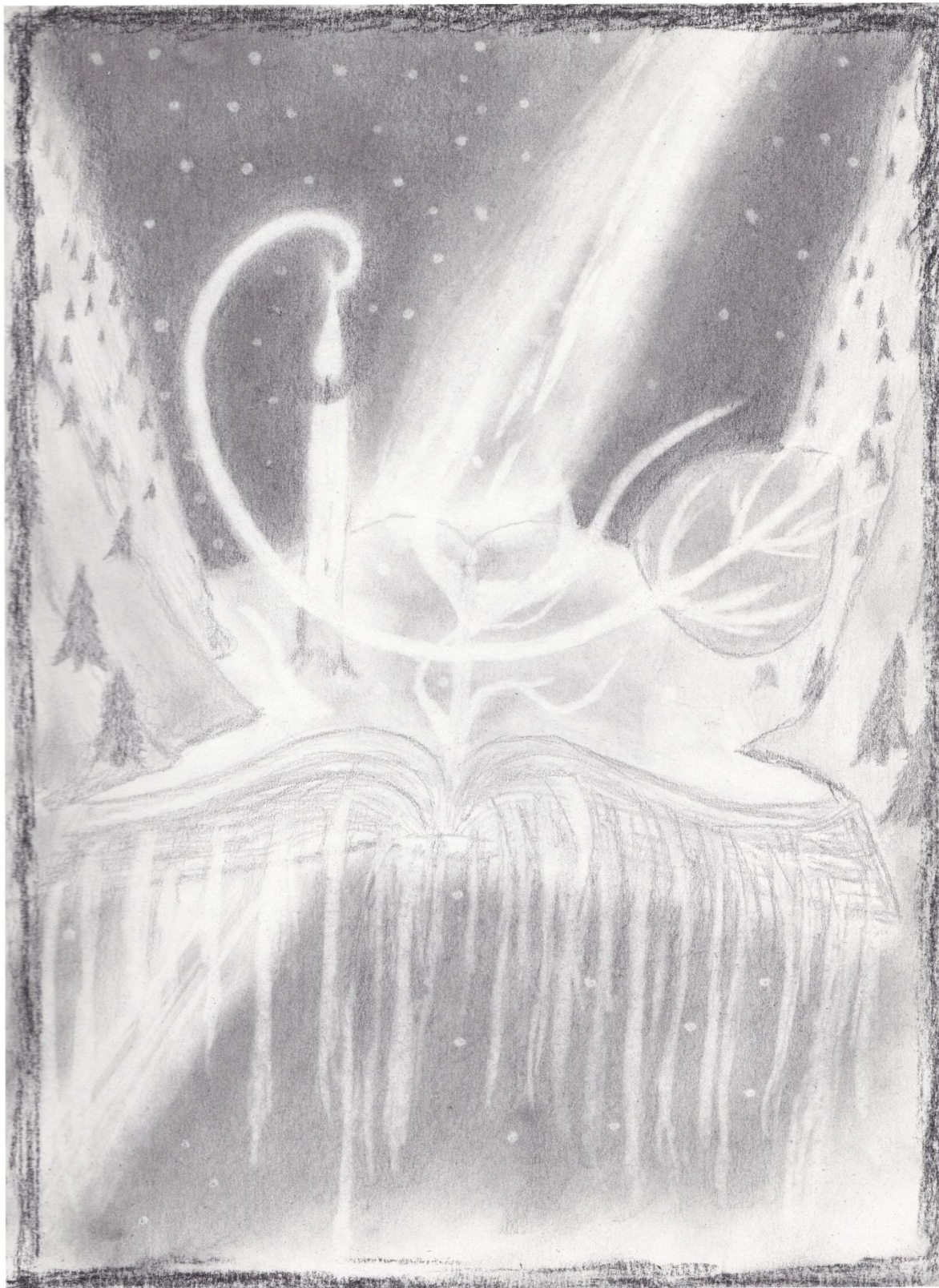




The Book of Odyssey

Magic, Mentalism, and Mysticism

Volume II

By
Tom Phoenix

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Of Dreams and Solitude

As we walk the paths, we often find ourselves in empty glades which were once bright with moonlight and illuminated leaves, floating gently on the autumn wind. But now these glades are cold and empty with only faint rays of sunlight through dark clouds gathering. From time to time, we spend too long in these small rings of treeless space and find ourselves withering with dying oaks. A time of man, a time of mortality, and a time of realization –

*“In a world lost to treason
Shapes of the greater, that dared and who died
Grand giants overlooking the vast never ending
The pillars of the sky
At their feet lie the masses
Those like us, who craved to arise
As they fell all before them
Triumph or death for the pillars of the sky”*

- Netherbird

Table of Contents

Special Thanks	1
Introduction	2
The Aspen Glade	3
The Aspen Glade Variation	18
Billet Peaks	23
Gilly's Revenge	41
The Disposable Swami	51
Grasp of Time	55
Conclusion	69

Special Thanks

Aquilus

When writing this, I made a playlist of your music and set it on loop. As much as I enjoy writing, it is a solitary endeavor, and your brilliance kept me company.

PhoenixFeatherLight

That was an excellent conversation we had about abstract art. You really have an eloquent style of writing.

Havukrunnu

Myrskynkutsuja is a storm – wrought with sweeping gales of voice, torrents of harmony, and crashes of thunderous power.

Millard Longman

Thank you for the permission to include the peeks in this book. And I'm glad you like them!

Aldi

Thanks for the great lecture in Vegas. Oh, and your pendulum peek is brilliant.

Moonsorrow

As always, your music is the pinnacle of accomplishment. When I need a guiding light, all I need to do is put on some headphones and listen to V: Hävitetty.

Netherbird

“The Grander Voyage” is a masterpiece. I hope one day I'll be able to create something as powerful as your music.

Lance

Man you're an inspiration. Brilliant thinker too. Grow your beard long and strong, my friend.

My Brother

The mountains are calling, and we must go.

Introduction

Greetings! Welcome to the fourth volume of the Magic, Mentalism, and Mysticism series.

We desire a method of real magic, without real methods, and since such does not yet exist, we continue our walk in search of something as close to the ideal as possible.

I had a dream once, where I turned to a person I had never met, and told them to imagine they were a child again. They were outside playing, and they hear the voice of their mom calling them in for dinner. They imagine hearing their mom's voice, clearly, as though she was there now. I wrote something on a note card while their eyes were closed, and then asked them to look at the card. "Is this something you could hear her saying?" And on the note card is their name. They never said anything, never wrote anything down, I never did any social media research, or listened in on a conversation.

Call me a dreamer.

But I have a method.

Welcome to the Book of Odyssey.

The Aspen Glade

Presentation

Part 1

You: “Our thoughts and dreams are among the most precious things we can experience, and also share with others. Though most of our day-to-day communication is through physical means, there is another aspect to our minds which is largely unknown, yet observable. I’ll need a volunteer. Yes, what is your name?”

Her: “Melissa.”

You: “Lovely name. You and I are going to make an attempt at non-physical transfer of thought.”

(Take out a billet and a pen.)

You: “Now Melissa, I want you to remain silent during this process, as this is only going to take place in your mind. On this card, you’re going to write a word and a number, there’s no way I could know what these are, but they will have some significance to you. Also, when you’re finished with that, fold this card and let me know when you’re done.”

Melissa: *(She does this.)*

You: “Excellent, now hold the card at your fingertips... I’m trying to feel *(close your eyes, and move your hand around the billet)*, thoughts, especially strong thoughts, leave traces. I’m feeling something, but it’s too faint. Allow me to hold it *(take the billet from her and hold it near your ear)*.”

You: “Okay, I’m getting a couple impressions. *(Close your hand around the billet.)* Go ahead and close your eyes. Again, don’t say anything during this, I’m only trying to read your inner thoughts. Really focus on this word.... This is something very important to you, nod if that is correct.

Melissa: *(She nods 'yes')*

You: "And the number has two digits, yes?"

Melissa: *(She nods)*

You: "Ah, I felt a color, it was bright white coming from you, so I assume that was a 'yes'. The second of the two digits won't divide, is it a prime number? Perhaps. But definitely an odd number, yes?"

Melissa: *(She nods 'yes')*

You: "And the first digit, it's tall and imposing but also lonely. One."

Melissa: *(She nods 'yes')*

You: "As for the word, when you see it in your mind, it feels very cold, snowy, almost."

You: *(Set the billet on fire.)*

Melissa: *(She nods 'yes')*

You: "Yet it feels warm at the same time, like a fireplace on a cold winter night. 'Ember'! That's why it has a warm feeling to it! The word you are thinking of is a month, and it ends with 'ember'. This word is the month you were born in, would this be 'November'?.... No, your mind went dark for a moment, December then."

Melissa: *(She nods yes)*

You: "December.... 15th, December 15th, is this correct?"

Melissa: *(She shakes her head 'no')*

You: "Ah, but I feel a color of gray, it's close to the 15th, within a few days. Only a few days, I can't tell which direction. Your mind fluttered a bit, I think it's up. December 20th, is this correct?"

Melissa: *(She shakes her head 'no').*

You: “Ah well, I feel I’m very close but will not take a third guess. On the count of three, slowly open your eyes. One. Two... Three. And open. Not December 20th? How close was I?”

Melissa: “December 19th.”

You: “Oh, very close then. I thought it may have been a few days below the 15th, but went with my instinct on the 20th.”

Part 2

You: “Let us move on to something a bit more exciting.” *(Pull out a box and set it in the center of the table).* “In here *(give a sneaky grin)*, I have a sheet of paper. And on that paper, there is a mystery. But a mystery which will slowly be revealed. *(Remove the paper from the box, and show that it has colored lines drawn all over it.)*

You: *(Addressing the person sitting next to Melissa)* “Would you be opposed to being placed in a trance-like state? Don’t worry, it is simply a state of relaxation. No? Excellent. And are you right-handed or left-handed? Right? Good. Look at me, just relax, and I’m going to count backwards from five to one. When I reach one, you will close your eyes and wait for further instruction. Ready? Breathe in, hold it, and release. Five, breathe in, four, slowly release it, three, inhale, two, release, and one. You are now fully relaxed, and may breathe normally. Listen very closely to what I say. You are going to take this pencil in your *left* hand, and this pad in your right. While I speak to you, you are going to allow the pencil to move across the paper in lazy circles and wavy lines. A very light touch will do. Move your hands under the table as you do this. Nod if you understand what to do.”

Them: *(They nod ‘yes’.)*

You: “Very good. Now listen to the sound of my voice. *(Begin folding the paper along the colored lines.)* You are standing on the shore, looking out to the ocean, you feel the sand underfoot and hear the waves as they crash onto the rocks. In front of you, there is a path floating on top of the water – it looks like you could walk on it without sinking. You take a few cautious steps, and then you walk confidently across the waves. You look down to the water and find the water has

vanished, and there are rocks and trees surrounding you. You approach a tree, and hold one of the leaves. Looking at it, it gets larger, and larger, until you now walk on the leaf, which has vanished, for you now walk with the stars. *Drop the pencil, and fold the paper in half and in half again.* Set the paper on the table. *(You take the paper and place it in the box, closing the lid.)* You see within the constellations, and you see the pattern. The pattern our subconscious takes. You are a part of it, like all living things, and between our minds, there is a connection. So there you stand on the beach, coming back now. Breathe in, hold it, and release. I will count now, when I reach three, you will open your eyes. One. Two... Three, open. How do you feel?"

Them: "Relaxed. A little confused. What was that about?"

You: "The subconscious mind acts in patterns, but in a very different form than what we are accustomed to. Your conscious mind was trying to make sense of what you experienced, while your higher mind was able to act out. Do you have any idea what you drew?"

Them: "No idea."

You: "Neither does anyone else." *(Open the box and take out the folded slip.)* "The waves, the leaves, and the pattern among the stars are all connected. One pattern which runs through all of Nature. One pattern, represented by a ratio, called, 'The Golden Ratio'."

You: *(Show the origami model you have folded, and it appears to have a spiral pattern. You turn it over, and a symbol has been revealed by how the folds align. The symbol is the Greek letter "phi".)*

You unfold the slip of paper, and they have drawn scribbles and wavy lines, yet behind those, there is a spiral with the symbol "phi" around the center.

