

Magic Banny Presents



Top Hat

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Christmas Special Edition

A Letter from the Editor

by Michael Jay



It is the season of giving. Maybe I was premature when, in October, I suggested that our readers take a moment and consider making a small contribution to Gareth Hobson's charity [Boxing for Cancer](#). I hope that, with Christmas right around the corner, we'll get a response for Gareth. Gareth's target amount is £150 and if just 100 of our readers were to donate a single pound, he would almost be at his target. I honestly believe that this issue of Top Hat is worth a pound and if you agree, then take a moment, click on the link (above) and kick that dosh Gareth's way.

There has been talk of adding "Easter Eggs" to our issues of Top Hat. While we will not be doing that this month, be on the lookout in upcoming issues for these Easter Eggs that will direct you where to e-mail to get some terrific extras or other links to material that will be exclusive to our Top Hat readers. Not to worry, I'll tell you in my editor's letter just how many Easter Eggs there are to be found in the issue - I just won't tell you where.

Please make sure that you are telling your family and friends in magic about Top Hat - you are our only advertising. I feel that we have a lot to offer to magicians in any arena (be it amateur, semi-pro, or full professional), but if we're not getting the word out then Top Hat is doomed to failure. Share the links to download our magazines, found in three places:

[Magic Bunny](#)

[FaceBook](#)

[Lybrary](#)

(Hey! Those are links - you can click on 'em!)

So let me formally welcome you to our Christmas Special Edition of Top Hat and let me further calm your fears that we'll be publishing special editions for every damn holiday or jubilee that comes down the pike. This should be our last special edition until next Halloween (and even then, there's no guarantee that we'll have a Halloween special in 2016). I wanted this edition of Top Hat to

be dedicated to the unlucky number 13, but since the Halloween special was only a month ago and popular opinion was in favor of a Christmas special, I had to humbly abnegate.

And I think you'll be quite pleasantly surprised by the quality of articles in this issue, particularly those that are Christmas themed.

We start you off with first time contributor Ken Muller and his bittersweet Christmas story. Following that Gary Scott continues his 3 part series on how to get the most out of your books and Joshua Shuh finishes off his thesis that he started in the last issue. Werner Miller continues his self-working card trick series with another 3 tricks for you to learn and regular contributor Dave Wyton offers us several Christmas themed tricks. Jon A. Hand gives us a Christmas themed cups & balls routine, which is followed by another article from Ken Muller, only this time it's an actual trick for you. Interestingly, Ken then follows with two specific scripts that can be used for a Christmas theme, the first serves as a script for a classic card trick and the second can be used with several classic tricks. Bringing this section to an end is the next installment of the novel, 'The Magician', for those who are actually following Danny's descent into hell.

I'll let Señor Muerto give you the low-down on the Bizarre Bursary when you get there.



Letters to the Editor



- I enjoyed the Halloween theme, tricks and stories. Will you be publishing another themed issue? *David Strang*

I reckon that this issue of Top Hat answers your question, but please allow me to clarify the matter. I do enjoy putting together the themed issues and I'm certain that we'll have more of them in the future, but they take up a great deal of extra time in formatting them and finding artwork as well as getting the writers to give me themed articles. In addition, I don't want to fall into a rut of publishing a themed edition every time there's a minor holiday just around the corner. I'm pleased that you're enjoying these themed issues and I hope that all of our readers feel the same way.

-
- I just wanted to thank you for all your time and work with Top Hat. It's a great e-zine and I look forward to it. *James Pavel*

On behalf of everyone who works very hard to get these issues produced, you're welcome. If you are enjoying these magazines, then please consider contributing to Gareth's charity (discussed above). I would also appreciate it if you would refer to these issues as 'magazines' and not 'e-zines'. Somehow, 'e-zine' just seems below the level of these issues as a descriptor. Am I being a bit snobbish? Yes, I think that I am, but I think that too many people work too hard on this publication to relegate it to the label of 'e-zine'. It is a 'magazine'!

Christmas Memory

by Ken Maller



Dennis didn't perform much magic any more, and in recent years only when the family was gathered for dinner and "catching up." This used to mean four or five holidays a year. Nowadays, with everyone busy faking more important things, Christmas provided the only captive audience - at least if the gift exchange came after the meal and entertainment. Progressive arthritis also restricted his favorite effects to larger objects and minimal sleights. While his waning skills decreased possible mystery, cocktails and wine enhanced the astonishment. Everyone appreciated seeing grandpa "do his thing," and the stories later told to friends and abstemious kin enhanced simple magic into incredible illusions. Christmas is like that - or used to be.

Most Christmas gifts are not surprises but the manifestation of hints and ploys or outright begging. The thrill of shopping for "special items" and the chance to feign wisdom while the receiver acts surprised is part of the "gimmie" game. Thus, magic tricks fit right in - the performer pretends to do something impossible and the viewers pretend to be fooled. Most surprise comes from not seeing Dennis drop props on the floor, though astonishment occurs in spite of everyone. The family greatly appreciates the classic effects, partially because they have some idea of how the tricks are done and can appear smug and superior over their children. The other reason is that Dennis does them so well that everyone can honestly say, "Never seen it better - even on YouTube."

Dennis had his favorites and believed these were the favorites of his family as well: Sympathetic Silks, Linking Rings and a series of Rope Effects. He practiced these continuously by "drinking from an empty cup." Dennis went through the motions of each routine daily with no props, moving his hands as if holding the actual objects while subvocalizing the story. With his eyes closed he could imagine observing the presentation from afar and make minor changes if a flaw was detected. In his perception, physical limitations in anything are only an opportunity to change and improve. "Practice does NOT make perfect," he mumbled to himself. "Perfect practice makes perfect!"

A nurse asked Dennis what he had said. "Doing magic," he replied. Laughter! "The magic is that I am here to do it again this Christmas!" She heard only "Chrismus" and "magic," the rest was garbled. The nurse chuckled and watched his strange hand movements for a while. It wasn't unusual for an Alzheimer's patient to act out memories with their fingers and chant gibberish, but this was extraordinary. Surprising that he knew it was Christmas.

"Does he remember what that means?" she thought. "Magic? I guess it is magical for all those relatives to come by on Christmas afternoon and sit a spell." All the nurses and staff stopped by for the annual event, though none understood what his strange sign language conveyed or why the gathered clan applauded his antics. Such understanding came from imagination grounded in what use-ta-be, with each spectator providing images of objects to fill the dancing fingers. See the rainbow scarves and yellow rope and silver loops that ring like chimes! You can't ask for more magic than that!

Well, maybe . . .

We look at a group of carved figurines gathered around a manger and are transported to a place distant in space and time. We imagine impossible things like peace on earth and joy in every well-fed heart. Folks sing in harmony with little care for snow and cold. Each Christmas moment proves that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Or is all that but a childhood memory?

Waving hand and willing hearts. Nothing at all, yet everything.

And all it takes is one old man who has forgotten to remember that magic is an illusion.



The Art of Reading Magic

by Gary Scott



Part 2

Tools of the Trade

- “I have a passion for teaching kids to become readers, to become comfortable with a book, not daunted. Books shouldn't be daunting, they should be funny, exciting and wonderful; and learning to be a reader gives a terrific advantage.”
— [Roald Dahl](#)

In your journey to become a magician, you can follow many paths.

You can learn a quick trick to show friends and family. You can go more in-depth and learn from a master. You can study the classics and become a historian. You can formulate a plan and specialise in one particular genre. Through it all, at some point, you will come across magic books and the wonders within. Recently, the modern magi has turned away from the study of magic and looks for instant gratification. The instant download. The one-trick DVD. It all points to the modern way of magicians failing to study what should be the foremost of all entertainments.

Hopefully, from my introduction in the last issue of Top Hat, your interest for tuition the old school way has been ignited.

Are you ready to continue on your quest in learning how to study magic from books?

If so, this article is dedicated to those books you have already perused through and know what's inside. Those books you already have in your library.

I'll be dealing with *Old vs. New* publications in the next Top Hat.

- “To acquire the habit of reading is to construct for yourself a refuge from almost all the miseries of life.”
— [W. Somerset Maugham](#)

Here are some tools that you probably have lying about that will really help you digest the information in your library. Get hold of the following items and let's go study.

1. Good writing pen
2. High-lighter
3. Dictionary
4. Thesaurus
5. Book-stand
6. Lined note-book
7. Box of blank, white index cards (90mm x 60mm approx)
8. A craft-knife (optional)
9. A pencil (optional)
10. A mirror (preferably a 3-tier table-top mirror used for make-up)

Some of the above tools are to help you design a reference guide for your athenaeum.

This is a lot easier than you think. With that in mind, let's begin with how to reference the material you want to study. I guess the first thing you'll need to do is take a book from your shelf and open it at the contents page. Go straight to any trick that you learnt from previously or had a passing interest in.



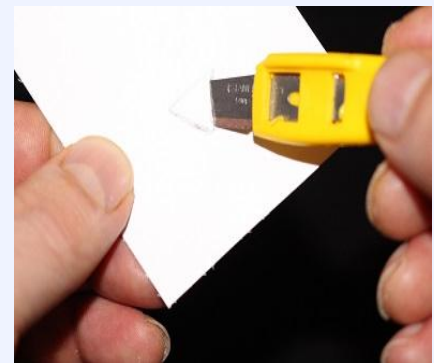
Take any one of the index cards and write down in small, legible writing the word 'Trick' at the top of the card. Then write the book title and the corresponding page number. Use about 1/3 of the card to write this information. The rest of the card is used for any other details you wish to add. The card can now be placed inside the book at the

appropriate place and you have an instant reference. Remember to keep your writing small but legible. You can fill the remainder of the card with key passage points. This avoids any kind of marking inside the actual books. I'm not a fan of marking books. I think it's very destructive. However, there are some books that are very worthwhile marking. All the magic books in the Dover publication range are very cheap paperbacks. If you buy two copies of any title you desire, you can have one to keep in pristine condition and another that you can totally butcher with notations and highlighting. The index cards do have one problem that is easily fixed. No matter how carefully you bookmark the pages with the reference card you have made, they will ultimately slip down inside the book. With the optional craft-knife, you can create bookmarks that remain permanently erect.

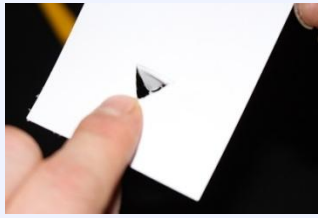
You are going to create a small hinge in the card that hooks to a book page.



First make sure that the hinge you require is going to be just over halfway down from the top of the card by drawing a small, upside-down triangle with your pencil. Now use the craft-knife to cut



through the two-sides that form the point that is facing down. With your finger, push the triangle out from front to back. It is hinged on the triangle base. Don't push too far as you need the hinge to be tight enough to grip the page. I have exaggerated the depth of the triangle hinge on



the card to help illustrate what is going on. You can use this impromptu *hook* on any book page and when the book is in your library, the card will remain elevated. You may wish to place the hinge higher and more central on the card to have not as much out-jogged from the top of your book.



Well that's how to find what you're looking for dealt with and hopefully a way that you might enjoy referencing without destroying your books.



Let's continue on with how to study the actual things you want to know. The good things about all magic books, whether they be old or new, is that they are all written in a linear manner. First the effect is explained and then the method with a possible third segment dedicated to presentations. I'm going to concentrate on method as that's what you really need to know. What I'm about to teach you also applies to any book that teaches magic theory. This way you can learn magic theory from a book with the techniques I'm about to share. It's all about notation and digesting the information. The thing with theory books is that there are no 'toys' to play with. It's all text heavy stuff and can be quite daunting. Like trying to remember 'War and Peace' it's not all going to sink-in. The notation exercises I'm offering will hopefully help with dense theoretical material.

- “Cram your head with characters and stories. Abuse your library privileges. Never stop looking at the world, and never stop reading to find out what sense other people have made of it. If people give you a hard time and tell you to get your nose out of a book, tell them you're working. Tell them it's research. Tell them to pipe down and leave you alone.”

— [Jennifer Weiner](#)

The Effect

So let's begin our journey. As the writing is so effective at teaching and written in a modern manner, I'll use Card College vol.1 as our first guide by opening the book to Pg 241 and we'll see how to study some of the very last trick in the book which is aptly named 'The Lucky Coin'. This is where you can use your bookstand. Get the book as central as possible and adjust the retainers accordingly to hold the book in place.

You now have 'free hands' that enable you to work with the props required. You will also not be hunched over a desk getting neck cramps. The book is also not being overtly creased to keep the pages open. The book is vertical and easy to reference. Remember, you can use any book /trick you like because I'm only using Card College vol.1 as an example. If you do happen to follow along with my choice, it will be more helpful to the process.

Firstly, read the effect and ask yourself the following questions (and answer accordingly). Is this new or have you come across this before? What attracted you to this? Is it what you remembered? Have you performed this before? Did it play well? Did you make any adjustments? What did you move onto? Have you made notes elsewhere? Now imagine the effect being played out in your mind. Imagine your handling and demeanor. What kind of presentation can you link to this effect? Take your lined notebook and begin a fresh page with the title of the effect. Write down the answers to the previously asked questions and anymore that may come to mind. Your notebook is about to become your own personal reference/text beyond the pages of the printed book. So why do this at all when you can just keep referencing the book itself? Firstly, a book does not have enough space for you to write detailed notations. Secondly, this is all to do with the learning process. Getting into the habit of writing helps clarify the ideas being presented. It also helps you remember things better and reach your goals more securely. Thirdly, at any time in the future when you have moved on from the particular trick of study, you will have a permanent record of all your thoughts, ideas and learning process. Once these things have been considered, move onto the props required.

The Props

Within the confines of 'The Lucky Coin' I need a deck of cards, an easily recognisable miniature card (I use the two of hearts), a dollar size coin and a coin purse. You can also have an exotic coin with a suitable container and create a specific presentation that relates to those items. The miniature card is stuck on the tail side of the coin. If there is no miniature card at hand, you can use the index from a regular playing card. Seeing as you've played the routine out in your head when reading the effect, then you may think that you can switch out the props completely. Don't! Play with the original premise first and run through the original method and props first. The old saying "You don't know where your headed unless you know where you've been" seems appropriate here. In the older books there are props that can be quite archaic, not produced anymore and can be somewhat dangerous but I'll deal with that in my next article.

- “Art never responds to the wish to make it democratic; it is not for everybody; it is only for those who are willing to undergo the effort needed to understand it.”
— [Flannery O'Connor](#), [Mystery and Manners: Occasional Prose](#)

The Method

A general rule for learning the method is to read it all through once and give yourself a general overview of how the props, sleights and any other handlings blend together. Also you will find out if there are any requirements for brand-new sleights which help bring the trick to a successful conclusion.

Method is the part of the instruction in a book that gives the most problems. Many a time I've had to re-read something a zillion times just to comprehend a particular instruction. For whatever reason it doesn't sink-in and I feel like I'm in limbo. Here's a good DVD vs. Book comparison in relation to this first hurdle. Let's say that you need to learn a 'Riffle Force' for the trick you're about to study. It's on the DVD. As you follow along with the magi, he is probably speaking as well. What do you have to do if you miss something whether it be

audio or visual? You have to stop what you're doing, grab the remote, rewind the DVD to the point you missed and continue. You will now repeat this action if you are not satisfied with any gaps and begin to get frustrated with the whole 'stop-start' thing. (It was a lot worse back in the days of VHS.) Let's take a look at what happens when we deal with this problem with a book that's on the correct page, standing in its holder.

You misinterpret what you read or you don't quite understand the fundamentals. All you have to do is move your eyes. Yep! A small movement back to the left to re-read the text. It's that simple. Think of it as an automatic re-wind. Almost instantaneous. You can do this as much as you like without stopping.

Ok! Back to 'The Lucky Coin'.

The first instruction is to force the two of hearts using 'The Classic Force'. It details the page number to learn this. My guidance here is based on you not knowing anything that is required in relation to new technique. Remove yourself from the confines of the method and head straight to the lesson on 'The Classic Force'. This technique is not easy and I can replace this method with a 'Riffle Force'. Don't Ignore the naturalness of 'The Classic Force'. It's a technique worth mastering. The idea of replacing one force with another is to get you through the method and help remove any stumbling block. Remember to *still* learn the method as is. So your first goal is to master any sleights required for the trick whilst still running through the method with the alternate force. If you do this, you'll be able to run through the method more effectively. 'By Forces Unseen' by Earnest Earick has a complete Index of reference for the sleights used at the rear of that particular book and I always recommend to any student of that book to learn the sleights first as they are quite knuckle-busting. This way you will have the tools necessary to complete the effects you wish to use.

The second instruction for 'The Lucky Coin' is the process of what to do after the force has taken place and the cards needing to be in a face down ribbon-spread on the table. A smooth ribbon spread that exposes the edges of all the cards makes the trick easier to execute and more aesthetically pleasing. Make sure you have a good-sized close-up mat for all ribbon spreading duties.

The placement of the coin, head side up, onto the ribbon spread is next. Think about the naturalness of this move. If the coin did not have the miniature card on its reverse side, which must be concealed for now, how would you place the coin? You can do this with a natural edge grip and drop the coin a few inches above the cards. It will not flip over and the miniature card will remain unseen. Note down your handling preference at this point. Whether it be inside your notebook or on your index card.

So far you should have made notation on three main points. All relevant information in regards to the effect, the handling of the force and the placement of the coin. You haven't? Then go back to the start and get some notations going. For the long term study of magic books, this is the habit you need to get into.

Unfortunately, the complete breakdown of what 'The Lucky Coin' is and it's method are not mine to share.

So we'll leave the rest of the method alone and later I'll re-cap on the tools that you may have received from my instruction.

- “The worst readers are those who behave like plundering troops: they take away a few things they can use, dirty and confound the remainder, and revile the whole.”
— [Friedrich Nietzsche](#)

Odd Words

Uh oh....What's that word mean? Time to get the dictionary out. You'll find that the best modern books, although written in a linear fashion, are authored by those that have great writing skills. This means that the language is sometimes not limited to basic conversation. It's not shameful to not understand a particular word. Nobody knows everything. So should we be using an on-line dictionary or should we be using a hard-copy? Remember how this exercise is all about books? Then use a hard-copy. It gets you into the habit of dealing with books. They are cheap as chips and WHSmith (a UK Stationary/book store) has large compendiums for very cheap prices. I purchased a large, Collins hard-back

dictionary for £3.99. Another tool is a thesaurus which is used mainly for alternate words when writing so that is good practice to have one on hand. Although you probably won't need one so much for reading. These fall into the same price brackets as a dictionary so pick yourself up a thesaurus at the same time as your dictionary. Not exactly breaking the bank but gives you a lifetime of reference.

- “Books are like imprisoned souls till someone takes them down from a shelf and frees them.”
— [Samuel Butler](#)

Using Diagrams/Illustrations/Photographs

You'll find the diagrams in Card College some of the best out there, but for this guide I'll be using 'Expert Cigarette Magic' by D. Deveen (ECM) on how to work with pictures. ECM uses photographs and they show the multiple phases of a particular piece of sleight-of-hand with a cigarette.

Take note of the sleight you're studying and begin by holding the cigarette in the initial position ready to execute the sleight. Follow the pictures in sequential order until you have worked through to the final picture. Now take this to the mirror and repeat the process. Check your angles. Is the execution natural? Does it convey the idea of the proposed action on offer? Now take the knowledge of the sleight and work it to perfection. If there are any discrepancies go back to the book and remain diligent knowing that the author has executed these moves thousands of times. If there is a point where the sleight is difficult, take note of what the author is trying to accomplish and adjust the handling accordingly to hand-size, flexibility and/or co-ordination.

- “... that when you're buying books, you're optimistically thinking you're buying the time to read them.” (Paraphrase of Schopenhauer)
— [Arthur Schopenhauer](#)

Highlighting

One of the best things about the modern world is the availability of some classic magic tomes as paperback re-prints by Dover publications. As an example, I have Sachs' Sleight-of-Hand by Edwin T. Sachs in its Dover incarnation and I've highlighted key references throughout. I've actually taken a highlighting marker and coloured the passages, phrases and important notes. This way you can flick through the book and once in a while a highlighted passage will grab your attention and you can re-read the snippets that you considered important at the time you read the book. One point about highlighting is make sure you do it on your first read through. So make sure it's a book you don't mind having coloured streaks running through it. There is no point in reading the book cover to cover just to repeat the process just for notation. A second point would be, not to restrict yourself to this kind of notation. If the passage is quite large, highlight it and then write it out in your notebook. Don't forget to use headings and page numbers for anything you write down.

- “You don't have to burn books to destroy a culture. Just get people to stop reading them.”
— Ray Bradbury

Other Tips for Study

There are a few more things that you can do that will ultimately help you study from a book.

Make sure you have some background ambience. Put on some of your favourite music. The best kind is something acoustic. Try not to listen to music that contains words/singing as sometimes you will drift into listening to the song rather than the concentrating on the words in the book. Not too loud as you still want to be able to focus on your study. Do not have YouTube videos running or any kind of visual entertainment otherwise your eyes will wander.

Distraction is not the key when learning from a book. The only *visual* distraction should be the words and sentences within.

Get a beverage on the go. Once you get into the habit of book study, you'll find the hours fly by. You'll need to pause once in a while for refreshment.....and speaking of pausing, don't forget to take breaks.

The whole point is for this process to be enjoyable. Sure it can be hard-work, but we are dealing with our vocation of choice. Magic. It should be as enjoyable to us in the printed pages of a book as it seems to be via the video medium. There is possibly one thing I should mention. Time management.

Unfortunately we all live different lifestyles so the pressures of work and family usually take precedence over anything hobby related. All I can say is that if you've made it this far through this article, in fact if you've made through this entire issue of Top Hat, you've got time to learn something from a book.

- “Don't join the book burners. Don't think you're going to conceal faults by concealing evidence that they ever existed. Don't be afraid to go in your library and read every book...”
— [Dwight D. Eisenhower](#)

Art of Reading Re-Cap

If you've understood my intentions so far, hopefully you've read how I've covered the ability to arrange props and set-up for study, substitutions for specific sleights, how to play with interpretation, working to a diligent schedule, dictionary usage and working with illustrations. Hopefully you've also understood that all the principles I've put forward are not restrictive to the books of my choosing. You can apply any of these techniques to your books/tricks/sleights of choice, no matter what magic genre you pursue.

In my final article for this trilogy, I'll be discussing approaches for *Old Vs. New*. and possibly some extra tidbits here and there.

Until then I'll leave you with this quote:

- All I have learned, I learned from books.”
— [Abraham Lincoln](#)

Siya on the boards.

Did You Know?

Harry Blackstone Jr. (1934-1997) attended military schools, ultimately enlisting in the military. During his basic training, he learned Mandarin Chinese and was later stationed in Tokyo, Japan. While he was not interested in magic during his youth, it was his time in the Far East that brought him into performing magic. Upon returning home, Blackstone worked in the entertainment industry, including spending time as a radio announcer and even managing the touring show 'Hair', among other notable experiences, before ultimately taking over the family business.





Part 2

Re-Evaluating The KOM Law - A Personal Paradigm Shift

In order to determine whether or not the KOM Law is valid (spoiler alert: it is not) we must first examine the claim itself. If we reject said claim (spoiler alert: we will) then we must put forth a new set of principles in its place. I will do so by categorizing the information into 5 different sections.

Section 1 - Validates or rejects the specific claim of the clarified KOM Law

Section 2 - The Human Brain in a Nutshell

Section 3 - Personal Frameworks of Reality

Section 4 - Inattentional Blindness and Optical Tracking

Section 5 - Revamping the Paradigm

Section 1 - Validation of Specific Claim - "The Big Move Covers the Little Move"

(I have included the clarified KOM Law here for ease of reading - it is the clarified KOM Law verbatim from part 1 of my thesis, found in issue #12 of Top Hat, volume 2.)

Clarified KOM Law: The human brain makes decisions on where to focus attention. In the case of two moving objects, the brain will decide to focus its attention on the object that makes the larger movement in space. Thus, the object that makes the smaller movement will go unnoticed. This only applies to secret moves.

The first question we have to ask when examining such an assertion: Is the

assertion universally true? By that I mean does the above claim hold true given any set of circumstances. The answer in this case is no; it does not. I've already discussed the scenario in which the principle was invalidated. So, examination of that scenario is necessary to display its variables.

What was different about the guy in the back of the room? Have you guessed it already? The answer, in that case, was distance. The claim holds false when the distance between the observer and the magician is increased. This isn't the only time however when the above statement is rendered false. The second is YouTube.

YouTube has effectively destroyed all hope of keeping any magic gimmick, sleight, or method a secret. It's not just those idiots giving away secrets though that's doing it. Watching old time sleight of hand guys is unbelievably painful. Vaudeville magic wasn't meant for a digital world. Most arguments I've seen or heard as to why magic does not work on video, at least in part, revolve around the rewind button. That, however, is an erroneous assumption which fails to take in consideration our general understanding of neurocognition. Regardless of the argument put forth, we magicians have to face the music: the big move does NOT cover the little move on camera. The reason why will be discussed (briefly) later. The important thing to understand now is that there are times when the above principle is FALSE.

So, do we scrap the idea that the big move covers the little move altogether? In order to answer this question we must first come to a basic understanding concerning the nature of laws, hypotheses, and theories. These are concepts that base themselves within the realm of observational studies and are generally validated by complex mathematics.

A hypothesis is an induction based on observation. It's a best GUESS. If those hypotheses hold true through numerous intense and rigorous experiments then they become a theory. A theory is an explanation of a natural phenomenon supported by a bunch of evidence (Nothing irritates scientists more than saying something is "just a theory"). If said theory is tested time and time again and proves to be predictive, then it becomes a law.

