



# The Book of Wonders

Magir, Mentalism, and Mysticism  
Volume III

By  
Tom Phoenix

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**For Matthew**

The wandering fire, the fire woodlands filling;  
in glades for ever green it glows,  
In dells immortal, immortal dew distilling  
The flower that in secret fragrance grows.

- Summoning

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## **Special Thanks**

### **Moonsorrow and Finsterforst**

For your uncanny and bordering on un-earthly ability to weave true power into the music you create. Much of my structuring, writing, and creating has been done while listening to your masterworks.

### **Saor**

For the passages of power and the drums which beat like the heart of the mountains.

### **Jake Rogers**

For your moving music that captures the beauty of nature and resonates in the heart.

### **Gaahl**

For inspiring the artist. And for the aspiring artist. Your insights into Nature, Magick, and symbolism are highly thought-provoking.

### **Casey Neistat**

For your video **Make It Count**. Last we talked, I told you that this video changed my life, but it should be said here as well. The video is a light-hearted way of showing how to find wonder and joy in the little things. This, at the time of watching, is exactly what I needed to see. Thanks again man.

### **My Brother**

Again, thanks for everything. We are going back to the mountains.

## Preface

For those not familiar with my style, I'd like to take a moment to describe my shade of magic: I draw from the sleights of card and coin magic, the techniques of mentalism, the methods of psychics, and the stories of my past and dreams, of poems and song lyrics, of mathematical patterns, of major fifths and minor thirds within beautiful pieces of music. Everything is combined with the underlying message I wish to convey, to create an entirely magical experience.

Memory shapes us,  
Experience sustains us,  
Dreams guide us

Welcome to the Book of Wonders.

## Introduction

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

If we look back through the tales of myth and legend, we remember the characters who accomplished great and heroic deeds, as well as those shrouded in mystery. Merlin, Arthur, Gandalf, Odin, and the Blue Wizards are but a few of those magical figures. Of course, there are ones such as Morgan la Fey, Sauron, Saruman, who compose the darker of magical feats, but those will come in another book.

I was once asked why my card magic routines are so very different from my mentalism/mysticism pieces. And, why do I jump back and forth between what are commonly viewed as ‘tricks’ and real magic. To answer this question, I must reference one of the above figures. My childhood was predominately ruled by The Lord of the Rings, the Lost Tales of Middle Earth, Star Wars, and the adventures of King Arthur and Merlin. Of all those magical characters, the one whom had the greatest impact on me was Gandalf the Grey. His soft-spoken words of wisdom, quick wit, honesty, sincerity, cleverness, and care for others, were of the highest quality.

But there was something about his command of magic that was also struck a chord in me. For those of you who do not know, Gandalf was particularly talented at designing and manufacturing fireworks, from harmless sparkling butterflies, to colossal fiery dragons wreaking havoc at birthday parties.

Gandalf the Grey also cracked solid stone, fought Balrogs, produced searing light with just a thought, drew enemies forth from the minds of kings, could darken rooms at will, and otherwise had an aura of mystery surrounding the full extent of his powers. His magical ability was shown in these instances of tremendous power, but also in light-hearted demonstrations of smoke rings and fireworks.

The routines and concepts presented in this book are things which I have built, performed, and cherish. If this is the first volume you are reading, then it would be good to note: This side of my art does not take the form of “hey, look what I can do”, but rather an attempt to create wonder and open hearts. This, to me, is far more important.

My card magic is like my own cart of fireworks. But in these pages, you will find secrets which lay along the path of great and powerful magic.

## The Sharpie Gimmick

This is the construction of what will be referred to as the “Sharpie Gimmick” throughout the rest of this book.

- Take a wooden pencil, and cut it down, so it is about three inches long.
- Decrease the diameter around the writing end, so the new diameter is about  $1/8^{\text{th}}$  of an inch across.
- Use another black Sharpie to color the tip of the pencil, this ensures the wooden tip does not show.
- Disassemble a Sharpie, take out the writing tip and ink cartridge.
- Insert the pencil into the black part of the Sharpie and tape it in place.
- Reassemble the Sharpie.

A suggestion given to me by Jean-Manuel Cervier is to use a red pencil in place of the regular pencil. This would provide a further disconnect between the sharpie and the actual utensil.





To quote Kenton's words from my first book (originally published through Wonder Wizards), the gimmicked sharpie "allows you to do the secret work right in front of everyone, as there is a huge disconnect between the Sharpie pen and the pencil writing on the prediction inside the envelope. This is another one of my original innovations."

- Again, those are Kenton's words, though he wrote them to sound like I was the writer. To the best of my knowledge, no one has concealed a pencil inside a sharpie. But with recent research, I have found that other people have disguised writing utensils before (examples: red/black sharpie, pen/crayon, and pen/pencil)
- I do claim credit for the pencil/sharpie combination, BUT, I will not refer to the concept (of disguising a utensil) as an "original innovation", as this would demean the previous creators who created similar gimmicks.

## Single Writing

The term “single writing” is something I coined in *The Book of Light*. It was used in a couple of those routines, and will be used in this book as well. “Single writing” refers to the *process* of pre-writing something using one kind of utensil, to use as a disguise for secretly writing something else in a different utensil.

For our purposes, we will replace the tip of a sharpie with the tip of a pencil, as described previously. This allows us to appear to write on one surface using ink, while we are secretly writing on a different surface in pencil. We then show the pre-written word/drawing, eliminating the possibility of any secret writing.

Here’s a really simple example. This is only to demonstrate how the process is used. In practice, you can force the information you write on the card and either get a “hit” or a “near-hit”:

Write the number “753” on a business card *using sharpie*. Have a folded slip of paper set in view.



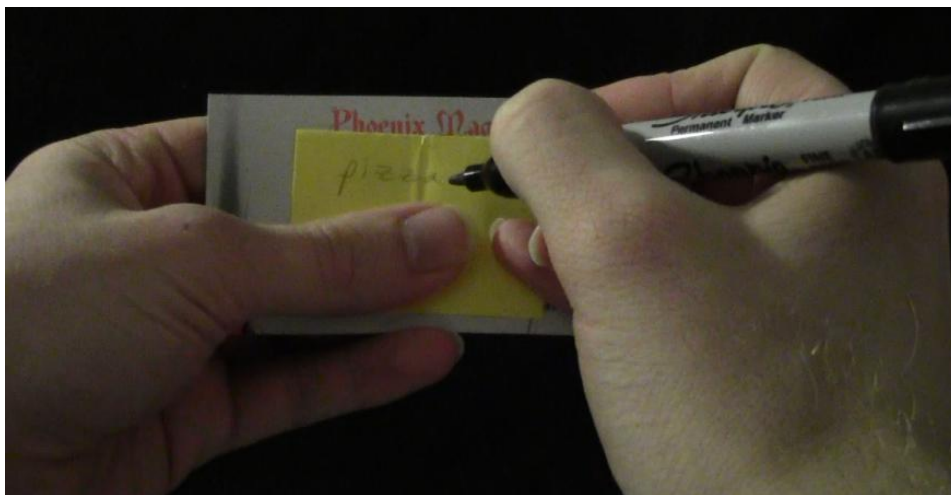
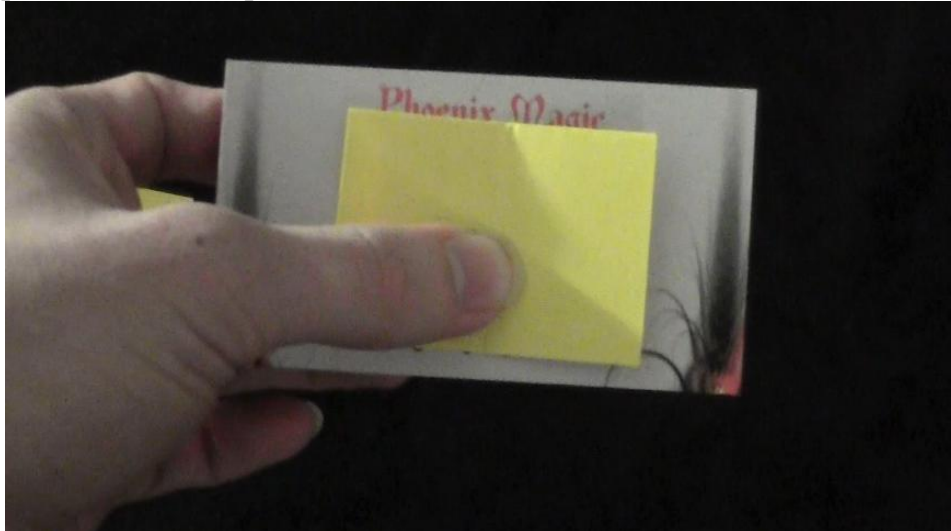
On another slip of paper, *using a pencil*, write the words “John’s favorite food is: \_\_\_\_\_”.

This paper goes in your pocket, behind the business card.

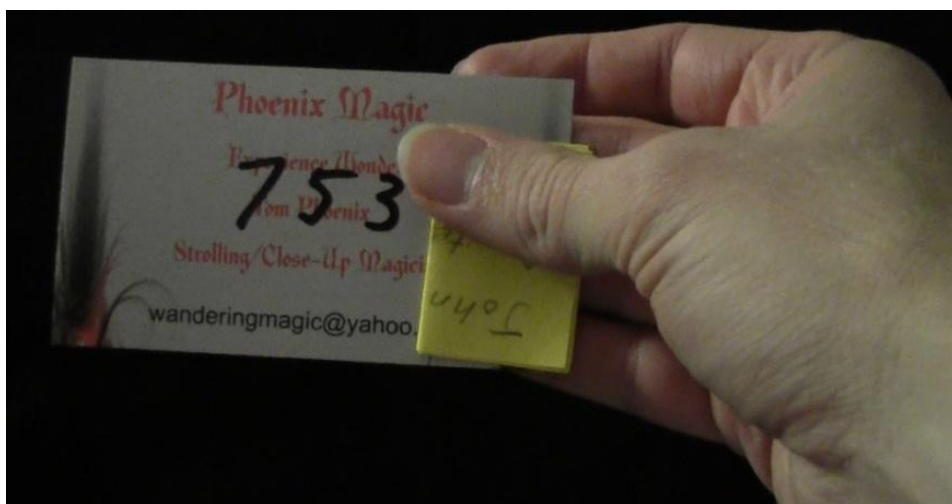
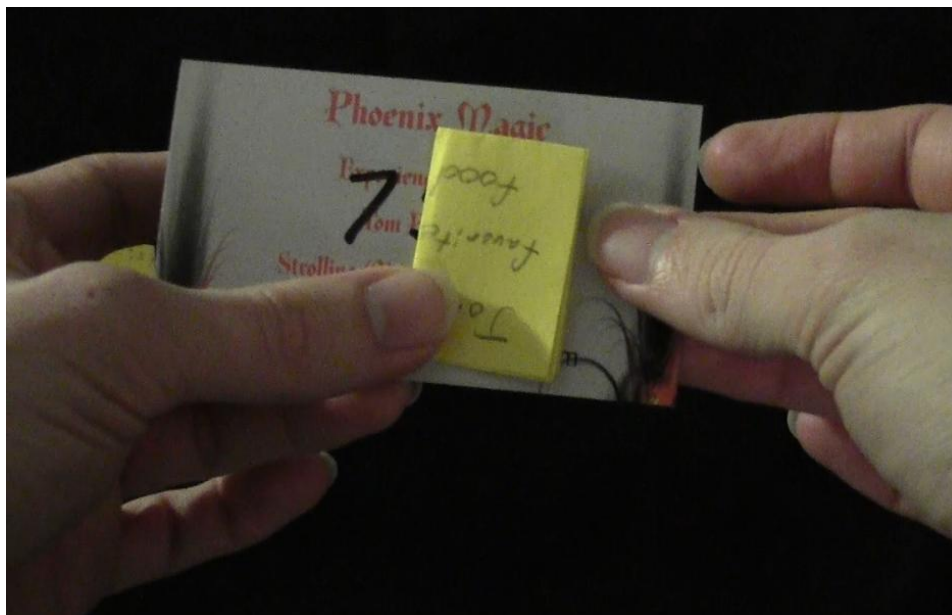
Place the folded slip of paper on the table. Separate from the one that’s in your pocket.