Part 3

You: *(Turn to the person across from Melissa.)* "You and I have never met, and therefore, I couldn't know anything about you. I'd like to try something with the power of imagination. And no worries, you will not be in any state of trance or otherwise. Though do close your eyes. And imagine you are, oh, a kid again. You're outside playing with friends, and your mom or your dad calls you in for

dinner. Do you have this in mind?”

Him: “Yes.”

You: “Very good. Now as you’re sitting at the dinner table, what kind of food are you having?”

Him: “Chicken and potatoes.”

You: “Excellent. Now right before you go to bed, you happily remember that tomorrow is your birthday. See when we were kids, birthdays were magical in and of themselves. Though of course, as we grow older, the birthday becomes the ‘I’ll get balloons at the office, day’ or the ‘yes, now I get a Tuesday off, day’ or ‘the my birthday sucked because I had to work, day’. But getting back to your memory, you’re lying in bed, what kinds of food are you going to have for your birthday tomorrow?”

Him: “Pizza with extra cheese, vanilla cake, and chocolate ice cream.”

You: “And to drink?”

Him: “Cream soda.”

You: “Sounds like a good time. What is one present you really wanted as a kid, but never got?”

Him: “A Lego X-Wing.”

You: “Me too. Know how that goes. How about a few friends you are expecting for the party?”

Him: “My friend John Peterson, Jason Hernandez, and Kevin Jackson.

You: “Alright. When you were imagining this, I saw a day marked on a calendar. Don’t know if you had a calendar as a kid, but there it was. This year, when your birthday rolls around, make me a promise. You will have a party, and you will contact those three friends and invite them to your place. You will have pizza with extra cheese, cream soda to drink, and vanilla cake and chocolate ice cream for dessert. You will reclaim that golden time of childhood, when the world seemed

so big, and everything felt like magic. Promise me that, and I can promise that you will have one of the best birthdays of your life. Can you do that?"

Him: "Yes... I will."

You: "Oh, and invite me, too. Cream soda is my favorite."

Him: "Hahaha, alright, I'll do that."

You: "Sounds good. See you on June 12th."

- Alternatively, you can make a list of the food he wants and the names of his friends on a slip of paper. At the bottom, write: "See you on June 12th!" Hand him the paper and say: "Is everything there correct?"
- Or, say: "If, in your mind, the next day is your birthday, then that would mean today is... June 11th."

The Aspen Glade – Method Introduction

When I came up with the method, I was still half-asleep, I woke up shortly after that scene ended. I jotted down what had happened, what the conditions were, and then a method came to me. Here are the conditions:

- The person you reveal the name/birthday of needs to be entirely independent of the equation (they cannot provide any input whatsoever).
- No social media is used to collect their information before officially meeting them.
- It needs to look and feel as close to the real thing as possible.

The method spawned from a little joke I used to play on people. Since I perform mostly walk-around, table-hopping, and private parties, I often have opportunities to really mess with people through some group dynamics. This has also forced me to come up with some bullet-proof dual-reality subtleties, as the usual ones are not suitable for people who all know and talk with each other.

For large groups, stuff like instant-stooging two people to think of the same thing will fly. But for small, familiar groups, they do talk about it afterwards; not always with the intention of trying to figure out the method, but when two people describe what they felt, there are discrepancies, and therein lies the flaw which begins to pull away the veil of mystery.

- And as a side note: there is an outlook among some mentalists that “*as long as everyone enjoyed it, who cares if they work out parts of it later? Getting paid is what matters.*” This detracts from the *magic* of mentalism. It must be perfect to be unexplainable. If the performance is unraveled and revealed, then it becomes an elaborate puzzle, rather than magic. There is a routine in my “Book of Light”, in which I state: “*Even if the instant stooge talks, that is only one piece of a very large puzzle, most of which has nothing to do with that bit of information.*” I have since changed my mind. The person who was stooged in that manner is cheated out of an otherwise magical moment. And it is for this reason that I now use a different method for instant stooging.

The joke is as follows: I would pick a table where there were clearly more people at the table than were currently at the table. For instance, there are four plates, but only three people at the table. I approach the table, introduce myself as the

magician, then look around quickly to make sure no one else is returning to the table. I then put on a mischievous smile and say to the group: “Okay, this will be really funny. What city was this person born in (gesturing to the empty seat)?” They reply: “Oh he’s from Miami.” And I reply: “Great! Y’all are going to enjoy this! Until he gets back, let’s have some magic.” And I proceed to do some mentalism/mindreading.

And of course when the missing person gets back, I’d introduce myself and then say: “We were just having a demonstration of mindreading.” To which the person says: “Cool! Can you read my mind?” I look him in the eye briefly, then turn to the group and say: “Sure, why not?” I’ll leave the rest to your imagination.

It worked out very well every time *because*: Friends enjoy playing jokes on their friends. AND people enjoy feeling like they’re ‘in-on’ something, especially if it involves pranking someone else. I have used this joke so many times, and I’ve seen the same group over multiple performances. In each subsequent performance, that person has never been let in on what actually happened during that first performance. It becomes kind of a “secret inside code” between me and their friends. And since I use other mentalism techniques on the other friends, they believe that I *actually can read minds* and that one time was just a lighthearted joke for them to chuckle about, while the rest of what I do remains a mystery.

The Aspen Glade – Method

Part 1 Explanation

Now that you have the background, here is the method I came up with, in which no one is “in on a joke”, and no one has a clue how anything happened.

Instead of using pre-show as it is normally used (getting information about the person doing the writing), we’re going to use it to get information about someone else as well. Here’s the basic equation of what’s happening: “Pre-show Person A in order to read Person B’s mind.”

You have a billet with this written on it:

Your birthday: _____
Birthday of _____
Person across _____
From you: _____

The prompts are on the left half of the billet, and the lines to write on are on the right half. The billet is pre-folded into quarters, as in **The Aspen Peek** (described in the next chapter).

In performance, you hold the billet facing Person A (hold it with your thumb on the back, and index and middle fingers on front) and you say: “Now Melissa, I want you to remain silent during this process, as this is only going to take place in your mind. On this card, you’re going to write a word and a number (*pointing with your index finger to the top line*), there’s no way I could know what these are, but they will have some significance to you. Also, when you’re finished with that (*tap your middle finger on the bottom line*), fold this card and let me know when you’re done.” She does this.

You say: “Excellent, now hold the card at your fingertips.” You move your hand near and around it, as if to “read” what it contains. Gently take it from her hand, close your eyes, use your other hand to continue “feeling” the air around it. Put it into your hand, peek it (using the Aspen Peek, or whatever other right-half peek you like), and close your hand around it.

Now, *you miss her birthday*. Not by much. You only need to be off by one on the month (at first) and off by a couple on the day. Oh, and keep in mind that no one knows you have prompted her to write her birthday – they think she just wrote a “word and a number”, which allows you to get extra hits. If you go re-read the presentation of the ‘divining the word and number’ section, you’ll see how to work in these lines, where to her, you are reiterating what she knows you already know. But to the audience, they think you are picking up on all these details through psychic means.

There are a few areas of sneakiness going on here:

First, as mentioned before, nobody knows that she was prompted to write her birthday. So that whole section about “guessing the month” is going to sound incredible to them. We’re using the season the month falls in to determine how the word feels. Melissa knows you are referring to what season the month lies in, but everyone else thinks the word has something to do with a physical sensation.

Second, if the month is September, November, or December, then you can use the ‘ember’ section. Again, ‘ember’ sounds like simply the back-half of the word to Melissa, but everyone else interprets it as a fire-ember.

Third, this idea of receiving colors from her mind draws attention away from the billet and adds some amount of ‘visualization’ of what is happening between the two of you. And it gives a ‘little cover’ as to what has actually happened.

And fourth, you got the month wrong at first, corrected yourself, and then missed the day. Not by much. Then you missed it again. This confirms that you did not, in fact, see what she wrote. If you had seen it, then you would have gotten it correct on the first try. This is extremely important. She knows you didn’t see the writing, and nobody knows that she wrote somebody else’s name in it. This gives us an insane advantage.

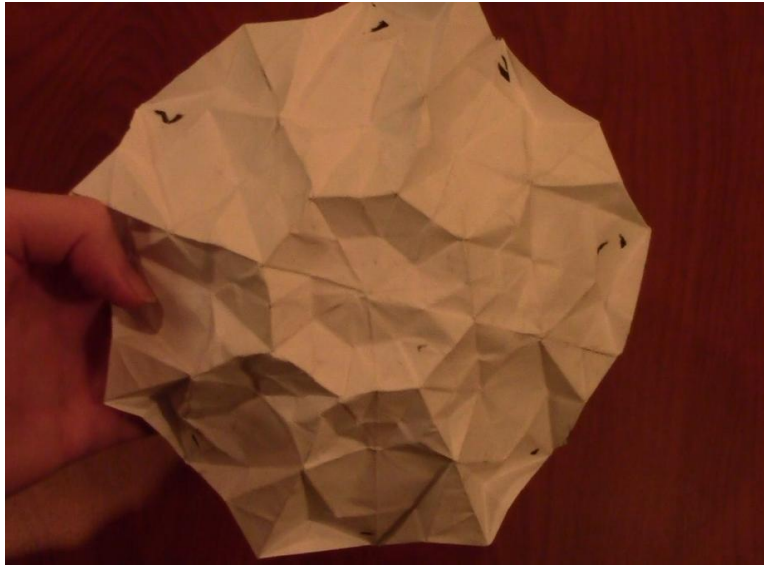
Now toss the billet. In the trash, in a bowl with other folded billets, or burn it (*throw it in the fire Isildur!*). Don’t make a big move out of it, just put it somewhere where no one is going to/can fish for it.

Part 2 Explanation

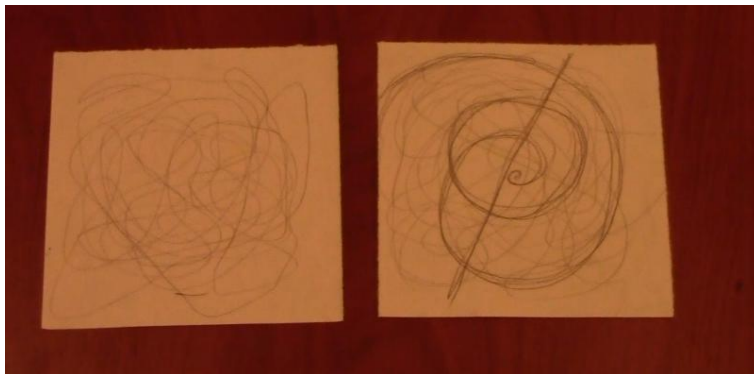
Move onto something else, could be a watch force, a “follow your intuition” effect, a cartomancy reading, etc.

In the Presentation section, I used a little routine I really enjoy performing. It works by pre-folding a slip of paper with the reveal design on it, and putting that into a switching box. The origami section is just a matter of pre-folding a model, and then drawing a Greek character/other symbol on it, so the symbol overlaps several folds (when the model is unfolded, the symbol isn't obvious, but once the model is folded, the pieces of the symbol come together).





When the participant is in a trance, they are genuinely scribbling on a slip of paper, that paper is then placed into the switching box and the lid is closed. Once they are brought out of the trance, you reveal the model you folded and the resulting symbol on the back. They unfold the switched paper, and the designs match.







When the origami spiral is in the box (before you open the box), it is holding the false bottom in the lid. When you open the box at the beginning, use your thumb to hold the false bottom in the lid, open it, pull out the origami, and leave the box open. The visible side of the false bottom has been stained the same color as the box, so it goes unnoticed. The attention is on the origami figure and what I'm doing with it, as well as the person in the trance.

Here's what the inside looks like when the lid is closed:





Part 3 Explanation

And then come back to the person across from Melissa. Follow the presentation outlined in the Presentation section. And there you have it – a real piece of mindreading, as far as everyone else is concerned. Keep in mind, Melissa knows you didn't see the billet and nobody knows what you prompted her to write. The billet is gone, and you're in the clear.

You don't have to use the birthday/birthday on the billet. It could easily be Last name/birthday, or star sign/city of birth, or occupation/major, hobby/name, etc.

And a nice note: if the present they wanted as a kid isn't too expensive, *go buy them one*. They will likely be a friend for a long time to come.

Or, if you have a confederate standing by, you can text them the present, they go and buy it, and deliver it before you are done performing. Obviously, it would have to be something accessible and preferably under \$50 or so (though if you're getting paid a hefty amount for the gig, then you have more leeway).