Well, that's great, but what if we observe something that is the complete OPPOSITE of what a law predicts? Has this happened before? You bet. If a

theory or law fails, given a set of circumstances, then we either must abandon it altogether or make modifications to the existing model, sometimes called a paradigm, that are in line with our current observations. For Instance, how about Newton's Second Law: $F = MA$. There are several instances where this is not true (ah, the early 1900's . . . what a fun time it would have been to be a physicist). In these occurrences, luckily we had Einstein and Max Planck to help us out. Did we scrap the idea? No, we modified our **paradigm** in accordance with our new understanding of nature. It must have been quite the daunting task to challenge the guy who invented calculus.

So, let me clear one thing up. Even though I have been calling it the "KOM Law", it really isn't. In a scientific sense, the explanation regarding big and little moves, is still in the hypothesis stage. I was merely calling it a law at the beginning of the paper because, as a teenager, that's how I viewed it. If it were a law, the Classic Pass would have gone unnoticed regardless of whether or not an observer was in the front row. So, just as it was Newton, the Kind Old Magician wasn't wrong. He just didn't have all the information laid before him to understand the true nature of reality. The nature of reality in this case, concerns the human brain.

Section 2 - The Human Brain in a Nutshell

When we say something as simple as "the big move covers the little move" it must be understood that we are making a comment concerning the nature of human behavior. In doing so, we are making an assertion that we have a certain level of understanding concerning the human brain. I've expressed similar statements before, but until the invention of the MRI we had very little in the way of understanding of such neural mechanics. Even with functional MRI, we are still in our infancy of understanding what is truly going on in the human brain. Even discussing our rudimentary knowledge of the organ would require years and THOUSANDS of pages. So, let's keep it simple, shall we?

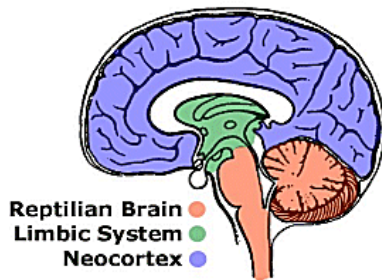
If the brain is something you are interested in, but don't feel like reading a medical encyclopedia on your day off, I highly recommend Michio Kaku's 'The Future of the Mind'. The analysis written there presents the brain in a unique and

enjoyable context. If you are interested in learning more concerning neural systems and how they relate to magic as well as some basic tenets of the theory of evolution (most notably the mechanism of natural selection) then stay tuned. My book, 'Conjuring at the Lighthouse', covers these topics in fair detail. This is done in an attempt to illustrate one of my five basic principles for performing quality magic. With any luck there will be no more life disruptions the prevent me from its completion.

The human brain is comprised of three different systems. Dr. Paul MacLean of the National Institute of Mental Health (who was inspired by Charles Darwin and his theories on Natural Selection) chose to view the brain in terms of evolution. He postulated that each system within the brain comprised one temporal unit. By that he meant each system has formed throughout time with one system acting as the foundation for the next. These evolutionary units within the human brain are the Reptilian Brain, the Mammalian Brain, and the Human Brain.

The Reptilian Brain is found in the lowest part of the skull. It was formed around 500 million years ago. I will forego its anatomy to concentrate on what it does. Its function revolves around the necessities for survival: breathing, heartbeat, balance, etc. The Mammalian Brain (also called The Limbic System) is in the middle portion of the skull. This portion of the brain is responsible for things such as memory, temperature regulation, social behavior, and electrical relay. Lastly, we have the NeoCortex or the Human Brain. This portion of the brain sits within the upper most portion of the skull and its size and shape is truly unique to humans. The NeoCortex is responsible for advanced and abstract thinking, higher cognitive functioning, and most importantly: FUTURE PLANNING.

The Evolution-Designed Brain



So why did I capitalize those last few words? Because that concept is the most important fact a magician needs to understand about the Human Brain. Understanding the brain's components and their functions on a rudimentary level is important, but knowing that the Neocortex actively plans for the

future is absolutely ESSENTIAL to becoming a great magician. This future planning ability is unique to humans and certainly beneficial to our species. This ability has allowed us to design products as dumb as Tang and as frightening as the hydrogen bomb.

So why is knowing that future planning occurs vital to the magicians? Well, I'll tell you why. It makes human beings easy to predict. If they're easy to predict: magic is easy.

Section 3 - Future Planning and Our Personal Frameworks of Reality

Earlier in this essay I told you I would explain why the big move doesn't cover the little move when the distance between the observer and the magician is increased. Well here it is: It is harder to manipulate the attention of another person when there is no element of danger involved. Think about that for a second. Why does the big move cover the little move anyway? The larger movement likely presents a larger amount of danger. Our brains instinctually tell our eyes to focus on larger actions as a mechanism of survival. It's the same reason why sleight of hand never works on YouTube (or does it . . . how many of those passes did you catch?). The big move never covers the little move on camera because there is NO ELEMENT OF DANGER.

In the previous section I revealed a very important function of the NeoCortex: Future Planning. When viewed in the context of the previous paragraph it should become immediately clear to you that Future Planning is also a protection mechanism. As an example: imagine I have no choice, but to fight a world champion mixed martial artist to the death in an alley behind a bar because I accidentally tripped and spilled beer all over his gigantically big pectoral muscles. There is a dramatically high probability that, given that set of conditions, I'm going to perish. However, had I been informed two days prior that said scenario would happen, the outcome would be drastically different. If I was a thug, I could bring numerous weapons to tip the fight in my favor. Or, better yet, if I was intelligent, I'd likely stay at home and watch Daredevil on Netflix (seriously you have to watch this show, it's amazing). In short, Future Planning is the most highly evolved defense mechanism human beings have ever had the privilege of possessing.

As a magician, we must understand that while we are being watched by a spectator, information is being accumulated by them to plan for the future. The information gathered is then compared to their Personal Framework of Reality (catchy, right?). We will call this a PFOR for short, but before I elucidate the concept, an understanding of how human beings accumulate knowledge must be reached.

Knowledge accumulation occurs through one of four methods:

1. One can learn through experience. Don't touch a red stoveIT'S HOT!!!!
Red = hot.
2. One can learn through observation, induction, analysis, and conclusion. We briefly discussed this earlier, but this formula is called the Scientific Method. We repeat this a million times (or in my case a zillion times as a punishment for picking a scientific career) and finally get to the point where our hypothesis becomes a theory, so on and so forth. We've discussed this already in our discussion of scientific laws, but suffice it to say this method of knowledge accumulation is time consuming, labor intensive, filled with peer reviewed roadblocks, and often mind-blowingly frustrating.
3. Logic. There are some things that clearly cannot be experimented on or repeated. So, in short, we must work the problem backwards mathematically. In other words, we're presented with the solution and then we have to find the problem, like Jeopardy. An example of this type of knowledge accumulation would be our current understandings in Big Bang Cosmology.
4. The last way to accumulate knowledge is the easiest. Someone tells us. This method of knowledge accumulation has given us such great concepts as Holocaust Denial, a 6000-year-old earth, and the myth stating Vaccines are a causal factor for Autism. Unfortunately, in today's world, this method of learning seems to be one of the two most prevalent.

A. In recent years, I've noticed a disturbing trend within mass media concerning this method of knowledge accumulation. As best I can tell, there seems to be a decline of the critical examination of our world within the global news networks. For all our sakes, I hope I am wrong, but this is a terrible thought indeed.

B. If you are interested in learning a method of examining the claims of other human beings as they are presented to you, I highly recommend 'Why People Believe Weird Things' by Michael Shermer. It's an excellent and entertaining read and belongs on every critical thinker's shelf.

One glance at the above four criteria will demonstrate to anyone that Scientific Method (#2) and logic (#3) are the best ways of accumulating knowledge. Unfortunately, they are the least efficient methods of doing so. Learning through experience (#1), while more efficient than the Scientific Method and logic, is not overly efficient by any means and involves a certain amount of trial and error. That trial and error can really suck (for lack of a better phrase) when the stove is hot. So, often we're stuck having to rely on others give us our information (#4).

(For this reason alone, you should run out and buy that Shermer book I recommended. It gives you a solid method of interpreting method 4 claims using methods 2 and 3 rubrics.)

What does the average human being, using these four methods of accumulating knowledge, do with this information? Simple, they form a repository. This repository allows them to compare new information with old and then do one of two things: 1) Update the repository or 2) discard the new information. This repository also serves as the primary information source regarding future planning. It also, in part, controls our perception. So you can see how powerful this is, I've termed this repository, as noted above, a Personal Framework of Reality (PFOR).

If you asked a mentalist at this point they would (and have) come to the conclusion that manipulating data accumulation method 4 is the best way to run a magic show. In other words, because individuals are ignorant concerning the Human Brain and its functions, they fabricate the possibility that some brains possess abilities that are either supernatural or can be honed through intense study and practice. *BARF.*

With a few notable exceptions, I believe most mentalists operate under this pretense simply because it is the only way they know how to maintain audience interest. In time, when a better understanding of the brain is common place, these mentalists will be unemployed. A magician, however, is different.

Now, there's good news and bad news.

The bad news is that everyone's PFOR is different. Some people think that when they die they're going to walk in a heaven with streets made of Gold (a strangely materialistic idea coming from a God). Others believe that when they die the lights go out and that's it (a grim, but strangely comforting view). And still others believe in a self contained universe that is recycling and we are all part of a greater whole. When it comes to higher level cognitive assertions (controlled by the NeoCortex) everyone's PFOR is different. The reason for this is because many times the higher level portions of the PFOR are based on the least accurate method of accumulating knowledge (# 4). However, that's just the bad news. There's good news too!

The good news, however, is that everyone's PFOR is also the same. Sure, there are inconsistencies amongst human beings due to the fact that relying on personal communication is the least valid way of accumulating knowledge. Luckily though, #4 isn't the only way to learn! Learning through experience might be just as most common if not more so. Don't touch a red stove, it's hot! Gravity exists, throw a ball and see. Don't drink foul smelling milk, it's gone bad. You turn a door knob to the right to open the door. Put the toilet seat back down if a girl lives in the house you dolt! Andmost importantly for usMAGIC ISN'T REAL.

Only when we truly know and understand that the audience fully endorses the last statement can we begin to deceive them appropriately. If we understand a spectator's PFOR, we can easily begin to predict their actions. If we can easily predict their actions, there is no limit to the amount of deception we can employ. Remember, you must operate within their existing PFOR. Do not try to manipulate knowledge accumulation.

A magician knows and accepts that the public doesn't believe in magic. **He or she is there to entertain his or her audience through controlled deception, not change the audience's knowledge base to something that is non-falsifiable and lacking in scientific rigor.** Operating within a known PFOR is a measure used to empower the spectator. It is the mark of the elegant, cunning, and noble sorcerer. Using the "Power of the Mind" premise, while certainly effective, takes advantage of the spectator's lack of knowledge. It serves only to

empower the performer as confusion and disinformation are in his or her favor. Decide which magician you want to be.

If you have chosen the road less traveled then good for you. The good news is that audiences are wonderfully willing to suspend their disbelief if you appeal to their known PFOR ('Harry Potter', 'Transformers', 'The Matrix', etc). If you are unaware of how to do this please refer to my previous Top Hat article concerning that nature of character creation and deception. It is also covered in further detail in 'Conjuring at the Lighthouse'.

Understanding the predominant elements within the average spectator's PFOR is the absolute cornerstone my misdirectional philosophy. Agreeing with the spectator that magic isn't real is merely one of those predominant elements. There are several others that I don't have time to get into. That said, big and little moves are something completely different. The understanding of the PFOR is designed to fool the overall consciousness. In other words, it's the highest order of business to deceive - the end game. The KOM hypothesis focused on a more basic level of neural cognition: attention, sensation, and processing. Now that you've adamantly embraced the idea of character creation to embrace the PFOR, let me give you another powerful array of weapons designed to engage a spectator's ASP (attention, sensation, and processing).

Section 4 - Inattentional Blindness and Optical Tracking

- **Inattentional Blindness**

By sometime in 2004 I had come to be known as the guy on base who did magic. I was a Senior Airmen at the time (the rank of E4). This also happened to be around the same time that 'Texas Hold 'Em' exploded in popularity. Now, I had performed magic for many years at this point. I saw the possibility of card sharps as a real detriment to legitimate play. So, I decided to give a series of both informal and formal public service announcements. Following in the footsteps of Milt Kort (a mentor who had given similar lectures while he was in the Army) I briefed some of the local establishments as well as my friends who maintained a serious interest in the game. I did so by giving a series of demonstrations on shuffling technique, false dealing, etc. While the lectures

were well received by the local establishments, my friends' attitudes were not as welcoming.

"Josh, you would never get away with stuff like that if you played us." An anonymous person said arrogantly.

The others, in unison, began nodding their heads. It became apparent to me that they didn't consider this a lecture, but rather some sort of challenge. I'll be the first to say it: I hate challenge magic. It is antagonistic and promotes the idea of winners and losers. That isn't my style. Hard as I tried though, de-escalation was not an option.

I replied, "Hey, guys, I'm just here to show you some card and cheating stuff, not play you in poker."

"That's because you couldn't cheat in front of us. We would catch you every time because you're not that good."

There's a point in any argument where I go from nice guy looking to avoid altercations to merciless Nietzschean commando. That was it. Attacking my sleight of hand skills, while I'm simultaneously attempting to prevent you from being swindled, is drawing a line in the sand. So I did what any self-respecting magician would do: antagonize the situation in my favor.

"Please, putting me at a table with you guys would be like throwing lambs to the slaughter."

From the calculated tone in my voice to the changing of my posture, my demeanor had changed. The smarter ones became cautious. Still, the bait was dangling right in front of them.

My attacker asked, "You're saying you could beat us at a game because we couldn't catch you?"

Just a little bite . . . that's all it takes.

I replied, "No, I'm not saying I could beat you in a game. I'm saying I WOULD beat you in a game. And, there's nothing you could do about it."

"Fine, let's play a game!"

BINGO! Reel him in. Reel him in.

Six players intended to play. The game was scheduled for the following week. The reason for the delay was two-fold. The first being that our paychecks didn't come until the following Friday. The second was a lie by me. I revealed to them that the demonstration had made my hands tired so I couldn't play right away.

An agreement was made. I told them that if they caught me cheating, I would immediately forfeit all my chips. Catching me meant they needed to spot my artifice. In doing so we would then stop the game to validate whether the accuser had been correct. To determine the accusations validity, the hands would be turned over and we would all be privy to whom the cards benefitted. This method removed the other players having to rely on my honesty to determine whether or not they had been correct. Finally, I had two conditions on my end. First, I was allowed to deal. In fact, I said if I wasn't allowed to deal, I would not play. The second is that I got to keep the money I won regardless of whether or not I cheated.

With that agreement in mind, a week later I walked into the game. And, as I had predicted, hours later I left the table with approximately three thousand dollars. Of course, I am neither greedy nor cruel. So, I gave it all back to them. It was never my intention to keep their money, I just wanted to give them a spanking.

Now before you read any further if you have not watched the video I posted at the beginning of this work I insist you do so now:

[Video Found Here](#)

So how did I accomplish such an attack even when the defenders knew said attack was coming? It's simple really. It was the method of manipulation I employed in the YouTube Video: Inattentional Blindness.

The term "Inattentional Blindness" was coined by Arien Mack (a professor of Psychology at The New School in New York) and Irvin Rock (a Psychologist from UC Berkeley who specialized in Perception) in their book of the same title. In short, they noticed that an observer couldn't see stuff they weren't paying

attention to. They postulated that an observer would be “blind” to a readily noticeable object or event even if said object or event was fully visible as long as the observer’s attention was focused somewhere else in their field of vision. Several experiments have demonstrated this phenomena in humans.

Be honest with yourself. How many of those passes did you catch the first time you watched the clip? **If I had told you that I was going to execute ten passes in a video demonstrating CARD SLEIGHTS would you have said they could have flown by you?** I’m guessing the answer to that is probably no. The reason I had you watch the clip before reading this article was to demonstrate that magicians are not immune to inattention blindness. No one is. That’s how powerful it is. Heck, I even foreshadowed that I was going to utilize the principle by employing it while demonstrating the second move in the video: The One Handed Top Palm. The point is that it doesn’t matter who you are or what your level of understanding is in the magical arts. The fact remains that one cannot see a maneuver when one is either not paying attention to that maneuver or their attention is fixated elsewhere.

I mean really, does anyone think beautiful assistants weren’t a calculated measure? It’s funny that magicians knew and understood this concept LONG before experimental psychologists could describe it with their endless psychobabble.

It was also my goal to hopefully impart to the younger magicians that magic is about hiding skill and understanding psychology. Knowing technique is certainly important to becoming a solid magical performer, but understanding and utilizing a systematic method of deception is by far more advantageous. It is unfortunate that many younger magicians truly do not understand the difference between being skillful and being deceptive.

There are several magicians you can watch that make use of inattention blindness. Karl Hein takes the concept and makes a science out of it, Ron Bauer has it written into ALL of his routines (albeit he calls it the En Route Principle), and Ed Marlo’s book on Action Palming is inattention blindness by another name. If, however, you want to see the master of them all . . . a serious review of Tony Slydini’s work should be in order. In addition to utilizing inattention blindness (amongst numerous other ploys), he has elevated misdirection to an art form.

The question remains though, how does one utilize inattentional blindness in their own work? It's easy, actually. To accomplish the technique all one has to do is ask the spectator to look at something else. Just make sure you ask nicely. In the presentation at the beginning of this lecture I ASKED you to watch three of the greatest card moves in the history of magic. I asked you to look at something else and you did. What about the fellows in the story above? Well, they were set up from the get-go. First, I was performing a demonstration on card technique. Second, at the time of the wager, I made two statements. First, I stated that my hands were tired; second, I demanded that I must be allowed to deal. This all heavily implied that the only way I could cheat was through sleight of hand. In other words, I asked for them to look at something else . . . and boy oh boy . . . they did! Each player was so intent on looking at my hands during the game that they completely failed to notice they were using marked cards! Knowing what cards every player is holding sure does make it easy to win.

- **Optical Tracking and Vision**

Now, I would love to get into a longer discussion on the manner in which vision works, but this essay is long enough already. However, it is not a stretch to say that vision is the most complicated sensory system our bodies utilize (it also appears to be the most evolved).

An unostentatious ophthalmologist once explained it to me like this, "The eye is the camera that relays the information to the computer or the brain." This was a (thankfully) simplified explanation of something that is tremendously complex.

It should go without saying that knowing how vision works is important when deceiving an individual. Vision accounts for near 80% of our sensory input. With this much dependence on vision, being able to manipulate it should be a primary objective. Magicians already know this. That's why there is a tendency within the market to say something is "HIGHLY VISUAL."

Instead of saying something is highly visual, I'd like to put vision in perspective. Every step in our approach to fooling someone is based on knowing and understanding that person's mind. By creating a character we fool their

consciousness. By using inattentional blindness we fool their attention. By using optical tracking we fool their vision. That said, like inattentional blindness, the concept is quite simple.

The eyes follow what moves. Why does this occur? Giving you the anthropological history behind the physiologic mechanisms involved would be difficult, lengthy, and boring. So, let's skip all that. In short, the reason the eyes follow what moves is the reason for everything else within biological systems: survival. Imagine you are in an open field with an animal running towards you at a rapid velocity. It would behoove you to keep an eye on this creature, would it not? If you answered yes, then you're right. Over time, the humans that had the ability to track what moved were more successful at survival. Now, we all do it.

Knowing this, we should perform covert maneuvers as still as we can while something else within the field of a spectator's vision is moving. The concept of our eyes following what moves is likely the etiology of the big move covering the little move. However, the suggestion here is that you not perform two movements at the same time. Instead, the maneuver is performed by the still hand while the cover is performed by the hand in motion.

So are there moves which either utilize optical tracking or inattentional blindness as part of their basic structure? Yes, yes there are. I've demonstrated a bottom palm which utilizes inattentional blindness in the library (this technique was written up by Edward Marlo in 'Revolutionary Card Technique'). Still, there are several maneuvers which capitalize on this form of misdirection, and here is an example of inattentional blindness: [Video Found Here](#)

Section 5 - Putting it all together

Magicians unite, it's time for a paradigm shift.

The old paradigm: The big move covers the little move.

The New Paradigm: The new paradigm is philosophically rather than scientifically based. It centers itself on an understanding of Personal Frameworks of Reality, Neuroperception, Visual Instinct, and lastly, the Human

Brain's preoccupation with danger. The beauty of this philosophy is listed in the three points below.

1. The higher you go up the ladder, the more elegant and sophisticated the deception becomes.
2. Each step is designed to deceive different aspects of the Human Brain. For instance, step four is designed to deceive the brain's most primal instinct: fear mechanisms, while step one is designed to fool the most complicated aspect of neurocognition: consciousness.
3. The steps will work in conjunction with one another, but may also be used independently of one another depending on circumstance.

The Philosophy of the Elegant Sorcerer

A. First, the elegant sorcerer understands and operates within the Personalized Framework of a spectator's reality. Most notably, this framework is based upon the idea that the concept of magic or supernatural abilities themselves are not realistic. Taking the path of least resistance the performer accepts the spectator's personalized framework of reality and adjusts his or her performance to create a character in which the observer will not feel threatened, but rather willingly suspend his or her disbelief. No modern magician will ever attempt to manipulate a spectator's PFOR. Misinforming the spectator concerning the nature of reality is counterproductive in that it plays upon a spectator's weaknesses instead of their strengths and ultimately creates ignorance.

B. After the character has been established, or even if it hasn't, the next step in successful and non threatening deception is engaging the spectator to become inattentionally blind. This involves having the spectator focus on something else by simply asking them nicely to focus on said distraction.

C. If the trick does not permit demonstrating character and the audience is unwilling to reply with your nice request to become inattentionally blind then one must resort to utilize the principle of optical tracking. This states, in short, that the eyes will follow an object that moves in space. The closer the

moving object is to the spectator the higher probability that spectator's attention will be drawn to it.

D. If the above do not succeed it is likely that you have not adequately prepared your performance or you do not understand when and how the attentions shift during the narrative. If this is the case, a trick review is in order. Still, during performance and as a last resort, one may employ the concept covert maneuver camouflage. When presented with two actions in real time, probability is higher that the larger action in space (based upon the fear mechanism within the brain) will act as cover for the smaller procedure of the covert maneuver.

The tenets above are linear in that they each idea is designed to deceive some aspect of neurocognition from the simplest (big and little moves) to the most complex (abstract critical thinking - "magic isn't real"). As a magician you must judge both the venue and the audience to determine which principle is to be put into place at any specific moment. For instance, it's hard to have friends and family go with a character. Thus, inattentional blindness is the most appropriate technique to utilize. Inattentional blindness, however, would be a disaster for dealing with a heckler or someone with attention deficit disorder. In the case of these two it would be most appropriate to choose optical tracking or covert maneuver camouflage.

The choice is up to you. Use your new found abilities wisely, courteously, and with restraint. Never forget, knowing WHEN is just as important as knowing HOW. Welcome to the world of the Elegant Sorcerer.

Three (Self-Working) Card Tricks

by Werner Miller



Dream Team

Preparation

You will need 16 cards lettered as depicted on the next page. (If you intend to use other names, take care that they are in alphabetical order!)

The cards of the first column (*Ann, Bill, Cathy, Cindy*) are lettered "T" on their backs, the cards of the second column (*Jill, Jim, John, Judy*) are lettered "E" on their backs, the cards of the third column (*Linda, Mary, Paul, Peter*) are lettered "A" on their backs, the cards of the fourth column (*Susan, Tom, Tony, Walt*) are lettered "M" on their backs.

Assemble the cards in any order.

Presentation

Ribbon spread the cards, names upwards. "This is the player pool from which the coach is going to select the ideal team for the upcoming match. Not an easy task, because there are many antipathies between the players."

"So the coach asked each player to write down the names of six other players (s)he does not get on well with. *Ann*, for instance, . . ." (Point to the first card!) "... made clear that she dislikes *Jill, Linda, Susan, Bill, Cathy* and *Cindy*."

Address a spectator and ask for playing the role of the coach.

The spectator has to pick any card out of the spread thus nominating the first player by random. Then he has to look for the six names in the players' personal antipathy list. These guys should not be in the same team, so their cards are removed from the spread and discarded.

From the remaining nine cards, again one is selected for the team, and the six from his/her antipathy list are eliminated. (In fact, only four are discarded, because two names have already been sorted out to avoid troubles with the first player.)

Four cards are still in the spread. Again, one card is picked out and the antipathy list checked. There are two cards to be removed (the four other names listed there have already been discarded.)

One card is left over. Can this player complete the team? Yes! None of the players already selected is on his/her antipathy list! Congratulate the spectator, and casually arrange the four cards alphabetically side by side.

Ann Jill Linda Susan Bill Cathy Cindy	Jill Ann Susan Linda Jim John Judy	Linda Jill Susan Ann Peter Mary Paul	Susan Linda Ann Tony Jill Tom Walt
Bill Cathy Ann Cindy Jim Tom Mary	Jim Mary Bill Tom John Jill Judy	Mary Linda Tom Jim Peter Paul Bill	Tom Susan Jim Tony Walt Bill Mary
Cathy Cindy Bill John Ann Tony Paul	John Jim Cathy Jill Judy Paul Tony	Paul Linda John Mary Peter Tony Cathy	Tony Tom Susan Walt Cathy John Paul
Cindy Ann Cathy Judy Bill Walt Peter	Judy John Walt Jim Cindy Peter Jill	Peter Paul Linda Mary Judy Cindy Walt	Walt Susan Tom Tony Cindy Peter Judy
T	E	A	M

Turn the four cards over, and draw attention to the word thus coming into view: "T-E-A-M". Any other proof needed? Let the match come . . .