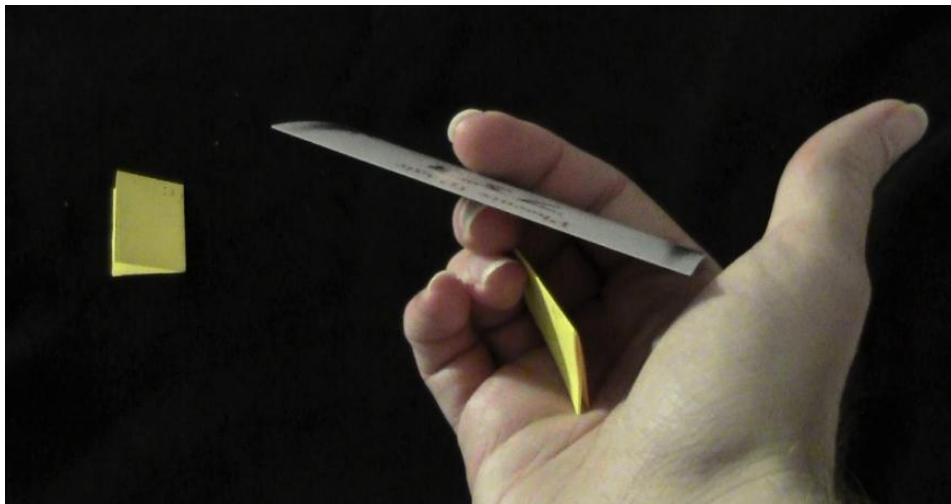
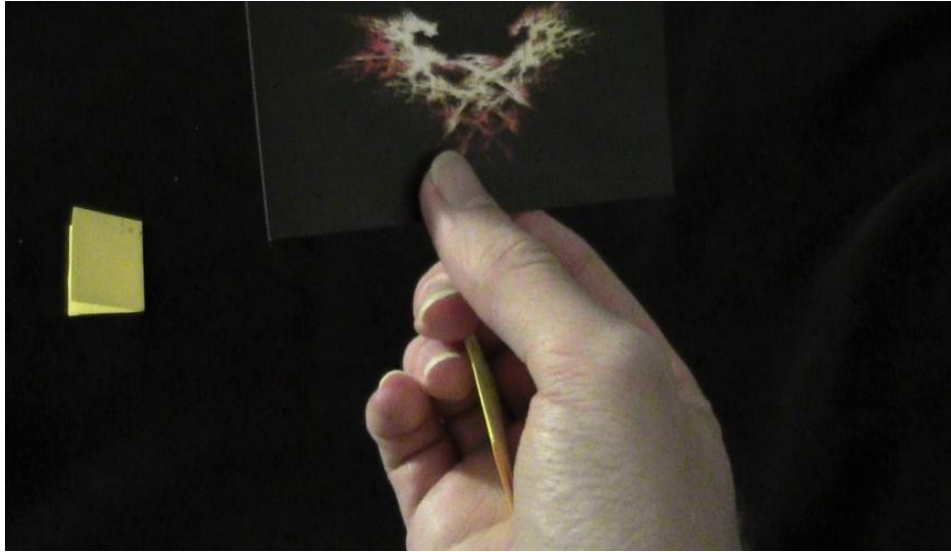
During performance, tell John to name his favorite food. Let's say he says: "Pizza". Ask someone else to think of a number between 1 and 1000.

Pull out your business card, with the prepared slip behind it, and your gimmicked sharpie. Say: "I'm going to try and read your mind and figure out what number you're thinking of." Write "pizza" on the prepared slip of paper, using the pencil point of the sharpie.



Fold the slip behind the card, maneuver it into a finger palm, put the sharpie away, and ask what number they were thinking of. Turn the card around to show the number you wrote.





Now switch the folded slips of paper, to show that you predicted what John's favorite food was. Here is the switch I use, it's a classic switch:



The billet on the table is picked up in the left hand.



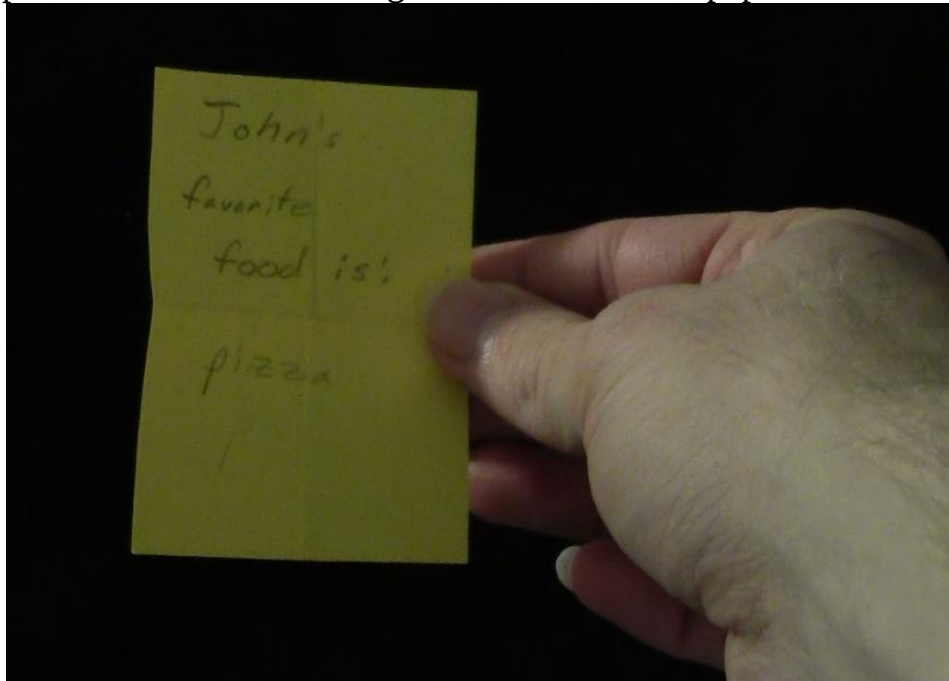
The business card is transferred from the right hand to the left, and the folded paper in the right hand is revealed.



It appears as if you only switched which hand was holding which object, but in reality, the paper which was in the left hand *is still in the left hand*, only it is hidden underneath the business card.



Now ditch the business card (and consequently the other folded paper) in your pocket. Reveal the writing on the other folded paper.



This allows us to set a prediction in full view, ask for 2 pieces of information, appear to attempt to divine one of them, and then show that the other was correctly predicted.

The “Single Writing” process is my independent creation, but when it’s dissected, it is essentially a combination of: one-ahead, double-writing (without writing two things consecutively), and change of utensil.

The handling of the folded slip behind the business card is going to take some practice. I wanted to do this part of the process using only one hand, so it is a bit of a “juggling act”, in maneuvering the folded slip into a finger clip, concealing it behind the fingers, and then collapsing it so it hides under the business card.

## Moments Lost

*Inspired by the song “Oaken Halls of Sorrow”, by Gallowbraid. The full line is: “Moments lost to the moons of time”.*

### **Performance:**

This is to be performed for an audience, using 1 participant, or for a single person.

### **Participant 1 = Anna**

**You:** “Many years ago, when I was four years old, my parents took me to Switzerland. Since I was so young, I only remember fragments of the trip, and those pieces are blurry, disordered, and fading with time. There is one instance, which still stands out in the memory, though. I remember standing in a courtyard on the side of a mountain. There was a very tall stone wall to my right, and it had little shoots of ivy sticking out of it, with vines along the bottom where it met the ground. To my left, there was a shorter stone wall, which dropped down to a narrow trail. And in front of me, there was a very small garden. The grass was very soft and damp from the morning dew. Beyond the garden was a large maple tree. I walked to it, and found an enormous maple leaf on the ground – it was the biggest leaf I had ever seen, even bigger than my head. I kept the leaf, and that is where the memory ends.”

**You:** “I still have the leaf, and it still is as big as it was then, and when I look at it, I remember the soft grass, the chill in the air, the gentle wind, and the feeling of child-like wonder.”

**You:** “Could you think of a memory that is similar to mine, one where you don’t remember much of it, but the parts you do remember are very powerful?”

**Anna:** “Yes”.

**You:** “Excellent, I want you think of one detail of the memory that allows you feel as if you were there again – in my case, I would think of the maple leaf. Do you have something?”

**Anna:** “Yes, I do.”

**You:** *(Bring out a stack of billets and a sharpie, handing her one billet)* “If you could, write the word or words you are thinking of, and keep it turned face-down, so no one can see.”

*(She does so.)*

**You:** *(Take the card back, and replace it face-down into the stack. Set the stack on the table or in their hands.)* “Now close your eyes and imagine going back to this time, and I will try to follow your mind-path to see into your memory. Immerse yourself in the scenery, hear the sounds and see the sights. If it is outdoors, feel the air on your skin. Go back to this time, and allow, just for a moment, everything else to fall away, as if you were truly a child again.”

**You:** “And slowly open your eyes; how do you feel?”

**Anna:** “Relaxed and happy.”

**You:** *(Pick up the sharpie, remove the top card of the stack, turning it upwards so everyone can see it is blank)* “In just a moment, I will write something that stood out to me in your memory. It may be nothing, but it seemed important.” *(Pick up the stack as well)*

**You:** “I saw a person, you knew them, and I couldn’t tell if you were sitting or standing, the edges of your vision were fuzzy.” *(Put the card on the bottom of the stack and write a word on it. Show the card to the other people watching.)*

**You:** *(Put the card face-down on the table, and place the sharpie back in your pocket.)* “As I said, there is a chance this could be nothing, but it felt like you had a strong connection with this person. I wrote a name, underlined it, and showed it to them *(gesture towards the audience)*. Does the name ‘Mark’ mean anything to you?”

**Anna:** “Yes.”

**You:** “That is wonderful! Thank you, Anna.” *(Smile, pause, and continue.)* “Our memories are precious, our experience shapes us into who we are, we can describe them with words, but only our feelings truly represent our past.” *(As you are speaking, deal cards off the stack, showing they are all blank.)*

**You:** “And some moments, particularly the one involving Mark, exist solely in your heart.” *(Turn over the card you just wrote on, and show that it too, is blank.)*

# Moments Lost – Method

## Introduction

Oftentimes, the billet is used solely to get information from someone, and the act of them writing it down is glazed over in the re-cap before the reveal. This is fine, and billet work is fun and interesting, but what if we were to use the billet as the finisher, rather than simply a means to an end? I wanted to create a routine, or a magical piece, where the billet is not used only as a tool to obtain information, but where it is used as part of the magic. “**Moments Lost**” is one of the pieces I came up with using this shift in thinking.

The materials you will need are simply:

- Stack of billets/business cards
- Sharpie

This works best for groups of people, but can be done one-on-one. If done with a group, then you get an extra impact (it’s an interesting little “effect”, but we’ll get there later). If done one-on-one, then you only get the vanished writing effect.

I will describe the “group” version first, and the “single” version second.

## Method 1:

You start out by telling a quick, good, story from your childhood, placing emphasis on a physical object, specific name, specific place, etc. The object/name should be one of those things which stand out in the memory, not a minor detail.

Ask if they could think of a memory as well, and hand them a billet. Instruct them to write down a significant object/name/place, i.e.: something that when they think of this memory, that one thing stands out from the rest. Once they have written it, slide it face-down into the stack of billets. Control it to the bottom, and set the stack on the table.



Ask them now to close their eyes and imagine going back to this time, and you will follow their mind-path and try to see details of their memory. Tell them to immerse themselves in the scenery, hear the sounds and see the sights. If it is outdoors, feel the air on their skin. Go back to this time, and allow, just for a moment, everything else to fall away, as if they were truly a child again.

After you have done this, ask them to slowly open their eyes.

Pick up a sharpie in your dominant hand and the top card of the stack, also in your dominant hand. Show it is blank, while saying: *“In just a moment, I will write something that stood out to me in your memory.”*



Pick up the stack in your non-dominant hand, bring it up towards you (so you are looking at the information they wrote), remember the word, and turn the stack face-down. Keep the blank billet in your dominant hand, and keep your hands apart.

If the word is a name, then say something like this: *“I saw a person, and you knew this person very well. When you looked at them, I felt a very strong connection between you.”* If the word is a city, say something like this: *“I’m not entirely sure where this is, but when you turned and looked at the buildings, you felt the sense of child-like wonder. There were many people here, but you only knew a couple – the rest have become blurred with time.”*

You’re making assumptions about the situation, based on what they wrote. There are a couple nice points about this:

- The participant knows you could not have seen the card.
- The spectators don’t know what the participant wrote.
  - o This means, to the spectators, you really were following their mind while they remembered the experience. And the participant is thinking the same thing.

Use your left thumb to slightly push the bottom billet off the stack about a 1/8<sup>th</sup> inch. This allows you to slide the blank billet *behind* the bottom billet.

- The point of doing this is to show a blank billet to everyone, and then supposedly put it on the bottom of the stack to write on it. Now, everyone (participant included), believes we are about to write on a blank billet. We're setting ourselves up for a "vanished writing" effect, while simultaneously making the cleanup really easy.

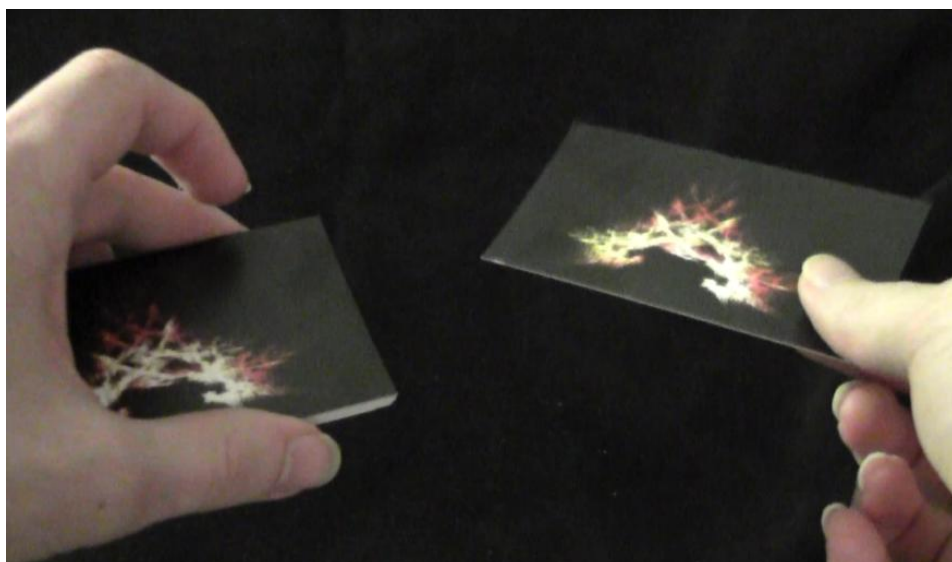


Once you supposedly have a blank card on the bottom of the stack and have partially revealed bits of the memory, pretend to write on the card. After the "writing", turn the stack towards the spectators (not the participant), allowing them to see what you wrote. They think they are looking at what you just wrote.... But they are actually looking at the word the participant wrote. But nobody needs to know that you never actually wrote anything. And the participants will be able to vouch for you at the end.



