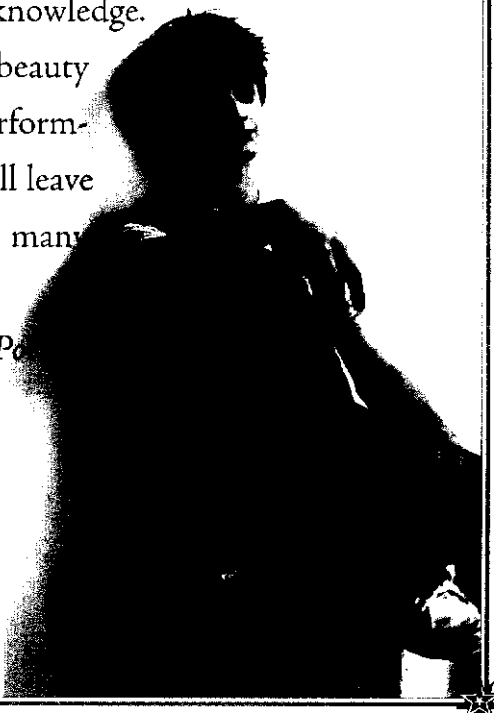
The final book will contain all the chapters listed above

months. I learned some wonderful illusions, with which I have entertained my friends at parties, on the set and at school! To break the ice with new actors joining the *Harry Potter* films, I often show them some magic – Emma Thompson did actually scream when I first met her and performed an amazing trick which Paul had taught me!

Apart from the practical side, Paul opened my mind to a world which I had previously known nothing about. I quickly became obsessed with it and wanted to know who were the greatest magicians? What are the most difficult illusions to perform? Paul was always there, not only with an answer but with amazing background knowledge. Paul's world of magic is one of beauty and elegance, where a simple performance executed with precision will leave an audience bewildered. How many people can do that?

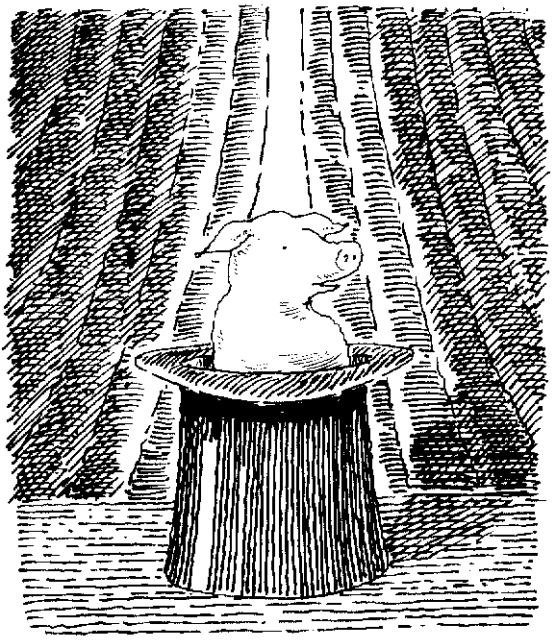
Step into the pages of *Hocus Po* and prepare to be astonished!

DANIEL RADCLIFFE



performed at a time before television! Woven into the story are wonderful magic tricks which you'll be able to try for yourself. And if you turn the pages with care and read closely you'll discover the real secrets – hints and tips on how to perform your tricks so that they look really, well, magical!

And when the story is over, I've gathered together a whole extra miscellany of magical feats that you can learn to perform. By the end you'll be able to pick up your own magic wand, step on to the stage and, before you know it, be on a path to becoming a great magician yourself!



Suddenly I heard a loud noise behind me. It sounded like something had been thrown forcefully on to the wooden floor. I turned around with a start.

'Look, Dave, I'll call you back later,' I said.

'Are you sure you're OK?' he asked.

'Yes, fine, I just, er, knocked something over.'

I put the phone down, my hands now trembling.

I looked around the walls at the strange figures staring at me from the posters. They seemed more intense somehow. Their features were sharper, the colours were brighter. Then I spotted it. One of my books had fallen off its shelf – that's what had made the noise. I picked it up from the floor, turning it over in my hand to read the spine. *The Life and Mysteries of Dr Q by C. Alexander*. Strange – hadn't I locked that one away in the cabinet?

And as I stood up a really odd thing happened. For a moment I swear I could hear the little spirit bell ringing. Then, as I went to look at it, something cold seemed to press into the back of my neck – almost like a finger – just for a split second, and then it was gone. But there was nothing there to have caused it. It was a really horrible feeling and it still gives me goose pimples thinking about it.

I felt really spooked now. I looked more intensively around the room, under the sofa and behind the piano. I was peering inside one of the cabinets – though I had no idea what I was looking for – when I heard a voice, which spoke with a heavy American accent.

'Think a lot of yourself, don'tcha?'

Eh?

I whirled round, my heart pounding, but couldn't see anyone. Was I hearing things?

The voice came again – even more sarcastic.

'Fine magician you are, if you can't tell where a voice is comin' from!'

I looked round the room again, my heart beating faster than ever.

'The fact is,' he went on, 'we've been watchin' you – and we've made up our minds. We got plans for you.'

'W-We?' I gasped.

He jerked his head at the other posters round the room, and I realised they were all nodding – Devant, Lafayette, Kellar, Robert-Houdin, Chung Ling Soo, Servais Le Roy – all of them.

Another thought sprang into my mind before I could stop it. *Must be the first time they've ever agreed on anything in their lives!*

Alexander coughed. 'Yeah, you may be right,' he said, not so sarky now. Then he drew himself up and struck a dramatic pose, pointing straight at me.

'Like I say, we've been watchin' you, and we agree that you're not a bad little magician – for a beginner.'

Thanks a bunch, I thought. I'd only been doing magic for years, that's all . . . I felt quite indignant, and somehow that helped me to get a grip.

Alexander said sharply, 'You've got a high opinion of yourself, feller. It's about time you realised just how far you've gotta go to catch up with us.'

Another voice broke in, English this time. It came from David Devant's poster, and sounded friendlier than Alexander.

'The thing is,' he said, 'we think it's about time you see us in action, instead of just reading about us in your dusty old books. See just what kind of magic we could really work. There's you boasting about making a dove disappear, while I can make a donkey – the most obstinate animal known to man – vanish in the blink of an eye!'

I was slow catching up. 'See you in action?' I asked. 'You're going to show me your acts?'

'Yeah,' said Alexander. Then he added, 'Some of 'em, anyways. You'll see what we can do – and then you'll learn how good your little dove act is!'



This excerpt ends here. Turn the page to find out what happened later when one of the other magician's turned up . . .