(From my e-book "Enigmaths 3": <http://www.lybrary.com/werner-miller-m-7881.html>)

Persiste!

This is based on a trick **Leo Boudreau** 2009 shared on the *Magic Cafe*.

To simplify the performance I don't use imaginary objects but real playing cards and a *Monge Shuffle* (see postscript) to alter their order systematically. So there is no need for memorizing names of objects or remembering the order they are to be shown to the spectator - the routine becomes "self-working".

Here are the details of my version:

The spectator freely selects four cards. He notes and remembers one of them, and then he shuffles the cards and hands them to you.

Hold the packet face down. Let's name the top card A, the next one B, the next one C, and the bottom card D. (Fig. a)

Perform a *Monge Shuffle*. New order: D-B-A-C. (Fig. b)

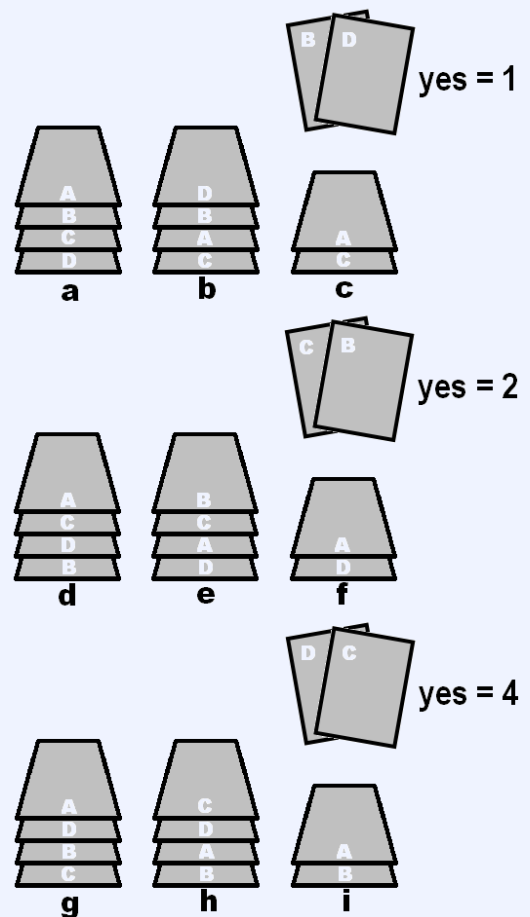
Remove the top two cards (D, B), fan them, and show them to the spectator. (Fig. c)

"I'm going to ask you a question. Feel free to answer it either truthfully or by lying. *Do you see your noted card?*"

If the answer is "Yes", keep in mind the number 1 as your first key number.

Place the pair of cards just displayed below the remaining two cards. New order: A-C-D-B. (Fig. d)

Perform another *Monge Shuffle*. Result: B-C-A-D. (Fig. e)



As before, remove the top two cards

(B, C), fan them, and show them to the spectator. (Fig. f)

"I will ask you one more question, but please note: If you told the truth the last time, then please do so again. If you lied the last time, then please lie again. - *Do you see your noted card now?*"

If the answer is "Yes", keep in mind the number 2 as your second key number.

Place the pair of cards just displayed below the remaining two cards. New order: A-D-B-C. (Fig. g)

Give them a last *Monge Shuffle*. Result: C-D-A-B. (Fig. h)

Remove the two top cards (C, D), fan them, and show them to the spectator. (Fig. i)

"Now, for the last question, please, don't step out of line: If you answered truthfully the last questions, then please answer truthfully again. If you lied, then please lie again. - *Do you see your noted card now?*"

If the answer is "Yes", keep in mind the number 4 as your third key number.

Place the pair of cards just displayed below the remaining two cards. The cards are now in the same order as at the start: A-B-C-D. (Fig. a)

You got it. Although you never saw the faces of any cards, you know which of the four cards the spectator selected and also whether the spectator told the truth or lied.

The "Yes" answers tell the story.

As described, you recorded them by associating key numbers: If the first answer was "Yes", you remembered 1 ($= 2^0$); if the second answer was "Yes", you remembered 2 ($= 2^1$); if the third answer was "Yes", you remembered 4 ($= 2^2$).

Mentally add up the key numbers you have in mind. You will get one of eight possible totals: 0 (i.e., no "Yes"); 1, 2, 4 (i.e., one "Yes"); 3, 5, 6 (i.e., twice "Yes"); 7 (i.e., three times "Yes").

Each result has its unique meaning:

0	Spectator selected card A and told the truth
3 (= 1 + 2)	Spectator selected card B and told the truth
6 (= 2 + 4)	Spectator selected card C and told the truth
5 (= 1 + 4)	Spectator selected card D and told the truth
7 (= 1 + 2 + 4)	Spectator selected card A and lied
4	Spectator selected card B and lied
1	Spectator selected card C and lied
2	Spectator selected card D and lied

There's no need to memorize the whole table. It is only vital that you can recall the first four numbers of the left column, in their order from the top down: **0 - 3 - 6 - 5** (mnemonic aid: a year has **0365** days).

Obtaining one of these numbers as the total indicates that the spectator answered truthfully. Each of them belongs to a different card: 1st number (0) - 1st card (A), 2nd number (3) - 2nd card (B), 3rd number (6) - 3rd card (C), 4th number (5) - 4th card (D).

When the total doesn't match any of these four numbers, you know that the spectator lied. Subtract the total from 7, and you get again **0** (= 7 - 7), **3** (= 7 - 4), **6** (= 7 - 1), or **5** (= 7 - 2). As before, each result belongs to a different card assigned the same way: 1st number (0) - 1st card (A), 2nd number (3) - 2nd card (B), 3rd number (6) - 3rd card (C), 4th number (5) - 4th card (D).

Of course, for a good presentation you need a suitable **patter theme**, too. Leo Boudreau dressed it up as pseudo test in analyzing the spectator's body language. Can you think of any other ideas for this presentation?

Postscript

Monge (Over/Under) Shuffle: If you are not familiar with this mixing procedure, here's a short description: Hold the packet face down in the left hand and use the thumb to push off the top card into the right. Now, with the left thumb, push off the next card so that it goes on top of the first one. The left thumb then pushes off a third card but this is taken on the bottom of the right hand packet. The fourth goes to the top, the fifth to the bottom and so on, alternately placing the left hand's cards above and below the right's.

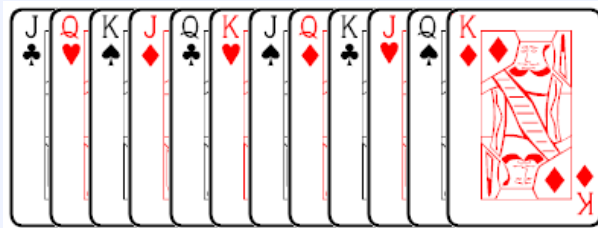
The *Monge Shuffle* is named after Gaspard Monge (1746 - 1818), a French mathematician who investigated this method of shuffling. (See Maurice Kraitchik, "Mathematical Recreations", Reprint New York 1953, pp. 321-323.)

(From my e-book "Enigmaths 4": <http://www.lybrary.com/werner-miller-m-7881.html>)

Starring the Joker

Effect

From a 12-card packet, the spectator takes a card and keeps it face down. In lieu of it the Joker is inserted, and the Joker reveals the identity of the selected card by locating simultaneously a card of the same suit and a card of the same value.



Preparation

For this trick, you need only the court cards and a Joker. Arrange the 12 court cards in such a manner that the suits and the values both run cyclically (e.g. the suits in ChaSeD order and the values in J-Q-K order, as depicted.)

Presentation

Fan the 12-card packet face up: the court cards of a poker deck. Close the fan, turn the packet face down, and ask a spectator to give the packet several complete cuts to randomize the order of the cards.

Introduce the Joker and announce that he will play an important role soon.

Spell aloud "J-O-K-E-R", with each letter dealing a single card off the top into a new pile (thus reversing the order of the top five cards).

Ask the spectator to take the next (6th) card and to keep it unviewed face down. Explain that the place of this card will be taken by the Joker as a wild card, but in fact place the Joker *face up on top* of the reverse counted 5-card packet and drop the remaining six cards as a block on top of the Joker.

(To make it clear: If - after the cuts, before spelling "J-O-K-E-R" - the order of the cards was 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10-11-12, they are now in this order: 7-8-9-10-11-12-Joker-5-4-3-2-1. All the cards but the Joker are face down.)

Request the spectator to give the cards a complete cut.

Instruct the spectator to keep track of the Joker, and deal the cards singly and alternately into two piles: left, right, left, right, . . . Where will the Joker end up? Keep the half containing the Joker, the other half is discarded.

You are left with six cards. Have them cut by the spectator, then deal them as before singly and alternately into two piles. Again, the pile that does not contain the Joker is eliminated.

Three cards remain: the face-up Joker and two face-down unknown cards. Spread them apart so that the top card ends up on the far right and the bottom card ends up on the far left.

If the Joker is not already in the middle, you may transfer one card from the left end to the right end or vice versa. (This little adjustment is not vital, but it makes things easier.)

Turn the right neighbor card of the Joker face up; it is e.g. the King of Spades (emphasize the value). Turn the left neighbor card of the Joker face up; it is e.g. the Queen of Diamonds (emphasize the suit).

Point to either card several times in turn muttering, "King . . . Diamonds, King . . . Diamonds, . . .", finally combining both to a new card and proclaiming its identity in a loud voice: "King of Diamonds!"

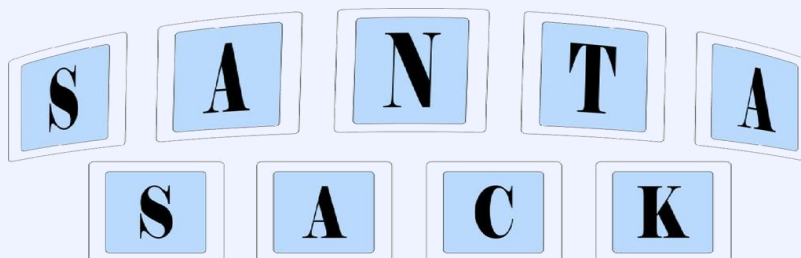
Ask the spectator to turn over the card he's keeping: It's the King of Diamonds, what else.

(From my e-book "Enigmaths 5": <http://www.lybrary.com/werner-miller-m-7881.html>)

Did You Know?

Richard Humber (1907-1966) started his career as a bandleader, booking such shows as Rudy Vallee and Russ Columbo. Ultimately, he formed his own band and found success on both radio and television. Later he staged many magic shows and worked with his friend Orson Welles (amongst many others). To this day he is known to the magic world for his "Humber Ring" and "Billfooled" (which we now call the "Humber Wallet").





The Christmas Card Trick

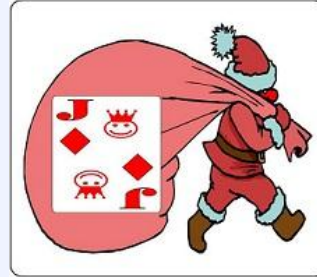
The wonder-worker displays an envelope, inside which, he says, is a picture of a well-known individual. A spectator is asked to think of, and then name, any famous person. Assume the choice is Hugo Forth, the well known famous-for-being-famous celebrity. The wily wizard removes the picture from the envelope to reveal a picture of a baby. *This is Hugo Forth, when he was a baby.* What a hoot.

Most, if not all, magicians will be familiar with the “Baby Gag” trick, which is what the previous paragraph is all about. It is quite comical and various versions and variations crop up from time to time, but the effect and punch line remain the same.

This is a bit of nonsense along the same lines. The difference is that the picture in the envelope is revealed to be Hugo Forth dressed as Father Christmas. *“This is Hugo Forth, doing his duty at the Christmas party.”*

This might be too much preparation for some, and I do prefer impromptu stuff myself; but the good news is that once made it can be hauled out of the drawer every year at no extra expense.

All we need is a bit of copyright-free clip art with our main man’s face hidden by the beard and in this example, a red nose.



As we can see from the illustrations, a double sided Father Christmas is required. One shows the front and one shows the back. Any card that we want to force should be printed on Father Christmas's back. If he's carrying a sack, print it on that. In this case it's the jack of diamonds.

When ready, stash the card in an envelope, marked in such a way that we can remove the card without prematurely revealing the back. We also need a pack of cards, with the force card on top.

If we're doing this in the middle of an impromptu routine, it's a simple matter to get the force card into position. The introductory phase with the celebrity envelope removes any perceived heat from the pack.

Ask a spectator to hold the envelope for a moment or two, and then go through the "This-Envelope-Contains-A-Picture-Of-A-Famous-Person" business. Have a spectator name any famous individual. Assume Hugo First. Remove the card and show the picture, Hugo at the Christmas party.

When the laughter and applause subside, introduce the pack and ask the spectator to remind you which celebrity he named. Clarify that this was a free choice and all that, emphasising that you could not possibly know who he would name. This is true.

Now force the jack of diamonds as follows. With the force card on top of the deck, deal/spell the celebrity name in time-honoured fashion; one card for each letter of the name. H-U-G-O-F-I-R-S-T. Table the undealt cards off to one side. Say something like: *"This really is the Hugo First Miracle Christmas Card Trick. . .look."*

Turn over the dealt pile to reveal the face card, the jack of diamonds. Say: *This is Hugo's favourite card. How do we know?"*

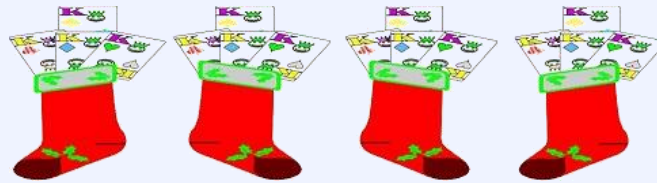
Turn Father Christmas over to reveal the Jack on Santa's back.

A bit of foolery, a bit of fun and a shade or two of baffle . . .

Yuletide Yap

I've never felt it necessary to perform tricks specifically themed to any season; not even Christmas. I've always felt that existing patter and tricks can be adjusted slightly—and easily—to accommodate and acknowledge the festivities. Others disagree and love to change their whole performance, particularly for children's shows. Both approaches are valid and work well for individuals: Horses for courses.

This thrilling bit of fluff is one of the concessions I've made, for no reason other than I like it, which is all the reason anybody needs. Although it's always well received, so that helps. And hold on to your baubles, here's another exciting dose of festive fluff.



Stocking Filler

Control a selected card to the top of the pack; assume six of clubs. Ask someone to name something to do with Christmas. Suggest a few things such as: **Happy or Merry Christmas, Season's Greetings, Father Christmas, Yuletide, Jingle Bells, Santa, Santa Claus, Claus, Commerce, Christmas Day, or Christmas Eve.**

Assume somebody says “Turkey”.

Deal/spell the word T-U-R-K-E-Y, one card for each letter. The first card dealt is the six of clubs, the selection. Apply a bit of time misdirection, by muttering something like: “*What made you choose turkey? Is that what you think the trick will be?*”

When the uproarious laughter dies down, ask the name of the card. Pick up and turnover the dealt pile to reveal the selection. Bow graciously and modestly accept the applause.

Yep, the general idea is older than the hills, but nothing wrong with that. It takes up no room in the close-up case and can be slipped into the more usual festive frolics. Other seasonal/magic words are available, of course.

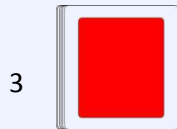


. . . Being a creaky approach to an antique, stuffed and dressed up for the festivities.

Begin with four favoured cards on top of the pack; for yuletide and old time’s sake, let’s go with the four kings (any quartet will do, but kings suit the title).



Begin with: "At this time of year we can't move for Christmas cards. Well, here is mine."



A shuffle and cut or two will not go amiss, but such manoeuvres aren't essential. Ask someone to say a word associated with the season to be jolly. Assume they go for *Stocking*.

Spell/deal the word S-T-O-C-K-I-N-G, taking one card for each letter of the word. The result, though hopefully no one's counting, will be a face down pile of eight cards. Actually, thinking about it, even if they do count it, doesn't matter. The first four cards dealt are the aces, so following the deal/spell, the aces will be at the bottom of the pile.

Ask someone else to choose another season-to-be-jolly word; assume *Greetings*.

Spell/deal the word G-R-E-E-T-I-N-G-S, one card for each letter. This adds nine cards to the eight already dealt. Total now, 17 cards.

Deal the cards into four piles spelling C-A-R-D. On conclusion the top four card of each pile will be a king.

Alternatively, to add a hint of corn to the proceedings, when you get to the point where there are four piles on the table, invite a spectator to choose three

piles. Eliminate the one not chosen and then reveal three kings as in the Christmas song.

After suitable pause the fourth king can be revealed to round things up a bit.

The illustrations give an idea of what the procedure involves, though the cards spelling the words "Greetings" and "Stocking" will not be spread. As noted they will form a single pile.

When the cards are dealt/spelt into the four piles, the odds are against the last card being dealt onto the "C" pile. Wherever the deal finishes, make no comment and conclude the shenanigans by revealing the four kings. Or allow a spectator to do it. Either way, applause and ovations will ensue. Have a pen handy to sign autographs.



Christmas Cups and Balls

by Jon A. Hand



Cups & Balls is one of the oldest tricks in magic. The variety of magical effects possible in a routine is stunning: vanishes, reproductions, transpositions, transformations, and productions. It is no wonder that the trick has stood the test of time, and that Houdini called it the test of a magician.

The trick has tremendous versatility, with a wide variety of available moves which enable individual conjurers to create an unique version for themselves. Yet, one of the problems with cups & balls is that it looks pretty much the same in everyone's hands. The spectator, when asked what the conjuror did, will reply, "All sorts of things; the balls came and went, and he ended with (final load) that came out of nowhere!" In other words, the trick is one of mind-teasing skill. Rarely is there any sort of plot to engage the spectator's imagination and make the trick even more memorable. This routine is an attempt to add a plot to the effects, giving them some meaning other than, "Look what I can do."

Features of this routine include:

1. A plot - Holiday presents must be hidden from curious children, who tear apart the house seeking their presents. Cups and pockets represent closets, car trunks, neighbor's home, etc. The plot is appropriate for December holidays, adaptable as needed or desired for Christmas, Hanukah, or Kwanzaa.
2. New plot-appropriate basic balls
3. Plot-appropriate transformations (intermediate loads)
4. The Ramsay subtleties, both palm-up and palm-out, are used consistently in this routine to normalize them, whether or not the conjuror is holding out.

Materials needed:

1. Close-up mat -- A commercial one is fine, of course, but there are other options for the thrifty. You might choose a Dish Drying Mat from a local



discount store in black, red, or green (these are cloth with a raised square pattern and foam inside). You might also use Jean Hugard's suggestion of a heavy hand towel, or doubled bath towel, in white.

2. Cups -- a set of three standard aluminum, brass, copper, or silver cups. Shiny cups can reflect palmed items in the hand, so you will need to practice with a mirror to correct how the new basic balls are impacted by reflections. Alternatively, heavy plastic opaque cups in your choice of color could be used. This routine has been tested with standard dealer cups and the plastic cups as described.
3. New basic balls

A. In the Christmas season, one can find ornaments which are small sponge squares covered in Mylar plastic wrap with tiny "ribbon" cording, resembling Christmas gift packages. These ornaments come in packages of a dozen, generally in four rows of three colors, and are normally tied onto real gifts as decorations. They are available in several sizes, and one of the smaller sizes seems to be the best for this trick. You will need four identical ones.

B. If you cannot find these pre-made ornaments, then get a thick yellow sponge which you would normally use to wash your car. With a sharp bread knife, cut across the sponge like you would cut across a loaf of bread, slicing a 1" (2.5 cm) hunk from the center. Cut that slice into small squares, perhaps 1" (2.5 cm), making them as identical in size and shape as you possibly can. Use a permanent marker to draw simulated ribbon around all six sides of each sponge to resemble wrapped Christmas presents, drawing a bow on the top side (and the opposite side, so that either side can be the top!). Neatness counts! Make a minimum of four, although you will have plenty of sponge to make a dozen as backups just from this slice. [Since you have much more extra sponge left over, plan a use for it: for example, cut a set of yellow sponge cubes, continually rounding off the corners to form balls in your choice of sizes to use as color changes in your red sponge ball routines.]



4. Transformations (surprise loads) -- Locate several 1" (2.5 cm) angular rocks. Paint flat black to resemble lumps of coal (since real coal is too dirty to use). The routine requires three, but you will want to make some backups.
5. Final load -- use one sock from a pair of baby-sized Christmas-themed socks, or a miniature ornamental Christmas stocking, which can be filled with small toys and/or candies in the foot and folded over into a ball shape for loading

Setup:

1. Stack the cups, mouth upward. Place three presents in the topmost cup.
2. Load the Christmas stocking with tiny toys and/or small candies, no higher than the heel area. Fold over the leg fabric to hold them in place, and put into right side pocket of the pants if the routine is done standing. If you will be seated, you can place the stocking in the right side pocket of the coat, or in the lap between your thighs.
3. Place two coal lumps into the right pocket, atop the stocking, along with the secret (extra) fourth present.
4. Place the third coal lump into the left pocket.
5. To begin the routine, secretly finger palm the extra present in the right hand, and pick up the stacked cups from your magic case with the left hand.

The routine is taught in sections to assist in learning. Sleights are taught as needed. All directions are given from the conjuror's viewpoint. Suggested patter ideas are in *italics* throughout the routine, but adjust the patter to suit *you*.

Section 1 - Introduce the three cups in a mouth-up stack in the left hand, and pour out three presents. Using the right hand, line up the presents from left to right, and place a mouth-down cup behind each present. The fourth present remains palmed in the right hand, either in finger palm, or low finger

palm (3rd/4th fingers). Drop both hands into resting position on the edge of the table or mat, in gently curled palm-down fists, with the thumbs covering the gap at the side of each first finger. *"You are looking at Christmas presents that must be kept hidden from the children until Christmas morning. I will put them away in closets for now."* Tilt back each cup with the left hand, sliding its present into the cup with the right fingers. All this time your fourth present remains in finger palm, held in place gently with the thumb.

Place both hands once again in resting position on the table or mat edge. *"The children have gotten suspicious, and they have begun searching the house for possible hiding places for their presents. I need to keep them hidden, and perhaps you could help me move them from place to place in secret."* Pick up the left cup with your left hand, and pass it to the right hand, covering the palmed present. Keep your eyes on the present you have uncovered at all times, paying no attention to the moving cup. Pick up the exposed present from the mat with the left thumb and forefinger, and replace the cup, loading the palmed present in the process (standard c'n'b loading move). Turn the left palm upward (not outward) into a Ramsay subtlety position, even though nothing is hidden in the hand, to briefly display the present. False transfer the visible present from the left hand to the right hand, palming it in the left hand in transit. Curl the right fingers to receive the present. Believe that it arrived in the right hand, and look only where the present is supposed to be. Close the right hand into a loose fist and move it a small distance to the right, as you make a small pointing motion with the left, concealing the stolen package in finger palm. Dead drop the left hand to the table in a resting position as you follow the right hand to the right with your eyes. Crumple the right fingers, as if rubbing away the present. Open the right hand from little finger through index finger. Smile and show the hand unmistakably empty after the vanish, for a moment. *"This present is safely re-hidden!"*

You will repeat with the middle cup, but you will vary the procedure by reversing the hands. The extra present is now palmed in the left hand, and so the right hand picks up the cup, passes it to the left hand to load, and picks up the second present in thumb and forefinger as the cup is loaded and placed onto the table. False transfer the visible present from right hand to left, palming it in the right hand in transit. *"Let's re-hide this one, too!"* The left hand moves to the left a bit, with the right hand pointing to it. This time, tap the closed left

hand with the right index (pointer) finger, and hold up the right pointer finger in palm-out Ramsay subtlety, exposing some of the palm to the spectators while safely holding out the present in finger palm. Look directly at the spectators and say, *"Watch, now!"* Drop the right hand to the table as you lift the left hand a bit, turning your eyes back to the supposed location of the present. Crumple vanish the present in the left hand, showing the empty hand from little finger to forefinger. *"Ah. . . got that one stashed, too!"* Smile!

Vary the procedure again with the right cup by picking it up with the right hand at the cup's shoulder, keeping the extra present palmed in the process. Pick up the visible third present with the left hand, and display it in palm up (not palm out) Ramsay subtlety at the fingertips. Replace the right cup with the right hand, loading the extra present as you comment on the present on display in the left hand. *"Uh, oh. . . this present was almost spotted!"* Make the pretended transfer to the right hand, palming the present in the left hand in transit. Move the right hand to the right, follow the right hand with the eyes, as you drop the left hand to the table with the palmed present. Crumple vanish as before, and reveal the empty right hand from little finger to forefinger. Wait a beat, and reach simultaneously to right and left cups, lifting them to reveal the return of their hidden presents. *"Still safely hidden!"* Place the cups behind the presents. Quickly lift the center cup with the left hand to show the return of the third present. Say *"...and here is the other one!"* while looking directly at the spectators. You load the center cup with the extra present as you replace the cup behind the visible present on the table.

End Section One - Status: Hands are clean, cups are lined up behind three presents, and the extra present is under the center cup.

Section Two - Take advantage of your truly empty hands to do a sweeping palm up gesture, both hands moving outward from the center of the body. *"Ok, you parents know the closets where the presents are stashed. Keep an eye out for searching children!"* During this patter, you appear to push the presents back into their closets (cups). Tilt the left cup back a bit with the left hand, and use the right hand to pretend to shove the present into the cup, palming it in the fingertips and thumb. Move to the center cup, tilt it back a bit with the left hand, and push both the palmed present and the exposed present under the center cup to join the hidden present, making three under the cup. Move to the

right cup, and pretend to shove the third present under that cup, palming it instead. Do a two-handed, palm forward Ramsay subtlety, with each index finger pointing up at a 45 degree angle. Move the hands apart a little as you say, *"Everybody good? Ok, let's check. . ."* Lift the left and right cups by their narrow upper ends, finding the space beneath them both empty! *"No! Where are they? Wait. . . I bet Mom has moved them!"* Place the end cups in a new line behind where the presents should have been. If you are seated, pick a woman in the crowd to tap the center cup; if you are standing, ask her to wave her hand in a magic pass. Pick up the center cup, finding all three presents together! *"Whew! That was a scary moment!"* Place the center cup behind the three presents.