After showing the spectators the word, turn the stack towards the floor, and use **The Glide** to slide out the card which is 2<sup>nd</sup> from the bottom. Take this card and place it face-down in the participant's hand. They are now holding a blank billet.

- The mental situation is this:
  - Everybody thinks you wrote a word on a billet.
  - Everybody thinks the billet you wrote on is in the participant's hand.
  - The participant is wondering what you wrote, and is amazed by you knowing a bit about their memory.
  - The spectators saw the word you wrote and can confirm that YOU wrote it, because of the manipulation of the blank billet.
  - The spectators do not know for certain if the word you wrote had anything to do with the memory.



Palm the bottom card (theirs) in your dominant hand, and then use that hand to put the sharpie back in your pocket, ditching their card with the sharpie. You are clean.



Say: *“As I said, there is a chance this could be nothing, but it felt like you had a strong connection with this person. I wrote a name, underlined it, and showed it to them (gesture towards the spectators – they will nod in confirmation). Does the word (insert word here) mean anything to you?”* They will say “yes”.

And the fun part: They still have the blank billet, face-down in their hands. You turn the stack face up, and deal them onto the table, showing that every single one is blank, while saying: *“Our memories are precious, our experience shapes us into who we are, we can describe them with words, but only our feelings truly represent*

our past.” Pause, as they have seen the entire stack blank – there should have been one billet with their writing on it, but there wasn’t. Now say: “*And some moments, particularly the one involving (insert word here), exists solely in your heart.*” Motion to them to turn over the billet, and it too, is blank.

## **Method 2:**

This method is for a one-on-one situation. The theme stays the same, and the vanishing word is the same also. The handling is a little different, though.

In this method, the only move you use is a double lift.

Start out with the same introduction – telling a quick story and asking them to think of a memory as well. They then pick out a particularly significant detail.

Hand them a card from the stack and tell them to write the word on the card.

Hold the stack of cards blank-side up (assuming you have something printed on the other side. If both sides are blank, then it obviously doesn’t matter how you hold it), as you would hold a deck of playing cards. Get a little-finger break under the top card.

After they have written it, take the card back and place it face-up on the stack. There are now 2 cards above the break.

It is okay for you to see what they wrote.

Turn over both cards above the break as one, and push off the top card, while doing a wrist-kill with the hand holding the stack – again, this is assuming your cards have something printed on one side; if they are blank on both sides, don’t worry about the wrist-kill. And hand the top card to them.

The situation is this:

- The card with their writing is now writing-side down on the stack of cards
- And they are holding a blank card.

Proceed as in **Method 1**, and since you are not making any predictions about what they wrote, you will leave out the memory guessing section and jump straight to the vanished writing.

## **Method 2a:**

If you wanted to do the memory guessing section in a one-on-one environment, it is fairly easy.

Hold the stack as you would a deck of cards (blank side facing down), and double-lift the top two cards.

Still holding the stack, have them write the word on the top card, while *blatantly* turning your head and body away. You don't want them to suspect that you might've seen the word.

After they write it, turn both cards face-down, and push off the top card. You have now switched the card they wrote on, with the actual top card of the deck. You can turn around once the top card has been pushed off.

Hand them the top card and continue as normal, leaving out the part where you "draw" a prediction.

## **Notes:**

Regardless of which method you use or what the situation is, the theme of "some moments exist solely in our hearts" is the same, because the end result of the writing vanishing from the card takes place in each method.

**Methods 2** and **2a** can each be accomplished with signed billets, you'll just need to have them sign the opposite side they write the word on.

## **Additional Idea 1:**

In **Method 1**, an alternative ending is to switch the reveal of the word and the moment of the vanishing. The way it is described in the method is:

- 1) Reveal the word first
- 2) Show all billets are blank

But by switching the moments, you create a really interesting dynamic.

## **Additional Idea 2:**

This routine works really well with the "apparent trance" performance touch. By supposedly putting the participant into a trance-like state as they think of the memory, you can use this as a kicker at the end: "did the participant actually write

anything, or did they imagine they wrote something?” The participant will swear they wrote the word, but since all the cards are blank, the opposite is proven.

### **Additional Idea 3:**

In line with the previous idea, by putting all the spectators into a trance-state, the entire stack of blank billets at the end could be attributed to them imagining that you wrote something. In which case, they all imagined seeing the same thing. And this is remarkable.

### **Additional Idea 4:**

In Method 1, you could add to their drawing/word. This allows us to have a “reinforcement” moment when we verify with the audience that we “wrote” on the card. For instance, if they drew a house, then we draw a tree next to it. If they wrote the word “Paris”, then we underline the word, etc.

During the “verification” stage, where we say: *“Now I wrote something down, I don’t know if it is related...”* we add a few words: *“Now I wrote something down and underlined it, I don’t know if it’s related...”*

This tiny subtlety reinforces the thought that we wrote on the card.

## Convergence

The Convergence Principle is, in short: A stooge-free method of creating an effect in the minds of the audience, while creating a separate effect in the mind of the participant. This is caused by *partially implying* we received more pieces of information than we actually did, in the act of revealing a single piece of information to the participant.

### **Example:**

One week prior to performance, contact participant and have them think of someone from their past that was immensely important, maybe a childhood friend, or a mentor, or a role-model. Later that night, they are to find a small stone and write the name of that person on the surface. Take the stone and place it in a fire. Before they go to sleep, put some ashes from the fire into a bowl, and set the bowl under the foot of their bed. Tell them they will have a dream which will remind them of how important this person is to them.

They might actually have a dream of that person, if so, then great. If not, that's okay.

Tell them you will do the same thing, only you will write their name on the stone.

In the morning, they are to scatter the ashes to the four winds.

The next week, during your performance, you recite what occurred the previous week. On the table, there is a small billet.

Tell them to vividly recall their dream, if they can. Remember the sights, the colors, were they sad or happy. Ask what the name of the person was.

Once you get the name of the person they thought of, use the "single-writing" method (described after the "sharpie gimmick" section) and switch the billets. Tell them you too had a dream that night, and in it, there was a person you had never seen before. Since the other events of the dream were beginning to fade, you wrote a name to avoid forgetting everything. The Convergence Principle causes everyone to assume you saw the details of their dream, due to the ritual, and the participant believes you only saw their **single** thought-of person.

It's a linguistic/psychological dual reality effect, where there is no instant stooging, and no way to backtrack the method... because the effect is actually created in the minds of the audience!

I touched on this briefly in my Hidden Thoughts series, but at the time, I didn't have a name for it. The example given in that book was of a humorous nature, but the principle remains the same: 2 pieces of information are presented, and the audience incorrectly assumes they converge and form an assumed effect, WHILE the participant is aware that the information is indeed 2 separate pieces.

### **Here's another example:**

Let's say you are doing a book test, while asking the participant to think of a memory. You want the audience to believe you have correctly divined the contents of the memory, when in fact, you have only guessed the word the participant chose in the book.

The participant thinks of a memory, then selects from a series of books with a title that relates to the memory.

The order here is important – they *first* think of the memory, *then* they select the title. This is because when we re-phrase this later, we can make it sound as if we *knew what memory they would pick THEREFORE we were able to figure out the title/word*. AND, to the participant, it will sound as if we just figured out what the word was.

“There's no way I could have known what memory they would think of and by consequence, no way I could have known what book they would choose... but last night I had a dream in which I saw into your thoughts, and based on this very powerful memory you have in mind, it would make sense for you to have picked book X.”

### **Further Explanation:**

It wouldn't have to be a dream, you could instead have them put their hand palm-out in the air and imagine the memory taking place in front of them. You place your palm very close to theirs, close your eyes, inhale deeply, then step away, and say you felt their thoughts.\*\*\*

However you want to present this, just make sure the end result is you *half-way implying that you saw the memory*, while actually saying you saw the word.

In this case:

“Real information” = the book title,

“Imagined information” = the memory,

and “Assumption” = my vision of their memory

You never actually have to divine the details of the memory, yet you can give that perception to the audience, without alerting the participant that that’s what you’re doing.

This does beg the question: how do you figure out which book they picked?

Here are a few ideas:

- Use a confederate who watches which book they pick and feeds you information.
- Use a bookshelf with a false back, so you can see which book has been removed.
- Put the books in a box, set the box so the bottom is facing you, and cut a gap into the bottom and color-code the book bindings, so you can tell which book is missing by looking at the bottom of the box.
- Have them write it down and use a peek/impression pad.
- Use a regular Hoy book test, and have them think of a word on the first line, relate that to the memory to the word and go from there.
- Use books of very different title lengths, and use Peter Turner’s “can you see how many letters are in the title?” idea that he does with zodiac signs.
- Use an anagram.

There are so many ways to get that one piece of information. The rest is up to how you present that piece in order to get the audience to assume something that never existed.

## **Additional Idea 1:**

Here’s an interesting idea:

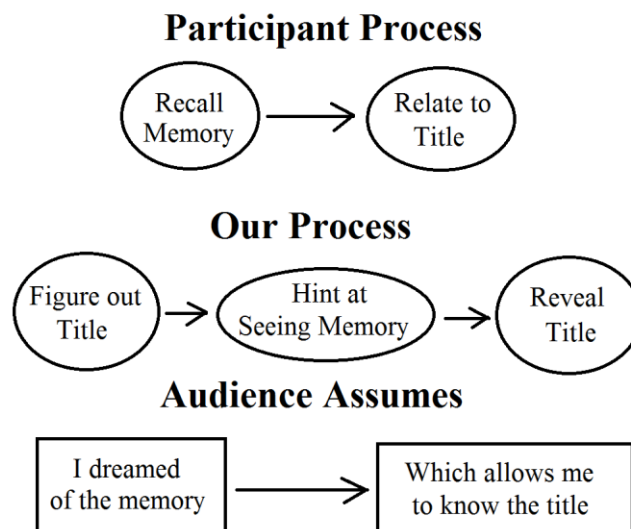
- Get several different hard-back books of the same size.
- Get that same number of the same book.
- Take the jackets off the different books and put them on the duplicate books.
- You now have 4 or 5 of the same book with different covers. (... a one-way force bookshelf...)

- Have a spec. choose a number, then turn to that page in any book, and then remember the first word (or most interesting word) on the top line of the page.
- At some point later in your performance, pick up a different book, turn to the same page, and get the word.
- Maybe use this for a one-ahead presentation later on.

\*\*\*A note here: Combine this moment of placing your hand out in front of theirs with the pretense that you are receiving energy from the participant. To a 'new-age' crowd, this will be accepted as truth, and the participant will attribute any tingling sensations in their palms and wrist to energy transfer. This sensation is caused by the fatiguing of smaller muscles in the wrist and back of the hand. You can feel this by putting your hand out in front of you and keeping your arm straight. Your arm will be slightly above 90 degrees, with relation to your body. Pull your fingers back towards you, as if you were placing your hand on a wall. It takes a bit of work to keep your hand in that position for very long, doesn't it?

To a crowd of, let's say, non-new-age people, who aren't familiar with or don't believe in ideas like sending energy, grounding, auras, etc., this moment will just be a very mysterious, very strange and magical thing to witness, as they've never seen two people do this, and couple that with the "vision" you receive from them, and you have a truly beautiful presentation on your hands. No pun intended.

Here is a diagram which models the Convergence Principle perhaps a little clearer than explaining in text:



# Hale of Stars

Inspired by: “Black Sky” – by Thrawsunblat

I have included two versions of the same premise (the other is found at the end of this book), for those who wish to perform this perhaps as a “impromptu/casual” piece (outside of a formal performance), and a version for two participants in either a casual or formal setting. The premise and underlying message is the same, but the workings are different.

## **Performance**

This version is intended for one participant, with or without an audience.

### **Participant 1 = Melissa**

**You:** (*Introduce yourself, etc.*) “There was a time, many years ago, when I stood with several of my best friends on the side of a mountain. The sun was going down and the stars were already visible. We were overlooking a small valley – there were some trees below and a small brook running along the contours of the mountain base. It was a beautiful moment – the sky was a brilliant orange, the mountains were purple, and the stars shown through the clouds. As I looked to the heavens and saw the constellations, something dawned on me.

I’ll get to that realization later, but for now, I’d like for you to think of the name of someone. Someone who is very important to you, could be a family member, boyfriend, teacher, or close friend – someone who has had a tremendous impact on your life and someone who you cherish. Do you have a person in mind?

**Melissa:** “Yes.”

**You:** (*Pull out a slip of paper and a pencil and write a name on it, fold it up, and set it in view.*)

**You:** “Now look up at the stars, see the Big Dipper? And Orion over there? Instead of focusing on finding the constellations you already know, I want you to create your own. See the lines start connecting stars, until the name of this person is written across the sky. See those lines begin to glow, as this person glows in your heart. Let me know once you see their name.”

**Melissa:** “I have it.”

**You:** “Do you know your star sign?”

**Melissa:** “Yes.”

**You:** “Okay, I’m going to write a star sign, based on what I’m feeling from you right now.”

*(Pull out another slip of paper and a sharpie and start to write a zodiac symbol)*

**You:** “Out of curiosity, what is the name of this person you’re thinking of?”

**Melissa:** “Rachel.”

**You:** “Hmm... That’s... Interesting...” *(Smile to yourself, give a soft laugh and finish the writing.)*

**You:** *(Turn the paper around so they can see what you wrote.)* “You wouldn’t happen to be a Scorpio, would you? I felt a bit of Libra first, but I didn’t think that was correct.”