The Aspen Glade – Method and Presentation Variant

Still following the “Pre-show Person A to read Person B’s mind” ploy, we can use this in a slightly different manner. Rather than asking Person A for their information and Person B’s information, we can simply ask Person A for their own information, but reveal it through Person B. I’ll use a similar example as above, where Person A is named “Melissa.”

You tell her to write a word and number on the billet, then you take it, peek it (as before), and tell her to close her eyes. Act as if you’re having trouble seeing into her mind.

Now here’s the sneaky part: Say: “I’m having a bit of trouble. One moment.” Turn to the person opposite her (setup is you in the middle, Melissa on your Right side, and someone else on the Left), open your eyes, and with your free hand, gesture to them to open their Right Hand. Place the billet in their open hand.

- It should be the hand closest to you, so if they are on your left side, they open their right hand.

And you close their fingers over the billet.

Say: “Melissa, place both hands on the table, right hand palm down and left hand palm up.” As you say this, point to Person B’s left hand, and gently hold it between your Right Middle finger and thumb (their hand is palm-down, your Middle Finger is under the palm, and your thumb is on top of their hand). Move their Left Hand outwards, so it now hovers a few inches above Melissa’s Right Hand. As your Right Hand (guiding Person B’s Left Hand) approaches Melissa’s Right Hand, allow your pinky finger to extend downwards and gently brush the back of her hand. Don’t say anything about that. If she says anything about it later, everyone will remember that her hand was never touched.

- Melissa has her eyes closed. So she does not know that you gave the billet to someone else. She also doesn’t know what else is going on.
- Everyone else understands that you are silently giving directions to Person B.

Place your Left Hand above (but not touching) Person B’s Right Hand (which is holding the billet in a fist).

Use your Right pointer finger to trace the path from Melissa's forehead, down her Right Arm, into Person B's Left Arm, across their forehead, down their Right Arm, up your Left Arm, and to your head. This is done as you say: "Imagine pushing this thought out, through your limbs and into the minds of those at this table."

Look at Person B, and mouth the words "Look at me." Wait for them to do so, then place your Right Hand a few inches above Melissa's open Left Hand, and close your eyes (still with your head facing Person B).

- The situation is now a chain of disconnected hands: Melissa's Left Hand is on the table palm up, fingers straight. Your Right hand is a few inches above her Left Hand. Your Left Hand is a few inches above Person B's Right Hand, which is closed about the billet. Person B's Left Hand is a few inches above the back of Melissa's Right hand.

Still looking directly at (eyes closed) Person B, say: "Focus hard on the word you hold. There is some cold coming from your mind, it is something to do with winter..."

- Continue as in the previous example, having Melissa nod 'yes' and 'no' each time you progress in discovering the word.
- At some point, move your Right Hand over to where your Left hand is. Now it appears as if you are receiving information solely from Person B.

And here is how this seems from everyone's perspective:

- Melissa has her eyes closed, so she doesn't know about this "hand circle", she thinks you still have the billet, and she understands that she's supposed to imagine pushing this thought out through her limbs, but doesn't understand why.
- Person B knows they are holding the billet, but doesn't know what is on it. Person B understands that Melissa is "pushing thoughts" out through her arms, which are somehow traveling through them and into your mind.
- Everyone else sees you (with your eyes closed) looking directly at Person B, thus, you are reading Person B's mind, and getting details about the word and number correct, which are apparently being transferred through these unseen connections.
- The resulting situation is a really strange "how is this happening???" sequence of correct hits, with you "seeing" into the thoughts of a person who doesn't even know what those thoughts are.

After you have correctly guessed the birthday (or come within one day of it), say: “Now, everyone please put your hands in your lap. Take a deep breath in, and as you let it out, fully relax. Very good. On the count of three, open your eyes. One. Two. And three, open.” Of course, Melissa opens her eyes to the same situation she saw before closing her eyes – everything appears to be normal. And she thinks you were reading her mind directly, while everyone else sees you reading her thoughts using a different person as the medium.

Let everyone have a moment to breathe, and then ask Melissa: “*You didn’t happen to feel any touches on either of your hands, did you?*” She replies: “*Yes, I felt a soft touch on my right hand.*” To which you turn to Person B, looking a bit confused, and say: “*Did you ever touch her hand?*” Person B says no, and then you look to everyone else (***Since you asked Person B the question first, they think you’re referring to Person B touching her hand!***) and give them a questioning look, while gesturing towards Person B. They all shake their heads and say: “*Nobody touched your hand.*”

- This adds reinforcement in the minds of the audience that some kind of psychic transfer took place – they think you’re talking about Person B touching her hand, and they witnessed this sequence of apparent mindreading, AND, Melissa claims there was a touch on her hand, yet Person B and everyone else confirms that she was never touched.

The Aspen Glade – Notes:

- I've experimented with having everyone put their hands in their lap before having "Melissa" open her eyes, versus having her open her eyes to the odd situation. The reactions are very similar. Either her friends fill her in on what happened at the time, or, they talk about it later and Melissa finds out that she was actually sending thoughts through someone else. I think having the delayed reaction is better, as it keeps the performance of that routine going, even after you have officially finished.
- If you're outside or at a private party, burn that billet instead of handing it to Person B.
- This act of directing other participants to do things the other participant is blind to, adds a really nice layer of mystery to what is going on.
- Another thing which can be done (for presentation touches), is to have everyone at the table connect their hands as described, creating one large circle.
- And if you want to add a subtle moment of psychic 'control' to the performance, do this:
 - o When you tell Melissa to put her hands on the table, Right Hand palm down and Left Hand Palm up, be sure to specify to keep her fingers straight.
 - o Allow your eyes to flutter about 10 seconds after you tell her this.
 - o Watch her left hand. Even though you initially told her to keep her fingers straight, her mind is elsewhere. Which means her hand will naturally begin to close – we're going to take advantage of this. Once you see her fingers begin to move upwards (the closing motion), you are going to raise your right hand slowly and deliberately. Look directly at her hand while this happens (though obviously, keep your eyes closed/fluttering. The resulting effect is that *people look where you look*. Everyone else sees as you turn your head towards her hand, and as you raise your hand, hers begins to close. It appears as if you are somehow compelling her fingers to move.

- The origami model I use is called: “Stars and Wheels” – by Andrew Hudson. You can see it here: <http://origamiweekly.blogspot.com/2009/03/stars-and-wheels-andrew-hudson.html>
 - This is a rather difficult model to fold, but there are plenty of other origami tessellation models out there. Tomoko Fuse has a great nautilus shell which works nicely with this routine.

The Aspen Glade – Credits

The subtlety of tapping your finger on each line to indicate everything they should write comes from Peter Turner. It’s a brilliant method of getting someone to give more information than what the audience thinks the participant is giving.

And the line: “*I want you to remain silent during this process, as this is only going to take place in your mind*” comes from my friend, Lance Sinclair. It’s a method of justifying their silence, because you don’t want them to say anything like: “*Do you want his whole name?*” Or, “*Yeah, that’s what I wrote!*” Etc.

The Billet Peek

When it comes to magic and mentalism, particularly mentalism, I am largely self taught (I can count on one hand how many mentalism books I've read). This has definite advantages: I'm not subject to the restraints of traditional thought, and don't know much about the usual presentation styles, which makes it easier to develop my own presentations (and consequently find ways to make them magical). Though it has disadvantages as well: I end up re-inventing stuff other people created, and since I'm not aware of many classic methods, I find myself struggling with a problem which could easily be fixed or bypassed, had I actually learned the proper techniques.

But, I believe the benefits outweigh the downfalls, as there is more adventure in finding your own way through the mountains, rather than taking the beaten path – you see sunsets differently, you find caves no one knew existed, and you see more wildlife. When you get lost, you get to test your improvisation skills and figure out how to adapt and find your way again. Such with magic and mentalism – I learned how to do a watch force, how to use a swami, how to switch a bill, and a couple other basic things. Those became my boots, hiking staff, tent and sleeping bag. My belief is my compass and imagination is my map – the rest of the equipment is stuff I've improvised while on the trail.

One such piece of equipment is the billet peek. Yes, I'm aware other people have created very good peeks, but as said above, I really don't have the desire to learn from past creators, unless something stands out and catches my eye – it's more fun and challenging to try to create something myself. However, since magic and mentalism is such a small, respectable, and tight-knit field, it is customary, and polite, to credit those who came before us, if a creation turns out similar to an existing creation.

Following this section are three billet peeks of my own creation. I wanted to ask someone to write information, and then I appear to destroy it, or place it in an impossible-to-observe location, yet still see what they wrote. I wanted to do it with one hand, be surrounded, and devoid of any suspicious movements. The results worked extremely well. I haven't mentioned these in any previous releases, nor shown them to any of my friends until very recently. One friend told me these were reminiscent of variations of Millard Longman's "Acidus Novus Peek", as well as Al Mann's Azonic Peek, though the handlings are much different. Now, I

know the basic Acidus Novus, because a friend showed me a few years ago. But I don't know any variations. You can learn the original Acidus Novus here: <http://www.mevproshop.com/acidus-novus.html>

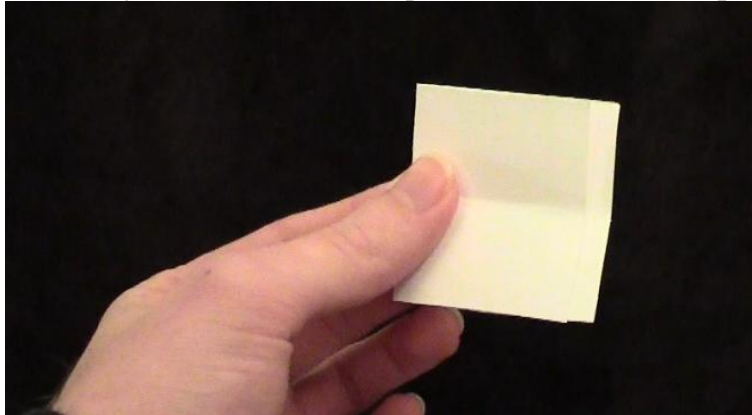
So I contacted Millard Longman, showed him the peeks, asked if they were different enough from existing variations, and if it would be okay to include them in an upcoming work. He responded (very quickly, I might add) with: *“Hi Tom, these peeks look good to me! I encourage you to publish these! Thank you for asking my permission and I hereby grant it to you. We should be friends on Facebook.”*

Without further ado, let us move onto the peeks.

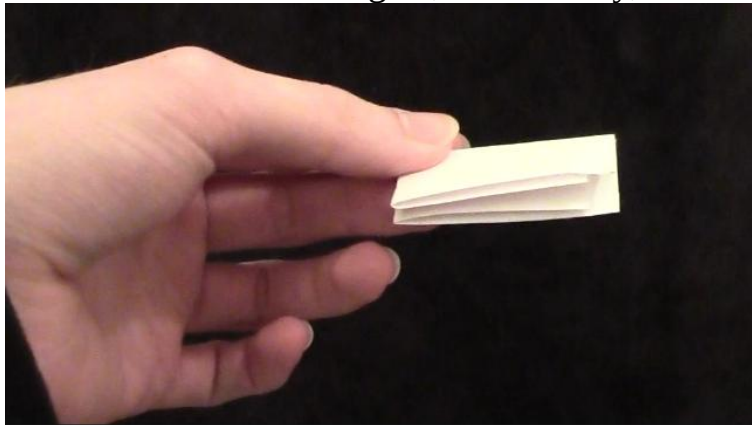
The Aspen Peek

This is an interesting little billet peek which is used to peek the right half of a folded billet (folded into quarters). The peek is done quickly, with one hand, and is only visible from the angle at which you look at it. The name comes from how the billet looks in the “peek position” – it reminds me of an aspen leaf.