End Section Two – Status: Right hand has extra present palmed, cups are lined up, and three presents are clustered in the center of the mat.

Section Three – Place one present on top of each cup, keeping the extra present palmed in the right hand. Lower both hands into resting position. *"After that last scare, I decided to move the presents to the top of the closets, hoping that the children were too short to see them up there. However, I saw one of the kids climbing on a chair to get a cookie from the cookie jar, and so I decided that the presents are not safe."* If standing: Pick up the right cup by its shoulder with the right hand, and toss the present from the top of the cup to the left hand. Show the present as you replace the right cup, keeping your eyes on the left hand as you load the right cup during its replacement to the table. If seated: Tilt the right cup forward from its shoulder with the right hand, and catch the present in the cupped left hand, loading the extra present under the cup as you receive the visible present. In either case, continue, *"I need to take this present to the neighbor's house to hide it."* Suit your actions to your words by executing a false transfer from the left hand to the right. As the left hand retains the present, it forms a pointer toward the right hand. Move your closing right hand slightly right and upward in a "snapping up" gesture that reinforces the illusion that the present is arriving in the right hand, and drop the left hand with palmed present to resting position on the mat or table edge. Pretending to place the present in your right pocket, pick up coal lump #1 and emerge with it in finger palm. Lift the right cup with the left hand, ignoring the palmed present for the moment. The present has returned instantly to the right cup! Transfer the cup to the right hand as it exits the pocket with the coal lump. Pick up the tabled

present with the left hand index finger and thumb to display it, using a palm-up (not palm-out) Ramsay subtlety to hide the extra present in the left finger palm. Simultaneously, set the cup behind the present with the right hand, loading the coal lump as you set it down and taking care that it does not talk. *“Apparently, the neighbor brought it back, afraid his kids might find it! I had better put this back in the top of the closet!”* Place the present back on top of the right cup.

“I must take this next present to a different neighbor’s house, then.” Repeat with the center cup, using reversed hands and the appropriate standing or seated technique. Use the left hand to toss (or tilt) the present from the center cup to the cupped right hand, and display it in thumb and forefinger, again using palm-up Ramsay subtlety to conceal the extra present in finger palm. Replace the cup with the left hand, loading the extra present under the center cup as you replace it. False transfer the visible present to the left hand, do the “snapping up” gesture, and pretend to place the supposed present into the left pocket. Pick up coal lump #2, and emerge from the left pocket just as the right hand lifts the center cup to show that the present has returned! *“Oops. . . no good there, either! Back to the top of the closet!”* Transfer the cup to the left hand to cover the coal lump, and pick up the tabled present to display at the right fingertips in Ramsay subtlety (again, to hide the finger palmed extra present). Load the coal lump in setting down the cup. Place the visible present on top of the center cup.

“Perhaps I can carry this last one with me in my briefcase.” Repeat with the left cup, once again reversing hands. The right hand tosses (or tilts) the left cup to get the present into the left hand. In setting down the cup, the extra present is loaded. False transfer from the left hand to the right, do the “snapping up” gesture, and pocket the supposed present. Pick up coal lump #3. *“Hey, did Junior see me put that into my briefcase? I had better get it back into the closet!”* As the right hand emerges from the pocket, the left hand picks up the left cup from the table, exposing the return of the final present to the cup! Pass the cup to the right hand, and load the last coal lump as the left hand lifts and displays the present with the palm-up Ramsay subtlety. Place the third present back on the top of the left cup.

End Section Three – Status: All cups have hidden coal lumps under them, the extra present is finger palmed in the left hand, and the visible presents are atop each of the cups.

Section Four – Ignore the cups, and begin using only your hands. *“We have had too many close calls! I am going to move some presents to my car trunk!”* Use the right hand to pick up the left cup’s present, and really place it into the curled palm-up left hand (which is already concealing the extra present), using the same motions as a false transfer (consistency of motion is important; real and false transfers should look alike). Taking the present from atop the middle cup, place it into the left curled palm also. There are now three in the left hand, and the spectators think there are two. *“Two in my trunk... this last one will go into my wife’s car trunk.”* The third present is taken from atop the right cup, shown briefly, and actually put into the right pocket. *“Wait. . . the children are headed towards Mom’s car!”* Make a magical gesture, as if pulling an invisible object through the cloth of the pocket, and toss the invisible object toward the left hand. Wait a second for dramatic impact, and open the hand fully, showing that the third present has joined the other two! Smile! Place each present back atop a cup, as you say, *“Back into the top of the closet!”*

End Section Four – Status: All cups have hidden lumps of coal under them, the extra present was ditched into the right pocket, and there is a present atop each cup once again.

Section Five – The cups have been forgotten during Section Four’s “two in the hand, one in the pocket” maneuver, creating time misdirection between the last moment the cups were handled and the upcoming effect. *“It is time that the children and I had a talk. They need to stop trying to spoil Christmas morning.”* Pick up all packages from the cups with the left hand, and (really!) transfer them singly to the right (consistency of motion, again). Cup the right fingers to receive them as usual, but open the hand a bit too much and hold it too low, (deliberately) exposing the packages in the hand. Perform the “snapping up” gesture, which remains consistent from earlier, and place the packages into the right pocket. These last exposures of the presents before they enter the pocket tacitly ‘proves’ that all previous ones were really going into the pocket, and makes it difficult for spectators to backtrack on earlier pocket trips.

Drop the presents in the pocket, and pick up the final load. *“Children, here is what happens when you are naughty and try to ruin the joy of Christmas.”* Emerge from the pocket with the final load stocking in the right hand, back of the hand outward, just as you pick up a cup and expose the first lump of coal! Look at the spectators and say, *“How would you like to get a lump of coal for Christmas?”* Exactly during this patter, place the cup into the right hand, over the load as you pivot your hand to palm up. Pick up the center cup, and stack it upon the cup in the right hand, exposing the arrival of the second lump of coal! Wait a beat for it to sink into the spectators, and quickly lift the right cup, stacking it on the other two. *“Surely none of you wants THIS for Christmas!”* Nod toward the three lumps of coal as you set the loaded cup stack on the table.

“Of course, the children apologized, and they stopped seeking their Christmas gifts. I then disposed of the lumps of coal...” Scoop up all three of the coal lumps in one move of the right hand, and open the hand to display them briefly on the palm. Turn the left hand up into curled fingers to receive them, and do a click pass: While looking at the spectators, appear to dump the set of three into the left hand, but allow the coal lumps to fall from the right palm into the right fingers, making a clattering sound as they stay in the right hand. Close the left hand into a bulbous fist (remember, you supposedly have three lumps of coal in there!). Move the closed left hand away to the left, following with your eyes, and form a pointer with the right hand as you settle the coal lumps into right finger palm. Hesitate a moment, perhaps glance again at the spectators, and then look back at the left hand as you count aloud, tapping on the closed left fist. *“One, two, three...”* and shift your gaze to make the last tap on the stack of cups. *“...GO!”*

Look back at the left hand, and open it from little finger to forefinger to reveal the vanish, dropping the right hand to the table in rest position as the left hand opens. *“Of course, Christmas does finally arrive!”* Lift the cup stack with the left hand, exposing the Christmas stocking. Transfer the stack to the right hand to cover the coal lumps, and place the cups into your magic case, ditching the coal lumps. Use both hands to open the small stocking and dump out the small toys and/or candies.



Almond Brothers

by Ken Muller



A busy mother finds her life full with three kids jumping around, only to discover she has only two very energetic ones – or did she misplace one? (The handling makes two nuts seem like three.)

EFFECT: Three almonds from a dish are counted into the left hand (3LH). Suddenly one vanishes to be found hiding behind the couch (2LH, 1RH). She lets him be in order to feed the other two but one of them sneaks away to join the first (1LH,2RH). Oh well, they are quiet at least! She plays with the girl (1LH) and then checks on the two brats. One is missing! (1RH) She hunts around and finds him playing with his sister in the kitchen (2LH). She goes to get the third for lunch but he is gone! (0LH) She can't find him and begins to think she has only two kids all along. (2LH) Then she catches him trying to crawl out the door! (1RH) – so she puts all three to bed. (3 in dish)

PREPARATION: a dish of almonds all the same, shelled or not.

- PRACTICED ACTIONS -

Moves: Sway Movements, Sway Reverse, Point, Splay

Sleights: SwayOn, DropCount, ClipPass, SwayToss

Subtleties: *Implication, Misdirection (Preemptive Doubt)*

If you are not familiar with the listed Sleights it would be best to explore these at the end of this article. Several might be 'eye-openers' for you. Here is an outline:

CrossToss: A method of displaying both hands empty while concealing an object.

SwayToss: A method for vanishing an object or transferring secretly.

SwayOn: A masked transfer of an object while concealing the true count of objects in the hands. This can give the perception of more Objects in play than exist.

DropCount: A false count of Objects from a basket to the hand to give the impression of more Objects being held than actual. This uses ClipPass.

ClipPass: A variation of the PalmerClip for use with general objects.

PATTER: a busy mother is often at wit's end trying to take care of a passel of kids. Imagine a mom with one, two, three young urchins, together in the kitchen fighting over what to eat. Suddenly one is gone! She looks around and finds him in another room behind the couch. She gives him a banana and goes back to the other two kids but another has sneaked away! A quick search and he is discovered with his brother. She gets the remaining girl eating her cereal, then checks on the couch rats. Gone! Back to the kitchen and now he is finishing his milk. Great! Now for the other boy. Oh no! "Maybe I'm crazy," she cries, "And only have two kids." One last look. "Ah Ha!" Catches him crawling out the door. "Maybe I'm just tired. Let's all take a nap." One, two, three - all asleep. "Ahhh!"

(The gender of the kids may be changed to match the setting and audience.)

EXECUTION: Three almonds from a dish are counted into the left hand (3LH).¹ Suddenly one vanishes to be found hiding behind the couch (2LH, 1RH).² She lets him be in order to feed the other two³ but one of them sneaks away to

¹ Begin with SwayReverse moves to casually display the hands empty and to establish a pattern of performance for later moves. DropCount two Almonds into the hand while searching for "just the right ones." Slide several up against the near edge of the dish. The audience believes you have three Almonds in hand.

² Show the two Almonds on the Left Palm while Point with the Right; then execute SwayOn to show one Almond in the Right Hand. Sway the body from left to right during the Transfer with the Left Hand in loose Point.

³ Making an identical Sway from right to left, Point to the Single Almond in the Left Hand, acting surprised that one is missing.

join the first (1LH, 2RH).⁴ Oh well, they are quiet at least! She plays with the girl (1LH)⁵ and then checks on the two brats. One is missing! (1RH)⁶ She hunts around and finds him playing with his sister in the kitchen (2LH).⁷ She goes to get the third for lunch but he is gone! (0LH)⁸ Mom can't find him and begins to think she has only two kids all along. (2LH)⁹ She checks again and finds him crawling out the door! (1RH)¹⁰ - so she puts all three to bed. (3 in dish)¹¹

NOTE: After doing this and similar effects for years I came across the coin sleight called Tenkai Point Transfer. It is similar to SwayOn except my fingers never touch the hand in Point and are moving away during the reveal. Jay Sankey uses this sleight in a coin Routine called "*Mexican Jumping Coins.*" Since you can't use a dish with coins very logically I suggest you check out his methods if you wish to do a similar routine with coins. He doesn't use *Sway Moves*, but a different False Count. Here, the natural frantic movements of the

⁴ Repeat Step #2 to get the second Almond onto the Right Palm, with the Left in Point.

⁵ Gesture wildly on "quiet" and SwayToss one Almond back into the Left Hand from ClipPass. Actually, the Right Fist makes a circular clockwise sweep over the Left Hand. Open the Left Hand naturally from the Point position to show the Almond.

⁶ Open the Right Hand naturally as it is supposed to hold two Almonds. Show surprise and start looking around the table or space anxiously.

⁷ Either SwayToss or SwayOn using body movements during the frantic search. If SwayToss is used be sure not to display the empty Right Hand. You are now showing Two Almonds on the Left Palm with the Right Hand in Point.

⁸ Do a slight Sway to the right for continuity as you open the Right Hand to show nothing! Show resignation rather than surprise.

⁹ Open the Left Hand to show Two Almonds with the Right Splay. Sway first to the left, then back to the right side. With a shrug, Sway back to the left side/center and SwayToss one Almond to the Right Hand that goes to Point at the now closed Left Hand.

¹⁰ With a sigh reach out an 'grab' the missing child trying to crawl away, opening the right Hand to reveal the missing Almond at the fingertips, keeping the Left closed and far away. An astute spectator might have gotten suspicious after showing only two total Almonds and will be watching for something like the SwayOn (point Transfer)

¹¹ The audience believes you have Two Almonds in the Left hand and One in the Right. Before they know to expect reach down to the dish with the Left Fingers and knock over the little stack made earlier saying, "One." Next, visibly drop the Almond from the Right Fingers saying, "Two." Then, open the Left Palm the show the remaining Almond and let it drop into the dish - "Three."



distraught mother makes *Sway Moves* and ideal mask for the transfers in what I have learned is a “one behind approach.” This allows the Right Hand to be shown completely empty at the beginning and at the end, followed by an ‘impossible’ production. Actually, the Left Hand could be shown empty at step #5, followed by a “search” and a final discovery back in the Left Hand. However, do not show the Right Hand with two Almonds at the same time as the empty Left as such verifying only two Almonds may overplay the mystery. *SwayOn* is combined with *Preemptive Doubt* as a Preemptive Transfer Sleight in other Funsway eBooks.

LESSON: the audience will believe any silly story as long as the visual results more or less illustrates what is happening. This is a special form of misdirection. By saying, “Two kids,” and then showing two Almonds you establish a level of trust. Later when you say “Two” about a closed hand and only one is seen in the other you are believed. Perhaps this is Implication rather than Inference –but it works. Most “one behind” effects never display both hands at once, but here it seems to work with a later production that will fool experienced magicians. When using almost continuous *Sway Movements* it is the sudden stop that will draw attention. During a *SwayOn* the Object is tossed onto the waiting palm that is moving away. When it lands the Pointing hand moves slowly away while the receiving hand stops. This will also stop any movement of the Object so that it appears to have been there all along. The biggest error with *SwayToss* or *On* is to hesitate during the ‘catch’. It is essential that the hands never stop their continuous flowing motion.

Sway Movements – Flowing movements of the hands and body that casually display both sides of each hand.

Sway Reverse – A figure-eight type of continuous *Sway Movement* with no concealed object in either hand.

Point - To use the slightly open hand with extended forefingers to direct attention to an object or hand with the back partially towards the audience.

Splay - To show one's hand with palm upwards and fingers spread, to be completely empty or holding a small object on the palm.

SwayOn - A masked transfer of an object while concealing the true count of objects in the hands. This can give the perception of more Objects in play than exist.

DropCount - A False Count of objects from a basket to the hand to give the impression of more Objects being held than actual. This uses ClipPass. The Right Hand picks up an object from the basket and comes up from behind the Left Hand to drop it in, continuing over the top and back down to the basket. While the second object is being found the first is allowed to slide into PalmerClip position. After the second object is dropped into the Left Hand, the first object is dropped from between the fingers to be caught by the Right Hand on its way to the basket. That object is now brought back up as the third object, leaving only two in the Left Hand.

ClipPass - A variation of the PalmerClip for use with general objects.

PalmerClip - the object lies across the ring finger and against the little finger. The little one raises and lowers so as to pinch the object between the fingers where it can be pushed or dropped from the back of the hand, any exposed part covered by the thumb.

CrossToss - The Left Hand starts on the left side with the Right Hand Point. It sweeps slowly to the right side and rotates palm down and passes over the Right Hand that is Splay and up, the body turning and moving more than the arms. As the body returns to the left side the Left Hand rotates vertical and drops the Object that is picked up by the Right Hand rotating into Point and stopping. This is used to conceal the fact that you have an object in the hands, but appears identical to SwayToss and Sway Reverse.

SwayToss - As the hands pass each other during natural *Sway Movements* a small object can be Tossed from one hand to another. Actually, an Object can just be left hanging in the air for the other hand to pick up a moment later. Because the hands are in motion, a phenomenon called *Inattention of Vision*

prevents the Object from being perceived. Some planning is required to insure that the hand with the Object to be Tossed is above the receiving hand. Practice is required to maintain eye contact with the audience during this move, followed by a continuous flowing movement of the hands.

Inattention of Vision - When the eye is focused on any object the background is filled in from experience as much as visual impressions. When the eye follows the motion of an interesting object like a colored stone, the mind cannot perceive any incongruent action in its path. Even when the mind expects to see an object appear on the palm of the hand, its attention is still on the moving hand or other item (e.g. a wand). When the object is finally noticed it appears suddenly and the mind may attempt to reconstruct the possibilities of its physical existence, with a temporary brush of astonishment. A proper balance of Motion, Rhythm, Directed Focus, Implication and Inference can create a Zone of Invisibility called a 'Womb' in front of your bellybutton. Many Sway Sleights take advantage of this concept to "fool the mind."



Editor's Note

The previous trick, 'Almond Brothers', and the notes that follow, are from "Sleight and the Family Stone", written and conceived by Ken Muller and published in 2009. Many of the sleights and methods that he describes can be found in other magic writings with different names and the creative magician can take what Ken has given in this article and morph it into a superb magic trick based on previous knowledge and the personal work of each, individual magician reading this article. It is not Magi Muller's claim that he alone is responsible for the sleights and methods given, only that the material is his own, creative, work.

The two scripts that follow this article (below) are also Magi Muller's unique writings, to be used by the readers of this magazine for a Christmas presentation. Ken Muller has graciously given us both 'Almond Brothers' and these two following scripts for our use, should we decide to make them part of our own presentations. It is Ken's hope that we can find a place for his offerings in our own work, whether holiday themed or otherwise.

Many thanks, Ken!

Christmas Scripts

by Ken Maller



Johan and Lisa were newly wed,
with hearts filled with love and caring;
and their first Christmas shared together
should have been one of such special joy.

But they knew little of selfless giving,
each raised with greed and material things,
so each flipped through catalogues
in search of Santa's inspiration.

He selected a gift by careful search
and had it wrapped in fine red paper,
so it would be noticed 'neath the tree
in hopes she would like as much as he.

She thumbed through the catalogue
and let it fall open to a page
that she fancied he might have checked,
and ordered it shipped that very day.

But Christmas arrived with empty mail
and she placed no red box 'neath that tree,
and she burst into tears and dreadful sobs
that love might be lost to lack of care.

She grabbed up his gift without peeking
and thrust it to his bewildered hands.
"I would give anything that this be yours,
for I'm not worthy of such a gift."

Yet, Christmas is magic as you know,
for she got her wish with girlish glee,
as blackish day turned to rosy glow
and the box revealed a Magi's touch.

It makes no sense and defies reason
that his and hers are found the same,
but ...
To get what you give is life itself,
and to give all you have a blessing.

It came to pass on that night of nights,
when the Child was swaddled and Mary rested,
that a shepherd whispered in Joseph's ear
that three Magi waited outside the door.

He was no longer surprised at anything,
and went out to greet the strange visitors,
fearing a bit that they would disturb
Mary and the sleeping infant.

To his surprise only two Magi were there,
though an empty camel spoke of a third,
so Joseph rushed inside to find the Wise Man
kneeling by the manger in awe and wonder.

He dashed back outside to hold back the others
as there was so little room inside the stable;
but alas, a second had disappeared like smoke,
only to be found next to Mother and Child.

"Enough," thought Joseph protectively,
and went outside to restrain the third,
but a different Magi was found sitting there
though Joseph had never seen these two pass.

While two Magi had remained in quiet prayer
the third had snuck out to tend the herd;
so Joseph returned to guide the others out,
but another was missing from Mary's side.

Dash in – dash out and round-about,
poor Joseph found two Magi without,
and hoped the third would join his friends
but then he too had vanished from the crib.

"Please stay put," he cried to those outside,
the two who pointed up unto the sky,
and the hilltop where the third had flown
to praise the star that had brought them home.

And one by one they entered their tent
to reflect on a journey's end well spent,
and Joseph sighed for peace well earned,
as the family finally shared a night alone.

On page 35 of the diary (above) is the script that will fit to 'Red Hot Momma'. If you perform 'RHM' you will immediately see where the lines fit with the moves. It's just a matter of memorizing the script and then adapting your actions into the presentation. On page 36 you'll see a script that is intended to use with the trick 'Almond Brothers', but can be used to fit with nearly any 'Three Fly' presentation, as well as 'Coins Across', 'Matrix', and 'Chink-a-Chink' (amongst others).

The Magician

by Michael Jay



Chapter 4

Although it was coming to an end, it had been a beautiful day. The sky was blue and only a few clouds were to be found drifting across the sky, and even those clouds were the fluffy white, billowy ones. Danny always pointed out that they were called cirrus clouds, but Danny called every cloud a cirrus cloud. Over the years, it had become a game between Sheri and him. Danny would point out the biggest, nastiest rain cloud and say, "Look, that's a cirrus cloud." Sheri would smile and agree, even though she knew that it was not.

Sheri and Danny were enjoying an early evening picnic in the park. They needed this kind of time together without any interruptions, without any worries. Of late, their arguments had been loud and vicious. Money problems had crept into their otherwise idyllic life, forcing Sheri to get a job to help pay the bills and, in Danny's opinion, that was not good. Danny knew what went on in offices, the grab-ass bullshit that bosses pulled even in the face of harassment laws. Moreover, Sheri's office job was causing Danny's work to suffer. Sheri had little time for practicing routines these days and when she did, her heart was no longer in it. (Not that it mattered - Danny was not getting the work that he used to, even as little as a year ago, when he was booked solid every weekend. Now he felt lucky just to get two shows in a month.)

None of that mattered at this very moment, though, with the sun on the horizon, framing Sheri's head like a halo. It glimmered on the edges of her hair, which served to enhance her natural beauty. Sheri's hair always reminded Danny of wheat late in the season, where it took on the color that was neither brown nor gold, just a very pleasing color in between.

While Danny tried to put a name to that color, the sun behind her turned to a deep red. Too red. The way the sun was showing from behind her left a strange shadow at the bottom of her neck. It looked oddly like two hands reaching in front of her throat as if to strangle her. And something was seeping out from under those shadowy hands; it was beginning to run down her chest

and into her blouse. But it wasn't the sun at all, it was a man - a man with two wicked hands strangling, finger nails ripping, cutting into her flesh, and that strange ooze was blood. Sheri was bleeding.

Danny quickly tried to reach out to her, but his arm would not move. Danny could not reach out to her; he seemed paralyzed, somehow.

Sheri's face began to twist from the pain and fear. Danny was frozen and could only watch as the blood flowed freely, forming a puddle around her, a puddle in the shape of a heart. She was trying to speak, but those phantasmal hands around her neck stifled her. Sheri could only make gurgling sounds. Danny tried to break free from the invisible bonds that were barring him from helping his wife and the clouds were growing ever bigger.

The clouds had engulfed them, fog rolling in and everything fading to white. Danny could see nothing but the white fog. To his horror, he could still hear the gurgling.

The fog was lifting, the sounds fading, but the white remained. It was the white of the ceiling and Danny was on his back, looking up. He was in a hospital bed. "A dream," Danny told himself, but could not fully understand why he was in a hospital. His mind was groggy from drugs and there was an IV in his arm. Just down his arm from that IV was a set of handcuffs that were shackling him to the bed's steel rail. It was those damned Peerless cuffs, mocking him, holding his arm in place so that he couldn't move. Danny's mouth was dry and he was struggling to make full sense of his situation.

"Ah, you're awake."

Danny looked in the direction of the voice. Across the room was a nurse. She was tall and lanky, but pretty in her own way. The outfit, no doubt, Danny figured - all women were pretty when dressed like a nurse.

"What's going on?" Danny's mind was still not working properly.

"You passed out from the stress and the police brought you here." Her tone was matter-of-fact - professional, but noncommittal.

"Oh," Danny said and he drifted off to sleep.

The nurse left Danny's room and meandered back to the nurse's station. She was not aware of the facts in Danny's case, but she knew that she had to inform the police that Danny was awake. She made the call to the detective's squad using the number that she had been given.

It was nearly an hour later when Detective Casey and Detective Jones arrived at New York Methodist Hospital. These two first grade detectives had been given the Steadman case and the facts were fairly straightforward (Danny was the only real suspect in this crime). When they walked into Danny's room, he was still asleep.

Jones began to shake Danny's arm, saying "Wake up, Steadman, wake up already." He was not gentle about this.

Danny came around, his brain still mucking about in the fog of the drugs he had been given, and saw the two detectives. He looked down at those Peerless cuffs, grunted, and then turned his attention back to the two detectives.

"Mr. Steadman, good to see you can join us," Jones stated in obvious mockery. "I'm Detective Jones and this is my partner Detective Casey. We need to ask you some questions. Do you think you can handle that?"

"Yea, I think so . . . But why am I in cuffs?"

"We're going to ask the question here, Steadman." The reply was blunt and came from the other detective, Casey.

"Why don't you tell us everything that happened before you found your wife dead on the floor," Jones started in.

"Am I under arrest?" It was a logical question, but was met once again with Casey's blunt statement that Danny was not the one asking questions. Jones was a bit more reasonable, though.