**Melissa:** “Neither, I’m a Leo.”

**You:** “Ah well that is quite okay. Everyone has a little of each sign in them, but our character is determined by the choices we make, not the month we were born in. I must ask, did you think of one person and then change your mind to someone else? Or was Rachel the first person you thought of?”

**Melissa:** “She was the second person.”

**You:** “Remarkable. When I stood on the mountain, overlooking the valley, with the sun’s fire blazing across the skyline, I realized: though we all live in different places, walk different paths, have different dreams, goals, loves, and aspirations, when we lay to rest, we all see the same stars.”

**You:** “Last night, I looked to the sky, and saw a memory, a person, written in starlight.”

*(Hand the folded slip of paper to them, and when they open it, there is a message, which says: “In the stars, I saw a person named Rachel.”)*

*(Let them have the moment.)*

## Vale of Stars – Method

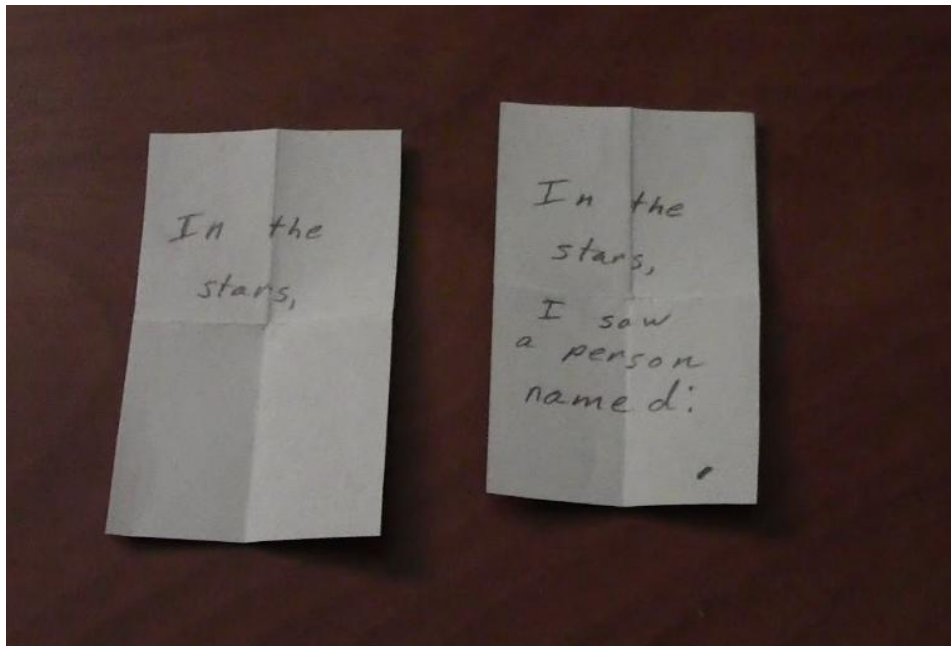
This is mechanically identical to the “Single Writing” example, given at the beginning of this book. Now, I do have a couple little subtleties which were not present in that example.

### Materials

- 2 slips of paper
- 1 billet
- The Sharpie Gimmick
- Wooden Pencil with a loose tip

### Preparation

Pre-write on the first slip of paper and fold it into quarters. This is simply so there is clearly writing on it, and nothing will seem out-of-place after the switch. Here is what it should look like:



On the second slip of paper (the one you are switching out), after the blank where the name will be written, write a sharp *period*. This becomes the result of the pencil tip “breaking”, which justifies using a sharpie later on.

On the billet, pre-write two star signs, and cross one of them out. This increases the odds of you being correct.



## The Story

Start out by telling the quick story of standing on a mountain, overlooking a valley. Ask them to think of someone special to them, and then tell them about how you saw a name written in starlight.

## Setting Up the Prediction

Take out a slip of paper and a pencil. “Write” something on that paper, and as you “write” the period, allow the tip of the pencil to break. Hold the pencil up, so they can see it is broken. This justifies using a sharpie in just a moment, as your other pencil doesn’t work anymore.

Fold up the paper and leave it in view.

Ask them to look to the sky (works great at night, particularly when you’re not in a big city), and imagine seeing this person’s name formed by connections in the stars.

- If you cannot see many stars where you are, then tell them to imagine this. But using the stars is preferable.

Ask if they know their star sign, and say that you are going to try to guess it, based on your interaction so far. Take out your pre-written billet and the Sharpie Gimmick. Pretend to write one symbol, *and then* ask them for the name of the person. Once they tell you, think for a moment, and obviously “cross out” the first thing you wrote. Now write the name on the hidden slip of paper. This is done under the guise of “writing” a star sign.



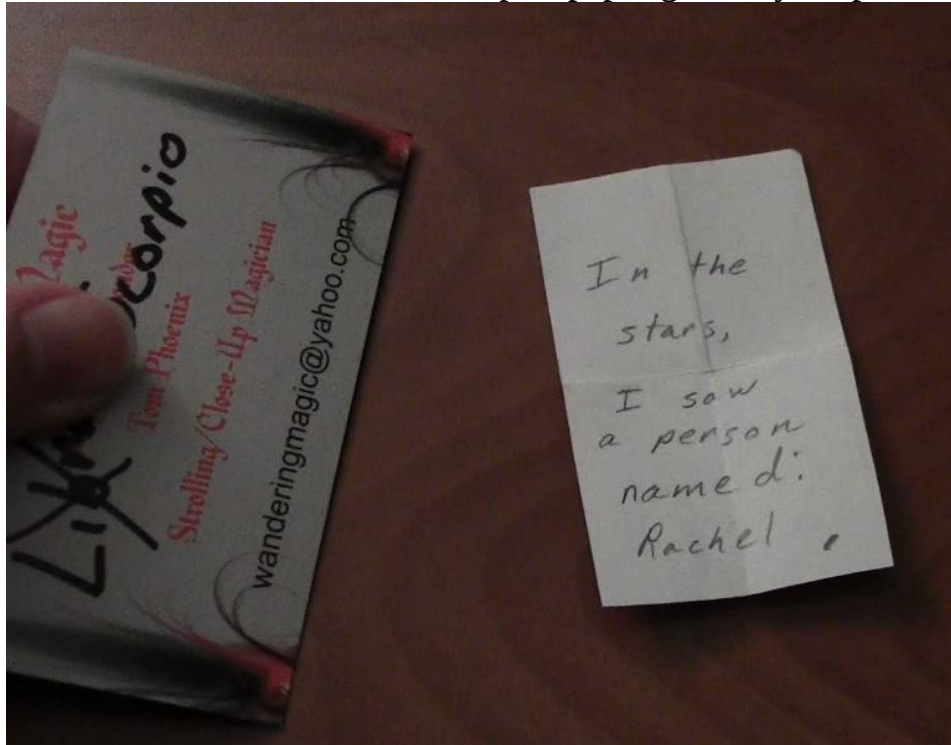
Maneuver the slip of paper into a finger clip, and show the two star signs you wrote. If one of them is correct, then you have a good looking hit! If neither is correct, that is okay, take the miss and move on.



## The Realization

Tell them the realization you had about how we all see the same stars at night, despite our differences.

Switch the slips of paper under the billet, and hand them the one you actually wrote on. The billet and other slip of paper go into your pocket.



When they open the paper, it has a message which reads: *“In the stars, I saw a person named Rachel.”*

This is impossible. Let them have the moment. There’s no need to do a “re-cap” of events.

## **Additional Idea**

Rather than guessing at a star sign, you could set up a psychological force (or some personal information you obtained earlier through social media/event rosters), and pre-write the item to be forced/revealed.

For example:

- Write the word “rose” on the business card, and later ask them to imagine seeing the thought-of person in the sky, and they reach down from the stars to hand the participant a flower.
- Ask what the name of the thought-of person is.
- Tell them to imagine taking the flower from the person and hold it in their hands.

- “Write” something on the business card, while actually writing name of the person on the paper.
- Ask what kind of flower it is, 99% of the time people say “rose”, and you turn the card around to reveal that you correctly divined the flower.
- Now switch out the papers to show that you also predicted the name of the person they would imagine.

The flower can be used as symbolic of love across time and space.

## Magic as Illustration

In Magic, we have many types of moments:

- Reveals (divining information from peeks, impressions, etc.)
- Predictions (revealing preconceived knowledge)
- Demonstrations of Magic (Invisible Palm plots, Twisting the Aces, Montes, etc.)
- Demonstrations of skill (Memorization, Gambling displays, Cardistry (it can be magical), card production (can be presented as skill or magic))
- Impossible Moments (Ambitious Card Routines, transpositions, etc.)

The list goes on, but for the sake of keeping it concise, I categorize individual effects based on these criteria:

- Am I appearing to reveal information that I didn't already know?
- Am I appearing to change something into something else?
- Am I appearing to predict information I couldn't know?
- Am I appearing to demonstrate *something impossible* for the audience?

Of course, categories can be blended and mixed-and-matched to create different feeling experiences, and that is where heavy creativity comes in.

Magic as illustration is what I refer to as those experiences when the moment(s) is/are not about the word they are thinking of, it is about what the word *means to them*.

For instance, in “**Atlantis**”, the invisible touch on their skin is symbolic of the wonders we experience as children – not about making someone feel an invisible touch. The touch on the hand is still magical, but it's not the focus of the routine as commonly seen in magic and mentalism. Same sort of concept in “**Tears of Angels**” – the rain turning to blood on the billet does fall under the “demonstration of something impossible” category, but the *rain turning to blood* illustrates, or is representative of, the remnants of the feeling of pain and loss.

Nearly any individual effect, from any path of Magic, can be re-framed to become illustrative..... with the possible exception of sponge balls.

But then again, who says a single effect, performed on its own, cannot be truly magical?

## Tears of Angels

### **Introduction:**

This piece is considerably different from the rest in this book, as the dialog is based in poetry. I have several of these such pieces, but due to their nature, very few performers will use them, which is why I have only included one in this volume, and the others may or may not be released. The method, however, can be applied in countless places.

I have a handful of “powerhouse effects”, and “**Tears of Angels**” is one of them. The method is beyond a utility device – it is something which causes a reaction bordering on true belief. **DO NOT over-use it, and do not treat it as a trick or mental puzzle – doing so will diminish the power it carries.**

The performance of this is short, and consists of you alternating between reciting a poem, giving instructions, and demonstrating something incredible.

This flavor of “poetic magic” is, I have found, extremely powerful, as there is the added touch of allowing the audience to search for meaning in the words, and it gives a mystical elegance to the performance.

### **Note 1:**

To be performed outside, while it is raining. You can be under an awning, tent, or balcony, as long as you have easy access the falling rain.

### **Note 2:**

Because of the subject matter of this performance, it is wise to have someone lined up beforehand, who is comfortable in talking about those who have passed. What you don’t want to do is randomly call on someone in the middle of the performance and ask them to write the name of a deceased loved one – this puts them in a difficult spot and comes off as rather rude and insensitive.

### **Note 3:**

Pay attention to Note 2 – ***this is extremely important.***

## Performance:

### Participant 1 = Matthew

**You:** “Will the clouds part as our souls rise to the stars? Greetings, I would like to share with you a poem, dedicated to one whom I dearly miss.”

**You:**

“A crown of stars rests  
Beyond winter’s reign  
A realm of beauty  
Without sorrow or pain

In cold, quiet solitude  
We find the wonders of life  
But this peace is not to last  
In such a world now wrought with strife.”

**You:** “Matthew, could you think of someone, perhaps a relative, or friend who has passed from this world to the next?” (*Remove a sharpie and a billet from your pocket/box.*)

**Matthew:** “Yes, I can.”

**You:**

“A tear is shed  
For every life that’s lost  
And falls as snow  
Upon endless tides of winter-frost

Trees will fall as ash tonight  
No star will shine in joy tonight  
The once-white ground now stained with death  
Bound to rise, and fall again, without a final breath.

**You:** “If you could, write the name of this person on this paper.”

**Matthew:** (*He does so*)

**You:** “The skies will live on, lasting past our time. And as the sky witnesses the sorrow of mortals, will it remember our names? Will it too weep in sadness?”

**You:**

“Memories will fall as ash tonight  
No star will shine in joy tonight  
The once-white ground now stained with death  
Bound to rise, only to fall again, without a breath.”

**You:** *Hold the billet in the rain, and as the droplets hit it, they turn to blood.*

“For every life that’s lost,  
Stars dim in agony  
Shedding tears of light and blood  
They must witness our sorrow  
For all eternity.”

## Tears of Angels – Method

You will need some of this stuff:

<https://www.sfxco.co.uk/collections/hydrochromic-ink-changes-colour-when-exposed-to-water/products/hydrochromic-wet-and-reveal-ink-coatings>

It looks expensive, but it will last you a *long* time.

It is normally used for commercial purposes, as shown in the demo videos on their site, and very few people know this stuff exists.

This is a special ink, which starts out white, and turns transparent when in contact with water. This causes the message/color underneath it to be revealed.

With this in mind, it's fairly easy to see how to turn rain into blood – take a billet, coat one side with red ink, wait for it to dry, and then put down a coating of the special ink. The special ink takes several hours to dry completely, and you should apply it in very thin coats. It appears semi-transparent while still wet/drying, but after it is dry to the touch, it is solid white. I recommend putting on 2 thin coats.