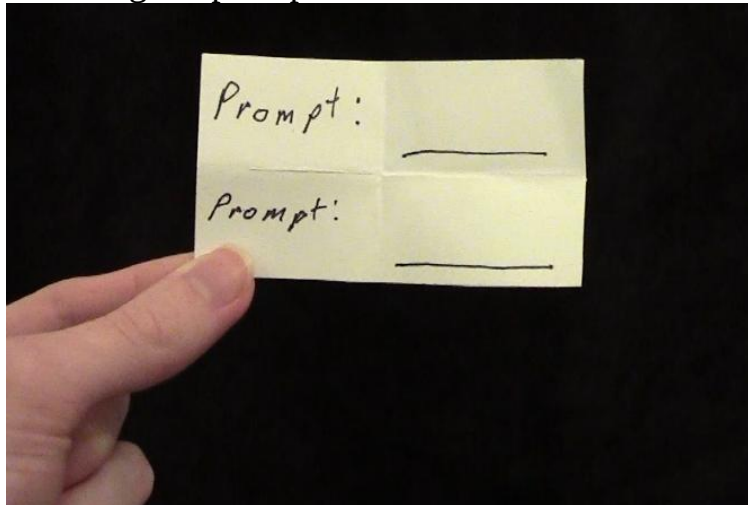
You will pre-fold the billet before handing it to the participant. It is folded in half vertically, with about one-quarter inch of overlap on the right side:



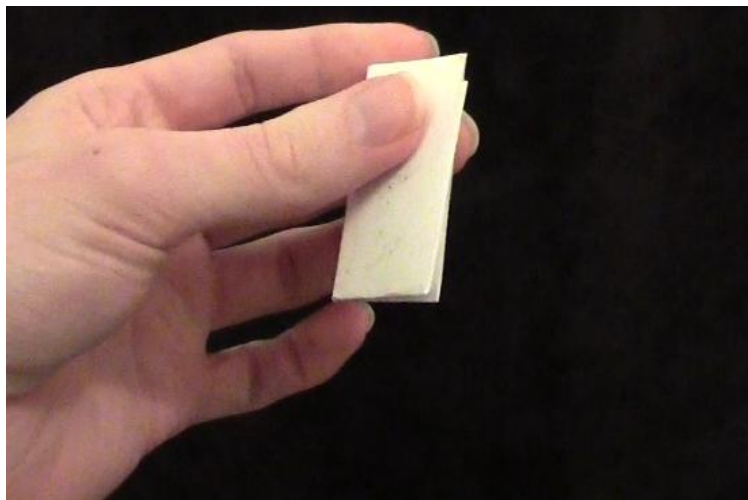
It is then folded in half again, horizontally, so the top and bottom edges are even:



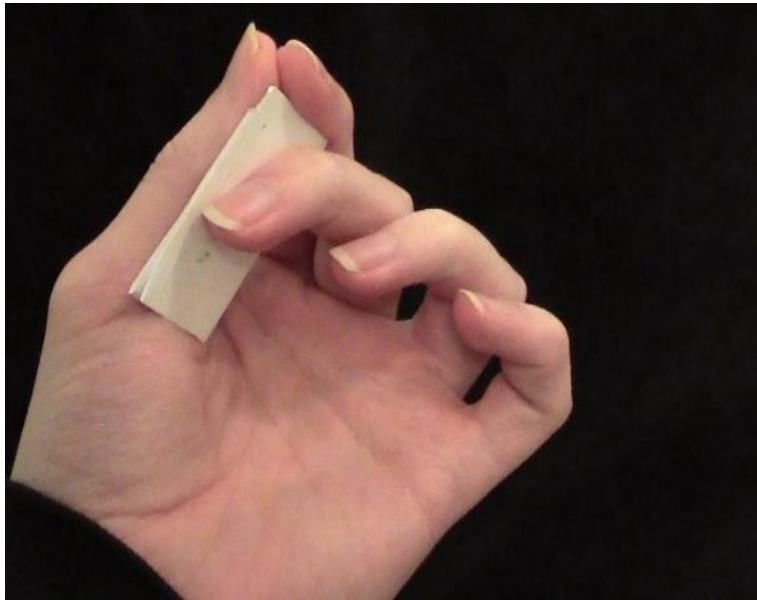
The billet is handed to the participant to write their information on the right side, following the prompts on the left-hand side:



They re-fold the billet on the existing creases. And you take the billet between your middle finger and thumb, with the folded edges on the left side and the bottom:



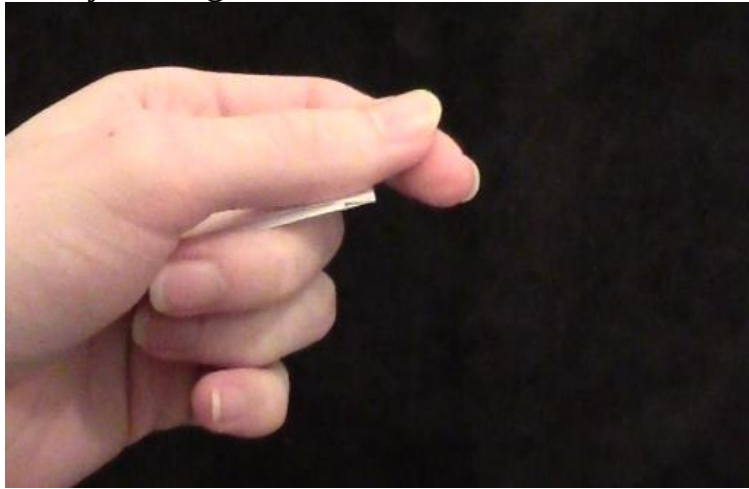
The billet is moved so that it is against your thumb, with the pad of your index finger now along the top edge:



You push down with your index finger, bracing the bottom edge along the base of your thumb. This causes the edges to bow outwards, allowing you to see inside the billet – the right half is easy to see, and with some tilting, you can (though it's more difficult) see the left half as well (the left half will be upside down and backwards):



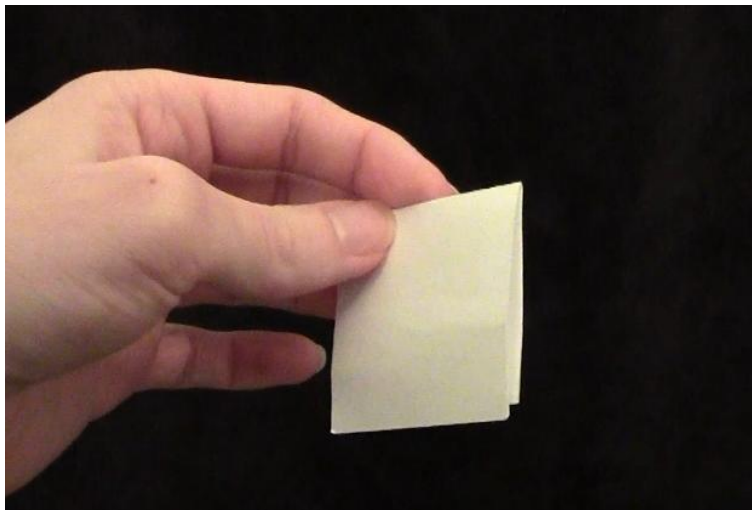
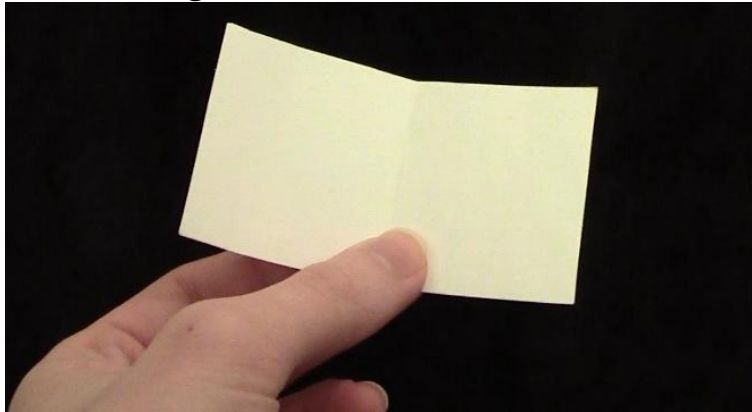
After getting the peek, use your middle finger to pull the billet into your palm and close your fingers around it:



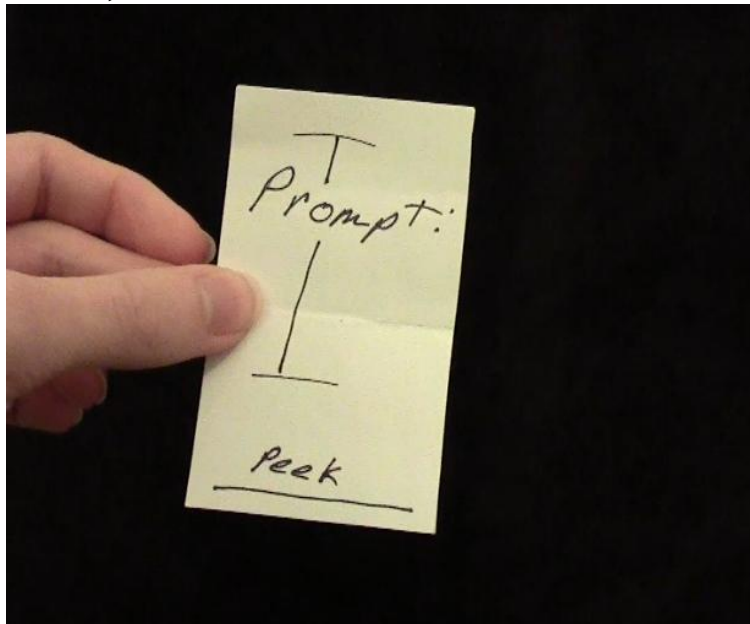
The Conjuror Peek

The namesake is because of what it takes to make this invisible to all except you. It takes one hand to get the peek, and the other hand to cover the motion. But that's okay – it looks like you're conjuring something.

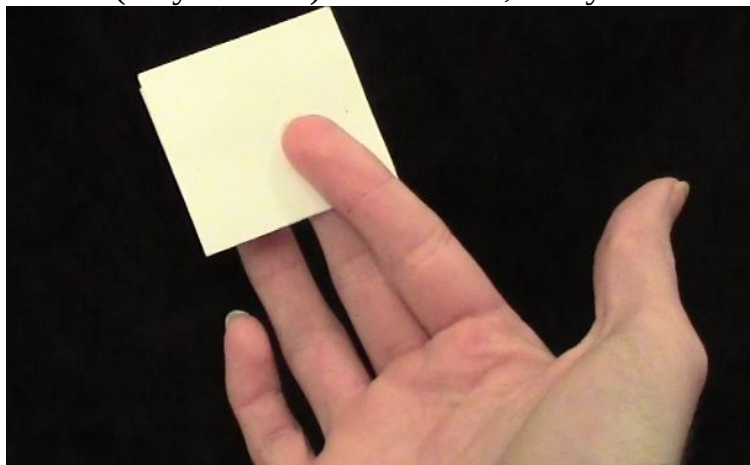
The billet is pre-folded in half, vertically, so the left half overlaps the right half by about one-eighth of an inch:

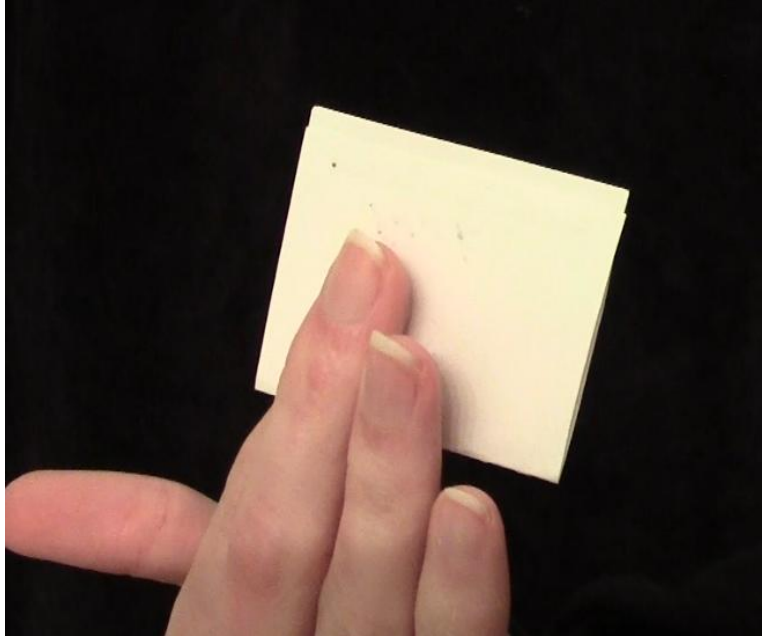


The billet is turned 90 degrees clockwise, such that the upper half is the slightly longer half. The prompt is written on the top half and the upper portion of the bottom, and the line for them to write on is at the bottom of the lower half:

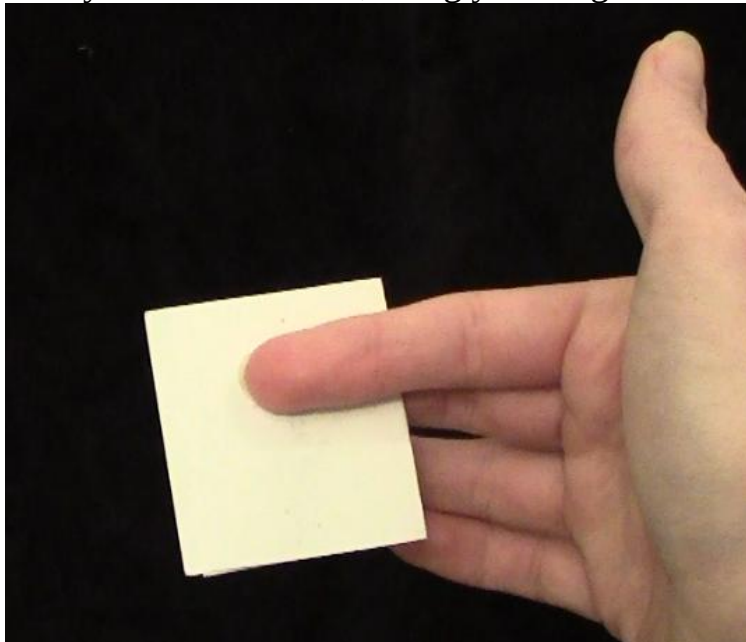


After they have written on it, tell them to fold it and hand it to you. You hold it so the loose edges are upwards, and the fold is along the bottom. Your index finger is behind (on your side) of the billet, and you are looking at the back of the top half:





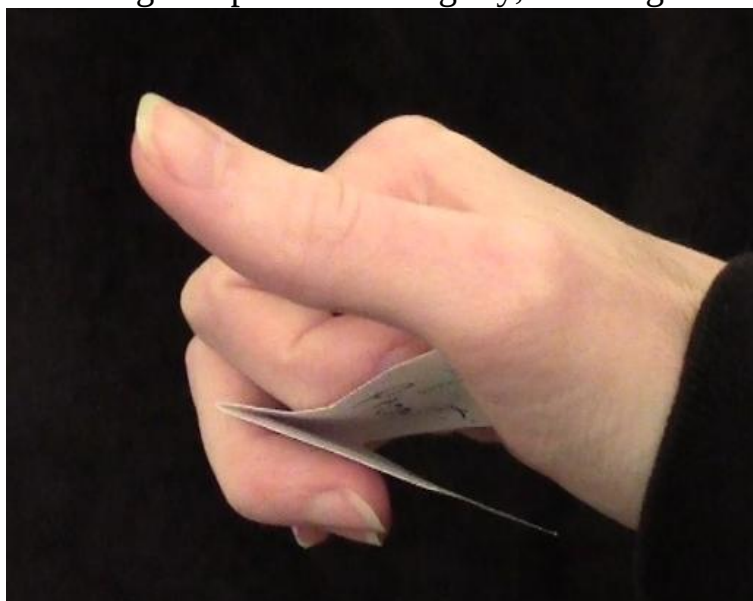
Turn your hand inwards, along your fingers to curl:



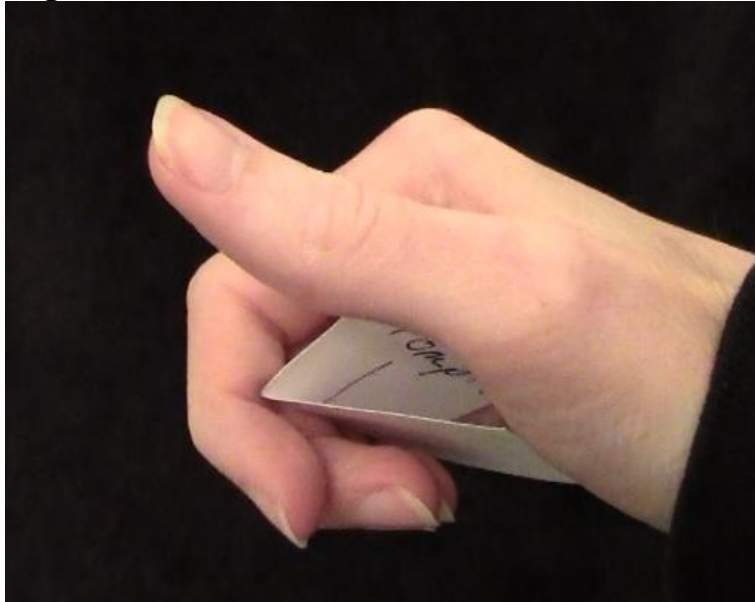
Swing the billet into your palm (now the loose edges are facing you and the folded side is against the insides of your fingers):



Use the base of your palm to snag the overhanging edge, and the knuckle of your index finger to push down slightly, allowing the lower flap to come loose:



Now gently push the upper flap so it curves upwards against the insides of your fingers:



To get the peek, you wait until you are ready, and then position your left hand about here, to block anyone on the left from seeing:



Use your right fingers to close inwards further. This pushes the bottom flap into view:



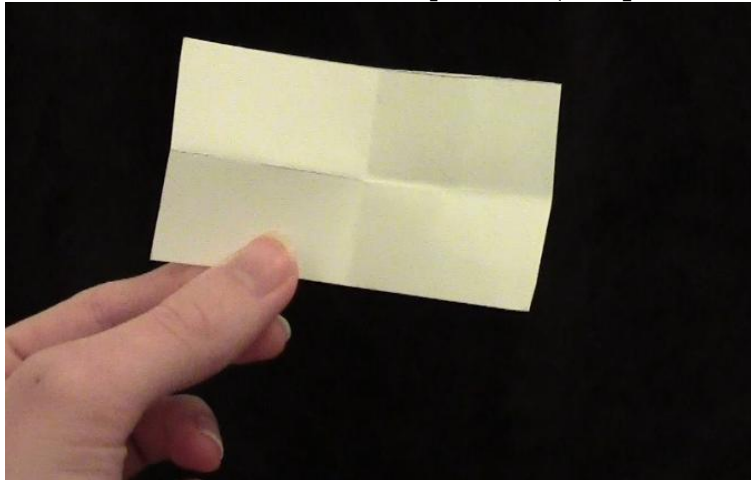
This is best done with a bit of up-and-down motion to mask the movement of the fingers. Wrists come up, fingers push, get the peek, fingers go back, wrists come down.

The result is a billet you can leave in your hand for as long as you want, and then get the peek even when everyone is watching your hands. The notion that you may have seen the writing is dispelled when you miss the word the first time, throw it in a fire, and then it is revealed to you later.

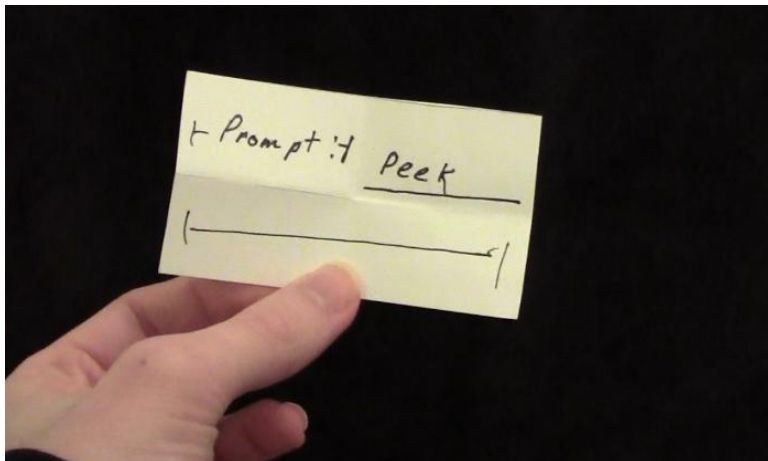
The Pillar Peek

Created several years back, along with the Aspen Peek, but first given a name a few months ago, after hearing a song called: “Pillars of the Sky”. I highly recommend the band “Netherbird” – they have thought-provoking lyrics and the music ripples with power. Anyway, this is used to peek the upper-right corner (upper-left will be upside down).

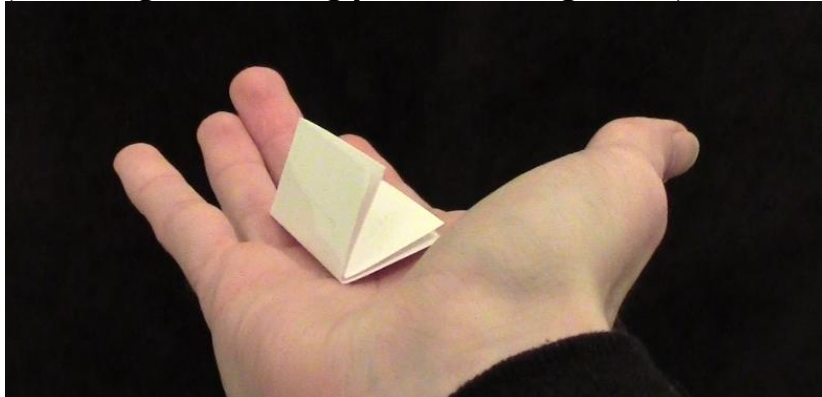
You will fold the billet into quarters (no special overlapping needed):



Write your prompt, such that the space for them to write in is the upper-right corner:



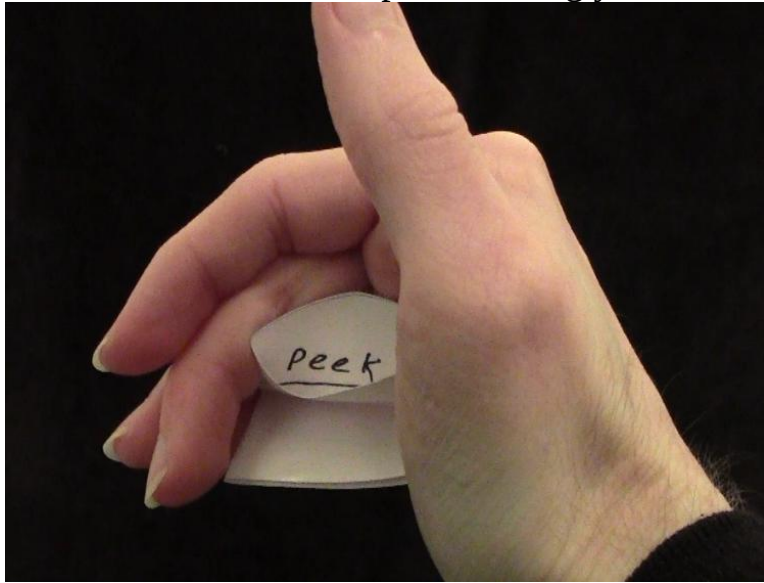
You place the billet in your palm, with the folded sides facing the left and the front (loose edges are facing you and the right side):



The peek happens as you close your fingers around the billet, your middle finger pushes against the lower-front fold, and the billet is braced between your middle finger and your palm:



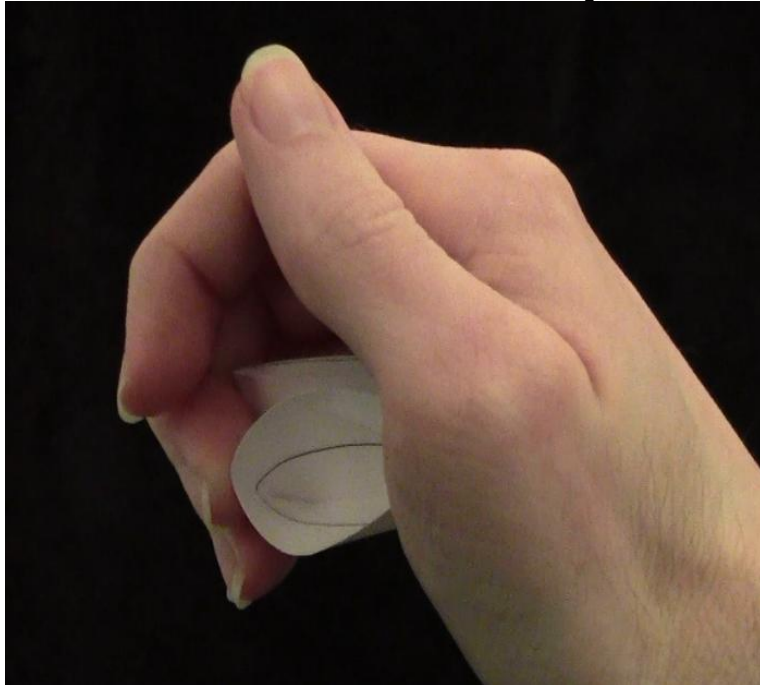
This causes the billet to open, allowing you to clearly see the upper-right corner:



Continue to close your hand, while turning your hand over:



This same series of motions can be used to open the other “pocket” as well, or both at the same time, similar to how the Aspen Peek works:



Though because of how the motion is supposed to look (turning your hand over and closing it), the peek needs to happen swiftly, so trying to peek the entire inside of the billet is not preferable. Unless there is another motion happening at the same time, such as moving the billet across the table to place in a box.