"You resisted arrest so you're being lawfully restrained," Jones began. "But that's not why we're here. We're investigating the murder of your wife, Mrs. Steadman, and we need to find out the string of events that led up to her death. Can you answer some questions for us?"

"Yea, sure, but I didn't resist arrest . . ." Before he could finish his thought, Casey jumped on Danny again.

"That has nothing to do with any of this, Steadman, just answer Jones' questions."

"Okay, but you don't need to be so nasty." Danny was starting to feel that same frustration that had come over him when he was trying to talk to Sergeant Davis. He remembered how that ended, though, and thought the better of getting too upset with these detectives, regardless of their very poor social skills.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Steadman, we'll try to be more understanding of your situation," Jones began.

"What were you doing before you came home?"

"I was out, speaking with a client. Jobs haven't been coming in much these days, so it's important that I meet with them personally to try to sell our shows." It was useless information, but Danny was trying to remember everything that he could and his mind was still in a bit of a cloud.

A cloud, Danny thought. A cloud that stopped him from saving Sheri, a cloud that took him away from her, a cloud that was still stopping him from thinking straight. He felt like he was trying to make his way through a thick mire between the dream world and reality. What the hell kind of drugs did they give him?

"Shows?" Jones asked.

"I'm a magician," Danny answered without any irony in his voice. Jones raised his eyebrows almost imperceptibly, shot a furtive glance to his partner and continued with his questions.

"Who was this 'client', Mr. Steadman?" Jones was looking for a solid lead.

Danny's mind was clearing up. The drugs that he was given were beginning to wear off and the surreal position that he had found himself in was starting to become a cold, hard reality. The sinking feeling coming from deep within was halted abruptly by an odd realization - an odd realization that caused Danny to giggle.

"Oh, you find this funny, Mr. Steadman?" asked Jones, disconcerted by this change in Danny's demeanor.

"No, it's not funny at all," Danny stated, still trying to control his sudden fit of giddiness. "I just realized that you are Detectives Casey and Jones . . ." That old Seibert/Newton ballad began running through Danny's head and he could not help but sing his own version out loud.

"Casey Jones climbed into the cabin, Casey Jones had his pecker in his hand . . ."

Detective Casey exploded. "You think this is some kind of joke, you degenerate bastard?"

Jones immediately turned to Casey to hold him back. Jones had always suspected that the decision to put them together had something to do with the word play of their names. Jones never understood why, otherwise, he would be partnered with a guy who was so bereft of humor that even Pol Pot would find him sedate. Certainly, Jones was cynical in his own way, but Casey brought cynicism to an entirely different level, a level that made them nearly incompatible as partners.

"Easy partner," Jones soothingly cooed to Casey. "Remember, he's been given drugs for his condition. He's not completely in his right mind."

That seemed to work. Casey settled down.

"Mr. Steadman," Jones began again. "We need to know who you were with prior to your wife's murder and what time that was."

"I was talking with Letisha Parker about performing for the old folks at her home. That would have been around 11 a.m. After that, I drove home for lunch and, well . . ." Danny's voice trailed off while the vision of horror replayed in his mind.

"Go on," Jones prodded.

"Well, I saw Sheri's car in the driveway. She shouldn't have been home, but I thought maybe she wanted to talk and got some time off work . . . Or maybe came home early. I didn't know. But the door was unlocked. Sheri always

locks the door. And then there was my dog, Tanni, covered in blood . . . Her blood - Sheri's blood . . . And then the police were there."

"What would Sheri want to talk about, Mr. Steadman?" Jones continued.

"We'd been having problems lately. I didn't like her working at that office and we needed to talk . . ." Danny suddenly became aware of the fact that he was implicating himself in Sheri's murder.

"Mr. Steadman," Detective Jones continued, "Can you think of anyone who would want to hurt your wife?"

Danny knew that this question only served to divert the under-current of what these two detectives were trying to prove - that Danny had killed his wife.

"No. Nobody would want to kill Sheri."

"Now, Mr. Steadman, I have to ask you this and you aren't going to like it, but do you think your wife was seeing anyone? I mean, do you think that she may have been seeing someone at her office or outside of the office?"

"Are you asking me if my wife was having an affair?" Danny's patience was wearing thin. He knew they had to ask these questions, but he was getting angry none-the-less.

"Yes, Mr. Steadman. Do you think she was having an affair?"

"No. I don't believe that for a second."

"Okay, Mr. Steadman, we have to check some other things out, but we'll get back to you and I'm sure that we'll have more questions for you," Jones said, trying to be as noncommittal as the nurse had been earlier.

"Am I under arrest?" Danny still wasn't certain of what was going on, only that he was being held by what were the easiest cuffs in the world from which to escape.

"I'm not putting you under arrest, Mr. Steadman. At least, not until my investigation is complete. Officer Davis, on the other hand, has placed you under arrest for resisting and that's going to keep you in custody at this time."

Danny was going to ask more questions, but the detectives were already leaving the room and it was obvious that they had nothing more to say.

The drugs had almost worn off at this point and Danny's brain was working hard and fast. He knew he needed a lawyer, but he also knew what the evidence suggested. He knew that he was the only suspect in Sheri's murder. He began looking around for anything within reach that he could use to pick those cuffs.

Those damnable, Peerless Model 700, chain link, standard issue, cuffs.

Chapter 5 of The Magician will be available on January 15th, included with issue #14 of Top Hat Magazine. Please watch our FaceBook page for details.





Bizarre Bursary

Ah, the Christmas Season is upon us, Kiddies, and I see that you've found yourselves back in my bizarre lair. I have some very special Christmas treats for you this time around.

Making his very first foray into the dark recesses of our world, Mark Williams offers us a short story from his twisted psyche. Following that, Weepin' Willie shares his good memories of Krystal Lake. Finally, Nyama Possessor returns with the history of our beloved familiars.

Here's wishing you all a Creepy Christmas.



Merry Christmas... Mr. Torrance

by Mark Williams



A sky of ebon darkness loomed above the small village; a malevolent evil presence besieged the townspeople below. Tiny white glimmering stars winked at the townspeople; the stars' bright rays pierced through the cold and balmy darkness. Upon closer observation, there was an uneasy feeling, a feeling of trepidation, offset by one of celebration. The townspeople were decorating their freshly cut evergreen trees with colorful lights, tinsel and beautiful ornaments. Pinecone wreaths were being hung in nearly every window; it was Christmas Eve and the townspeople were trying to enjoy themselves at the Local Hall where their jubilant party was taking place. Only one man, Mr. Torrance, was saddened by this occasion (as he was every year). Mr. Torrance is an Octogenarian who had lived a hard life alone inside a dreary one-room house just on the out skirts of the town. Mr. Torrance is crippled, and he moves slowly about in his wheelchair. He had his third open-heart surgery just last week and is still recovering. His personal nurse could not be with him tonight, as she too was attending the town party. Mr. Torrance forbade her to go to the township's Christmas Party--yet she defied his cruelty and went anyway. Mr. Torrance vowed to sever her from his employ as of Christmas Day.

Mr. Torrance wheeled himself over towards his frost-covered window and, with his handkerchief, he wiped clean a portion of the glass. He could still see the snow falling from the Heavens above and at that exact moment, a teardrop froze upon his wrinkled face as it trickled down his cheek. Mr. Torrance contemplated his loneliness and began to weep heavily into his aged hands. The sublime evil seemed so distant at this moment, yet his cruel facade had been Mr. Torrance's ultimate downfall. Mr. Torrance then abruptly turned his wheelchair towards his small fireplace. Once there, he sat near the fire's glowing embers and tried to remain warm. Even this momentary relief from the stark cold could not stop him from crying. Mr. Torrance wished that just once, he too might be invited to the town's Christmas party or that the townspeople would come to visit him. This, of course, he knew would never happen.

The townspeople learned to hate Mr. Torrance at his constant insistence. The townspeople refused to have anything to do with Mr. Torrance, as they believed that he truly was an evil old man. This was definitely true enough; Mr. Torrance was a crotchety old soul who hated everyone. Mr. Torrance was never pleasant and he

always felt that he had absolutely no use for any of the townspeople. All he ever wanted was to be left alone. Mr. Torrance often verbalized his disgust to many of the townspeople and it was these types of incidents that started his fading away from society. The townspeople grew further away from this evil man, yet there was still a feeling of foreboding, even at the mere mention of Mr. Torrance's name. The townspeople no longer had any use for such an ungrateful soul. The townspeople did not even bother to ask Mr. Torrance to their festivities. The Townspeople soon all learned to ignore Mr. Torrance whenever they might see him and they soon turned Mr. Torrance out from their little village. Yet, the townspeople refused to let their celebration get spoiled.

The town's Christmas party was at its height of reverie. Everyone was dancing and singing Christmas carols. Then, suddenly, a brilliant light struck the middle of the Dance Floor. The townspeople froze in terror, at first...then they all saw a brightly lit Star to the East; shining shards of colorful luminescence. It was a beautiful sight to behold, and in an instant, its rays of hope touched each of their hearts.

Mr. Torrance suddenly heard a knock on his front door, but when he tried to wheel himself over to the door his wheelchair would not move. The evil had crept ever deeper into his soul and it held firm its grip. The brakes on his wheelchair were not set, so Mr. Torrance tried again. As before, his wheelchair did not budge and every muscle in his body was frozen stiff. The evil would soon take his soul to feed on and devour. There was another knock on his front door and this time Mr. Torrance could hear several faint and muffled voices calling out his name. He tried to answer, but found that he could no longer speak. Evil knows no salvation, as it hungers for pure hate. Mr. Torrance tried in complete desperation to utter just a sound, yet none would escape from inside of him.

The knocking persisted. This time Mr. Torrance could actually identify the town mayor's familiar voice. Mr. Torrance was still unable to respond, but at long last he saw the town mayor peering through the window he had recently wiped clean. Mr. Torrance was quite relieved to see the town mayor, but it was no use...The evil had finished the work it had started--Mr. Torrance's soul sank into a dark abyss. The town mayor was not able to see Mr. Torrance. All that was visible was an empty wheelchair with a handkerchief lain across the seat, sitting next to a brightly burning fire.

After a few more attempts to rouse Mr. Torrance, the mayor and all of the townspeople left. The townspeople returned to their party, forgetting that they had gone on a goodwill visit to include Mr. Torrance in their festivities.

Mr. Torrance was suddenly struck by the dreadful silence that followed and a sharp chill pierced his entire being. His soul was lost to the evil...In a moment later, Mr. Torrance was dead. The evil retreated and was soon gone; another conquest had quenched its hunger. In the dark sullen emptiness, there was another bright star hovering above Mr. Torrance's house. Its bright light illuminated the front porch.

And there, just outside of his front door, was a beautifully wrapped box with a colorful ribbon tied to it and a small card which read: "Merry Christmas...Mr. Torrance."



The Death Rose

by Weepin' Willie



Krystal Lake

Krystal Lake! Oh, how I love this place. I can see, by the look in your eyes, that you love it too. Sally and I spent a lot of our childhood youth here and this is where Marsha waited on Richard, that day; ah, the memories and stories this place could share. Marsha is my niece, the adopted daughter of my only brother, Joe. Joe was always the ugly duckling of the family and in desperation for female companionship. He called the number he found on the bus station bathroom wall. "For a good time, call Thea," it said. There were not any online dating sites in those days so if you found a name on the bathroom wall, and especially if you were looking for a good time, you had to give it a call. As it turns out, Thea was the love of Joe's life and the marriage lasted many years, although Thea was in reality a post-surgery transvestite originally known on his birth certificate as Theodore. Joe and Marsha loved Thea with their whole hearts, but unfortunately, Thea's love was not as strong for them and she eventually decided she was a male lesbian and left Joe and Marsha for another woman. It was a sad time and a lengthy recovery.

As I stroll along this shoreline, it is easy to remember those good times and it brings a smile to my face and a twinkle to my eyes. Krystal Lake only pales in comparison to a dimly lit embalming room with more than one cadaver patiently reposed upon the gurney.

See that old tire floating on that clump of green stuff? That tire is over fifty years old and looks as good as the day it was discarded. Once, Joe and I made a swing out of it on a tree that was once on that bank. The limb overhung the lake and we would swing out and plunge feet first into the slime. The tree is long gone but the tire and the slime are still here. Mom would get so mad at us for coming home all slimy that the hairy mole on her forehead would puff out and look like a spider. Sometimes, when dad kissed her on the forehead, she would shout "Jesus!" because a few course hairs would always get caught between his teeth and hurt as he disengaged them from the mole. I imagine when dad died she sort of missed the forehead play; after all, Mom was a bit on the masochistic side, anyway. When dad kissed her and she yelled, "Jesus!", Joe and I both knew it was going to be a hot night at our house and we would need to plug our

ears to shut out all the moaning and groaning. I was half-way through puberty before I realized my dad's name was not really Jesus; ours was not a particularly religious family.

On one of those park benches is where Jackie Alice's daughter learned the facts of life. With the dozens of condoms floating in the water and strewn in the bushes and paths, the park lends itself to discussions of, "What are those, Mommy?" Unfortunately, Mommy probably recognizes a few of them, herself. Parents can lead their child to a park bench and explain the 'facts of life' by answering the questions that naturally arise; it's a rite of passage here and parents appreciate rescue from the awkwardness of how to start the conversation about sex. I imagine, at the right time, a child can be shown an actual demonstration if necessary. The story is told that Elizabeth Sue and her dad were sitting on the bench one afternoon when she saw two spiders on the ground, one on top of the other.

"What are those, daddy?" She asked.

"Granddaddy long legs, darling," he answered.

"The one on the top is a granddaddy longlegs?"

"Yes dear."

"What about the one on the bottom?"

"That's a granddaddy long legs too,"

"Both of them are granddaddy long legs?"

"That's right."

"What are they doing?"

"They're making love."

Little three year old Elizabeth Sue jumps off the bench, walks over to the spiders, and grinds them into the earth with the heel of her shoe.

"Ain't going to have none of that gay crap around here," she exclaimed.

So, I guess children do learn what they live.

Ah! There it is, the Death Rose Bush that is so coveted. Each winter it comes back to life and the red buds blossom into the most beautiful black roses you have ever seen. Rumor has it that if you prick your finger on one of the thorns that you will die. It is a pretty sure bet since we all are going to die someday, whether we prick our fingers or not. One Monday morning after I had exited the embalming room after a long week-end of work, my head reeling from the embalming fluid, and my clothes stained with blood, I drove to Krystal Lake in the hearse and picked one to give to Sally when I proposed marriage. Some think the rose is black because of the soil or water while others think it absorbs all the blood that drains here from the Death Emporium. I think it is because it is magic.

Death Rose

Effect:

A long stem black rose is placed across the open hand and when it is released it rises of its own accord.

Performance:

(Produce a long stem, plastic, black rose. You can get them at stores during Halloween.)

“Ah! The Black Rose. Black, the symbol of Death, and the Rose, the symbol of Love, the perfect match! I Love Death! While it is said that diamonds are forever, it is Death that is really eternal. The Black Rose is the symbol of eternal love and, like eternal love, the Black Rose is rare, and magical, as well.

(Lay the rose upon the hand and it rises of its own accord as you make the appropriate hand gestures. After the rose has raised to the desired height, lower it and then hand it out for examination. No words are necessary.)

Secret:

There are no magnets, wires, or threads, so this effect can be impromptu. You can use a plastic rose or a real one. Almost any long thin item can be levitated in this manner.





You hold your hand at about a 30 degree angle to protect the front view and make sure no one is to your side or especially behind you because angle is important. When you lay the rose across your hand, you lay it across the second knuckle of the first three fingers and tuck the very end under the little finger skin at the second knuckle area.

It only takes a little practice to get it right. The skin of the pinky finger just barely overlaps the bottom half of the rose stem thickness and unless looked at very closely, just looks like the rose is laying on the hand, even from your view. With the hand properly elevated you can cover more if needed until you learn to catch just the right

amount. To levitate the rose, flex the muscle of the little finger, keeping the other fingers stiff and unmoving, and if necessary, move the finger down just a little. Your hand acts like a lever and with the right amount of pressure, you can actually stand the rose vertical to the ground, where it now becomes a balancing act.

There have been many who have used the levitating rose for their magic routines. Most use magnets or threads. I find this technique refreshing because it is as impromptu as death and, like death, you can do it alone. (Which is unlike sex because if you do sex alone people will laugh at you).



Your friend in death and life,

Weepin' Willie

"Your last SMILE is my first priority!"

Visionary Reflections from the Secret Laboratory of the Nyama Possessor



Men are anxious to improve their circumstances, but are unwilling to improve themselves; they therefore remain bound. -- James Allen (As A Man Thinketh)

Greetings brothers and sisters, I hope you enjoyed your very first visit to my Temple and Secret Laboratory back in issue #10... Glad to see you have returned. I promise to make your stay here a productive, pleasurable and informative one. So sit back, relax and enjoy some complimentary Red Bush tea while I plant some historical and creative seeds of wondrous magikal inspiration in your mind.

As the summer season has closed its majestic doors once more, the Ta-Merrian/Kemetic (ancient Egyptian) calendar welcomes in the new year of 6256! Autumn is upon us now, a personal favorite time of year for myself, one which heralds *change*, eldership, the natural aging/dying stage in the cycle of life, and time for introspection and personal self-reflection before the icy hands of Old Man Winter choke the trees. It can get rather cold here on this mountain top, and the secret laboratory even more so due to its subterranean location. Nevertheless, I'm busy preparing for the seasonal *changes* – physically, mentally, spiritually & magikally.

Change, or transmutation rather, is an inevitable part of action and outcome in life. It has even been said that the only guarantee in this life is *change* (and obviously death, which is in and of itself a form of physical *change*). Nothing is permanent but *change*. *Change* is constant... There would be no World, no Earth, no Universe, no progress and no evolutionary growth and development and invention were it not for *change*. Concerning transmutation and *change*, in the first paragraph of chapter four in The Kybalion (a metaphysical and philosophical book on Tehutism/Hermeticism to which I refer often), it is aptly stated:

Man considering the Universe, of which he is a unit, sees nothing but change in matter, forces and mental states. He sees that nothing really IS, but that everything is BECOMING and CHANGING. Nothing stands still – everything is being born, growing, dying – the very instant a thing reaches its height, it begins to decline – the law of rhythm is in constant operation – there is no reality, enduring quality, fixity, or

substantiality in anything – nothing is permanent but Change. He sees all things evolving from other things, and resolving into other things – a constant action and reaction; inflow and outflow; building up and tearing down; creation and destruction; birth, growth and death. Nothing endures but Change. And if he be a thinking man, he realizes that all of these changing things must be but outward appearances or manifestations of some Underlying Power – some Substantial Reality. [emphasis mine]

Now without going too deep into interpretation of the above passage, I included it here simply to give context to the macrocosmic reality and inevitability of *change*, as well as the microcosmic importance of *change* in our magik. One of the keys to being and becoming a successful performer of Metaphysical Magik and Mystery Art is daring to *change*! It's by *changing* things around, experimenting through trial and error, incorporating new ideas and playing the role of an alchemist or scientist, that we ultimately become victorious in our pursuit to find the necessary and needed ingredients for the perfect effects, routines, shows, character personalities, props, methods, etc., etc., etc.

You won't get anywhere unless you try...or better said, unless you *change*... Don't do nothing, don't get nothing! There is no such thing as making a mistake as long as you learn from it, so there is no excuse not to experiment with *change*. Do not allow yourself to get locked into fear, and thus become doomed to remain confined in a limiting box and in a stubborn mind state, left hanging upside-down like *The Hanged Man* of the tarot, in limbo and stagnation. Such habits are personal detriments and are surefire ways to become or remain a boring, inflexible and rusty performer, who performs to entertain himself at the neglect of his or her audience. Those who think inside the box are doomed to remain inside the box, forever!

Embrace *change* within your magikal thinking, even if only in small and strategic increments. Try that effect with a different story; slow down that fast-paced presentation; speed up that long and drawn out story; take a pair of scissors to that script; give that old presentation a brand new theme or storyline; research new streamlined methods to achieve the outcome; simplify; de-clutter; replace one prop for another, and confidently and safely try out new routines by placing them in the middle of your performance, so that the show will still be balanced if the new effect fails to deliver. When you dare to *change* things as a mage, you yourself can *change* internally, for you'll be surprised what manifests in terms of personal growth, presentational development, new ideas and knowledge, when you strive for healthy *change*. You'll never know unless you try.

If you do what you've always done, you'll get what you've always got, fine! Yet dare to break free from your safety zone, break out of the mold of complacency, saw through the chains of comfortable captivity, learn to be comfortable in uncomfortable situations and strive to make some minor *changes* and adjustments where you see fit in your magik (persona, effects, methods, themes, show, pacing, patter, script, storyline, character and style). If fear is considered the mind killer, then a magi unwilling to *change* is the unruly murderer of his/her own success (and therefore his or her own future). Keep it fresh, make it new again, and embrace a little *change* within your magik.

From the Secret Laboratory inside the Temple of the Turquoise Ankh...

Shem Hotep!

Ankh-Ujaa-Seneb!

~ Nyama Possessor ~

~ THE VILLAGE BONEFIRE ~

Animal/Pet Familiars (From An Afrikan Perspective)

Not sure where the idea came from, or how it flowed into the forefront of my mind, yet in thinking about the possibilities of creating a routine utilizing the use of an animal assistant, I began to hone in on the concept of animal and pet familiars. My mind got to wondering, and wandering... From Afrikan shamans to Merlinesque wizards, from solitary-practitioners of folk magik and witchcraft to mad scientists and adventurous explorers, many magikal and enchanting storybook characters and movie personalities are often assisted by animals who are their pets and trusted sidekicks. Whether it be a wolf spirit, a talking raven, a protective snake, or the ever-popular and mysterious cat familiar, the idea of animals and human beings befriending and assisting each other seems as old as time itself, for even in the remote recesses of prehistory, we find evidence of this interesting and mutual companionship.

Back in the prehistoric era, parietal art clearly depicts therianthropy (metamorphosis/shape-shifting), thus representing the eternal and spiritual connection between humans and living non-human creatures. Take for instance *The Sorcerer*, a Stone Age pictograph found in the Pyrenees mountains at the Les Trois Frères site in

France, it portrays a neolithic magi taking the transformational form of a stag and is thought to be part of an ancient magico-religious shape-shifting ritual. Then there are ancient Earth figures such as the *Nazca Lines* in Peru which predominately feature animals including: hummingbirds, spiders, monkeys, fish, sharks, orcas, lizards, llamas, jaguars, monkeys, and some human figures as well.

While living in Ethiopia I visited the *Lioness of Gobu Dura* (Gobedra), a stunning ancient petroglyph of a life-sized lioness meticulously carved into the rock face of a giant boulder resting on the side of a mountain. European heraldry was partly inspired by Afrikan symbols of royalty, where kings and queens across the entire continent were associated with lions. Throughout Afrika one can see lions, eagles and mythical griffins marking royal artifacts. More specifically, Ethiopian rulers were often extremely fond of lions, and even kept them as pets, so much so that the original flag of Ethiopia featured a mighty lion gripping a royal banner.

In Ethiopian circles it is known that the *Nəgusā Nəgāst* (King of Kings/Emperor) of Ethiopia, kept animal familiars. Most notably were *Nəgusā Nəgāst* Tewodros II and *Nəgusā Nəgāst* Haile Selassie I, who both kept lions as pet familiars (see photos). The latter having had cheetahs as his familiars as well. During the forty-four (44) year reign of Haile Selassie I, it was customary that in order to speak with him about a personal matter or grievance one would have to patiently wait in a room with a couple of lions for a certain duration of time, which served to



ensure that 1. the petition/grievance/request was a serious one (and not a waste of the Emperor's time), 2. it served as a measure of security, used to intimidate potential would-be aggressors or assassins, and 3. to maintain the integrity of the empire (no emperor, king, empress or queen can be approached or bothered unannounced and unscheduled).

Despite the fact that animal reverence and anthropomorphism are found all over the ancient world, inhabitants of the Afrikan continent seem to have been the first human beings who strove to understand the interconnection between "man and beast" by wholeheartedly dedicating themselves to the study of fauna (and all nature in general for that matter). The Ta-Merrians/Kemites (known later as the "ancient Egyptians") even proclaimed that in order to know thyself, one must study nature. Some linguists

have even pointed out a possible relationship between the Kemetic word *Neter* and the English word *nature* (Neter being the Kemetic word for “a divine force of *nature*”). The outcome of tens of thousands of years of animal observance, reverence and respect by Afrikan people culminated in the artistic renditions and religio-philosophical wisdom literature of Kemet (ancient Egypt) and Kush (Nubia), where divine principles were paired up with specific animals, and their instinctual attributes/habits playing a highly important and significant role. Yet should anything less be expected from one of the most advanced and harmonious civilizations the world has ever known?

The religions and spiritual systems of both the Kemetic and Kushitic Afrikan civilizations expressed theriocephaly (humans with animal heads depicted in art) and anthropomorphism beginning in the predynastic and protodynastic eras. Examples of these Kemetic theriocephalic aspects of the supreme being (thought of as *divine forces of nature*) include *Khepra* who has



the head of a scarabaeus sacer (scarab/dung beetle), *Tehuti* with the head of an Ibis or Baboon, *Heru* with the head of a falcon, *Auset* who has the head of a cow, the Crocodile-headed *Sebek* and *Sekhmet* who has the head of a lioness.