The water needs to have some force behind it to activate the ink, which is why this works so well in the rain. If you set a water droplet on the billet, it will sit there and do nothing. But if you push down and wipe it off, you will leave a trail of transparent ink, revealing whatever is under it.

After about 20 minutes of drying from the water, the ink becomes white again, allowing you to re-use the same billet.

### Notes:

This method is *very* flexible. The given performance is my original (and most commonly used) application for it, but it can be used to reveal hidden messages, predictions, drawings, etc.

If you do not have access to a rainy environment, or otherwise want to perform this without needing rain, then you could just as easily use a basin/bowl of water and swish the billet around under the surface.

Don't use a water bottle. Turning water to blood *should not* be performed in the typical street magic "all borrowed materials" fashion. This degrades the power and detracts from the desired atmosphere. The materials should match the premise.

### **Other Information:**

When you purchase this ink, you will receive a link to the MSDS sheets for safety information, as well as further application instructions.

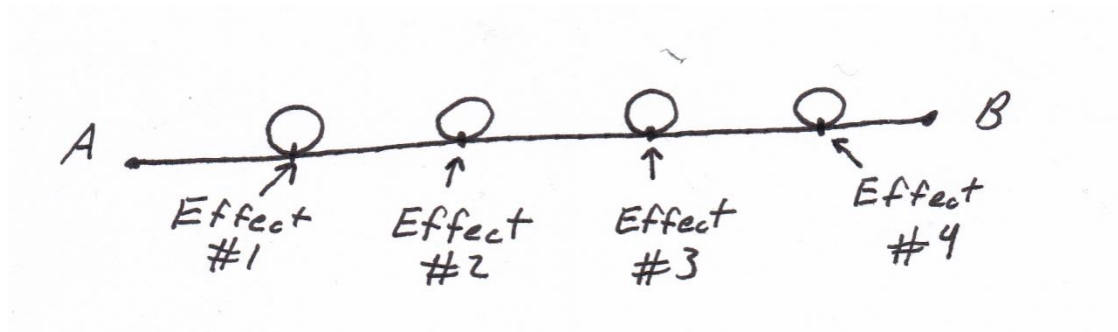
## Geometric Design

This is a method I came up with for “modeling” routines, and later used to structure routines. Those of you who own my *Book of Light*: the routine “**A Time to Remember**” was structured using an earlier version of this method. It came from trying to work out the order and resolution of events in the movie ‘Interstellar’. For those of you who haven’t seen it, you’re missing out. Anyway, it uses circles to represent individual effects. Here’s the sequence of events of the movie, without giving anything away:

- Data presented and decoded
  - Event 1
    - Event 2
      - Fractal dimension
    - Event 3 (causes Event 2)
  - Event 4 (causes Event 1)
- Data created

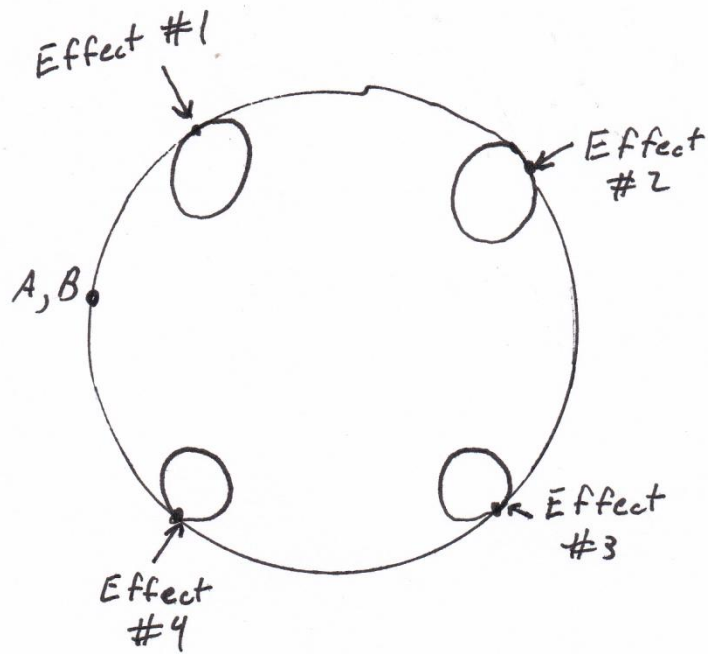
It was the process of mapping out the movie that got me thinking about a new way of designing routines.

Most “magic acts” would use a sequence like this:



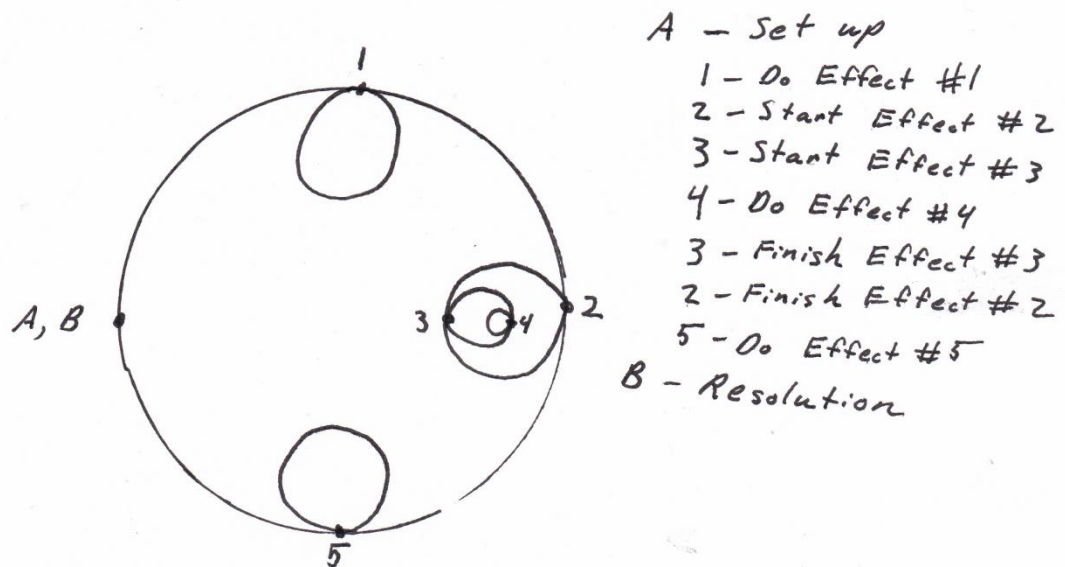
Where there is “one-trick-after-another”.

“Mentalism acts”, on the other hand, have a tendency to look something like this:



So the encompassing circle represents the effect that starts and finishes the show, and the smaller circles represent the individual effects during the show, before 'coming full-circle'.

Here is an order of events, modeled with circles:



Here's an example of this in action:

## **Materials:**

- Multiple books
- Calculator
- Notepad & pen
- Single book

## **Procedure:**

- Force a word (tree).
- Start to try to read their mind, and write down a series of numbers: 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1.
- Say that each number corresponds to a letter: G, F, E, D, C, B, A.
- So the word they are thinking of probably uses some of those letters: "BEAD".
- This is incorrect.
- Do some other quick effect.
- Hand out a book, and tell someone to open to any page and write the page number and remember the first word on the page, they pass the book to someone else, and write that page number and remember the first word. Do this a couple more times, and then give the notepad with the page numbers to someone.
- Try to guess the first word on each page. You'll probably fail – that's okay.
- Now, ask the person holding the pad to multiply all the numbers together. And ask for the total: 1,234,567.
- Go to your stack of books, and find the one that has a Dewey Decimal starting with 1234, go to the 5<sup>th</sup> page, 6<sup>th</sup> line, 7<sup>th</sup> word, and ask what the forced word was from the beginning.

See how this works? It is a timeline of events AND a map of how they interact.

Okay, so with that in mind, what if, instead of using this to model existing routines, we use it to create new ones? Grab a sheet of paper and draw yourself a large circle. Put some other circles inside. Put circles inside of circles. Play around with the designs. What can you come up with? And how can you 'plug in' effects to the design to create an entire performance?

## From Beyond

*Before describing this routine, it should be noted: this is a fully scripted act. Read it carefully, and understand that each section has a purpose.*

### **Performance:**

**You:** *(Approach the piano, and play a slow, sorrowful piece.*

*Stop playing mid-phrase and turn towards the audience to begin.)*

**You:** “Welcome. Our minds are home to the infinite vastness of imagination, and where there is imagination, there lies possibility. When we were children, we dreamt of worlds beyond this one, of powers and forces beyond reality. This realm of memory, and of dream, is where we shall venture tonight.”

“Two years ago, I was given this book by a dear friend. It contains legends of ancient times, and illustrations of those stories. I will need a volunteer, you sir, would you please stand?”

**Participant 1:** *(He stands)*

*(Position him so that he is standing next to you, with the audience to your front)*

**You:** “What is your name?”

**Participant 1:** “Mark”.

**You:** “Very nice to meet you, Mark. You can see these pages contain some text, illustrations, some with only text or only pictures *(flip through the book)*. You are going to choose one of these pages, and you will be the only one who knows which page was chosen.”

*(Position the book vertically, with the back of the book facing him, and turn, so the audience is to your side)*

**You:** “I will riffle through the pages like this *(demonstrate)*, and I would like you to say ‘stop’ at any point.”

*(You riffle the pages.)*

**Mark:** “Stop”.

**You:** “Here? Okay, now remember any word on this page, or if there is a picture which stands out to you, remember that picture... Do you have something?”

**Mark:** “Yes.”

**You:** “Excellent. Do not tell anyone, especially me... Oh, and remember the page number too (*close the book, and offer him a slip of paper and pencil*). You may write it down if you’d like, it may be important later.”

**Mark:** “Sure.”

**You:** “Wonderful, thank you Mark. Would you please have a seat? We’ll come back to the word or picture you have in mind a little later.” (*Walk him back to his seat.*)

*(Address the audience.)*

**You:** “This realm of memory contains rivers which ebb and flow through time, of time as we now experience it, but also of times to come, and times past. Would everyone close your eyes, and stand on the shore of a forest stream. Hear the birds in the trees, and the soft earth beneath your feet. Look now into the running waters, and see a single person, a person you know, someone who is very important to you. See their face, their eyes, and their smile. Think of a time when you and this person spent time together. See this in the waters. The water will ever run, but allow yourself this moment of memory... Slowly open your eyes.”

**You:** “I would like to try something in seeing memories. Who would be willing to try this?”

*(Someone will volunteer; let’s say their name is “Anna”.)*

*(Address Anna.)*

**You:** “Excellent, take this piece of card and write the name of the person you are thinking of, as well as a single word which describes a location where you two spent time together. This could be something like: ‘home’, ‘in a park’, or ‘a

restaurant'... Their name and a location is all. Keep it face-down, and do not let anyone see."

*(Take the card back, replace it in the stack, and put the stack in a box, closing the lid.)*

*(Turn to the person who is thinking of an image.)*

**You:** "Mark, if you could, please close your eyes. The last time this book opened, a word or image was already printed on it. Right now, I want for you to imagine seeing the book open to a blank page. Imagine either writing the word on the page, or drawing the image yourself. It will look the same as it did before, only it is you writing it in the book. Have you got it?"

**Mark:** "Yes."

**You:** "If it is a word, see each letter boldly, if it is an image, see all the colo- (*cut yourself off*)... This is a picture, yes?"

**Mark:** "Yes."

**You:** "Of a person?"

**Mark:** "Yes."

**You:** "Open your eyes. I cannot quite tell much about it, yet. I'll try again in a little while."

*(Hand a note card and pencil to someone.)*

**You:** "I would like for everyone to once again close your eyes and see yourself back at the forest stream. This time, rather than looking into the water, look to the sky. See the clouds; see them slowly form into a two-digit number. This could be your age, it could be the year you were born, such as '85, or it could be a lucky number or simply a random, two-digit number. And open your eyes."

*(Point to the person who has the note card)*

**You:** “At the top of the card, write the number you were thinking of. Pass it to the person next to you (*they do so*). And right below his, write the number you were thinking of. And continue this down to here (*stand about 3 people down the row*).”

*(Instruct the last person to fold the card in half. You take the card back.)*

*(Walk over to someone else and ask them to add the numbers together, and give them another card on which to write the total. Tell them to not let anyone else see what the total is. Offer them a calculator if they would like one.)*

**You:** “We now have a total of the pieces from multiple imaginations... and where there is imagination, there lies possibility.”

*(Turn back towards Mark. Pick up a drawing pad.)*

**You:** “Could you now imagine seeing a large white canvas floating between us?”

**Mark:** “Yes.”

**You:** “Excellent. See yourself drawing this picture on the canvas. Each line exactly as it is in your mind.”

*(Begin sketching on the pad. And also sketch some in the air between the two of you. Set the pad face-down.)*

**You:** “Alright, I think I’ve almost got it. But the details are still blurry.”

*(Address the person who is thinking of the name and location.)*

**You:** “Hold your hands out in front of you. See here, in your hands, the memory of this person. You and them, together. Hear the sounds, see the environment. Is this a restaurant?”

**Anna:** “No.”

**You:** “That’s quite alright, I’ll try again in a moment, but first I’d like to attempt something else and tell a story.”

**You:** “Everyone here thought of a person in the forest stream. I would now like for everyone here to think of a place which is important to you. It could be a city, a school, a national park, perhaps a country. You (*Address someone*), you have a place in mind, yes? See this place in the air between us. See the birds in the sky, you feel the soft ground underfoot. (*Write something on a pad, keeping it towards yourself*) What location are you thinking of?”