This peek is my favorite because of how quickly it happens and the fluidity of the motion.

And here are examples of how to phrase the prompt, to allow the written word to fall in the upper right corner:

The name, _____

Is the name of my best friend.

OR

In the
Month of: _____

Is when I was born.

Gilly's Revenge

Presentation

You: “Good evening. The idea of any person having such an intense thought that it radiates into the minds of others is very intriguing. Science will tell us it is impossible, and yet, we experience this on a regular basis. When someone you care about is very sad, and you don’t previously know that, if you were to walk into the same room as them, there is a certain heaviness in the air, and you can tell something is wrong. Most people have experienced this, yes?”

Audience: “Yes.”

You: “I would like to try an experiment of this ability to pass emotions and thoughts, but of course with good thoughts, this is a time for wonder, not a time for sadness. Could I have a volunteer? Ah, yes, what is your name?”

Them: “Anna.”

You: “Anna, it is a pleasure to meet you. If you could, sit here, across from me. Now, I’m going to have you write a word on this card. It will be a word which is important to you, and you will be the only one who knows who it is. When you have finished, fold it up and set it on the table.”

Anna: *(She does so.)*

You: “Excellent. Actually, let’s put that somewhere out of the way.” *(Slide it under a candle.)*

You: “Before we try any thought reading, we’ll start with something simpler... mostly because I need to warm up and get my mind in the right state. Don’t want to start feeling around someone else’s mind until I’m ready *(tap my temple)*.”

You: “Anna, if you could, take these, and give them a shuffle.”

Anna: *(She shuffles an old, worn deck of cards)*

You: “And we can see they are well mixed. I’m going to deal two piles. (*Begin dealing*) To start, I will attempt to separate the red cards from the black cards, and if that goes well, we’ll move on to something a bit more interesting. (*Finish dealing*) Okay, Anna, take a look at the top card. If it’s a red card, place it to your right, and if it’s a black card, place it to your left.”

Anna: “Okay.”

You: “Go ahead and do that same thing for the next four or five cards.”

Anna: (*She does so.*)

You: (*Close your eyes, furrow your brows, and deal a few cards into piles without looking.*)

You: “Do that again, just five or six cards.”

Anna: (*She sorts the next few cards.*)

You: (*Turn to the audience, and give a slight grin*) “I’m doing it the hard way.” (*Deal a few more cards onto your piles.*)

You: “Hmm. If I felt the colors correctly, then these two piles should each be all red (*turn one pile over and reveal it is all red, except for one black*) and all black (*turn over the other pile to reveal it is mostly black, with one red card*). Oh. Well, I got eight out of ten. I can live with that... Let’s move on. Anna, this time I am going to try to read your mind. In this previous case, I was running on simply intuition of the objects I was holding. Though now, you are holding the cards and I can no longer use that sense. I will close my eyes, and I want you to pick up the top card of the deck – if it is a red card, I want you to envision a large red sphere in your mind. If it is black, you will imagine a large black sphere. Understand?”

Anna: “Yes.”

You: “Then let us begin. (*I close my eyes*) Look at the top card. Red sphere or black sphere... I see a white room, and floating in the middle is... a black sphere. Is it a black card?”

Anna: “Nope, it’s red.”

You: “Off to a fantastic start. Take a look at the next card. Really focus now, walk up to the sphere in your mind. This is red. A red card, yes?”

Anna: “Yes!”

You: “Okay, and the next one. There is darkness, but not so dark as to be black. It may have only been a shadow of thought. This is red as well.”

Anna: “Yes it is!”

You: “Next, this is black, correct?”

Anna: “No, it is also red.”

You: “Ah, though I was on a roll. Oh well, the next card is... the next card is black.”

Anna: “Yes!”

You: “And the next one is... red, I believe? Yes, red.”

Anna: “Yes!”

You: And the next two, look at the next two cards. There are two spheres in the room. The first is red, and the next is black. Show the audience!”

Anna: “Yes and yes!”

You: “Excellent!”

(Take the applause.)

You: “Thank you, but you’ll notice towards the beginning of each of those sequences, I got a few colors wrong. I believe this is because there was *only* thought tied to the color, there was no emotion involved. I’d like to try it again, but this time, if the card is a red card, then I want you to imagine sitting inside by a fireplace *with* someone special to you, could be a friend, family member, someone

special. And if it is a black card, I want you to imagine sitting outside at night, under the stars.”

You: *(Close your eyes, take a deep breath and slowly let it out.)* “Look at the top card. If it’s a red card, you’re next to the fireplace, if it’s a black card, you’re outside at night. Focus now... There is a bit of a chill. It’s winter, someone is next to you, and you are sitting inside, next to the fire. Red.”

Anna: “Yes!”

You: “Excellent. Next. You hear a voice, a man’s voice. You two are talking, while enjoying the cool night air sitting in the moonlight. Black.”

Anna: “Yes!”

You: “Okay, now think of the next environment. I see darkness, but not surrounding you. Is his hair or his eyes black or brown?”

Anna: “Yes, his hair is black.”

You: “I thought so. In this instance, you’re sitting inside, watching logs burn in the fire, correct?”

Anna: “Yes!!”

You: “And last one for now... There is warmth on your skin. It’s heat from the fire. This person, you two are very close. He is a relative of yours, yes?”

Anna: “Yes, my cousin.”

You: “And you two are sitting by the fire right now?”

Anna: “Yes we are!”

You: *(Open your eyes.)* “Wonderful! You did very well Anna! Everyone give her a round of applause!” *(Wait for the applause to die down.)* “Oh, wait, we’re not quite done here, we still have three or four cards left. Forget about the fire and the stars, look at the card and send – *(stop talking, freeze your limbs for a couple heartbeats, then frantically look for a sharpie. Write a word on a pad and put it*

face-down.) – me the identity of the card, envision it in your mind, imagine pushing the image towards me... Five of Clubs. Next one. The Four of Diamo... Hearts. Four of Hearts! Yes, next! It's very colorful, Jack, Queen, or King, Jack or Queen, Jack or, Jack! Jack of Clubs! Yes, show everyone! And last one, theeeee... King of Diamonds!"

Anna: "Yes!"

(Take that applause.)

You: "I have to ask (*Push the pad across the table towards her, but keep your hand on it.*), the person who sat with you by the fire, your cousin. Two names came to me. Is his name 'Jason'?"

Anna: "No."

You: "... What is his name?"

Anna: "My cousin's name is Jonathan."

You: (*Look slowly across the audience, eventually letting your gaze rest on the pad. Glance up at Anna, and take your hand off the pad. Put your hands in your lap, give her a kind smile and nod towards the pad.*)

When she picks it up, the word: "Jonathan" is written across it. Motion to her to show it to the audience.

Gilly's Revenge – Method

The central workings of this routine are based in the Gilbreath Principle (hence “Gilly’s” in the title). Without getting into the mathematics as to why this works, I’ll outline the basic concept:

- When a deck is organized into an alternating red/black pattern, the resulting order after a shuffle follows a pattern, though not as obvious.
 - o Arrange a deck in the alternating red/black pattern
 - o Now cut the deck roughly in half
 - The bottom card of the bottom half and the bottom card of the top half should be opposite colors.
 - o Give the two halves a riffle shuffle
 - o You’ll notice, the top two cards are of opposite color
 - o And you’ll also notice, each pair of cards from the top or bottom are also of opposite color. Which means, if we know what color the top card is, the second card is the opposite. If we know the third card, then we can determine the fourth card. If we know the fifth card, then we can determine the sixth card, etc.

The whole method, in order, is as follows:

Address the participant: “I’d like for you to write the name of someone important to you, it could be a relative, good friend, or a special somebody. Choose one, and fold this in half when you’re finished.”

The billet you hand them is organized like this:

Choose one:

Relative: _____

Good Friend: _____

Girl/Boyfriend: _____

- If the participant is wearing a wedding ring, then replace the last line with: “Husband/Wife.”

The audience doesn’t see the billet, so they don’t know about the categories. The participant understands that they’re supposed to choose one category, and write a corresponding name.

Once they have written the name and re-folded the billet (on the existing crease), you take it, peek the right half, and you can see the name, *as well as the location on the billet*.

- If they wrote near the top of the billet, then you know the name is a relative
- If they wrote in the middle, you know the name is a good friend
- And if they wrote at the bottom, the name is a girl/boyfriend

After the peek (using either **The Aspen Peek** or **The Pillar Peek** by opening both pockets, or whatever other peek you want that allows you to see the right side), you place the billet under a glass/in a box.

- Alternatively, you could use my “Crystal Clear Peek”, which is essentially a peek device built into a card box. It allows you to get a full peek of the center of a billet.
- Or use a peek wallet, or a peek envelope. However you prefer, get the name and location of the name.

Now you have the name and the relation to the person.

The process of separating the colors and “reading their subconscious feeling of temperature/the light and dark of their mind” is quite simple: start with an alternating red/black pattern, split the deck such that the bottom cards of each half are opposing colors (one red, the other black), and hand them to a participant to be shuffled (make the motion of doing a riffle shuffle). After they shuffle, you can spread the deck face-up, to show they are indeed well-mixed.

While the cards are spread, memorize the first, third, fifth, and seventh cards of the deck (counting from the top). These will be the four cards in their stack.

Collect the cards after a few seconds of showing they are well mixed, with no discernable order (and while you memorize a few cards).

Now, deal the top card to them, the second card to yourself, the third card to them, etc. *Deal neat piles – you don’t want a card to get out of position.* This causes you to have two stacks, in which the top card in each pile form a pair of opposing colors, and this is true for each pair throughout the two stacks.

- If the top card of your stack is black, then the top card of their stack is red
- If the 2nd card of your stack is red, the 2nd card of their stack is black
- Etc.

Now everything is in place – the name and relation is known, the two stacks are “coded”, so we can read their mind when they think of a color, and we know the identity of the bottom four cards of their stack.

The first section of sorting the colors into piles is done under the premise of “warming up”. Ask them to look at the top card of their stack and put it to their right side if red, and to the left if black; do this same thing for the next four cards. You are going to memorize which side each card was dealt to, and then do the same thing (with an inconsistent tempo). Ask them to do this again with the next five cards. And you memorize the order again, and repeat it with your cards.

- This works because they are looking at the color of the card from their stack – this means you can do it without looking, as long as you remember the “left-pile, right-pile” order.

After those first ten cards have been sorted, you are now “warmed up and ready to read cards without touching them”. But first, you show the piles you sorted – you should have a perfect separation of red and black cards, though it is nice to have two or three misses. An easy way to “miss” the cards is to intentionally mess up the last two or three cards.

Give your stack a sloppy, face-up spread and say: *“Okay, I did alright, missed a couple... Oh well. Let’s try this...”* Make sure you can see the indexes.

The “imagine a colored sphere” phase works simply by calling the opposite color as each card in your face-up stack. For instance, if your stack is ordered:

R, B, R, R, R, B, B, R

Then their stack is ordered:

B, R, B, B, B, R, R, B

You are simply looking down at your stack, memorizing the order of a few cards, and then repeating the opposite color to them.

You’ll only want to do this seven or eight times, since you still need to have a few cards left to do the fire/night sky thing, plus the identities of the last few cards.

The night sky/fireplace phase works exactly the same as the previous section, only we are associating the colors of the card with an environment – even though we are talking about “seeing light in the sky/feeling a chill in the air/feeling heat at our

side”, and it seems there are more senses involved, we are still using a binary system. If the card is red, they are to imagine sitting next to a fire with this person they are thinking of. If the card is black, they are to imagine sitting outside at night with the person. Here are some elements you can talk about feeling/seeing from the person:

- Red
 - Heat
 - Soft floor
 - Walls
 - Bright light
 - Warm skin
- Black
 - Breeze
 - Faint light
 - Cool air
 - Moonlight

You will only do the “environment divining” phase four times. Take it slow. Mix in lines which suggest you are getting a feel for who their imagined person is.

