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Opening extract from

Hey Presto! Amazing Magic Tricks to Confound and Astound

Written by

Chris Stone

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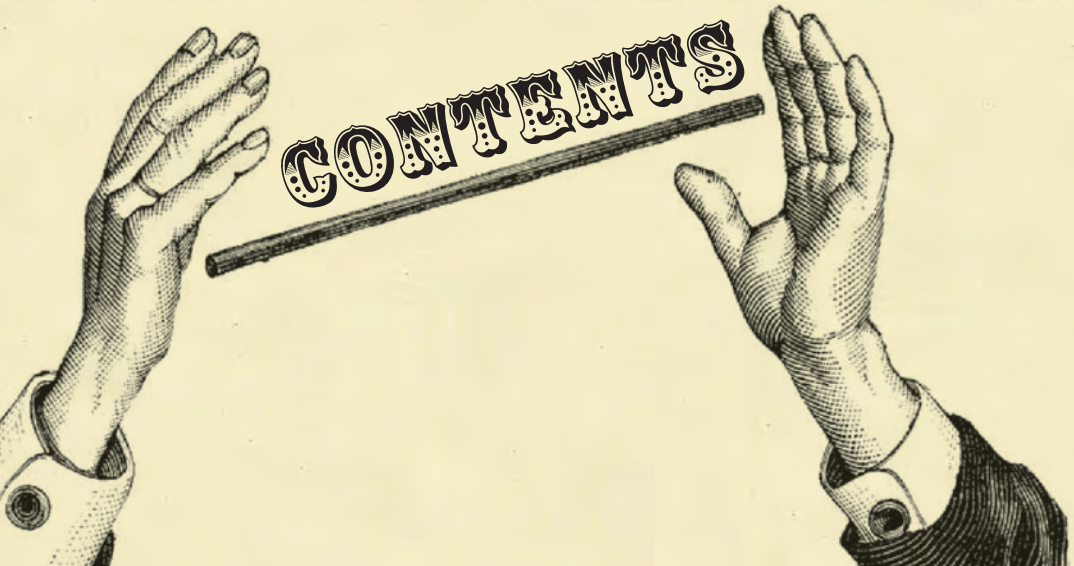
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INTRODUCTION

Magic tricks have amazed us for thousand of years. These days, illusions and advanced magic tricks are so convincing, so utterly compelling to watch, that they must be real, surely? As unbelievable as some tricks may seem – from the simple 'wobbly coin' trick to the most complex deck shuffle – what we are watching is not real, it is pure deception. Sleight of hand, tricks of the mind and a beautifully orchestrated system of bluffs with intriguing psychology and perfomance, convince our brains into thinking that all this magical majesty must be happening. And – and this is the most magical part of all – we are all quite happy to be deceived, for the world of suspended disbelief is a beautiful world indeed.

The world's greatest and most-celebrated magicians, conjurors and illusionists can make us believe the unbelievable, and the impossible seem possible. But, of course, just like everybody else, these conjurors had to start somewhere: they too had to learn the simple (but effective) card tricks, the easy (but imaginative) coin tricks and the basic (but totally mindboggling) sleight of hand tricks before advancing to more innovative, radical and daring skills performances.

This book will get you started on your way. It is a book of simple tricks, to master, to perfect and then to perform. It should be your entertaining companion on your first journey into the world of illusion, distraction, trickery and magic. So, if you want the all that and much more, then breathe deep, concentrate your mind, turn the page and read on …



TRICKS OF THE TRADE

While the following are technically tricks in themselves, they are used mostly as a means to an end in the performance of several of the card and coin tricks that appear in this book. Brush up on these techniques first of all to hone your skills as a magician.