**Them:** “Colorado.”

*(Turn your pad around to reveal “Colorado”)*

*(Take the applause.)*

**You:** “Oftentimes, my dreams leave me with only the memory of the emotions I felt in the dream, without the memory of the events. But every now and then, I can vividly remember the details of the dream. I remember looking standing in a dark room. I approached the wall and saw myself in a mirror, but as I grew closer to the mirror, the reflection in the mirror began to change into a grand concert hall. I turned around, and the once-dark and bare room had changed into a perfect reflection of what I saw in the mirror. I turned back to look at the mirror, but it was gone, replaced by rows of empty seats. On the stage, there was a single piano. There was faint music, and as I stepped closer, I saw a ghostly hand playing the keys. I sat down on the end of the piano bench and listened, in sadness, as the ghost played, ever in darkness, ever alone. The music grew faster, frustrated, angered, and then lonesome. I awoke that night in tears. I cannot describe the sorrow which hung in the hall.”

*(Pick up a pad and write “505” on the left half. Address the person who added the numbers together.)*

**You:** “You have a number in mind, is it five-hundred and five?”

**Them:** “No.”

**You:** “Remember the story? I looked into a mirror to see the concert hall. What was the number?”

**Them:** “202.”

*(Pick up a mirror, hold it perpendicular to the pad, and show that “505” mirrored, becomes “202”)*

*(Turn towards the person who is thinking of the image and pick up your drawing pad.)*

**You:** “I believe what you’re seeing on this canvas is a picture of a man. He is lying down. Are his eyes open or closed?”

**Mark:** “Closed.”

**You:** “Closed, as he dreams of what the future may bring.”

*(Sketch some more on the pad and hand it face-down to Mark.)*

**You:** “I feel like this is close to the picture you held in your mind. Turn it over.”

*(He does so, and it is a very good replica of what he saw in the book.)*

*(Turn to the person who is thinking of the name and location.)*

**You:** “I tried once and was not able to see, but I would like to try again. I think what happened last time was that I was too focused on trying to see where you were. I should have focused on the person you were with. Once again, cup your hands and look into this environment, and see yourself with this person (*hold your hand about 12 inches over their hands*)... This is a woman, she’s very dear to you. Her name is.... (*Take your pad and write something, keeping it turned towards you. Give the pad to Anna, still face-down.*) What is her relation to you? And what is her name?”

**Anna:** “She’s my grandmother. And her name is Carol.”

**You:** “Turn that over.”

*(She turns it over, and the pad reads: “Carol”.)*

**You:** “Our minds are home to the infinite vastness of imagination, and where there is imagination, there lies possibility. When we were children, we dreamt of worlds beyond this one, of powers and forces beyond reality. This realm of

memory – *(Stop mid-sentence and get a calculator. Hand it to the person who previously added up the other numbers.)*

*(Address that person)*

**You:** “The number you had in mind, it was 202, right?”

**Them:** “Yes.”

*(Address Mark)*

**You:** “What was the page number you stopped at?”

**Mark:** “116”

*(Address the person with the calculator)*

**You:** “Enter 202 and multiply it by 116, what’s the answer?”

**Them:** “Twenty-three thousand, four-hundred and thirty-two.”

**You:** “23,432. 2, 3, 4, 3, 2... *(Sit down at the piano)* In the key of C, the second note is D, the third note is E, and the fourth note is F. 2, 3, 4, 3, 2 – D, E, F, E, D.

*(Play these three notes on the piano, and they form the same melody you played at the beginning of the performance!)*

*(Let that sink in.)*

**You:** “This realm of memory, and of dream, is where we have ventured together. Thank you, and goodnight.”

## From Beyond – Method

*“From Beyond” was inspired by a couple lines from this song: “Blood of the Free”, by the band: Eternum. Those lines are: “I hear the voices of the past, the ghosts sing to me.” A little from Charles de Lint’s novel: “Memory and Dream”, and from a dream I once had.*

### A Note on Presentation

Due to the “modular” construction of this piece, it is very possible (and possibly preferable to some performers) to perform each section in a more linear fashion. Rather than switching around between sections (as was described in the performance), one could start and finish one section, before moving onto the next. This was recommended to me by a reader, and I decided to include it, so as to clarify that this routine can be adapted to different performing styles.

Also, with regards to the “numbers-to-notes” at the end: This can be done nearly the same with a visual representation of the keyboard. I perform in an area where everyone and their dog play an instrument, or at least has a basic understanding of music theory. But I understand that not everyone has such an audience. A large sheet of paper with a diagram of one octave of the keyboard, and each note labeled and numbered should clear up any confusion as to which notes correspond to the revealed numbers.

And as an alternative ending, a prediction of the final number could be placed inside an envelope, set on the piano, and used as the final reveal. The finishing of the sequence: D, E, F, E, D, can be used as a piece to conclude the entire performance.

## Introduction

This is an interesting routine, and it helps to have some knowledge of music. But that is not required. This is best performed with access to a piano or another keyboard type instrument (such as a marimba or vibraphone). This can also be done with staff paper, if you don't have access to an instrument.

The premise is that our lives and choices tend to follow a pattern, which appears random, but on closer inspection, is divivable and undeniably beautiful. This pattern can be uncovered and modeled in mathematics, Nature, and art – and in this case, music.

This, is what I would refer to as a “module routine”, as it is a routine itself, but also is something which can be broken into parts and inserted into an existing act.

For anyone who does not have any background in music, the rest of the introduction contains everything you'll need to know to perform this.

- First, some definitions:
  - Staff: The lines used as the surface to write music on
  - Note: a single pitch
  - Scale: a series of notes following a pattern, played in an ascending/descending manner
  - Whole Step: the distance between two full notes
  - Half Step: the distance between one note and the note which lies between it and the next – easier to describe with a piano

Please note: The camera I am using doesn't like to handle resonance very well, so the below videos are not going to be easy on the ears. It's not bad until I start playing more than one note at a time, so it might be a good idea to turn your volume down a little before clicking on the links.

Due to the nature of music, it is much easier to explain this with video or audio, so here is a link to a short video I made about the barebones of music theory:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wTh3-NoKEGo>

Here is a video of the piano part I use for the performance. Do realize, I tend to get a bit carried away when playing by myself (with no audience):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wqNpoBgbhp0>

And here is an alternate piece I use:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QQ097BesRqE>

How are we forcing the melody? We model the notes as numbers and force the numbers. The numbers need to be shown to have some significance to the presentation. The numbers are determined by relating notes of the scale to numbers 1 – 8 (or 1 – 13, if using a chromatic scale). The numbers/notes in the presentation section are the ones I use, so if you want to make your own melody to force, then here's how you do it:

- Create a melody
- Figure out what key it is in
- Relate each note to the corresponding position in the scale for that key
- Line up all those numbers, and find the divisors of the number
- Force those divisors.

For example, if you wanted to use the notes: C, G, E, F, D, you would:

- Determine the key you're playing in (C Major, A minor, or F Major), but for now, we'll call it C Major.
- Each note has value: C=1, G=5, E=3, F=4, D=2
- Full number becomes: 15342
- Divisors are: 1, 2, 3, 6, 2557, 5114, 7671, and 15342
  - o 1 x 15342, 2 x 7671, 3 x 5114, 6 x 2557
- Choose a combination of two easily force-able numbers (say: 3 and 5114), and force those.
- Here is a tool for determining the factors, divisors, and special properties of any number: <http://4687.ru.numberempire.com/5114>

Now you know how to get the ending number. This leads us to the process of forcing the divisors. In the presentation, I say I am using the key of C... technically, I'm in the key of D minor, but no one needs to know that. I use this because if I make "D" the 1<sup>st</sup> note of the scale, then the end number will be odd, making the factors more difficult to force (if any factors, as the number may be prime). In short, I like to ensure the number is even, so I adjust what key *I say I'm playing in*, in order to make the end result an even number.

The numbers can be forced any *number* of ways (no pun intended). A book force, or a switching bag, or the "add-a-number" force, or weighted dice, etc., will work.

In the case of using D, E, F, E, D as the final reveal, I say I'm playing in the key of C (again, I'm actually using D minor, but that's irrelevant). In C Major, D=2, E=3, and F=4, thus the number I need to force is: 23,432. I choose to use the divisors: 116 and 202. This is because they are both relatively low numbers, and if you look at the list of divisors, a few of them are palindromes (same sequence backwards and forwards; such as the words "level" and "radar"), or have repeating digits (2929, 5858). Given that the final number is also a palindrome, I don't want to raise suspicion by forcing two other palindromes, or obviously patterned numbers, multiplying them together, and resulting in another obvious pattern.

Thus, I use 116 and 202, or 58 and 404. These are both easy enough to force, as was seen in the presentation section. One comes from a book test, and the other comes from an "add-a-number" section.

This is really all you need to know, as we are not dealing with much more than forcing a few notes, which compliment the harmony (and partial melody) presented at the beginning.

## **Materials:**

- A keyboard instrument (or staff paper)
- Sharpie
- Stack of billets
- Box
- Pencil
- Drawing pad (spiral bound is best)
- Book
- Calculator
- Note card
- Mirror (optional)

## **Pre-show: Location Guess**

You'll need to pre-show someone and ask them to write down a place they are fond of. Peek what they wrote, return the paper to them, try to read their mind, and intentionally fail. Ask them if you could try again later. In the official performance, you are simply taking a second run at what you tried earlier.

- The peek can be done by using the Acidus Novus Peek or an impression pad. Either way, they need to receive the paper they wrote on, so they cannot think that you simply looked at it before starting the performance.

## Piano Introduction

The presentation (at least for me) starts with a loosely-structured introduction on the piano, ending with this pattern of notes: D, E, F, E... And almost hitting the last “D” key. I do this because the ear is trained to *want* that last note. In music theory, this is called the “resolution”. The previous notes *lead into* the last note, but it doesn’t come until the end of the presentation. This “delay of resolution” gives us a really interesting effect: If you play these notes in succession, you’ll *feel* in your mind what the last note should be, and that makes the reveal at the end of the performance very powerful, since the audiences’ minds have already tried filling in the last note.

After the introduction on piano, and the unresolved phrase, stand from the piano bench and approach the audience, either sitting again or standing, depending on your venue. The piano is not touched again until the very end of your performance.

## Drawing Duplication Part 1

The book I use is called: “Castles” by Alan Lee. It is a nice combination of illustrations and the legends which inspired them. The reason for using a book test is: we can force a number AND do a drawing duplication/word guess. I like for things to have multiple (and interesting) purposes. Rather than simply using the book as a number force, and revealing the number, we use it as an image force, and the page number is mentioned as a side note – a side note which becomes significant later on. It’s the little things. Such is life.

The action of forcing the page is done by holding a break at the bottom of the pages, and riffling through the top corners of the pages, much like how the riffle force is done with a deck of cards, only we are using both hands and the book is vertical rather than horizontal.

The image on the page 116 of “Castles” is of a drawing of a man’s head, as he is lying down. The drawing stretches over two pages (even numbers are always on the left page, and odd numbers are on the right), and there is no text on 116. Since I am aware of the contents of that page, it is easy to duplicate the drawing (obviously), but as a convincer, I like to add the line: “*Remember any word on this page, or if there is a picture which stands out to you, remember that picture.*” This solidifies the deception that we don’t have any idea what might be on the page.

Once they have the image in mind, start to close the book, and then open it quickly, while saying: “*Oh, and remember the page number too.*” Close the book, and offer

them a billet and pen, while saying: “*You can write it down if you’d like.*” The act of them writing it down is so they don’t forget the number. It is crucial for this number to be remembered; otherwise the final reveal will not work.

We now start “staggering” the pieces of the performance. This is something which is common when it comes to bringing something full-circle, but not during the body of the performance (See the chapter “**Layering**” for more detail on why I do this). Once the participant has remembered the image and the page number, we move onto the second piece, which is a name and location guess.

## **Name and Location Part 1**

Have a person write the name of someone who is very close to them, as well as a word which describes a place they spent time together. This is done on the back of a billet. Once they have written this, replace the billet in the stack of other billets, control it to the bottom, and peek it as you place the stack into a box.

## **Drawing Duplication Part 2**

After this preparation, turn to the person who is thinking about the image in the book. Ask them to close their eyes and imagine seeing the book open to a blank page, and they re-create the image/word on the page. And you very vaguely discern that it is an image they are seeing, not a single word.

## **Significant Numbers Part 1**

After the vague guess of the image, we move onto the second number force, which uses an “Add-a-Number” force from Anneman’s 202 Methods of Forcing. This is a truly brilliant force, which allows for any number (usually 2 or more digits) to be forced, under the guise of having a number randomly generated. A paper is handed to one person and they are told to write 2 digit number, the paper is passed to the next person, and they write a 2 digit number directly above or below the first. This continues a couple more times until you have a few 2 digit numbers written in a column. You then take the paper back, switch it for a prepared one, and hand the prepared one to a different person for them to add up. They record the total, and the paper is destroyed. Naturally, the sum is whatever number you wish to force.

- When forcing a 3 digit number, it is good to tell the people to write 2 digit numbers. This is because you do not want someone to write a number which is greater than the number you are forcing.
  - o For instance, if you are forcing “200”, and someone writes “210”, then after adding up the numbers, the total should be *at*

least “210”, but it isn’t, so there is a discrepancy. And this will be noticed.

- The last person to write a number is the only person who sees what everyone else wrote, but since they do not know what comes next, they will not be able to memorize, recall, total, and verify the sum after the paper has been switched, so there is no need to worry about anyone questioning the result.
- On the prepared note card, be sure that the numbers are written in different handwriting styles. This is important. If the person adding the numbers sees 4 or 5 numbers all written in the same style, it will raise suspicion.