- For example, if the name is that of a Boy/girlfriend/spouse, you might say:
 - “This is someone you have a deep connection with, one which runs closer to your heart than a friendship.”
- Or for a good friend:
 - “I feel you’ve known this person a long time, but they are not close to you in the same way a family member is.”
- Or for a relative:
 - “I feel this person is very special to you, like you’ve know them most of your life. They are a friend to you, but your share a bond which is different than friendship.”

After you have do the “environment guessing” phase, you move back to only guessing the cards. The last four cards are the ones you memorized after the deck was shuffled.

Now that their entire stack is appropriately separated, you can come back to the name of the person. Reveal it however you like.

Since they have 26 cards, here is the breakdown I use to distribute the phases:
10 cards for warming up

8 cards for guessing the color based on imagined spheres

4 cards for environment

4 cards for value and suit reveal

- Remember, the last four cards will be in reverse order than when you memorized them.
 - o So if the memorized order is: AS, 2H, KD, 5C
 - o Then the reveal order is: 5C, KD, 2H, AS

There is not much to remember here, the only pieces of information you need to remember are: the name and relation, and the first few cards from the top of the deck.

If you wish to do this while blindfolded, the first phase will be a matter of listening to which side of the table they deal the cards on. The next three phases are done by using the “nose peek” with a blindfold, to look at your face-up spread of cards.

- In this case, you’ll need to specify that they put the red/black piles out towards the edge of the table (at least a couple feet between the piles so you can hear the difference in placement). Or, you can do the warm up section without the blindfold, and only put it on when you start reading their mind.

The Disposable Swami

The swami I used for years cost me about \$0.25 and was made out of the tip of a wood pencil and a take-out box. The restaurant charged me 25 cents for the takeout box. Only the box – no food. Changing the tip was irritating, but it was better than dealing with the usual nuances of existing writers.

However, when hanging out with Bill Montana in Vegas, I saw him squinting over some paper, messing with some very small, indiscernible objects. I asked what he was up to, and he said two words which changed my life: “Disposable Swami”.

This kind of thing has been used for *years* by those “guess-your-weight” performers at circuses or state fairs. I don’t know when they came about, but Michael Weber had some work on it, Bill Montana uses it, and it’s been a largely underground piece for quite some time. Unfortunately, the existing method of construction is.... unreliable – they only work about 60% of the time. Make ten of them and maybe six of them will come out perfectly. So I re-worked the design, allowing for a bit more leeway, and will share my method of making them.

Take a strip of single-sided tape, and tape down the ends... Use tape to tape the tape... The long piece is sticky-side facing up.:



Put a line of glue along the center of the strip:



Now break off very small (about one-eighth inch) pieces of pencil graphite (either from a .7mm mechanical pencil or a No.2 wood pencil):



If using a wood pencil, it's easier to remove the stick of graphite by splitting the wood and push out the center:



Stick those pieces in the glue, and wait for it to dry:



Fold the long edges of the tape in towards the center of the strip, so the tape overlaps the glue (I bumped the table a bit, and a couple fell over... Of course, I didn't notice until the glue was dry...) :



Cut out each one:



And drop them in your pocket. When you need one, just pull it out, slightly moisten the pad of your thumb, and stick the writer in place. If you're having trouble with it moving/falling while writing, stick a piece of double sided tape on the back of the writer. Do your writing, and when you're finished, you can flick the writer off, and it looks like a tiny speck of trash on the ground. No one will ever know.

Grasp of Time

Presentation

You: “A few years ago, I read about a several people who underwent head injuries, but after their recovery, they were able to excel in areas they previously had no skill or talent in. For instance, one man had been hit in the head with a baseball, which obviously is terrible, but something incredible came out of it. When he got out of the hospital, he went home for a couple days to rest, and discovered he could recall the day of any date in history. With some mental math, this is possible for anyone to learn, but it does take time to do the mental equation. He can do it immediately without needing to think. Which leads us to the question, what other hidden abilities do our minds have? And how do we access and harness them? Have any of you heard of the phenomenon?”

Audience: “Yeah, there was a guy who got perfect photographic memory after a car accident.”

You: “Exactly like that.”

(Pull out some pastels, and a sheet of paper.)

You: “As for myself, I’ve never had a head injury, but I have had a couple experiences which revealed a previously un-tapped artistic talent. Given the proper set of conditions, I am able to put myself into a... sort of like a trance. More like a heightened sense of focus.”

(Put on a blindfold.)

You: “Could you please light these two candles? Excellent. And could someone turn off the lights? Thank you. I will now take a moment to calm my mind, and enter this state.”

(Put your hands palms down on the table on either side of the paper. Sit perfectly still for about 20 seconds. Now, you hold your palm over the candle for another 10 seconds. Pick up a pencil and draw a circle on the paper, as well as some small lines. Pick up the pastels and start drawing. Draw quickly, wildly, looking

directly at audience members and not paying any attention to your hands. Now fold the paper into an origami swan, and place it in a box.)

(Sit still for another 10 seconds. Place your hand over the candle, and after two or three seconds, pull it back quickly.)

You: “It is finished... Could someone turn the lights back on? Thank you. Did anyone happen to see what I drew?”

Audience: “It looked like a sunset. And then you folded it into something.”

You: “Ah, makes sense. I saw a very nice sunset last night. I am going to teach someone how I enter this state. Don’t worry, no one will hold their hands over fire. Could I have a volunteer? Yes, what is your name?”

Them: “Hannah.”

You: “Okay Hannah, it is very nice to meet you. I am going to verbally guide you through the process, I do it mentally, but that’s because I’ve been doing this for a while. I’m going to present you with a few phases of your life, and I want you to think of a word which pertains to one of them. Take this card, think about it, and write a word that comes to mind. Then fold it and set it out in front of you.”

Hannah: “Okay.” *(She does this.)*

You: “Very good. Now from here, I want you to remain silent, as this will require you to be entirely relaxed and have a clear head. If I ask a question, nod your head for yes, or shake it for no. Okay?”

Hannah: *(She nods yes.)*

You: “Okay, take a breath in, hold it, and slowly let it out. Good. Go ahead and close your eyes.” *(Pick up the folded card and put it in your fist. Move your left hand around your right fist.)* “I don’t know that any abilities will be revealed for you. Thoughts, especially strong thoughts, leave traces... Artistic talent is not the only ability I acquired, sometimes there is the ability to feel thoughts... *(Put the card back where it was, as you were not able to get a read from it.)* Go ahead and put your hands on top of the card. I’m going to count backwards from three down to one. When I reach one, you will be fully relaxed. Take a deep breath in, hold it,

three, slowly release, feel your mind going clear. Breathe in, hold it, all the stresses of the week are fading, two. Slowly release. You feel you are floating. Breathe in, hold it, slowly release, one. And you are now fully relaxed.”

You: “Again, when I ask a question, simply nod your shake your head. Do you feel alright?”

Hannah: *(She nods yes.)*

You: “You’re doing very well. Now I want you to imagine the home you grew up in. Imagine sitting in your favorite room. Nod when you are there.”

Hannah: *(She nods.)*

You: “Excellent. Think of all the friends you had. Some you still keep in touch with, and others with whom you parted ways. Remember their names and the fun you had together. Now think of growing up, going to middle school, making new friends, going to high school, trying new hobbies, making more new friends. Your interests probably changed, yes?”

Hannah: *(She nods yes.)*

You: “Mine too. Now think of going off in the world. Many of those things you enjoyed as a kid seem like a dream. Again, go back to when you were young, think of the things you enjoyed doing with your friends. This is how I put myself into a trance – I think of my childhood, and then growing up, and then back to childhood. I find one thing to focus on, and that helps to block out everything else, and find myself in almost a trance like state. Are you feeling good?”

Hannah: *(She nods yes.)*

You: “Okay. You are focusing on someone right now. It is a friend of yours... You’ve known her for a very long time. It is a girl, correct?”

Hannah: *(She nods yes.)*

You: “Okay. See yourself talking with her. Are you inside a building?”

Hannah: *(She shakes her head no.)*

You: “Outside?”

Hannah: *(She nods yes.)*

You: “So you’re outside. Ask your friend what time it is. Nod your head when you have done this.”

Hannah: *(She nods.)*

You: “Okay, now I want you to imagine doing something with her that you really enjoyed as a kid. That could going to the park, riding a bike, drawing, or something else. Nod your head when you’re doing this.”

Hannah: *(She nods.)*

You: “Whoa, that was a very bright thought. Was she your best friend?”

Hannah: *(She nods yes.)*

You: “And her name is... Regina?”

Hannah: *(She smiles and nods yes.)*

You: “Wonderful! I’m going to bring you back now, and don’t forget, it is always a good thing to revisit the kingdom of childhood... I’m going to count to three, and on three, you will open your eyes. One. Two... And three, open. Welcome back! How do you feel?”

Hannah: “I miss being a kid.”

You: “Ah well, getting older and growing up are two different things *(give a smile)*. Out of curiosity, when you asked Regina what time it was, what did she say?”

Hannah: “It was 2:30.”

You: “Does that time have any significance that you can think of, or was it just the first thing that came to mind?”

Hannah: “It was just what I imagined. First thing that popped into my head.”

You: “Alright. Earlier, somebody said I drew a sunset. I don’t know what I drew. But, ‘2:30’ rings a bell for me. This drawing is a gift for you, if it’s terrible, you’re welcome to toss it.”

You: *(Pull the swan out of the box, look at it, confused.)* “Don’t know why I folded it like that.” *(Unfold it and hand it to Hannah.) (Lean over and look closer at it.)* “You know, that’s not bad for being blindf – look at the sun.”

(The sun has a clock face on it, and the clock reads “2:30”.)

- Alternatively on the reveal, depending on your performance situation, you may choose to ask her to reiterate the time immediately before revealing the drawing. Though if you’re performing in a more close or intimate environment, then everyone can easily see the clock face and will make the connection immediately.

Grasp of Time – Method

Grasp of Time has a fairly straightforward method, again relying on prompting the participant to write a certain kind of word.

The ‘self-trance’ section at the beginning is only a matter of sitting very still, and not holding your hand low enough over the flame for it to burn. If it starts feeling hot, take a deep breath in, allow your shoulders to raise, chest to push out, *hand to rise*, and when you exhale, keep your hand in the higher position.

The drawing is done by using a nose-peek with the blindfold on.

And when you put your hand over the flame the second time, pull it back quickly after a couple seconds – even if it’s not too hot. This gives the illusion that that height above the flame is too hot to hold your hand, unless you’re in a trance.

The drawing at the beginning doesn’t need to be a recognizable scene, it could very well be random scribbles or something abstract; the only special thing you are doing is drawing a clock face in the corner of the paper. You’ll want to draw a circle and put 12 tick marks around the inside (or outside) of the circle, and put a dot in the center. Do this openly with a pencil – the hands will be drawn with a pencil, so you want the audience to remember that you did use a pencil for part of the drawing. Continue your drawing. When finished, fold the paper into an origami swan, such that the clock-area forms one of the wings. Further instruction will be given on how to do that in the “Notes” section. It also helps to have the paper pre-creased, diagonally.

The billet reads:

Write one of these:

- Name of a
childhood friend
- Favorite band
from high school
- Favorite
hobby as a kid

X_____

These categories are different because we want to touch on each of them in the phase where we are “reading” their memory. Also, it is easy to discern the category they chose, based on the answer they give. For instance, if they write “biking”, then that’s clearly a hobby, and not one of the other two. We also want them to perceive this as more options as to what they could pick from, as opposed to a list like this (used in “**Gilly’s Revenge**”): “The name of a relative, the name of a husband/wife, the name of a friend”, where the only option is to write a name. Here, they can write a band, hobby, or a name. Or whatever three categories you want.

Use **The Conjuror Peek** to obtain the word they wrote, and consequently, the category it fits into. We now have two answers to work with: we’ll save the word for a small reveal. The category will be used as one of those “hinting at reading their mind” reveals. And the big reveal is: they thought of the same time in their imagination that we drew in our trance-drawing.