The world’s oldest known example of theriocephaly is the *lion-headed figurine* (Löwenmensch) created by prehistoric Afrikan people who ventured into Eurasia. The figurine was radiocarbon dated to be forty-thousand (40,000) years old. Therianthropy, the transformation or shapeshifting of a human into an animal is also recorded among ancient continental Afrikans, one of the most well known examples being *Auset* (known to the Greeks as “Isis”). *Auset* magically transformed into a kite bird so that she could fly above her husband’s mummified body, which she temporarily brought back to life from the dead, to extract and receive his “divine seed”, thus marking the world’s first known “immaculate conception” (see photo). *Auset* was a well known sorceress and one of her ten-thousand (10,000) names includes: “*the Healer, the Mistress of Magic, in whose mouth is the Breath of Life, whose words destroy disease and awake the dead.*”

Now, the point must be clearly made here that the Kemites and Kushites did not view or believe these zoomorphic hybrids to be literal humans with animal heads, nor human heads with animal bodies. Rather they created these images and

personifications linked to specific animals to serve as metaphors, symbols and allegorical representations of specific natural phenomena, characteristics of the Earth, laws of the universe and nature, examples of perfected character and desired behavior, and perhaps most importantly divine concepts properly attributed to the plethora of qualities and characteristics of their one God and creator, known as *Atum*. Contrary to popular belief, the ancient Egyptians were NOT polytheistic, and in reality paid homage to only one major central infinite intelligence, named above.

In Botswana, recent archaeological finds reveal Afrikans engaged in advanced ceremonial magik and shamanistic rituals that incorporated animals thirty-thousand (30,000) years before the earliest discoveries in Europe. Tsodilo Hills is a small mountain range in the Kalahari that contains the world's biggest natural gallery of rock paintings. Of even greater importance though, is the little known hidden treasure mysteriously housed within the Tsodilo Hills, a mystical prehistoric python hewn from solid rock inside a concealed cave. The ceremonial veneration of the Afrikan Rock Python in Botswana's Tsodilo Hills is a whopping seventy-thousand (70,000) years old, literally making it the world's oldest ritual ever performed! The python is an animal familiar to the Khoi-San people, and subsequently the most important animal to them. An article on ScienceDaily.com further enlightens us on the details of this ancient Afrikan ritual:

According to their [the Khoi-San's] creation myth, mankind descended from the python and the ancient, arid streambeds around the hills are said to have been created by the python as it circled the hills in its ceaseless search for water. Sheila Coulson's find shows that people from the area had a specific ritual location associated with the python. The ritual was held in a little cave on the northern side of the Tsodilo Hills. The cave itself is so secluded and access to it is so difficult that it was not even discovered by archaeologists until the 1990s. When Coulson entered the cave this summer with her three master's students, it struck them that the mysterious rock resembled the head [and partial body] of a huge python. On the six meter long by two meter tall rock, they found three-to-four hundred indentations that could only have been man-made. *"You could see the mouth and eyes of the snake. It looked like a real python. The play of sunlight over the indentations gave them the appearance of snakeskin. At night, the firelight gave one the feeling that the snake was actually moving"*. [emphasis mine]

We'll return back to this illustrious Botswanan, cave-dwelling python ritual a little later, as it holds a curious and most interesting secret, which connects both animal familiars

and modern-day “Bizarre Magik” in the era of the Stone Age, and hints at possible clues to the origins of all contemporary Mystery Arts...

Ancient Afrikans understood that animals held attributes which served as examples of righteous principles and perfected being, as well as concepts that were best understood by using examples from the animal kingdom, much like Aesop the Ethiopian did later in history with his renowned *Fables*, in which he taught great truths through the adventures and characteristics of animals. This elevated understanding of the spiritual and ontological relationship between all living things in the universe (i.e. the interconnection between humans and animals and value systems; the nature of being if you will) has long been a major part of the spiritual systems and religious traditions of Afrikan people.

Proverbial Afrikan tales have always been symbolic ways of illustrating deeper meanings in a simple story format. Take for instance the following animal personalities who starred as main and influential characters in moral and wisdom stories all across the Afrikan continent. *Ananse* (spider) and *Adanko* (hare) of the Akan in Ghana; *Ijapa* (turtle) of the Yoruba in Nigeria; *Leuk* (rabbit) of the Wolof in Senegal; *Tule* (spider) of the Azande in Central Afrika and South Sudan; and *Br'er (Brother) Rabbit* of the BaKala in the U.S. all revolve around tales of clever animals, which incorporate life lessons, morals, values, ethics, and ontological comprehension.

Another example includes, the Afrikan proverb which states “A bee that has honey in the mouth has poison in the tail.” A metaphor warning the reader that people who offer you too many compliments often have ulterior motives. An English example of this Afrikan proverb is perhaps best exemplified by the tale of “Little Red Riding Hood”, wherein the blood-lusting wolf poses as the sweet and caring grandmother who is filled with kind word after kind word, so much so that it provokes suspicion and caution in Little Red Riding Hood, much like children being told to be wary of strangers who offer free candy and puppies conveniently located in their “minivans”... Universally, it seems there is such a thing as being “too nice”, as it tends to either signal weakness and passivity, or deceptive, fraudulent and insincere, often making others suspicious of their kindness.

Take for instance, two aspects of Kemetic spirituality, known as *Auset* (thousands of years later called “Isis” by the Greeks) and *Nekhbet*. Being representations of supreme motherhood, and therefore protection, guardianship, responsibility, healing and nurturing, the Ta-Merrians/Kemites associated *Auset* and *Nekhbet* with the vulture

(devotees of the latter even wore robes made from vulture feathers), an animal which is widely regarded as being one of the most self-sacrificing and protective mothers in the entire animal kingdom (of that specific geographical region anyways).

Not only do mother vultures fiercely protect their nest and offspring, they also spread their wings at maximum span, taking the full brunt of the midday sun's scorching hot rays so that her children will be shielded from it. Additionally, mother vultures have even been known to pierce themselves with their sharp beaks in order to draw blood from their very own sides so that it can quench the thirst of their dehydrated young when no water can be found and in times of severe drought. WOW, what die-hard mothers! One could say that the female vulture was the animal familiar of *Auset* and *Nekhbet*, symbolizing supreme motherhood, unrelenting protection and the preservation of all that is good and holy (in this case, children). *Nekhbet* was even referred to as the "mother of mothers".

Just as the Roman Catholic church has thousands of saints which are seen as extensions or messengers of the Judeo-Christian-Islamic God, so too did the Kemites understand their God (*Atum*) to be multidimensional, thus expressing itself in thousands of attributes and characteristics, personified by different names and images. As mentioned above (yet worth repeating again), it is a gross misinterpretation and purely incorrect to assert that the ancient Egyptians and Nubians were polytheists, rather they revered and believed in one God, under which many manifestations, attributes, qualities and characteristics were held and given specific names (i.e. *Shu*, *Tefnut*, *Ma'at*, *Nut*, *Geb*, *Ptah*, *Auset*, *Ausar*, *Heru*, *Set*, *Tehuti*, *Sekhmet*, *Het-Heru*, *Sebek*, *Anbu*, *Hapi*, etc.). More often than not, these attributes of the one Creator were "terrestrialized" by being associated with specific animals.

Thousands and thousands of years later, Christianity would borrow these zoomorphic ideas from the Kemites and Kushites and attribute them to their own new-founded religion. Examples include, the "Holy Spirit" depicted as a dove; *Saint Christopher* often illustrated as having the head of a dog and a human body; and the evangelists in Christian iconography which portray *Matthew* as a man, *Mark* as a lion, *Luke* as an ox and *John* as an eagle (as can be seen in the national treasure of Ireland, the Book of Kells and the Rider-Waite-Smith "Wheel of Fortune" and "The World" tarot cards). When the four (4) evangelists are combined in zoomorphic form they hold a close resemblance to the Kemetic *Heru-Em-Akhet* (incorrectly called the "Sphinx" by Greeks), which boldly sits alongside the Great Merw (pyramids) on the Giza plateau, symbolizing man and

woman's higher consciousness, rising above the animalistic nature and lower-self of worldly false desires.

The Fon of Benin also incorporated theriocephaly into their traditions just as the ancient Kemites and Kushites did. *Béhanzin*, the final king of the Dahomey empire was depicted in statues as a man with the head of a shark, which was naturally also the animal featured on his heraldic crest. In the style of their Kemetic predecessors, the Indian religion of Hinduism displays *Ganesha* as a human body with an elephant head. Even Eurasian mythological creatures like *Pan* and *Minotaur* and creatures like centaurs and mermaids have developed from this age-old premise. In fact, some of the oldest recorded works of magik and miracles known to humankind involved and incorporated animals, such as the incredible taming of wild beasts and ferocious creatures. In ancient times much of the magik that was performed utilized animals. It is in Afrika that we find the first known magik shows performed, as is documented in the Second Intermediate Period (c.1500 BCE) papyrus entitled "*King Khufu and the Magicians*" (Westcar Papyrus/P. Berlin 3033). The papyrus tells of magi, priests, sages and learned men of the Old Kingdom performing enchanting and wondrous feats of magik in the land of Ta-Merri/Kemet, starting as early as the reign of *Nesut Bity Khufu* of the 4th Dynasty (Old Kingdom) who commissioned the construction of the Great Mer (pyramid) of Giza.

One account from the papyrus which stands out features a master mage named *Djed-djedi* (Dedi). After hearing from his son *Djedefhor* (Hardjedef) about an elderly centenarian mage who performs miracles, *Nesut Bity Khufu* (The reigning King of ancient Egypt) summons his son to invite Djedi to demonstrate his magik by performing for the royal court. Djedefhor travels far to find Djedi and succeeds in convincing him to come perform for his father, the King of United Kemet, in the royal palace. Using animals to show forth his magikal skills, the one-hundred and ten (110) year old mage, scholar and prophet succeeded in individually decapitating a goose, water fowl and a bull, only to then magikally restore and resurrect them. It was also said that Djedi was able to tame lions, the reputed "Kings of the Plain"!

Khufu was indeed so impressed and astonished by Djedi's performance of animal decapitation and restoration that he even went as far as inviting him to live permanently in the royal palace, providing him with lavish living quarters and just about all the edible delicacies one could crave. No doubt though, the nature of Djedi's invitation was also strategically a selfish one on the part of the King, and such hospitality was granted to Djedi because Khufu knew that he possessed sacred

information needed to construct a special section of the Great Mer (pyramid), which Khufu was planning on having built as his final resting place. As material culture and archeology have shown and proven, Nesut Bity Khufu must have received the sacred information from Djedi (and the papyrus somewhat documents this fact), as the building of the Great Mer on the Giza plateau overlooking the city of Men-Nefer (erroneously known as “Memphis” by the Greeks) was indeed completed, and is known today as the only remaining structure of all the seven wonders of the ancient world.

Even older than the world’s first documented magik performance by Djedi in ancient Ta-Merri/Kemet as detailed above, is what I believe to be the oldest archeological evidence of magik in the entire world, having been performed an astounding one hundred-thousand (100,000) years ago! Traveling back again once more to the Tsodilo Hills of Ngamiland Botswana in Afrika, inside the sacred cave of the giant rock-hewn python ScienceDaily.com informs us of the following information that is of great particular interest to us modern-day magi:

Sheila Coulson also noticed a *secret chamber* behind the python stone. Some areas of the entrance to this small chamber were worn smooth, indicating that many people had passed through it over the years. *“The shaman, who is still a very important person in San culture, could have kept himself hidden in that secret chamber. He would have had a good view of the inside of the cave while remaining hidden himself. When he spoke from his hiding place, it could have seemed as if the voice came from the snake itself. The shaman would have been able to control everything. It was perfect.”* The shaman could also have “disappeared” from the chamber by crawling out onto the hillside through a small shaft. [emphasis mine]

After reading that profound paragraph it should come as no surprise that for thousands and thousands of years the Khoi-San have called these hills, “Mountains of the Gods” and most telling of all, the “Rock that Whispers”. It reminds me of Plato’s Allegory of The Cave in some distant way, and is as if the *Wizard of Oz* character literally took the inspiration from this clever ploy as he boldly played “the man behind the curtain” pretending to be someone he was not. Verily, this seems to be definitive proof of “Bizarre Magik” being performed one hundred-thousand (100,000) years ago. Sheila Coulson concludes by telling us that “In the cave, we find only the San people's three most important animals: the python, the elephant, and the giraffe. That is unusual. This would appear to be a very special place.” If animals played such an important role in ancient magik there is no reason they shouldn’t play an important one now, and coming

up we shall brainstorm on how to incorporate animals and pet familiars into our magik routines.

I want to fully congratulate all those who sat through my little history lesson. I felt it important to briefly describe the ancient Afrikan interconnection between human beings and animals. Originally and indigenously, the relationship between ourselves and other living creatures is a profoundly sacred and spiritual one. One which offers us a glimpse into the inner working of nature (and in the eyes of the Kemites, a glimpse at *Atum*/God as they believed in order to know "God" one must study nature). All this historical and archeological stuff is great, yet what exactly is a pet familiar? And what is their relationship to the Magik and Mystery Arts? For a straightforward and standard European definition/understanding of what a familiar is, Wikipedia informs us that:

In European folklore and folk-belief of the Medieval and Early Modern periods, familiar spirits (sometimes referred to simply as familiars or animal guides) were supernatural entities believed to assist witches and cunning folk in their practice of magic. According to the records of the time, they would appear in numerous guises, often as an animal... When they served witches, they were often thought to be malevolent, while when working for cunning-folk they were often thought of as benevolent (although there was some ambiguity in both cases). The former were often categorized as demons, while the latter were more commonly thought of and described as fairies. The main purpose of familiars is to serve the witch or young witch, providing protection for him/her as they come into their new powers.

Having previously provided archeological, historical, religious and artistic facts about the deep and sacred connection between animals and humans within some of the ancient Afrikan civilizations, the issue is up for debate as to whether animal familiars are solely relegated to European "magik" culture or not, as is stated in the Wikipedia description. As we have seen though the concept of an animal familiar is much broader than just being a European phenomenon. As I shall reveal in a moment, the concept of familiars is not confined to only European cultures and mythology, for many Afrikan cultures hold ancient beliefs in animal familiars as well. In fact the concept of an animal familiar was probably conceived and originated among Afrikan shamans millennia ago.

Continuing on, we read further that:

Since the 20th century a number of magical practitioners, including adherents of the Neopagan religion of Wicca, have begun to utilize the concept of familiars, due to their

association with older forms of magic. These contemporary practitioners utilize pets, wildlife or believe that invisible spirit versions of familiars act as magical aids.

As you can see, this is a most interesting topic, and is certainly usable content to create intriguing scripts and themes around for magikal purposes. More well-known and popular examples of animal and pet familiars include: The “flying mantis/fairy” familiar of the Fauno character in the movie *Pan’s Labyrinth*; The Wicked Witch of the West in the *Wizard of Oz* and her loyal minions the “flying monkeys”; and in *Return to Oz*, Dorothy Gale held a special friendship with “Belinda” a talking chicken who acted as her pet familiar. “Salem” was the name of the cat familiar in the TV series *Sabrina, The Teenage Witch*; and “Azrael” was the cat familiar of Gargamel from *The Smurfs* comic strip and cartoon TV series. Then there was “Binx” from the 1993 movie *Hocus Pocus*; “Crookshanks” from the *Harry Potter* films; and one might even venture to include “Jaq” and “Gus” the two (2) mice from the *Cinderella* fairytale as familiars of sorts.



Yet, perhaps the most famous familiar of all is “Pyewacket” from the movie *Bell, Book and Candle*. Lest we forget to mention real-life familiars, including Cornelius Agrippa’s black dog; Prince Rupert’s pet poodle named “Boye” (thought to have only been killed because of a silver bullet); and for kicks I’d like to also mention Tony Andruzzi’s black cat “Gimmick” (a name well-suited for a magi-assisting animal familiar). Also worth mentioning (although specifically geared towards children and young adults) is a new movie currently in development revolving around pet familiars, and entitled just that, *The Familiars*. It’s being produced by Sam Raimi of *The Evil Dead* fame, who has also written and directed numerous other films, especially in the horror genre.

In the entertainment world of so-called “classic” magic we are accustomed to animals featured prominently within traditional magic shows. Common images of rabbits being pulled from top hats, chicks ending up as the final load in a cups and balls routine and flashy dove acts set to instrumental music quickly come to mind. Yet the animals in this style of magic are mere occurrences and brief guest appearances, rather than secret assistants and sentient helpers. The difference being that the magician is master to doves and bunnies, whereas animal familiars are often more independent and just as powerful as their magikal human companions.

As Metaphysical Magi, Bizarrists and Mystery Artists we are much better suited to incorporate animals which serve to either assist us in proving a so-called miracle, or at least helping us achieve one. Although not a new idea, it is definitely one I have not seen much material on, or conversation around. In fact, the only mention of an animal familiar I could find as part of an effect was *Bête Noir* by Tony “Doc” Shiels in his book THIRTEEN! (although I’m positive there must be a myriad of other effects centered on this theme, that I have either forgotten about over the years, or just have yet to stumble upon).

Intriguingly, “The Magician” card from the brilliant and cleverly designed *Tarot of the New Vision* (see photo) even hints at the use of a pet familiar by magi and sorcerers. A pet monkey is clearly seen hiding directly behind the Magician in the card, as he gently holds onto the bottom edge of the mage’s robe/cape, as if patiently awaiting a cue from his master to secretly aid in making the magik happen. Symbolically, the monkey in the card signifies the “unseen” secret accomplice of the mage, a familiar of sorts who aids him in achieving miracles for and in front of the on-looking audience. Albeit racist-undertones permeate the image as the monkey is noticeably dressed in Moorish clothing, complete with vest and fez, thus quietly suggesting Afrikans and monkeys are one and the same (a popular image of which most are innocently unaware of the history).



There is however, humor in this card also, as the watching crowd gathered around the Magician curiously look unaffected and unimpressed, as if still waiting for something to happen or for a miracle to occur. The designer of this card was no fool, and the symbolism contained within the image perfectly seems to capture the old magic adage, “The BIG action covers the small action”. The big action in this case is the Magician who dramatically poses, loudly pointing to the Heavens with the right arm, and to the Earth with the left, as if referencing the Kemetic Universal Law of Correspondence: “As above, so below; as below so above.” Thusly, the flamboyant gesturing of the mage covers up the small action of the little monkey surreptitiously hidden behind the Magician and secretly assisting him in performing his profound “miracles”.

Even ordinary (non-familiar) animals are known to possess mysterious and special powers, as zookeepers have reported on the telling behavior and actions of confined animals just prior to Earthquakes, which strangely enough some animals can anticipate

in advance. And how many times have we heard outstanding real-life stories of animals saving people, especially dogs and dolphins! In Kenya, elephants have been known to protect and shield certain people (especially Kenyan conservationists) from encroaching lions in the wild. The females completely surround the humans and baby elephants placing them in the middle of a tight elephant circle, while the adult males take turns charging at and stomping towards the lions in order to scare and drive them away.

Similarly, in 2007 a colleague of mine showed me an Ethiopian newspaper article about a pride of lions who literally protected and comforted a little girl who had been abducted in a remote region of the country. It seems a pride of lions literally came to the little girl's rescue, even defending her, and chasing away her attackers by chasing them and roaring monstrously. Upon the arrival of the authorities they found the young girl being kept warm by one of the lions, who had his paw draped over her, as if to protect and comfort her. As soon as the lion spotted the authorities it turned its head away from them, and while looking in the opposite direction, gently lifted his paw from around her, at which point she stood up and ran into the waiting arms of the officials. Quite a remarkable and true story indeed! I personally, have always pondered the connection between humans and animals, and my in-depth study over the years has led me to know that there is in fact a very special connection between us.

As I have tried hard to point out all throughout this article, the relationship between animals and humans is sacred and ancient and deep. Nowadays, it seems as though many humans have lost that connection to and with animals, a connection that we once had in more ancient times around the globe. Sure, we have pet dogs and cats, city zoos, animal farms, and TV channels exclusively dedicated to animals, yet arguably since the advent of industrialism our dependence on animals and our proximity to them has pretty much lessened. I met a woman once who said she loved animals, she kept her some pets... Four (4) pets to be exact. I asked her what animals she had, and she said "I keep a *tiger* in the bedroom, a *mustang* in the garage, a *mink* on my back and a *jackass* to pay for it all." Ha-ha! Apparently as humans our appreciation for animals HAS changed.

Since the epoch of time, specific animals have been imbued with special powers and meanings based on their unique traits, appearance, behavior and instinctual habits. As we witnessed above, the earliest humans and the greatest of ancient civilizations alike, both felt the need to center themselves holistically, spiritually, metaphysically and magikally around the great power and mysticism of animals. I was further made aware of this while teaching, studying and conducting research among the Kushites in the

Nubian villages of Aswan, Egypt. One evening a couple of the elders showed me the ancient Old Nubian alphabet, as well as a pictographic writing system (similar or identical to that of the *Medu Neter* of ancient Egypt, incorrectly called “hieroglyphics”).

The importance of animals to ancient Afrikan populations was literally woven right into the *Medu Neter*, as well as other Afrikan languages and writing systems. It struck me like a bolt of lightning when an elder told me that the written visual representation for the word *chaos* was a detailed pictogram of two birds and a snake. The sheer logic and practicality of such an ingenious writing system was based on the fact that if those animals were to come in close proximity with each other (as shown in the ideogram of the word *chaos*), that is exactly what would happen, CHAOS! To some it may seem elementary or even “primitive”, yet to me it is pure brilliance! There is much power in the type of thinking that went into the creation of such a pictorial written language...talk about being aware of one’s environment and surroundings. And it didn’t stop there either, the entire writing system was made up of these visual and logically-connected pictograms/ideograms.

Similarly, the Asante of Ghana – who have inherited some of the esoteric knowledge and spiritual wisdom from Kemet and Kush – also use animals to depict highly symbolic conceptual meanings. The *Adinkra* are pictographic symbols used by the Asante, which convey aphorisms, wisdom proverbs and spiritual concepts just like the Kemetite *Medu Neter* language does. Traditionally the *Adinkra* symbols were stamped onto handmade cloth and worn by Asante royalty as specific messages, hence the term “The Cloth That Speaks”. Many of these *Medu Neter*-like symbols are based on the actions and attributes of animals, just like in the example I cited above with the word *chaos* in the Kushitic/Nubian writing system that I was shown in Aswan.

One such Asante *Adinkra* is known as *Owo Foro Adobe*, which both translates to and is visually depicted by a “snake climbing a Raffia tree”. The Raffia palm is very dangerous and challenging for a snake to climb due to the sharp spikes and barbs on its leaflets. The snake’s skill and ability to climb the palm tree exemplifies its foresight, care and determination, therefore embodying the character attributes of steadfastness, persistence, prudence, diligence, skillfulness and ultimately, performing the impossible. Additional animal-based *Adinkra* symbols include yet are not limited to: *Sankɔfa* (bird), *Akokonan* (chicken/hen), *Ananse Ntontan* (spider), *Bi Nka Bi* (fish), *Denkyem* (crocodile), *Dwennimmen* (ram), *Funtunfunefu Denkyemfunefu* (crocodiles), *Okodee Mmowere* (eagle) and *Fafanto* (butterfly).

Other examples of specific qualities and meanings of animals include the gorilla, which among the Fang and Bulu symbolize positive power and the element of fire, whereas the chimpanzee is historically represented as a symbol of evil. To the Lugbara of Uganda and Kongo, toads, snakes, lizards, water frogs, bats, owls, leopards, jackals and specific monkeys are said to be popular familiars. And according to the Dinka of South Sudan animal familiars include black cobras and hyenas.

To the Bafia of Kameroun, the turtle is a highly respected and traditional animal familiar. And an ancient belief holds that turtle shells aid in conflict resolution by settling disputes among family and community members. Being sacred to the Bafia, the turtle shells are also able to magikally determine wrongdoers and those who are guilty of negative behavior. As a way to determine the truth of a specific relational or familial issue, all parties involved in the dispute or disagreement place their hands upon the shell. Subsequently, the person who is guilty of wrongdoing, or who is responsible for the initial conflict or problem is expected to contract a disease in their hands, which serves as both a sign and a penalty of their offense and misbehavior. Now there's no reason that can't be worked into a magik routine! I'm pretty sure I've seen authentic turtle shells for sale online (to avoid any postal problems/fines just make sure they are legal to purchase in your country/state).

In many shamanistic cultures around the world, upon the completion of apprenticeship, newly initiated shamans obtain familiars, at which point they can use them for warfare and/or task oriented purposes. The familiar is said to literally take the physical place of the shaman when needed. However, should the animal familiar die in battle or while performing a specific job, the shaman also dies too. Familiars typically tend to be steady companions who remain close to their masters/confidants, only disappearing after the shaman has perished.

Kongolese magi are said to be able to change themselves into leopards by the use of magik elixirs and potions, and if while in the shape of a leopard they end up doing harm to a human being they are doomed to forever remain a leopard, never again permitted to become human again. Surely this shapeshifting "rule" has been socially set to discourage violence and chaos, while fostering and enforcing peace and self-responsibility as a societal failsafe measure. The AmaZulu in South Afrika believe a magikian's familiar is a human being transformed into an animal (think of an ugly frog that turns into a charming and handsome prince, it's the same premise in reverse). AmaZulu shaman are said to be able to cast spells that can change a human corpse into a animal such as an owl, hyena or most popularly a wild cat, whereupon it obeys the

command of its owner/confidant and thus becomes a trusted familiar to the mage/shaman.

Among the Akan of Ghana, there exists a complex clan system. Simplified for explanation and classification purposes, each of the original seven (7) Akan matrilineal clans have power/soul animals (*Abusua akraboa nwɔtwe*) used as respective clan totems. The *Ekɔɔna* clan is symbolized by the water buffalo, the *Asona* is represented by the crow (and wild boar), the *Biretuo* by the leopard, the *Dyokoo* by the hawk (and falcon), The *Aduana* by the dog, the *Aseneɛ* by the bat, and the *Agona* by the parrot. There is also now an eighth clan who broke off from the *Asona*/crow clan called *Asakyiri*, and are represented by the vulture as their power/soul animal. This clan is not often counted though, since they are essentially the same people as the *Asona*. In many ways (spiritually, magikally and culturally) these animals are direct familiars to each clan, and their respective members.