These numbers are derived from “significant numbers in their lives”, this could be an age of a loved one, their age, the day of the month they were born, a lucky number, etc. It is better if the numbers should have some kind of meaning to the person.

### **Drawing Duplication Part 3**

After the number “202” is forced, we move back the drawing duplication section and attempt to divine the image they are thinking of. I like to have something roughly sketched in preparation, as this makes it much easier (and quicker) to finish this section. Trying to sketch a person’s head from scratch, in front of an audience, at a strange angle, is rather difficult.

Pick up a drawing/sketch pad and turn to the person who is thinking of the image from the book. Ask them: “*Could you now imagine seeing a large white canvas floating between us?*” They say “Yes”, and you now ask them to imagine drawing the image or writing the word across the canvas. Tell them to make the lines exactly as they envision it in their minds. You are mimicking the movements in the air, according to what the picture is. In this case, they are imagining a man’s head, viewed from the side, with the face pointing upwards, so you will “draw in the air” the outline of a man’s head, and then scribble on the sketch pad. Alternate between drawing in the air (as they are imagining the image on the canvas, you are invisibly drawing it on the canvas), and physically drawing on the paper. Show no one the paper yet, we’re not ready to do the reveal.

### **Name and Location Part 2**

Set the pad face-down, and turn to the person who is thinking of the name and location. Ask them to go back to a time when they were with this person, to

imagine the sights and sounds, to hear their voice and feel the air. Tell them to cup their hands and imagine looking down on themselves, with this person. Hold your hand over theirs, close your eyes, and wait for a few heartbeats, and then move back, open your eyes, and say: “were you sitting in a diner?” Or some other location which was not what they wrote on the billet. Example, if they wrote, “park”, say something other than “park”.

- This is the “miss” section – The section where you are intentionally wrong in order to give credibility to the whole performance. I stress this quite a lot in my other works, and I’ll say it here as well: Getting stuff wrong is okay. When you get something wrong, it gives the feel of “if there was a trick to this, they would have gotten it right.” But since you were incorrect in the reveal, then it clearly was not a trick, which makes everything else look even better, now that everyone knows for certain that you can be wrong. Put effort into the performance of the reveal, even with the knowledge that you will intentionally fail.
- You are also preventing the thought that you may have seen the billet. After all, if you had seen what they wrote, how did you get this incorrect? Intentionally missing the location makes the idea of “seeing what they wrote” impossible.

## **Location Guess (from pre-show)**

You now address the entire audience and ask them to all think of a significant location. Gesture to the person you pre-showed, and follow the process described in the performance section. This is a guaranteed hit, and wraps up the first half of performance, before moving onto the series of reveals. It also serves as a moment of resolution amidst the “set up” sections.

## **Interlude**

We now move into the “story” section. You may tell whatever story you wish, but it needs to be powerful, memorable, and relate to some aspect of the performance thus far. The story of dreaming of looking into a mirror and seeing myself in the empty concert hall with a single piano at center stage with a ghostly hand lightly and sadly playing the music, is the story I like to use. Reason being: It ties in nicely with the piano music at the beginning, and the theme of memory and dream being recalled and manifested into reality. And also because this really is a dream I had about a year ago, only difference was: I was playing the piano.

## Significant Numbers Part 2

Address the person who has the summation of the significant numbers. Ask them to picture the number on an invisible canvas, as was done earlier with the image. Put your hand out, as if to touch the numbers, and say: *“505. The number is 505.”* They will say *“No”*. Pause, and say: *“Wait, remember the story? I looked into a mirror to see the ghost in the concert hall.”* Pull out a sheet of paper from the pad, and write the number “505” on the left-hand side of the page. Draw a vertical line down the middle (dividing the page in half), and say: *“What is the number?”* “202”. *“If we mirror this....”* Write “202” on the right half of the page.

- If you have a mirror on hand, hold it against the page, so the person can see the reflection.
- Write the “505” kind of sloppy, so the backwards “5’s” look like “2’s”.
- If the number you are forcing doesn’t mirror well, it could just as easily be turned upside down.
  - o For instance, “261” rotated upside down looks like “192”.
  - o Instead of being a perfect mirror of the form of the numbers, you could simply mirror the order of the numbers. Example: the number they are thinking of is: “123”. You guess: “321”, and use the mirroring method to change the order to “123”.

## Drawing Duplication Part 4

Take your applause. Come back to the person who has the imaginary canvas in front of them. Pick up your pad, and “fill in” the details. Address the person: *“I feel like you’re imagining a person, a man. Do you remember if his eyes were open or closed?”* It doesn’t matter what they say, you respond with either: *“Open, looking into the future, even as the body dies.”* OR *“Closed, as he dreams of what the future may hold.”* I use lines like this, not to serve a direct and specific purpose, but to introduce another layer of mystery. Hand the pad to them (face-down), and ask that they make the image bright and vivid in their minds. When they are ready, they are to turn the pad face-up. Your drawing will be a pretty good replica of what they imagined.

## Name and Location Part 3

Address the person who was part of the “name and location” section. Say: *“I tried once and was not able to see, but I would like to try again. I think what happened last time was that I was too focused on trying to see where you were. I should have focused on the person you were with.”* Repeat the process as described above. Take your pad of paper and write the name of the person. Keep it face-down and

hand it to them. Ask them what the name was, and after they say it, have them turn the pad around to reveal that you correctly divined the name.

## **Piano Conclusion**

After the moment has passed, say: *“Our minds are home to the infinite vastness of imagination, and where there is imagination, there lies possibility. When we were children, we dreamt of worlds beyond this one, of powers and forces beyond reality. This realm of memory...”* Pause immediately after “of memory”, and turn to the person who recorded the “add-a-number” result, and say: *“It was 202, correct?”* They reply: “Yes”. And now turn to the person who was forced the book page. Ask: *“What was the page number you chose?”* They will say: “116”. Pull out a calculator and ask someone to multiply those two numbers together, resulting in “23,432”.

Say: *“23,432... 2, 3, 4, 3, 2... In the key of C, the second note is D, the third note is E, the fourth note is F. 2, 3, 4, 3, 2... D, E, F, E, D.”* Approach the piano, and play the notes D, E, F, E, D. This completes the memory from the beginning, where we used the leading tones to “create” the *feeling* of a pitch in the minds of the audience.

## **Additional Idea 1:**

If you are reasonably good at playing piano, you can force a composer at the beginning, say Beethoven, and then force numbers which multiply to: 334,554. When played on an instrument, in the key of C Major, this pattern is his piece “Ode to Joy”. And then after you have played the full melody at the end, have the person reveal the composer you forced, which is the person who composed the music almost 200 years ago. This is an interesting way of using an event which happened a *long time ago* as a “reveal”.

## **Additional Idea 2:**

If you do not have access to an instrument, you can very well do something similar, only using staff paper.

This requires a method of forcing a name. You could use a switching bag, a music book, a stack of billets with a different composer’s name on each, a stack of blank cards with a name on each, etc.

- Force the composer of a really old piece of music (Beethoven, Mozart, etc.), but do not let anyone see which composer was chosen, and have that piece of music (as well as compositions from the other composers) on hand, either in a folder or binder.
- Throughout the performance, force numbers which correlate to the first or last several notes of the piece.
- Towards the end, take a blank sheet of staff paper and write the corresponding notes on the staff.
- Pull out your binder/folder of sheet music, and turn to the “forced” composer’s page.
- Show that the notes which were written are identical to the original composition.
- Finally, point out the composer on the sheet music, and ask for the person who is holding the forced card to reveal the composer.

The middle section of the performance remains the same, and the only part which changes is the format of the beginning and ending.

For example:

- Use a stack of billets (with a different composer written on each), to force “Beethoven”.
- Force these numbers throughout the performance: 1221 and 274
  - o 1221 can come from the “Add-a-Number” section
  - o 274 can be from a book test. The book obviously needs to have more than 274 pages.
- Multiply the numbers together to get: 334554
- Write the notes “E, E, F, G, G, F” on the staff
- Pull out four folder of music, and show that these are the first 6 notes of “Ode to Joy”.



- Point out that Ludwig Van Beethoven was the composer.
- Ask the person from the very beginning to reveal which composer was chosen from the stack of billets.

### **Additional Idea 3:**

For the “name and location” section, you *can* ask for them to think of the name of someone who has passed. This needs to be handled with great care. Rather than putting someone on the spot and asking them to think of someone who has died, something which can be done is to “pre-show” them... I don’t mean this in the usual pre-show sense:

- Find someone before the performance, and jump into conversation with them. At some point, say to them: “Memories are often made stronger if there are deep emotional ties, which makes them stand out amongst others. Later, during the performance, I will ask everyone in the audience to think of a person they know who is no longer with us. I would like to try an experiment in seeing memories, and memories of the deceased are very powerful. Would it be okay if I called upon you to participate in this section of the performance?”
  - This section is *EXTREMELY IMPORTANT*, because you need to establish *good* rapport with someone before you start asking questions about deceased loved ones.
  - If they say “yes”, thank them generously, and continue.
  - If they say “no”, then accept that, continue conversation, and try with someone else.
    - If that someone else also says “no”, it’s alright. You don’t have to use a deceased person’s name.

If you manage to get someone who doesn’t mind taking part in that section of the performance, then you slightly change your script once you reach that section. You are going to address the entire audience and say: “*This realm of memory contains rivers which ebb and flow through time, of time as we now experience it, but also of times to come, and times past. Would everyone close your eyes, and stand on the shore of a forest stream. Hear the birds in the trees, and the soft earth beneath your feet. Look now into the running waters, and see a single person, a person you knew, a person who is no longer with us. See their face, their eyes, and their smile. Think of a time when you and this person spent time together. See this in the waters. The water will ever run, but allow yourself this moment of memory... Slowly open your eyes. (Once everyone is looking at you, slowly close your eyes and bow your head.) Anna... Is Anna here?*”

- Say the name of the pre-showed person twice, the first time with a pause. This is because there is a chance that *somebody* was thinking of a deceased person named “Anna”. It’s an opportunity for a really good hit.
  - If someone was thinking of a person named “Anna”, you will likely get a reaction. At this point, you cannot call on *the pre-showed Anna* if you want to keep the hit. So to circumvent this, wait for the reaction to be over, and then gesture towards the pre-showed Anna, and continue.
  - If there is no reaction after saying “*Anna*” the first time, then continue with “*Is Anna here?*”

**You (Addressing Anna):** “Would you be okay with participating? No one else will know the name of the person if you don’t want them to.”

Continue as normal, until the revelation part comes: Ask them if they are comfortable sharing the name of the loved one with everyone. If so, then have them say the name. If not, then simply have them turn the pad over and look at the name. Either way, you will get a *deep and powerful* reaction, and the audience will know by their reaction that you correctly divined the name.

### **Note 1:**

If you choose to use **Additional Idea 3**, then switch the revelation of the drawing and the revelation of the name. So the revelation of the name comes first, followed by the drawing duplication. Reason being: there is a definite chance that the person will not want to tell the whole audience the name of their deceased loved one. If that is the case, *you don’t want to end on that note*. From a showmanship perspective, this is not the kind of finishing moment you want to have. It’s better to finish on a high note, and something which can be built up to a climax moment... and it is inappropriate to use a memory of a deceased person as the climax of the performance.

In short, if you use a deceased person for the “name and location” phase, then make that phase the second-to-last reveal of the performance.

### **Note 2:**

You could, if you’d like, make the piano reveal the second-to-last reveal, with the name reveal or the drawing duplication the finisher. Personally, I like to have a big

climax, and then a quieter “simmering” at the end. But if you don’t want to end on a quiet note (pun intended), then use one of the other phases as the conclusion.

## **Final Thoughts**

There is quite a lot happening here, so I highly suggest that you read this a couple times in order to get a good feel for the little nuances of the act.

The music aspect to this is not something which is normally seen in magic, except with regards to background music or choreography. There are loads of new effects which are “visual”, but really only play to the sense of sight. We have five senses, what about the other four?

Jerome Finley has a really nice touch in one of his acts, which utilizes the sense of smell, and turns it into a magical moment. Bill Montana has a ton of work relating to “mystic energies”. There are other senses we can cater to, and I have found that using music is a particularly powerful element to build magic around.

## Layering

This is not an effect, or method, but rather some notes on structuring. It's something I started thinking about when listening to a song called: "Sons of Winter and Stars" by the band "Wintersun". They are notorious for creating ridiculously intricate, beautiful, and intense music. The melodies are often simple, the drums are fast, and the lyrics are poetic and thought-provoking. But something which sets them apart from many other bands is the underlying sounds which weave in and out of the 'featured' parts.

Can be listened to here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=alo7A0NLmxU>

For instance, at the 1:55 mark, there are several parts being played at once:

- The harsh vocals are featured
- The drums forming the 'base' or the 'low end' of the pitches
- One guitar is continuing a melody from the previous section
- Another guitar is continuing a harmony
- The synthesizer is providing "whooshing" effects to punctuate the accents
- And there's an underlying female vocal in the background

There is more going on, but those are the main points. Altogether, the music has a very distinct feel, in being highly complex and coordinated, yet elegant in how each part contributes to the whole.

Or at the 2:35 mark, the bass guitar leads with a sixteenth note pattern, and the double-bass steps in to reinforce the bass, and the toms are added in for some variation in sound a couple bars later. And then the guitar riff from 1:46 and 2:08 is picked up again by the low-pitch instruments at 2:56.

The "hidden" patterns from some parts pop up here and there throughout the entire song, and this is what I mean by having "sounds weave in and out" through the song.