We do **The Conjuror Peek** right after they close their eyes. There is an interesting dual-reality situation in getting the peek. When we say: *“I don’t know that any abilities will be revealed for you. Thoughts, especially strong thoughts, leave traces... Artistic talent is not the only ability I acquired; sometimes there is the ability to feel thoughts...”* This is interpreted two different ways.

- The participant has their eyes closed, so they don’t see us pick up the billet.
- The audience watches us pick up the billet without looking at it, and use “the ability to feel thoughts.” They think we are trying to feel what was written.
- The participant thinks we are describing something they might experience.

If they set the billet on the table with the loose edges facing you, then you can look inside without needing to pick it up.

After getting the peek, place the billet right back where it was in front of them. Tell them to put their hands over the billet. As far as they are concerned, it has been there the whole time. And even though the audience sees us pick it up, they know we haven’t seen it, since we close our eyes briefly, frown a bit, shake our heads, and put the billet back, after stating that we can feel thoughts.

If they pick the “childhood friend” category, then we ask them to think of childhood, then of a time when they were in high school, and then move back to

childhood, putting emphasis on the “hobby as a kid” category. If they think of the high school band, then we start with high school, move towards a childhood friend, and move back towards high school, emphasizing a hobby. You don’t need to remember each of the sequences. Just understand that whichever one they pick, you’re going to set the scene with that one, move to one of the others, move back to the first, but emphasize the third, using the reveal of the word as the last section.

The time they see on a clock/their watch/phone is important for the final reveal, but is treated as a simple detail for the sake of fleshing out the story. During your “reading” section, you’re going to reach into your pocket for a swami (I recommend the disposable swami.). When you open the box to pull out the origami swan, you are simply lifting up the wing and drawing two lines on the clock face, as you hand it to the participant to unfold. Toss the swami under the table, over your shoulder, across the room, etc.





This idea of having a prediction inside a folded piece of paper stems from something I really enjoy doing:

- Write “Queen of Hearts” on a small square of paper.
- Fold the square into an origami crane (the decorative kind).
- Get a piece of flash paper and draw an origami crane on it.
- Palm the actual crane, and write somebody’s initials on the flash paper.
- Give them the flash paper as a gift, because in Japan, the crane is a symbol of peace and friendship.
- When they’re looking at it with the “umm, okay, thanks” expression, I say: “Actually, you don’t look particularly pleased. May I take that back?”
- Take it back and say: “If you don’t like it, I can just burn it.”
- Ignite the paper and produce the physical crane.
- Take the applause.
- Next time I see them (which could be weeks or months later), they usually say something about still having the bird. So I ask them to think of a card (for women, it’s 99% of the time the Queen of Hearts), and do some magic with that. If they say anything other than the QH, I just force that on them later.
- Then I say: “And you could, of course, said/chosen any card in the entire deck, including a Joker, correct?” “Yes.” “I think you should unfold that origami bird.”
- I have a ton of pre-planted predictions which are racking up time between giving the gift and revealing what’s inside. It’s just a matter of logging names of people who have and haven’t opened theirs yet. Reactions are along the lines of: “*You knew, 3 months ago, that I was going to pick this card!?!?*”
- It’s a lot of fun.
- I love magic.

The concept of having the participant ‘unlock’ a part of their mind which allows them to see things they could not have known is really interesting. From the audience-analyzing-things standpoint, there are some intriguing points:

- You couldn’t have created such a nice piece of artwork without your eyes, unless your subconscious was in control, which is the premise you set up at the beginning in talking about savants.
- You don’t know what you drew, otherwise you would not have asked.
- You were in a trance; otherwise you couldn’t have held your hand above the flame for so long.

- Obviously you exited the trance, because you felt the heat of the flame the second time.
- If you don't know what you drew, then the participant didn't read your mind. This means they either read your subconscious mind or gained the ability to sense what you drew and part of that drawing manifested itself in their mind.
- More than likely, there was some kind of unseen connection between you two, as you were able to pick out details of their memory.

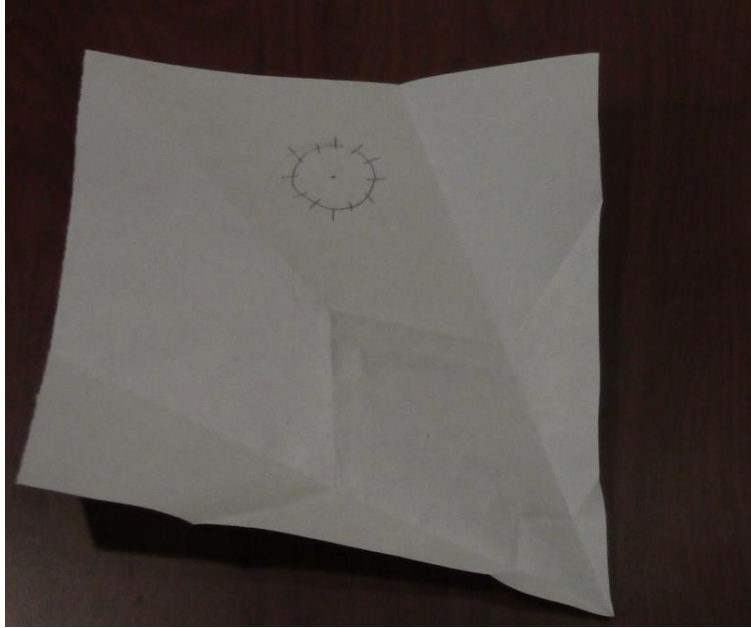
There is no way to backtrack anything, *unless* someone searches the entire floor for your swami gimmick, which looks like a tiny piece of trash or dust.

Nearly any effect which involves you 'changing' your prediction can be re-phrased to have the participant divine what you wrote. It does fall under the "spectator reads the performer" category, but using the trance as the cause really adds a layer of mystery to the performance. Especially given the example of savants at the beginning.

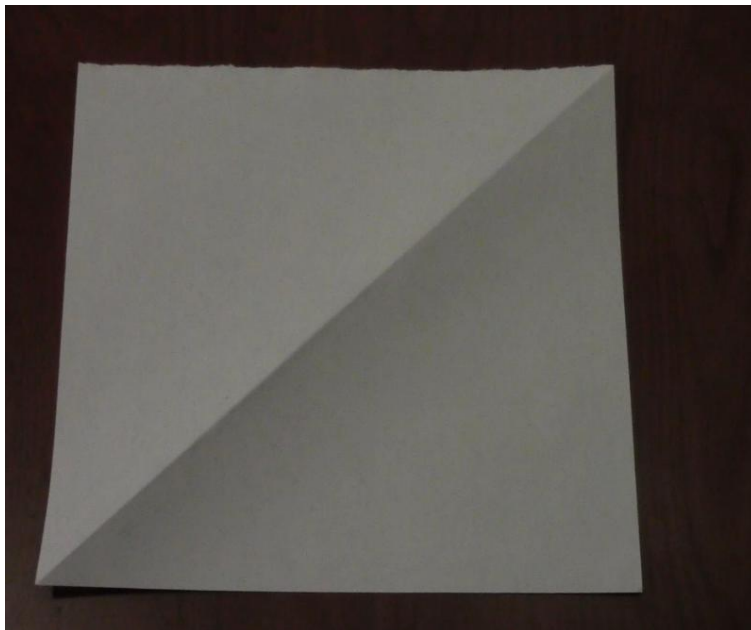
With regards to revealing the name, if you'd like, you may choose to *not* reveal the name. Instead, you can reveal the category. I set up the billet and the routine so that I can have some flexibility during performance. Think about this: If they write a name ending with "-ski", then you can assume their friend is Polish. You now know what category they chose, the name, and the nationality of the name. Rather than revealing the name, you can "look into their mind" and reveal the nationality of the person, as well as the person's relation to the participant. You can ask for the name, which negates any notion that you may have seen the billet.

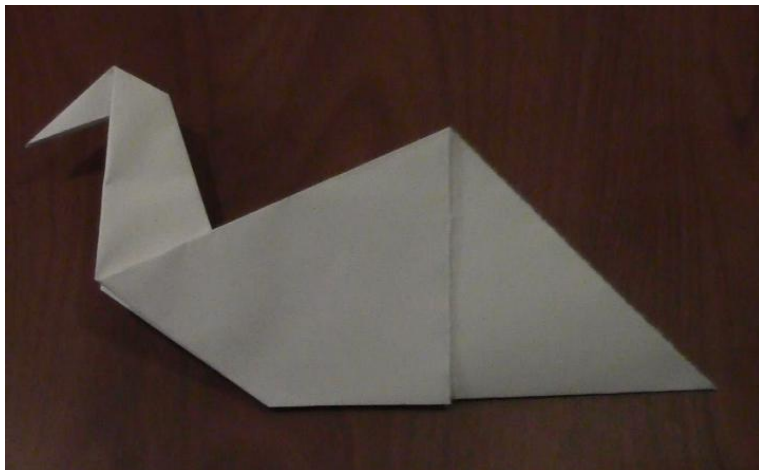
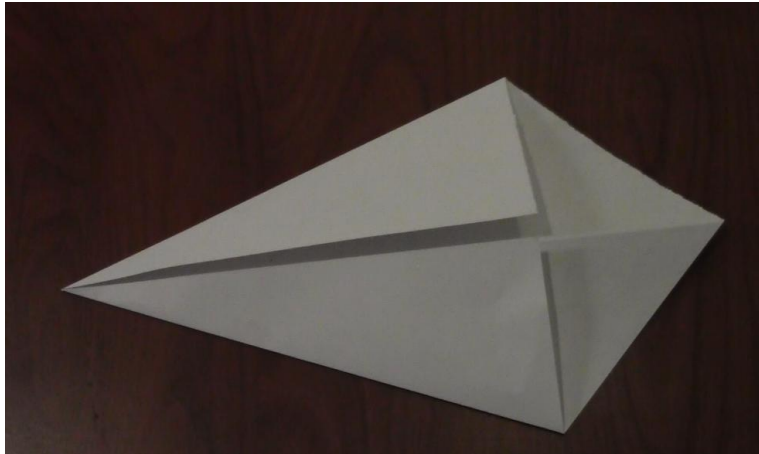
Grasp of Time – Notes:

Here is how to set up the prediction paper:



And here is how to make the swan:





The process I used to draw the ocean sunset is this (using pastels):

- Yellow circle for the sun
- Yellow streaks (horizontal) coming outwards from the sun
- Yellow streaks (horizontal) coming towards the viewer, through where the water will be
- Brown along the bottom edge
- Green, blue, and orange scribbles in the right corner
- Orange outwards from the sun

- Orange streaks mixed with the yellow in the water
- Red around the sun
- Red in an arc above the sun
- Black in the bottom right corner
- Black in the upper corners and along the top edge
- Blue across the center

I follow that process each time, and when working quickly (in a “trance-state”), I can finish it in just over one minute. This picture looks much better and brighter in person:



Conclusion

“What else, when chaos draws all forces inward
To shape a single leaf.”
-Conrad Aiken

A large mug of hot chocolate, more than a couple cookies, and a peanut butter and jelly sandwich sat on the desk, awaiting consumption. But in the center of the desk was a book, which most would agree, is more nutritious in the long run. By candlelight, the book was opened, read, thoroughly digested, and after a few short hours of solitude and exploring a world beyond this one, the book was closed. The hot chocolate, cookies, and sandwich were long gone, yet the taste of the story lingered on.

The book in question was called: “Elantris” – by Brandon Sanderson. It is a story of an immortal race, doomed to live with their misfortunes and wounds for eternity, for their magical ability to heal had been lost. Their city was once majestic, floating orbs of starlight, elegant crystal archways, towers with emerald spires and endless corridors of books.... But with the loss of magic, the orbs were dimmed, an infinite supply of blood flowed from wounds. Tears fell and bruises never healed.

Stories of this sort – where characters have a desperate quest for magic and a desire to find forces greater than their will – have an element of endurance and hold incredible power. Our quest for magic becomes our grail.

In Magic,
Tom Phoenix

“The bones of beasts and the bones of kings

Become dust in the wake of the hymn

Mighty kingdoms rise, but they all will fall

No more than a breath on the wind.”

- Caladan Brood

—

A time to weather the storm,
to experience sorrow in its many forms,
to lift our heads to the sky,
and as the clouds part,
and the bloodied ground dries,
the moonlight will again light our eyes.

We choose to rise.
We choose to survive.