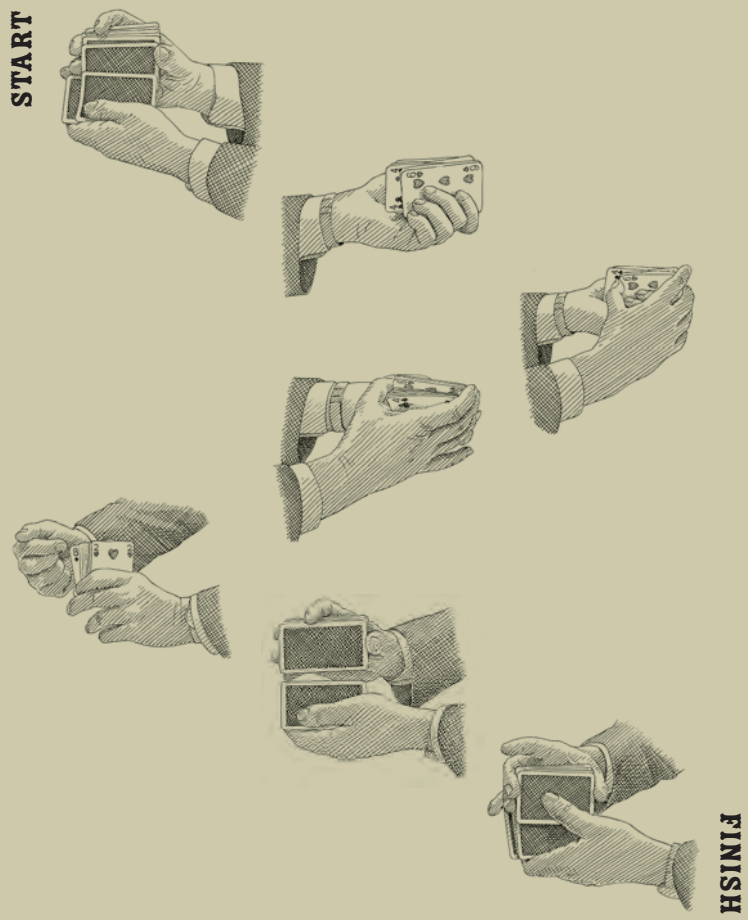
OVERHAND FALSE SHUFFLE

Almost everyone is familiar with the standard card shuffle (lifting sections of cards from the back of the deck and placing them at the front and middle of the deck). But this has the effect of mixing all the cards up: a disaster if, as a magician, you are trying to keep track of a particular card.

So you must instead give the impression of a random shuffle, while in fact 'loading' the deck to suit your trick.

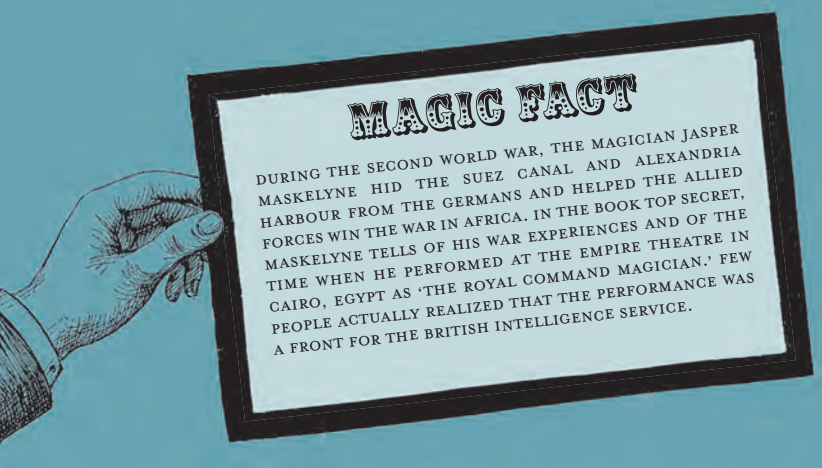
To practise this, put the four Aces on the top of the deck, lift the bottom half of the deck upwards as normal (this is called 'undercutting'). Your left thumb now draws a card off the top of this half so that it lands on the top of the four Aces. At the same time slide it inwards so that it projects about 0.5cm (¼ in) over the edge (this is called the 'injog', see illustration). Shuffle off the rest of the cards unevenly so that the fact that it is sticking out is a bit less obvious .

Your right hand now undercuts the deck again by pushing upwards on the underside of the injogged card (6, 7), grasping all the cards below it and throwing them (still in one block) back on top (8, 9).



If a trick requires you to shuffle the top card to the bottom, hold the complete deck in your right hand in the shuffling position (1). Draw off the top card only into your left hand by dragging it there with your left thumb (2). Now shuffle off the rest of the cards on top of this card (3). The card that was originally on top is now at the bottom (4).

To shuffle the bottom card (5) to the top, just start a normal shuffle (6) by undercutting the bottom half (7). Hang onto the original bottom card until last (8) and deposit it on top as you complete the shuffle (9, 10).



FORCING



For certain effects it is necessary to force the volunteer to choose a specific card while apparently letting him have a completely free choice. There are several ways to achieve a force but the most relevant technique for the tricks that follow is the cross-hand force. When you perform this, do not forget to emphasize the fairness of everything to your volunteer and the audience: you cannot see the cards, the volunteer shuffles repeatedly etc.



First, false shuffle the cards, then put them behind your back in your left hand. As soon as they are out of sight slip the card to be forced off the top and slide it over into the palm of your right hand, covering it with the back of your left hand. Turn around so that your back is now facing the volunteer. Ask the volunteer to take the cards and give them a really good shuffle before returning them to your hand. Once he has done so, turn around again and slip the forced card to the top of the deck. Then invite the volunteer to take the card at the top of the deck. Easy when you know how!