Moreover, there is a bird in Ghana called *Kokokyiniako* and its call is remarkably similar to the notes played by local handmade drums. Every drummer among the Akan-Asante profess a direct clan connection to the bird, and have vowed never to kill or consume it. Similarly, the Fon of Benin prominently featured an elephant wearing a gold crown on the old Dahomey flag, which they regarded as a totem and familiar, along with snakes. Which leads us to one of the most respected (and feared) of all creatures and animal familiars known throughout history, and around the world.

Unlike its frequent demonization by the Abrahamic religions, the serpent/snake was one of the most revered and holy animals of ancient times and has been the feature of some of the world's oldest rituals. Many Earth-based and shamanistic indigenous traditions and religions still revere and venerate the snake as a powerful and symbolic animal, capable of great and mighty magikal power. Metaphorically and metaphysically, snakes represent strength, fertility (birth), reincarnation (rebirth), resurrection, regeneration, renewal, protection, guardianship, infinity, eternity, immortality, divination, and even the human umbilical cord.

Throughout the world, serpents have been attributed to the Universal Mother Goddess ("Mother Earth" if you will), as well as the Universal Laws of Vibration and Rhythm. In ancient Egypt (Kemet/Ta-Merri) the celestial Milky Way was depicted as the primordial snake known as *Wadjet* (later incorrectly called "Uto/Buto" by the Greeks) and represented all of lower Kemet (the northern half of ancient Egypt). While the rearing cobra, *Iaret* (Gr. "Uraeus") was a symbol of supreme power, royalty, divinity

and sovereignty, especially when joined by Nekhbet (symbolic to the vulture) and who represented all of upper Kemet (the southern half of ancient Egypt). Together the cobra and the vulture were known as the “Two Ladies” and signified protection over the whole of united Kemet, where they were both revered and venerated by all.

Snakes are symbolic to men and masculine energy among the Bafia of Kameroun, and are considered personal family familiars among the AmaZulu of South Afrika, the Maasai of Kenya and Tanzania, and the Betsileo of Madagascar. In Benin, the Edo believe that snakes consume and destroy illness. And it is in Benin that snakes seem to receive the most honor, respect and praise, especially among the Fon and Ewe who practice the religion of *Vodu/n*. In Xwéda (Ouidah) Benin, known as the “Garden of Dahomey”, there was a great Temple of the Serpent, which was (and possibly still is) home to a multitude of living sacred snakes. Even the etymology of the former West Afrikan kingdom of *Dahomey* (which later became known as Benin) is linked to snakes. The word Dahomey originates from two (2) Fon words, *Dan/h* (snake) and *homè* (belly), literally meaning “In the belly of Dan (the Snake)”. The origin of the place name Dahomey is more complex than just its above transliteration though, a story I’ll save for another time.

Religiously, the great serpent *Dan* (also known as Danballa and Damballah in the Afrikan diaspora) is one of the oldest and most important of all the *Vodu/n* Loa (divine holy Spirits). Dahomi mythological cosmology tells of Dan propping up the universe with his corkscrew-postured, serpentine body consisting of seven-thousand (7000) coiled spirals. He is known as the “Father of the Sky” and the “Great Master”, the creator and originator of life and all living things, he who governs the intellect, powers of the mind and maintains the celestial balance. Dan mediates between the living and the dead always furthering peace, balance, order, harmony and effective communication. Of interest to the reader I’m sure, is the fact that Masklyn ye Mage (Tony Andruzzi) had an effect called “Damballa” in his *Grimoire of the Mages*. During a ritual to invoke Damballa, a can appropriately dressed-up as a “vodou drum” is seen slowly and visibly collapsing as if caused by the crushing power of invisible Loa Damballa himself (albeit Andruzzi seems to have incorrectly presented Damballa as a demon or evil force, instead of a positive and righteous Loa).

Some have suggested that pythons are/were seen as familiars and divine creatures among the Fon because they would prey upon and eat rats, whose population constantly threatened to destroy the agricultural crops and harvests, one of the single most important aspects of traditional Afrikan culture and society. Ayida-Weddo (also

known throughout Afrika and the Americas as Aido Quedo and Aido Hwedo) is the Loa of snakes, and is described as a small green snake. She is known as the “Rainbow Serpent” and is married to Dan. As the West Afrikan religion of Vodun was brought to the Americas (North, Central, South and the Caribbean) via the kidnapped and enslaved Afrika populations, Dan became known as *Damballah*.

Dan’s mother, Mawu (also known throughout Afrika and the Americas as Mami Wata, Mother Water, Mmuommiri, Yemoja, Yemanya, Kuitikuiti, River Mama, La Sirène) is one of the most well known Loa in the entire world, as she is paid homage to on three (3) separate continents (Afrika, South America and North America). Having originated in West Afrika (most likely Nigeria), she is revered all over the Afrikan continent. Mawu is often described as being in the appearance of a mermaid or as a complete human being (yet only human in an illusionary sense). She is also synonymous with manatee, which should be of no surprise since mermaids and siren (of Greek mythology) both originate from *sirenia* (aquatic mammals, of which manatee are a member of). Mawu is known to carry a serpent around her neck symbolizing prophecy, divinity and divination.

I’m sure all these names and spirits can get confusing for some of you to follow, and this is only further compacted by the fact that the Nigerian religion of Orisa-Ifá (as practiced by the Yorùbá); the Beninese/Dahomi religion of Vodun (as practiced by the Fon and Ewe); indigenous Akan, Ibo and Kongolese spiritual systems; the Haitian religion of Vodou; the Afri-Brazilian religion of Candomblé; the Afri-Jamaica religion of Kumina; the Afri-Cuban/Afri-Dominican/Afri-Puerto Rican religion of Palo and Santería (Regla de Oché/ La Regla de Lucumí) all overlap and converge in a syncretized fashion. Although they may all be variously related and connected, sharing the same religious roots, all are unique and independent of each other and should be understood and appreciated as such. Much like the Abrahamic religions of Christianity, Islam and Judaism are all connected and interrelated, they are acknowledged as separate and unique individual religions.

The *Mehen* (known as the “Ouroboros” in the Greek tradition) is a snake in the shape of a circle or figure eight, biting its own tail, and thus signifying the Universe, infinity, eternity, immortality and rebirth, completion, totality, and ultimately the eternal macrocosmic and microcosmic cycles of life and nature. The Mehen is an extremely powerful symbol and although its origins were in Afrika, it is found all around the world and throughout the historical timeline, including featuring as the Magician’s belt buckle in the Rider-Waite-Smith tarot deck, as was probably worn by the Keltic Druids.

The Mehen (Ouroboros) symbol originated in Ta-Merri/Kemet (ancient Egypt), where its earliest depiction is found in the tomb (KV62) of *Tutankhaten* (Tutankhamen) c. 1323 BCE (18th Dynasty). Also of particular interest is the unique and rather rare “double-headed” snake, revered by the Dagara of Burkina Faso and the Bamum of Kameroun. To the Bamum, the double-headed snake is a symbol of bravery, courage and nobility, as it serves as a metaphorical and ancestral reminder that their past kings fought two groups of enemies at the same time. Snakes are also thought to be the embodiment of the ancestors among many Afrikan cultures. Next we turn our attention to a long-standing archenemy of the snake. Can you guess “hoo” it is? That’s right...the mystical and ever elusive owl!

Despite the fact that European traditions tend to emblematically associate the owl with wisdom – mainly because of its ability to see in the darkness – most Afrikan cultures (and actually most of the world’s cultures in general) typically view the owl as a sinister creature, a bird of evil, and synonymous with negative forms of sorcery. In Central Afrika, the Bantu view the mysterious owl as the familiar of nefarious wizards. In East Afrika, owls are thought to be the magik deliverers of illness and disease to Swahili children. In South Afrika, the AmaZulu view the owl as a bird of evil sorcerers, and in much of West Afrika this reclusive wild bird is seen as the messenger of evil doers. More specifically, in Madagascar it is said that owls gather with magikians and witches to dance on the graves of the dead. In contrast, however, the Edo of Benin see the mighty bird as a symbol of the king's power to overthrow and destroy false prophets and fortunetelling seers.

So there you have it, a wealth of information and knowledge concerning animal and pet familiars, and specifically from a rare and oft unheard Afrikan perspective and understanding. This small glimpse into the world of animal spirits, totems and familiars through Afrikan eyes and indigenous meanings will hopefully provide you with some concepts and ideas to explore, as well as tidbits and small pieces of information to further research, investigate and ultimately incorporate. From here, we shall now transition from the spiritual, historical and cultural aspects of animal/pet familiars (as outlined above) into the wondrous possibilities of what can *magikally* be achieved by implementing the notion, concept and theme of animal familiars...

In thinking about tricks that people have trained animals and pets to do for circus shows and professional competitions, there is no reason why we can’t train a pet animal to be our special familiar for a magik performance. Check out the following links below for the “wild things” (no pun intended) that animals can be taught to do. Many might

actually be surprised as to the fascinating and amazing things animals can be trained to accomplish. Let's take a closer look at some of the possibilities of what our animal friends can do, aid us with, and accomplish when properly trained... Even a simple "trick" taught to an animal can be turned into an outright miracle if applied to the right context by a thinking and creative mage. Please excuse the sheer silliness of some of these videos, I have included them here not as direct examples of ideas for use, yet rather simply to prove the point that with a little effort and patience we can train an animal to aid us in magik and to do magikal feats and tasks which can serve useful to us Magikians and Mystery Artists.

Rats and Mice:

- [Epic Rat Tricks](#)
- [Awesome, Amazing Rat Tricks](#)
- [Trick Mousing](#)
- [15 Incredible Rat Tricks](#)

Monkeys:

- [Izakaya the Monkey](#)
- [Monkey and Vending Machine](#)

Dogs:

- [The Most Unusual and Amazing Dog Tricks](#)
- [45 Cute Dog Tricks](#)

As one can see from watching the videos above the possibilities for training an animal for magikal purposes are endless. Cats, Ferrets and Birds oh my! It should be said here, that the following thirty (30) ideas have not necessarily been tested or even attempted by me in real world working conditions (or even at all for that matter). This is simply an idea generating brainstorm off the top of the dome-piece, intended to introduce

different and creative *possibilities* of what could be done with an animal helper, and to get you to think creatively for yourself. In no way am I stating here that the following ideas are foolproof or even practical, as the majority of these ideas obviously require that the animal be rigorously trained and practiced with. Just as in the case with dove magic, money, time, effort and energy are required to bring most of these following ideas to life. Some of the ideas are pipe dreams given to inspire you, while others are practical and easy to pull off, a few not even needing a real/live animal. Enjoy!

30 Ideas for Using Animals as Pet Familiars and Secret Assistants:

1. A rat or mouse can be trained to come out from a hiding place and walk towards a skeptical participant, or scurry up his pant leg, which would surely demonstrate your magikal allegiance with and command over the animal kingdom, and guarantee a great reaction. It doesn't get more magikal than animals coming to your rescue and doing your bidding. To participants, even a simple thing like an animal openly acting on behalf of a mage and accomplishing things and taking commands can be mind-boggling. It don't have to be complicated y'all. Andruzzi said it best, "Use [your] creativity to take even the simplest trick and make a miracle out of it."
2. A rat, hamster, ferret or mouse, etc. could be secretly hidden under the séance table and be trained to untie a sitter's shoelaces, etc. as proof of a "trickster" spirit present in the room after being invoked or contacted. Perhaps instead of untying participant's shoes, the animal could just make a complete mess under the performance table ripping things up, leaving paper and trash behind as evidence that the mischievous spirit has left a sign.
3. A participant is given an old magik flute supposedly having belonged to a real life "Pied Piper of Hamelin" and said to magikally summon and control vermin. After the participant gives it a test with a strong blow, 5 or 6 rats (or ferrets) come running out from various corners of the room and all gather at the feet of and around the participant holding the magik flute. For a really interesting story check out *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*: [Story on Video](#)

4. For crazy reactions during the height of a low-light or blackout séance, have an animal familiar manifest itself. A rat or cat who sniffs its way around the séance table, and felt by the circle of sitter's tightly-held hands would invoke outrageously powerful emotional outbursts and responses. Imagine a rat crawling all over you in a completely dark séance! Or picture 6 or 7 rats scurrying all over and under the séance table, "I should have known it would be disastrous trying to make contact with 'WILLARD'!!"
5. How about a séance wherein the medium contacts an infamous deceased mob informant about the location of undiscovered remains of victims, or maybe the true story behind certain conspiratorial events (i.e. Operation Mongoose, JFK Assassination, etc.)? Might a big fat rat be found scampering about the séance table as a therianthropical manifestation or sign of the mob informant's ghostly presence?
6. A mouse could remove a participant's previously chosen (forced) tarot card with its mouth and teeth from the deck as part of a familiar spell. Might the "Classic Force" also work on animals?
7. A mouse, turtle or cat divines the selected tarot card from a ribbon spread deck by stopping directly on it (think of it as an animal version of *The Card Buggy*). Lightly coating a force card with something edible to get the animal's attention might do the trick?
8. Imagine a dog suddenly erupting into a crazed frenzy, cacophonously barking when a "spirit" has been summoned or has entered the room. A dog secretly signaled and who has been trained to bark on secret command could be used to explain that a spirit has been successfully contacted and is indeed present (hence the barking – the dog sensing a mysterious force in the room that humans cannot). If the dog is well-trained and it was well played/acted by the performer, it is the perfect undetected, unexpected and unspoken way to communicate to your sitters that a ghost must now be in the room, without even having to directly say so. After the

dog starts barking furiously the medium then turns back around to face the sitters at the table, a facial expression with widened eyes should be all that is necessary, no word need be spoken, let the sitters come to their own conclusions of what is happening:

Medium attempts to make contact

Silence

After a couple silent minutes goes by, a dog in the room starts loudly barking like crazy and pacing around the room frantically

"Hmmm I think we are no longer alone here. 'Jonathan are you with us? Let us know you are in the room with us tonight'."

A book flies off the shelf and onto the floor

Dog starts barking again even louder and more intensely

"Jonathan, there is someone here in the room with us tonight that has a question for you... Miriam would like to ask you if..." (and so on, and so on).

As we all know, dogs and cats often react to things that we are unaware of and that our human senses cannot pick up (the dogs in the neighborhood are always barking for what to us humans seems like no reason at all)... Using an animal to detect the presence of an ancestor/ghost/spirit also leaves the performer removed from having to handle any props or activating any gimmicks that would alert the participants to the arrival of a ghost (i.e. spirit bell, etc.). It is simple and clean which is what I like.

9. A dog or cat could be trained to completely "flip out" and go absolutely crazy on secret command when the magi has successfully summoned an "invisible demon" or what have you. Make sure the bathroom has plenty of toilet paper on hand... This one is sure to make participants soil themselves if played up and done seriously.

10. On a simpler premise, even the small act of a magi's pet familiar fetching his or her archaic wand for them, would be an interesting and basic addition to a routine (think of it as a "bizarre flourish").

11. An animal could bring the mage his or her tools throughout a show or routine. I can picture a little Capuchin monkey bringing an old and weather-beaten box to the performer's waiting hands, and waiting for the mage to finish so he can take it back again.

12. Allowing an animal to select an object or tarot card (seemingly at random) could be incorporated as a useful secret force of a card on the participating audience. By training a rat for example to pick a certain card every time (in a specific pile or location of the tabled tarot spread), one could force a specific card in a seemingly direct and just fashion. "The rat has chosen a card for us. We shall use this in our attempt at divining unforeseen events..."

13. A mouse could retrieve a coin or other small object from a participant and bring it across the table to you. I imagine a mouse retrieving a borrowed quarter or 1€ coin from a participant and scurrying with it into a small velvet bag where a gimmicked duplicate coin to be switched for the borrowed one secretly waits. This way you are completely hands off, the mouse having essentially done the switch for you just by bringing the borrowed quarter in a small pouch where the gimmicked one is hidden. All the work is done for you, just retrieve the gimmicked quarter, or better yet perhaps the mouse could be trained to make the switch for you, by bringing you the gimmicked coin on command?

14. How about an animal trained to switch out and/or change a billet or other object. If hidden under a table or better yet secretly resting on your lap, it might be able to secretly produce things into (or steal things away from) your hand which rests slightly beyond the edge of the tabletop as if you were about to "lap" an object. Imagine a mouse or other animal used for clean and totally soundless lapping, at which point it then places the object in a secret and hidden location (to be found later?).

15. I really like the idea of having a mouse or a rat being my secret assistant, destroying evidence, making things appear and disappear, bringing me things when needed

and being my very own living utility gimmick. Even a little brown or grey field mouse darting across the table to and from the sleeve of a sorcerer's robe is highly enchanting and intriguing, and draws up images of critters and birds nesting inside a wizard's giant gnarled beard waiting to do his bidding.

16. Consider this, tiny "fleas" are found and taken off of an "invisible" animal familiar and placed on a plate, where they are seen jumping and buzzing around. Thus proving the existence of the animal familiar who is adorned by a cloak of invisibility which you talk about (yet the existence of which all in the room will deny). All that is needed is four (4) or five (5) tiny "fleas" (iron shavings/filings, known in Wiccan circles as "loadstone food"). By using your best acting skills to pretend taking the "fleas" off of your familiar and placing them onto a light tabletop surface so they can be vaguely seen they can then be manipulated to jump up and move about using a strong neodymium magnet (N50) underneath the table, which when moved around and brought close to the undersurface of the table will simulate the appearance of live, buzzing and jumping fleas.

To the best of my knowledge there is a published routine utilizing this concept yet one which incorporates the use of a box filled with sand and the fleas appearing to move around in and through the sand giving the illusion that they are Egyptian "sand fleas" or something to that effect? Unfortunately time has caused my memory to forget who originated this wonderful idea and where I first read or saw it. Despite the unfortunate fact that I cannot give full credit for this concept, I have included it here because it is a clever example of sheer creativity and has many applications for use.

17. A monkey could probably be pretty easily trained to quietly steal objects from participants and secretly bring them to you (especially in a darkroom or lowlight séance setting), only to then be magikally revealed later in the performance.
18. Certain animals could be trained to find a hidden object in a room. Think of drug, bomb and cadaver sniffing canines. We might as well let them use their super sense of smell for our benefit right? Could a "crime dog" locate the "guilty party" during

a bizarre “whodunnit” mystery? For inspiration look up the late great Larry White’s routine “A Sherlock Holmes Halloween” on Karl Bartoni’s esteemed and ultra-informative *DragonSkull* web site. Also, might we be able to incorporate this animal familiar idea into Paul Prater’s effects “Freaks” and “Outsider”?

19. Just like some of the oldest “tricks” in the book (pun-intended), a dead animal could be brought back to life, or a (seemingly) wild animal (i.e. “rabid dog”) could be tamed and controlled?

20. A seemingly feral group of stray alley cats all get hypnotized by the vocal recitation of a Kemetic (ancient Egyptian) Love Psalm, the cats start to dance, jump for joy and follow the mage's every move, as if totally enchanted by the poetry. If a mage can control the weather and the elements of mother nature, he/she should be able to command animals with their power as well.

21. Animals witnessed fleeing from a section of the room thought to be inhabited by a ghost or a demon might prove pretty powerful. After all, they say animals can sense things humans can't, and a Japanese study has proven that cats and catfish can both predict Earthquakes, and therefore probably “ghosts” too. *smirk*

22. Well trained animals with good night vision might prove useful in a black-out séance. Skunks have been known to make great companions and trainable house pets after their “stink glands” have been removed. Plus they have pretty good night vision. Now, I wonder how harmless fruit bats are, and can they be trained? A couple bats manifesting in a séance would be sure to bring the house down (literally) yet just be sure you are covered for personal damages insurance-wise and have your sitters sign a waiver before attempting this die-hard feat. How about a ritual said to turn someone into a vampire? A bat-filled ritualistically-dressed dove pan and fake blood ought to be useful.

23. A scorpion, tarantula, stag or rhinoceros beetle made to surprisingly appear inside a switch box, change bag or antiqued and ceremonially-decorated dove pan when opened by a participant, might just be the perfect climax to an ancient ritual used to invoke a representative of death, or heralding a sign of foreseeable danger. Personally though, the older I get the more I prefer performing positive and empowering metaphysical magik and readings, while feeling less and less satisfied by merely “frightening” people (an easy thing to do nowadays). That said, a dangerous animal could be made to vanish (into a “nether-realm”) as part of a spell which brings good fortune and banishes evil.
24. Ingredients for a mystical potion for longevity (or immortality) are seen mixed in an eccentric and arcane container, after a ritual to consecrate the eccentric elixir and an ancient incantation read, the container lid is removed and a small turtle is found inside, thus symbolizing the spell for longevity has been accepted and granted. Again a distressed and carefully decorated small dove pan is all it takes. Potion ingredients could include: Well Water, Dumortierite and Angelite soaked in Blood and then buried for one month in the ground, 1 Coffin Nail, Fireplace Ashes, Sulfurous Water, Powdered Lead (Iron Powder), Dew from the Headstone of a Centenarian, 1 Oak Tree Acorn and 3 Organic Eggshells. Masklyn ye Mage would be proud!
25. A carrier pigeon, diamond dove or other bird could be trained to fly into an open house window and land on your shoulder or a perch after being summoned. It would appear as if your command of nature and fauna is so great that you can cause a wild bird to come into the window and onto your waiting hand. That would actually be pretty impressive to witness. Maybe it is found bearing a miniature scroll gently tied to its leg or neck, which reveals a previously chosen tarot card. “The Star” card in the RWS tarot depicts a bird resting on a tree in the background, perhaps the bird that flew in through the window carries with it a scroll with a “star” shape on it, could this be the bird featured in the card? “And oh my what is this, it doth bring forth a prophecy?” (said in my best British accent).

Similarly, “The Hierophant” card in the *Tarot of the New Vision* deck features a dove. Just as in the above example with the RWS “The Star” card, a dove could deliver a

message to the performer prophesying the chosen (forced) Hierophant card, and then revealed after it has been chosen. The live dove could be said to be the living depiction of the dove in The Hierophant's card imagery. Furthermore, a snake is also featured on that card, which could also be physically produced as part of a prophetic ritual utilizing a change bag or a distressed and dressed-up small dove pan.

26. If you haven't seen it already, undoubtedly one of the coolest and creepiest of unexplained animal manifestations can be produced using "*What Tha...*" by Rodger Lovins. Personally, I love this super visual and "bizarre" effect, and would recommend using it to pitch a show. That said the effect seems to have been intended to be more of a gag or an impromptu "side trick" than a "bizarre magik" piece, yet the possibilities are just too much to disregard it as a mere "visual stunt". One can only imagine what ideas would have been generated had this effect been created earlier and fallen into the hands of Tony Andruzzi, Eugene Poinc, Ed Solomon or Carl Herron. Personally, I typically use the "*What Tha...*" in a much more "occult-ish" fashion and in a more serious tone than what the original effect was intended to be... Mystery artist's "poetic license" I guess!).

In talking to a potential client about what it is I do exactly (séances, storytelling, divination, paranormal demonstrations, etc.), I bring up the topic of familiars, and that 20 years ago while I had just began studying indigenous Afrikan religions, neo-paganism, shamanism, metaphysics and the occult I acquired a rare and invisible animal familiar during a profound and sacred animal spirit ritual. Then I change the subject completely, and leave it there to stir and pick at their subconscious mind for a couple moments, as they (often) look at me striving to comprehend what I have just said.

Eventually, I return to the topic (whether they bring it back up again or not), and I tell them that I usually only call upon my familiar during times of need, yet that perhaps I can get it to manifest by offering it some food? Yet I caution them that it can AND has unexpectedly shape-shifted, occasionally into a dangerous variety of forms and wild animals. Placing my hand inside my pocket I remove a bag of sunflower seeds (or a container of grub worms if I'm feeling especially roguish) and place them onto a table, OR even dump them into the participant's hands so that he or she can attempt to feed it to my familiar – yet only if they are brave enough!

* * *

Now let's stop here for a second... Let's analyze the situation. The psychological expectation being set up here is that you have mentioned your animal familiar, then changed the subject... If done correctly you can create an element of *Attention, Interest, Desire* and *Action* (as Docc Hilford lectures on) in the mind of the potential client/participant. The goal is to plant the idea inside the person's mind that a real live animal can appear at your will (very powerful if pulled off!). The distance I am going here to convince them that I can actually manifest a familiar in the form of any animal of my choice is so strong, that even if the familiar failed to manifest, I will have still taken the potential client into uncharted mental waters and into a rather emotionally-suspenseful territory.

As my highly-talented friend Chris Gould would say, powerful mystery art can be performed without there even having to be a "trick" involved! In that sense it may be just as powerful to never have the familiar manifest, yet having succeeded in still bringing the participant somewhere in their mind. Who says magik had to work every time (isn't that only something regular magicians have to worry about)? However since I AM incorporating the "*What Tha...*" effect into this pitch, we need not worry for a failed manifestation, for the effect is always 100% and works like a charm every time, being under the full control of the performer. Thus if you so choose, an actual physical manifestation of your animal familiar is pretty easy.

By the way, my justification for using seeds or grubs is that I want to invoke the familiar "*in an animal form which will be more easily handled and manageable, and not get out of control 'AGAIN', like last time*" (Yikes!!!). Yes, I use those specific words to imply that the "last time" I manifested my animal spirit/familiar it got severely out of hand (this allows the potential client's imagination to wonder and wander a bit, and doubles as an extra convincer, invoking a feeling of uneasiness and uncertainty in just what might happen if it manifests (always good to keep 'em on their toes).