THE SEE-THROUGH CARD

This classic of card magic is an absolute stunner, but choose your location and moment very carefully. Never attempt this trick unless the conditions are 100 per cent favourable – it is too good to be ruined by bad presentation – but if performed well, the volunteer's chosen card seemingly passes through solid glass!

WHAT YOU NEED

A suitable window with curtains that can be easily pushed aside; a duplicate of any card in your pack; double-sided sticky tape.

THE SETUP

Long before you perform this trick you must stick the duplicate card to the outside of the window so that it faces inwards; a small piece of double-sided sticky tape does the job nicely.

THE PERFORMANCE

Start with the five of Spades on top of the deck. False shuffle (see page XX), a few times and then force the volunteer to choose the five of Spades by your favourite method. The cross-hand force (see page XX) works well here.

Once the volunteer (let's call him Jim), has remembered his card, returned it to the deck and given it a shuffle, give the deck to him to shuffle again. This is always a good policy when you do not have to keep track of a selected card. Just make sure he loses it in the deck. If you notice that he has shuffled the force card to the bottom ask him to give the cards another little shuffle.

'Let me have the deck now Jim.'

Take it from him and walk over to the window. Your left hand pulls the curtain to one side while your right hand (which contains the cards) quickly puts the deck directly over the card that is outside the window. Your back helps to conceal what is actually happening, and as Jim has no idea what you are trying to do, you will find it easy to set yourself up in the correct position. The cards, of course, must have their faces towards the room.

'Now Jim, I want you to take over from me. Come and hold the cards against the window for me please.'

You swap places and walk a few paces away, then turn to face him.

'What was the name of the card that you chose?'

'The five of Spades.'

'Please bring the cards to me now, Jim.'

He does so.

'Look Jim, you seem to have left one card behind stuck to the window. It is your card, the five of Spades! Would you fetch it for me please.'



TA DAH HA!

What did the fisherman say to the magician?

'PICK A COD ... ANY COD.'

THE REVERSED CARD

This super trick is very easy but at the same time very mystifying. A volunteer selects a card and then replaces it in the pack. The magician not only finds the chosen card, but reverses it in the pack as well. When performing this trick, take special care not to let your audience see the moves you are making with the cards.

WHAT YOU NEED

A deck of cards.

THE SETUP

To prepare the trick, turn over the bottom card of the pack so that the pack has two tops. Put the cards back in their case.

THE PERFORMANCE

Take the cards from their case and fan them behind your back. Be careful not to let anyone see the face up card at the bottom of the pack. Ask a volunteer to select a card.





While the volunteer is looking at his card, square up the pack and turn it over so that the reversed card is at the top. Turn round to face your audience and hold the pack in your hand.

Take the volunteer's card and push it back into the pack. Hold the deck behind your back, and secretly turn the reversed top card over again. As you do this, explain that not only will you find the chosen card, but you will reverse it in the pack as well.

HEY PRESTO!

Fan out the cards face up on a table. The chosen card will be the only one in the pack which is face down, or face up if you hold the cards up to show your audience.



THE BOLD COIN VANISH

Practising this trick will make the actions smooth and the effect extremely deceptive. A coin, apparently chosen from a handful of change, vanishes.

WHAT YOU NEED

A handful of coins of various denominations.

THE SETUP

No setup required.

THE PERFORMANCE

In order to perform this trick properly it is vital that the simple sequence of moves that are required exactly duplicate natural actions. So first, here is the natural sequence:

Take all the coins out of your right pocket and display them on your right palm. Reach across with your left hand (with its back towards your volunteer) and pick out one of the coins. Hold the coin between the fingers and thumb of the left hand and at the same time put all the other coins back in your pocket. Place the coin into your right hand, and close in into a fist. Open your hand and show the coin. This sequence of moves must be practised until it becomes second nature to you. The success of the trick depends entirely on your ability to be natural.

To make a coin vanish, you must perform all these actions, only this time, when



it comes to picking up the coin you don't! Yes, it is as simple as that. Remove the coins as before and display them on your palm. Reach over to take the coin with your left hand and, as soon as the back of your hand obscures the coin from sight, pretend to lift out a coin but let it slip out of your fingers again. Close your fingers over the imaginary coin and at the same time put all the coins back in your pocket again. Now pretend the pass the coin into your right hand and make a fist.

HEY PRESTO!

Now, at your leisure, make the imaginary coin vanish – both your hands are empty.