When one says that they can produce a familiar into any animal of their choosing, they are at great risk of someone wanting or expecting them to produce a damn tiger or elephant or something. So I justify using the seeds as a way to coax the familiar to manifest into a small, manageable and controllable animal (i.e. bird, turtle, lizard, snake, shrew, rat, mouse, mole, salamander, and so on), something

that would be inclined to eat seeds instead of carrion, ha-ha.

Also, the reason I use a *handful* of sunflower seeds (or grubs) opposed to just one (1) or two (2), is so that when the animal does actually manifest (in the brief half a second that it does) and “peck” at the nervously extended waiting hand of the participant, they will not have any way of knowing whether the animal took/ate one or not, due to the fact that it, 1. happens so fast they are unable to tell, and 2. there are so many seeds, they are unable to determine whether one is missing or not (the “million object” theory). Again if done properly the participant will swear that they saw the animal eat something from the palm of their very hand.

* * *

Ok, so now that the participant is holding their cupped hand(s) full of seeds or small grub worms, I show my hands empty by casually gesturing for them to extend their hand(s). DO NOT over prove the empty hands here, you are not a magician or a sleight-of-hand manipulator here, you are a shaman, an occultist, a medicine person, a ritual/ceremonial mage, etc. Just a simple and authentic gesture in explanation with “open hands” is all that is needed. I then cup my hands, while closing my eyes and whispering a non-coherent incantation (and beforehand perhaps lighting some sage or sweetgrass in order to “ensure a calm and peaceful animal manifestation”). As the potential client slowly extends the seed towards my cupped hands as in the action of attempting to feed whatever animal or creature might lie inside my closed hands (this creates suspense and a slight amount of tension and stress within the participant).

Caution them to move slowly and not to make any sudden movements for it would be catastrophic to have the animal familiar’s spirit enter itself into an orifice of the one who is striving to feed it (again building tension and stress and creating desire)!! When the participant’s hand(s) come in contact with my hand and close to the supposed location of my familiar, I make the familiar (in the form of the “*What Tha...*” gimmick) manifest itself in a swift pecking motion towards the participant’s handheld food.

I do NOT over do it! Less is more, they should see only a one (1) second glimpse of the thing, and not even be able to fully determine what exactly it was. If timed and

done correctly and smoothly it is one of the most powerful and memorable occurrences which one can ever demonstrate. Really though, you have to see it to believe it. I have also played around with the idea of "*What Tha...*" being able to literally take the seed from them, which would only really require that the seed stick to the gimmick so that the familiar and seed can both recede back into the dark cave of your cupped hands. Food for thought (no pun intended).

Lastly, after the familiar appears in my cupped hands and either takes the seed or at least attempts to eat it (again the reveal is only one second long, if not even just 1/2 a second), I look into my cupped hands and claim (bluff) that it has turned invisible again (likes to eat the food in private?). Still holding onto my now invisible familiar I make it literally appear inside of the participants shoe and they really feel it inside their own shoe! This is by far probably even more powerful than actually having glimpsed it just moments ago! At least that's what the reactions I have received show and prove. You're gonna have to do your homework to figure out how that's done though. A wise and mellow man once told me: "Seek and ye shall find, for what you seek is in your mind (imagination)".

The thing I like about "*What Tha...*" is that it is not clearly identifiable as any one particular animal. It could be a bird, lizard, mouse, rat, snake, miniature dragon, golem, gargoyle, parasitic creature, etc... The trick is to make the manifestation quick, no more than half (1/2) a second, or one (1) second at the most. Show it just enough to allow the participant to adjust his or her eyes and focus on it, BOOM! then its gone just as fast as it came.

By experimenting with leaving a feather, or piece of snake skin, or fake droppings (dried grape seeds or olive pits) in your hand after the creature has disappeared, it will stop curious participants from wanting to know where it went to (to which I would reply: "What do you mean where it went? It's right here, you just can't see it because it's just invisible, yet you can feel it!" Then make it appear in their shoe). If you happen to run into troublemakers, then simply tell them your familiar is very reciprocal and that it too left them a "treat" for them to eat. Offer them to taste one of the "droppings" that the animal left behind in your hand). This should handle even the most curious and obnoxious participants. Have fun with this one, I know I certainly do!

NOTE: Because the nature of the "*What Tha...*" gimmick is somewhat ambiguous

looking, one might want to experiment with allowing a participant to name a “small animal” while you call upon the elemental forces to make it appear for a brief moment. As I mentioned twice above – and it is worth repeating – that by manifesting the gimmick quickly enough, no one will be able to tell whether what you produced is a bird, turtle, lizard, snake, shrew, rat, mouse, mole, salamander, etc. As magi, ambiguity can and should be used to our advantage, by allowing the participant to come to his or her OWN conclusions as to what they just witnessed, while simultaneously causing their minds to fill in the missing pieces of visual information.

27. Inuits and Eskimos are known to have familiars which are expressed and incorporated into handmade and imitation seals, instead of living ones. Imagine an animal figurine, wood carving or representative sculpture in the shape of a specific animal which acts as your familiar during a routine. One doesn't necessarily have to spend the rest of their life training a farmyard of animals to do magik. So fear not, an animal figurine or statuette can be used as a familiar as well. My signature routine “*Sankofa: The Power of Ancestral Memory*” uses a small ebony wood carving of a special bird familiar of mine. For more ideas, check out Docc Hilford's “*The Whispering Buddha*”.
28. A séance for an animal might prove to be an interesting idea. There are pet cemeteries, pet hotels, etc. why not a pet séance or a séance for a specific animal (deity/totem), etc., etc., etc.?
29. A living and dead test involving pet animals. People are so inextricably attached to their pets nowadays... They sleep in the same bed with them, buy clothing for them, install “microchip” trackers in them, share their food with them, and bury them in special pet cemeteries. Why not have a Living and Dead Test of participant's still living and deceased pets? Then moving into attempting to contact the deceased pets for the owner... You laugh, yet the way I seen some folks with their animals, it just might sell! *Smile*

30. Instead of an actual physical animal used as a familiar, think about the use of animal figurines or parts, like the infamous “monkey paw”, or pictures of cave drawings depicting animals, or incorporating animal spirit decks, such as the *Druid Animal Oracle*, *Indigenous (First Nations) Animal Totems* or *Tikar Spider Cards* from Kameroun. As mentioned earlier, it doesn’t have to be a live animal to be your familiar. A drawing, statuette, sculpture, photograph, taxidermically stuffed animal, book on animals, an animal Medu Neter (hieroglyph) alphabet symbol, etc. The possibilities are limited only to your imagination.

I really hope y’all get inspired, build further on, or even incorporate a couple of these ideas I came up with. Again, some of the ideas listed are more practical than others... Open your creative mind, visualize what YOUR favorite animal is, research it, and think of ways you can either physically or metaphorically incorporate that animal into a routine or effect as your own personal animal/pet familiar. As Mystery Artists and Metaphysical Magi (“Bizzarrists”) it is incumbent upon us to do solid and sound research on the topics, subject matter and themes we feature and talk about in our routines and performances. Lest, one day you find yourself tested by someone who knows that you know not, and thereby call your bluff. So train hard to climb the entire mountain, not just halfway only to slide back down it. Do the full and investigative research on the subjects and topics you mention in your magik, for it’s better to have it and not need it, than need it and not have it.

Psychologically, the cool thing about the whole animal/pet familiar premise is that the participating audience is rarely going to assume an animal (much less a “lowly” rat) can be capable of secretly accomplishing things for the performer, unless the animal is openly touted as a familiar and a skillful pet whose talents are visibly demonstrated in the act of assisting the performer, mage or medium. In no way am I striving to sound like I’m underestimating our beloved participants or that they are totally clueless, yet I genuinely believe that sadly most people tend to think of animals (especially birds and rodents) as pretty incapable and unintelligent. I myself was pleasantly surprised and educated as to the many things animals can be trained to do in researching information for this specific column and topic. Some of the things I saw the animals being trained to do (in the video links above) blew me away, yet at the same time realistically also knowing that there will always be natural limitations when using animals as well. That said, I have taken the liberty to create three (3) distinct, separate (yet sometimes overlapping) categories for using an animal or trained pet as a familiar

or secret assistant. I have done this in part to showcase the multidimensional aspects/roles that an animal/familiar can play in our magik:

Category #1 - An animal used as a familiar in that it openly aids the mage by doing simple, non-magikal tasks as a trustworthy assistant to the mage:

Under this category the animal is clearly presented as being trained by the mage, and is strictly seen as a pet familiar of the mage in the sense that it is a dutiful and visible helper/assistant (the mage's trusty companion so to speak). For example a small show dog that brings various props to the mage throughout the show is a Category #1 use of an animal familiar.

Category #2 - An animal used (whether hidden or visible) as secret assistant, tool or utility of the mage, and secretly aids in accomplishing the method (or proving/selling) the effect credited to the mage:

This category utilizes the animal as a trained and unsuspected secret assistant/agent to the mage (whether the animal is visible to the audience or not). Aiding the mage in pulling off chicanery and subterfuge. Not necessarily a pet familiar in the open sense, in that it is hidden or if visible is believed to be normal, possessing no magikal powers and removed from the magi and his show. To be perfectly accurate, this category of animal use can only really be seen as a pet familiar strictly to the mage and the mage only. As the mage is the only one that knows the animal is assisting him or her.

For example a dog that has been trained to bark profusely upon receiving a subtle and secret command from the mage, which in performance appears to the participants as if a "normal pet" (house dog) nervously starts barking after the mage has vocally asked aloud if his "spirit guide" is present in the room. (The dog barks after receiving a secret command from the mage, which makes it appear as if the "normal" house dog has genuinely sensed the arrival of an invisible spirit in the room). The animal in this category (although used in secret for the effect/s), is not directly connected to the show, and is only connected to the show based on its seemingly unexpected and unsuspected actions.

Category #3 - An animal used as a familiar by being both a visible and a secret assistant to the mage, and/or by demonstrating its “magikal powers” during a show:

When a mage openly introduces an animal into a show as his/her magikal pet familiar (yet one that has been secretly trained by the mage to either accomplish or take part in the method of an effect) its use is under Category #3. This category of animal use differs from the above two categories in the sense that the animal is focalized as a main attraction in the effect, it is touted as a magikal creature, the literal pet familiar (or animal spirit) of the mage (or a witch, shaman, etc.), who under seemingly impossible “test” conditions is able to aid the mage in accomplishing a miracle, or use its magikal powers to create one itself. Make sense?

For example a mouse that has been secretly trained to stop on a specific (forced) tarot card when spread amongst the other cards on the table, yet which looks from the participant’s view as if the mouse has actually magikally “divined” their chosen card. The animal in this category is directly related and connected to the mage’s routines, and it is understood by all that the animal is an integral part of the show (billed as the mage’s familiar). Just as in Category #1 the animal’s function in this category is that of the mage’s trusted assistant, yet is spotlighted as having magikal powers that the mage openly uses to his advantage, which the animal in Category #1 does not possess.

Furthermore, the animal’s role in Category #3, is also similar to that of Category #2 in that it secretly aids the mage in accomplishing the effect, yet the main difference here is that the animal’s role in Category #2 is undisclosed, unrelated to the show/effect/routine in the eyes of the participant, and is secretly used as a utility by the mage (its assistance to the mage again is unknown to the participants). In Category #3 the animal is openly related and connected to the show/effect/routine despite also functioning as a secret utility for and to the mage.

I can think of several more categorical uses to place pet familiars in, yet for the sake of brevity, I will leave it at just these three categories. In creating magik effects, I oftentimes find it useful to break things down and into categories so that I can focus on one aspect of a concept at a time and run through all the possibilities and scenarios to ensure a more thorough and in-depth exploration and understanding of an idea.

Neglecting to do so can result in overlooking specific aspects of an idea which serve our best interest to flesh out.

Closing Thoughts:

So there you have it, a historical, religious, magikal, archeological, and anthropological introduction to animal familiars especially and specifically as seen and understood through many different eyes and lenses. As well as my thoughts and ideas on animals and pets being incorporated into magik effects, routines and presentations, either as secret assistants, openly featured helpers, startling reveals, or playing the role of an actual familiar in a show. I would like to take the time to dearly thank my brothers and sisters at BizarreMagic.net for building with me on some of these ideas, fleshing a few out and expanding on them further, always being willing to brainstorm on creative ideas, give constructive nonjudgmental feedback and further the art of Bizarre Magik, Metaphysical Magik and the Mystery Arts in general. Peace.

NOTE: No animals were harmed during the writing of this column. Moreover, ironically, as fate would have it, I myself own absolutely no pets or animals (yet), go figure! I know, I know, I know what you're thinking, "Dang Nyama! What is a secret laboratory without any animals?" Well, maybe it's because I'm vegan? Maybe it's because I've never had a use for them before? Or perhaps I am just too busy to take care of any animals??? Hmmmmm... Anyways, I'm guilty as charged on all three (3) accounts... Enjoy the rest of your visit in my animal-free lab.

Some Sources and Further Reading:

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https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Familiar_spirit
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Serpent_\(symbolism\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Serpent_(symbolism))
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<http://paganwiccan.about.com/od/magicandspellwork/a/AnimalFamiliars.htm>

~ Frankenstein Magik ~

(Alchemical Transmutation of Standard "Tricks")

Backstory Ideas For Standard Props and the Importance of Giving Props Their Proper Meaning

Important Questions to Ask Regarding Your Antique Magik Props:

- *What is it?* (an artifact? relic? contemporary item? antique? lost treasure?)
- *Where did it come from?* (what time period? country? city? place? culture? religion? civilization?)
- *When did you acquire it?*
- *How did you acquire it?* (yard sale? museum auction? ancient ruin? deceased relative? occult shoppe? book store? trash can? beach? cemetery?)
 - *Why did you acquire it? Or did it just fall into your hands mysteriously?*
 - *Did you purchase it? Find it? Steal it? Borrow it? If so, from where?*
 - *Was it given to you? If so, by whom?*
 - *Who might have owned it and/or used it before you?* (occultist? shaman? celebrity? relative? fantastical character? demon? angel? mage? monster? warrior? prisoner? child? animal? scientist? professor? extra terrestrial alien?)
 - *Did it belong to someone who was Important?* (evil? jealous? possessed? gifted? greedy? fortunate? wealthy? famous? insane? holy? haunted? revengeful? powerful? hated? loved? despised? brilliant? imprisoned? feared?)
 - *Does the prop have special powers? If so, what powers and characteristics does it possess and imbue?*
 - *Is the prop blessed or cursed in any way?*

- *Does the prop fit your character? Is it justifiable for you to possess?*
- *Is it an item of special curiosity, rarity, power, or just a regular ordinary object?*
 - *If rare and special, what makes it so? Does it reside in a special box? Is it carefully wrapped or covered? Is it handled with care and/or caution? Do you wear gloves before handling it?*
 - *Of what specific purpose does it serve you? Why do you need it? What function does it serve in the overall effect?*
- *Do you really need it? Will the effect/routine work without it, or is it mandatory?*
- *Does it dominate the performance or merely compliment it?*
- *Are there others like it still in existence, or is it one-of-a-kind? If there are others where are they, and who owns them?*
- *What story does it tell? When you look at it where does it look like it came from, where does it look like it has been?*
- *What time period does it come from? Is it new/contemporary, old, ancient or prehistoric?*

Silks/Fabric:

- *Is it fabric that was cut from a shaman's altar?*
- *Is it a piece of bed sheet belonging to a possessed victim who received an exorcism?*
- *Is it a scrap of clothing that was worn by a haunted doll, a possessed puppet, or a Nkondi charged nkisi/power object?*
- *Is it part of a uniform? (king, nazi soldier, Shinto priest, prisoner, psychiatric nurse, wizard, werewolf, alien, emperor, shaman, executioner?)*
- *Is it a scrap of burial shroud, dug up by grave robbers or by a wild animal? If so whose grave did it come from – that of an important person or a lowly commoner?*
- *Is it ancient linen from the burial chamber of a Ta-Merrian sah (ancient Egyptian mummy)?*

- *Is it a mystical gypsy's babushka or perhaps a fortuneteller's handkerchief? (i.e. Luna Rose of Outlaw Effects fame)*
 - *Is it a piece of bed sheet used by a prisoner to hang himself?*
 - *Is it a piece of clothing from someone who did you wrong? (sympathetic magik?)*
 - *Was it used to cover or polish a powerful or magikal object (mirror? genie's lamp? amulet/medallion?)*
 - *Was it the personal pocket square of someone powerful, royal, important or special?*
1. *Is it evidence from a crime scene investigation? A piece of clothing perhaps found in the vicinity of a horrific crime? A scrap of leather from Red Jack's apron? Is it a piece of clothing from a murder victim? Or a scrap of fabric from a lost boy's flying kite?*

The above mentioned questions are suggested to get your creative mind stimulated and activated. Asking yourself these specific questions about the props you buy, antiques you find, or relics you collect and artifacts you discover allows you to literally make the prop your own, by breathing life into it. If you're not sure where your props come from how are you to know where they should take you (in performance)? It may sound silly I know, yet a major part of creating your own effects and routines is by fleshing out all the details and then striving to refine them in such a way that you are left with a concrete back-story and are mentally covered, should you ever have some explaining to do. Better to know more about your props than not know anything about them. Don't underestimate this important truth.

~ NYAMA FILES (PORN FOR BIZARRISTS) ~

21 Rare Quotes, In-sight-full Proverbs and Unique Wisdom Sayings Concerning "Love" for Sitters, Séances and Spirit Messages

The following twenty-one (21) quotes, proverbs and wisdom sayings centered around the topic/subject of *Love* can be used as spirit messages in personal (one-on-one), pocket (small) or grand (parlor) séances, as well as impromptu séances that require a spirit

message (i.e. Eugene Burger's "*Flash Spirit Message*"). Moreover, the quotes can also be incorporated into full personal readings centered on *Love, Relationships* and even *Family*. In some instances you might want to summon or channel a particular author of a specific quote/saying below, and then reveal their "self-authored" spirit message.

Or instead, you might rather want to use one of the quotes/sayings as a spirit message yet detached from its "original author", simply using the quote all by itself as a specific answer to a sitter's question about Love, Relationships or Family (rather than theming a whole séance and/or reveal around and about the author of one of the quotes). Lastly, you may want to use one of the quotes/sayings in a script you are working out for a specific effect. These quotes hold their own weight and can both compliment your own words, as well as further enlighten the sitter on such matters. For the Kadri practitioners (Kadarologists/Kadarists) out there, these Love proverbs can also be used with Christopher J. Gould's ingenious reading system, "KADAR" as stock quotes or "fortune-cookie" type messages for those sitters who are drawn to the "Heart" as one of the *five gifts*.

Sometimes inspiration for a séance, effect or routine comes just from reading an intriguing and relevant quote. Be creative in your use of the following Love quotes, have fun using your imagination as to how you can incorporate some of them into a séance setting or a personal reading. I tell my students never to underestimate the absolute power of *personalizing* something – whether it be a memorable gift, message, thought, compliment, reading, or what have you. When something is personalized toward someone it hits them right between the eyes, reaches out and touches their heart (whether negatively through fear, or positively through reassurance).

People gravitate towards things that are personalized to them. We all know and can attest to the sheer impact and magnitude that a genuine and unexpected compliment can have, or a truthful dis that we feel hits us below the belt. When spirit messages are personalized (whether pre-made or created impromptu using a nail writer, etc.) they hit with the tremendous force of a firearm hammer striking a bullet's primer! The possibilities are limited only to your imagination. Hope you can find use for the following wise Love quotes:

1. *Kisses aren't contracts and presents aren't promises.*

-- Veronica Shoffstall

2. *Learn to build your roads on today because tomorrow's ground is too uncertain for plans, and futures have a way of falling down in mid-flight.*

-- Veronica Shoffstall

3. *Plant your own garden and decorate your own soul instead of waiting for someone else to bring you flowers.*

-- Veronica Shoffstall

4. *What does love look like? It has the hands to help others. It has the feet to hasten to the poor and needy. It has eyes to see misery and want. It has the ears to hear the sighs and sorrows of men. That is what love looks like.*

-- St. Augustine

5. *Love is friendship that has caught fire. It takes root and grows – one day at a time.*

-- “Ann Landers”

6. *Love is the quiet understanding and mature acceptance of imperfection.*

-- “Ann Landers”

7. *Love lifts you up. It makes you look up. It makes you think up. It makes you a better person than you were before.*

-- “Ann Landers”

8. *Time is too slow for those who wait, too swift for those who fear, too long for those who grieve, too short for those who rejoice, but for those who love, time is eternity.*

-- Henry Van Dyke

9. *The way to love anything is to realize that it might be lost.*

-- G. K. Chesterton

10. *I love you, and because I love you, I would sooner have you hate me for telling you the truth than adore me for telling you lies.*

-- Pietro Aretino

11. *You yourself, as much as anybody else in the entire universe, deserves your love and affection.*

-- Buddha

12. *Love is sometimes difficult, but death even more so.*

-- KiSwahili Proverb (East Afrika)

13. *Love is like a bird. If you hold it too tight you choke it, if you hold it too loose it will fly away.*

-- Akan Proverb (Ghana)

14. *Love has to be shown by deeds not words.*

-- KiSwahili Proverb (East Afrika)

15. *One who loves the vase loves also what's inside.*

-- Hausa Proverb (Nigeria)

16. *When one is in love, a cliff becomes a meadow.*

-- Amhara Proverb (Ethiopia)

17. *Who travels for love finds a thousand miles not longer than one.*

-- Japanese Proverb

18. *Only love can be divided endlessly and still not diminish.*

-- Anne Morrow Lindbergh

19. *Ever has it been that love knows not its own depth until the hour of separation.*

-- Kahlil Gibran

20. *Your task is not to seek for love, but merely to find all the barriers within yourself against it.*

-- Rumi

21. *If you love the life you live, you will live a life of love.*

-- Anonymous

As a rather nomadic performer I enjoy concepts and effects that pack small yet play very big, and most of my strongest pieces can comfortably and easily fit into an ALTOIDS® tin (which I have painted, distressed and desecrated of course). For me, props and gimmicks and gadgets are cool, I LOVE them, however more importantly to me is presentation, presentation, presentation! In all my years as a performer I have observed three (3) basic truisms:

1. Less is often more.

2. Simple is often better.

3. The most insignificant little "trick" can be turned into an astonishing miracle, if presented correctly.

I tend to prefer magik and séances that are rather direct, to the point and pretty straightforward, yet not in a rushed, infantile or careless way. An example of these personal preferences stated above, is a simple reading which involves a quote revealed via a spirit message to a young woman who inquires about Love (and she will inquire

about Love!). In this case the “spirit” (of you or your sitter’s choice), kindly imparts a reminder in the form of some *loving* grandmotherly wisdom/advice to her inquiry about Love:

“Always remember dear, Love has to be shown by deeds and not just words.”

...or...

“Kisses aren't contracts and presents aren't promises. So maintain a just amount of liberty and independence.”

...or...

“Love is the quiet understanding and mature acceptance of imperfection. Allow people in your life to make mistakes (within reason).”

It doesn't have to get anymore complicated than that. If you really study the best of the best, the master teachers and top performers in the realm of mystery art and magik you will not see long, overly-drawn-out stories combined with complicated and procedure-heavy processes that bore and “un-entertain” participants. A simple personalized spirit message and a five (5) minute palm reading are just as devastatingly powerful as a \$500 book test and an electronically operated spirit device, if not even more so! I enjoy focusing on the fundamentals, the simple basics... Give me a nail writer, haunted key, thumb tip, coin, tarot deck and a peek wallet (or a stack of business cards) and I could perform magik everyday for the rest of my life and never run out of material. Spirit messages are devastatingly powerful yet unbelievably simple and direct... And who doesn't enjoy inquiring about the topic of Love? I hope some of these quotes get put to good use.

~ Mummified Appendix ~

A Brief List of Bizarre, Mystery Art and Metaphysical Magik Using, Incorporating and/or Featuring Physical Animals (whether Dead or Alive)

Specific Effects:

Animal Sense by Matt Mello (Playing Psychic)
Bête Noir by Tony Shiels (THIRTEEN!)
Cat Eyes by Jim Magus (Horror Magic)
Chamber Dark by Bill Montana
Demon Key by T. A. Waters (Mind, Myth & Magick)
Dreams in the Witch-House by Stephen Minch (The Book of Forgotten Secrets)
Fly Resurrection by David Blaine
Fooling Pavlov by David Harkey and Eric Anderson (Ah-Ha!)
Gargoyle by Jim Magus (Horror Magic)
The Imaginary Object by Matt Mello
Khaibit Serpent by Jim Magus (Horror Magic)
Lady Bug by Paul Vigil
Protective Amulet by Brother Ephraim/Max Maven (Grimoire of the Mages)
The Ceremony of Atman-Ka by Stephen Minch (The Book of Forgotten Secrets)*
The Fungi from Yuggoth by Stephen Minch (The Book of Forgotten Secrets)
The Ritual of the Four Dead Flies by EvilDan
The Silver Key by Stephen Minch (The Book of Forgotten Secrets)

**The Ceremony of Atman-Ka* was also published in Masklyn ye Mage's Grimoire of the Mages under Stephen Minch's pen name "Frater Ecballium".

Books:

Mr. Lucky's Trick Dog Training Book by Mr. Lucky & Alice S. Vachss

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The next issue of Top Hat is due out the 15th January. If you are interested in submitting an article for publication please direct your inquiry to tophatv2@gmail.com - the deadline for submissions is the 1st January.

If you have any comments, questions or criticisms, please send them to the e-mail address above. We welcome all feedback.

PARTING SHOT:

We wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! May all your Christmases be white!

- The Writers and Staff here at Top Hat -