Getting back to magic.... As talked about in the "**Geometric Design**" chapter, most magic and mentalism acts have a central theme, but a very linear performance. Meaning, one idea is presented at the beginning and revived at the end. But each piece between the beginning and end has a "one event after another" feel. They have a very "pop music" feel, in that the drums cover the beat, the lead guitar

covers the melody, the bass covers the harmony, and the singer sings... and none of those things step out of their assigned roles.

I like to structure routines with a “Wintersun” style, where there are multiple parts in progress at the same time, where phases are oddly reminiscent of each other, where phrases have identical wordings yet different meanings, one piece has started before another has finished, and where an inherent beauty is established, while maintaining an obvious intricacy of time.

# Atlantix

Inspired by Stephen King's book "Hearts in Atlantis"

*"You know when you're young, you have moments of such happiness, you think you're living in someplace magical... like Atlantis must have been. Then we grow up and our hearts break in two."*

- Ted

## Performance

**You:** " 'Nelle tenebre eterne, in caldo e in gelo.' 'Into eternal darkness, into fire and into ice.' Dante's *'Inferno'*, chapter 87."

*(Pause)*

**You:** "Welcome! Tonight we will explore realms of myth, and memories past. But first, I would like all of you to set your hands in your lap and close your eyes. See yourself standing on the shore of a forest stream. Hear the birds in the trees, and the soft earth beneath your feet. Look now into the running waters, and see a ring of light form on the bottom of the stream. See it slowly rise to the surface, growing larger and brighter. The water inside the ring begins to vanish, and now as you look into this ring, you see yourself as a child again. See your eyes, your hair and your smile. See a memory you had as a child, a time that you remember fondly. It could be a birthday party, or when you first rode a bike, or simply a moment where you experienced pure happiness. See this moment in the waters... *(pause)* Now watch as the ring of light begins fade, sinking down to the bottom of the stream, and the light is swept away by the waters. Open your eyes."

**You:** "I would like everyone to think of word or two which describe that memory. **Some of you may have thought of something earlier...** For instance, if you thought of a birthday party, then perhaps the words "birthday party", or if there was a person involved, perhaps think of their name. We are going to try something in the transfer and transformation of memory."

*(Move towards someone in the audience)*

**You:** *(Addressing that person)* "What is your name?"

**Them:** “Alondra.”

**You:** “Okay, Alondra, could you please hold out your hand, palm facing up?”

**Alondra:** “Yes.” (*They do so.*)

(*Hold your hand above theirs.*)

**You:** “A single touch, of... I feel something, is it a person?”

**Alondra:** “Yes.”

**You:** “This person, I cannot quite hear their name. Is it ‘Valerie’?”

**Alondra:** “No.”

**You:** “Hmm. We’ll try again later.”

**You:** (*Address the audience.*) “Here I have several cards, made from the wood of an Ochroma Tree, from Brazil. Each card has a different symbol on it. I will need a volunteer. You sir, what is your name?”

**Them:** “Jacob.”

**You:** “Pleased to meet you, Jacob. If you could, mix these cards, gently, and lay them out in a circle, face-down. Neither you, nor I, nor anyone can see which cards are where.”

**Jacob:** (*He does so.*)

**You:** “Excellent. Now hold your hand about here (*a few inches above the cards*), and slowly move it around the circle... and let it stop moving when it feels right.”

**Jacob:** (*He stops over a card.*)

**You:** “Did that feel like the correct card to stop over? Did you feel any sort of vibration or odd sensation over that card?”

**Jacob:** “No, it just felt like I should stop there.”

**You:** “Very well. Do not look at it, but take that card and place it in your pocket. Thank you Jacob!”

**You:** “These pieces may thus far seem disconnected, but I assure you, I am confident that a pattern will be revealed. Many of our fondest memories are likely from our childhood, though as we grow older, these times become distant. But must we leave this behind?

Are we to leave the homes of our spirit?  
This cradle of our glory, this soft clime,  
This calm luxuriance of blissful light,  
These crystalline pavilions, and pure fanes  
Of all our lucent empire?”

*(Pause)*

**You:** *(Hand a slip of paper to an audience member.)* “If you could, please write the word you were thinking of earlier, the one which relates to your memory. And then fold the paper.”

*(They write on and fold the paper.)*

**You:** “The memory is held close for some time, then locked away until called again. Yet as we grow older, the light of childhood begins to fade, and when we look back on these times, we cherish the pure joy of memory, of the time of dreams.”

*(Take the paper, place it in the box, and close the lid.)*

**You:** “But these times need not be lost forever. These crystalline pavilions, and pure fanes of all our lucent empire may be revealed.”

*(Wave your hand of the box, open it, and reveal the billet has turned to a crystal)*

*(Remove the crystal and place it in their palm. Hold your hand over the crystal.)*

**You:** “In your thoughts... were you sitting?”

**Them:** “Yes.”

**You:** “On a park bench?”

**Them:** “Yes, I was.”

**You:** “Thank you.”

*(Pick up a sheet of stained paper and read it aloud.)*

**You:** “And the island of Atlantis disappeared in the depths of the sea... these are the words of Plato, in his account of the splendors and glory of the lost realm of Atlantis.”

**You:** *(Addressing the person who holds the crystal.)* “Tell me, do you see any shapes or patterns formed by the words?”

*(Many of the letters vanish, leaving only a triangle formed by the remaining letters. They will react to this.)*

**Them:** “Yes, there is a triangle.”

**You:** “A triangle? Jacob, earlier you chose a card from several others. It felt like the right card to you. Please take it out and tell us what symbol is on the card.”

**Jacob:** “It is a triangle!”

*(Let them have that moment.)*

**You:** *(Address Alondra, from the beginning.)* “I’m going to try to see her name once more. If you could, please hold out your hand again.”

*(Hold your hand a few inches above theirs.)*

**You:** “A single touch of memory, from one heart to another...”

*(Alondra will react as she feels a slight touch on her palm, even though you do not touch her.)*

*(Get a drawing pad and marker, and write something on the pad, holding it so no one can see. Hand it to Alondra, writing side down.)*

**You:** “This is the name of a person, someone special to you. Could you please say the name out loud?”

**Alondra:** “Vivian.”

**You:** “This is incredible, take a look *(gesture towards the pad)*.”

**Alondra:** *(They turn it over, and it says “Vivian”).*

*(Take your applause.)*

**You:** “ ‘Into eternal darkness, into fire and into ice.’ The realm of Atlantis fell, passing through legend and into myth. But though it has passed, the memory still lives – A place of wonder, a cradle of glory, the home of our spirit, a time of magic. Thank you, and goodnight.”

## Atlantis – Method

### Introduction

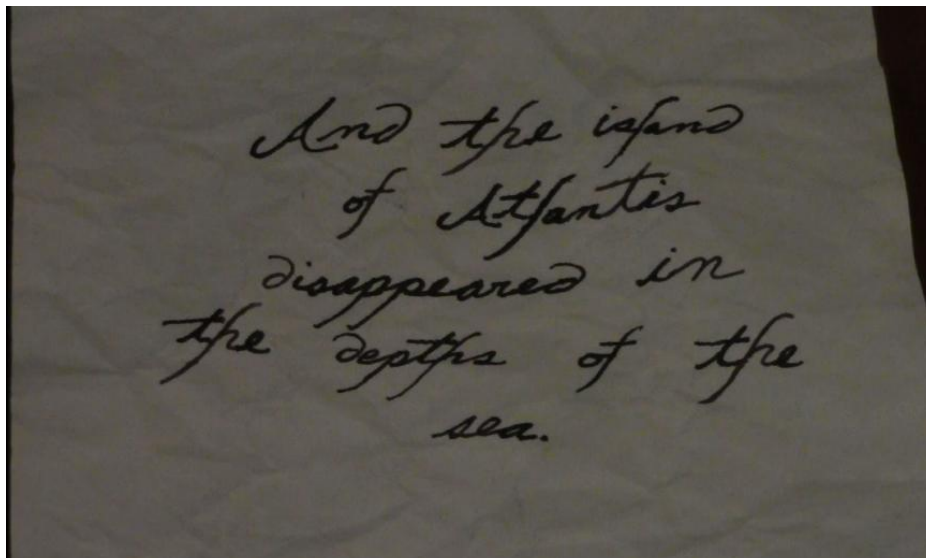
There are a few magic moments in this routine, wherein the memory is transformed into a crystal and then transferred to you by almost touching the crystal, the revelation of the triangle in the text, and the invisible touch at the end.

### Materials

- Invisible thread loop
- Switching box (if you don't have one, I will teach how to make the one I use at the end of the explanation)
- Billet
- Pencil
- Crystal
- Candle
- Cards (could be blank-face playing cards, or homemade wooden cards) or engraved stones – rose quartz looks really nice
- Stained paper
- FriXion Pen
- Regular pen
- Drawing pad

### Setup

The sheet of paper with Plato's writing on it looks like this:



Some of the letters have been written in FriXion Pen. Here is a typed version, and the bold letters are the ones which are done in regular ink, while the regular letters are written in FriXion Pen:

And **the** island  
of Atlantis  
**disappeared in**  
the depths of the sea.

Here is a link to the whole text, if you would like to read it: <http://sacred-texts.com/cla/plato/critias.htm>

The box (if you are using the one I use), goes on a table/surface. It is open, and has the paper covering part of the lid.



The loop of invisible thread gets double-looped around one wrist, like this:



Or like this:



The candle can be lit at the beginning of the performance, or you may light it while someone is laying the cards in a circle.

## Pre-Show

As in “**From Beyond**”, you will need to pre-show someone. This is easily done by following the same sort of procedure that you will later follow with the entire audience. Ask them to think of the forest stream, and a memory, and a word which represents that memory. The word is written on a slip of paper, and you obtain it through a peek (again, I really like Millard Longman’s Acidus Novus Peek). Another good one is Larry Becker’s “Sneak Thief” peek.

Anyway, obtain the name, using your preferred method. Follow the same steps as you will later, in having them hold out their hand, and you hold your hand above theirs. Incorrectly guess the name.

Tell them: *“That’s okay, hang onto that memory and the word, and I’ll try again later during the show.”*

## The Start

As an introduction, I recite the excerpt from Dante’s *Inferno*, first in Italian, then in English. This phrase will come into play again later.

## Forest Stream

To begin, I like to have everyone in the audience follow a “guided meditation”. This was used in Volume 1, and I use it in multiple routines (it’s used in “**From Beyond**”, as well). Mostly because it sets the mood, and it gets everyone to focus on the experience of magic, rather than thinking about the next day at work, or projects they’re working on, etc. The “forest stream” story is, I have found, very relaxing and accomplishes both these purposes.

- There is another, more subtle reason behind using the “forest stream” introduction: it *feels* like how magic should feel. Thinking of Nature has a certain power, in that we live in an electric age, where nearly every aspect of our lives is dictated or managed by circuitry. Nature is, to many people, an escape. As magicians, we offer the audience moments of wonder, of witnessing events which do not operate on the accepted laws of reality. To combine these moments with the thoughts of wind in the trees, birds singing, water running over rocks, is to create an experience which far surpasses the reach of most magic.

- In the presentation, the phrase: “*Some of you may have thought of something earlier...*” is a nice way of specifically addressing a single person, under the guise of referring to multiple people.
  - o This prevents the pre-showed person from changing their mind to something else, and to everyone else, it sounds as if other people may have thought of one such memory earlier in the day.

Anyway, once you have finished the introduction section, and everyone has a particular memory in mind, approach the person you pre-showed, and ask them to hold out their hand, palm facing up. You are going to place your right hand over theirs, and let it slowly descend, until it is a few inches above theirs. Say: “*A single touch, of...*” Hold this position for a couple heartbeats, say: “*I feel something, the thought of a person, but I cannot hear their name...*” say something which was similar to what they wrote on the billet, and intentionally miss the correct word.

- For example, if they wrote “John”, then you say “Jim”. If they wrote “California”, then you say “Nevada”, or if they wrote “forest”, then you say “mountains”, etc.
  - o Essentially, you are saying something which is close to (or in the same category as) the word they wrote, without being completely wrong.

Shake your head, and move back to your spot in front of the audience. This phase will be completed at the end of the presentation.

## **Force the Triangle**

### **(Psychological “Stop” Force + Equivoque)**

Ask for a volunteer, and have them join you in the front.

Take out a stack of blank-face playing cards, engraved stones, or wooden cards.

- Wooden cards can be made by staining balsa wood, and then drawing/painting/burning symbols onto them.
- Mark the card which has the symbol you want to force. In this case, mark the card which has a triangle on it.
- If using engraved stones, you will need to remember the exact shape of the one you will force. Marking stones isn’t easy, especially if you don’t want the marking to be noticeable by the participant.
- It does not really matter how many you use, as long as you have at least seven or eight.

- As a performance note, I like using the “*Ochroma Tree from Brazil*” line.... “*Ochroma pyramidale*” is the scientific word for “balsa wood”. It sounds much better than saying: “*Here I have some balsa wood cards...*” It’s a little cheeky, and serves to make the props look better, and provides a bit of amusement for the performer.

Ask the participant to mix up the stones/cards, and lay them face-down in a circle. You are looking for your marked card (or the remembered stone), and note the position.

Tell the participant to slowly move their hand around the circle, over the cards/stones. Once they are about 4 seconds away from the “triangle card”, say: “*let your hand stop when it feels right*”.

- If they stop on the marked card, then tell them to pick it up and place it in their pocket, *without looking at it*.
- If they stop one before, ask: “would you like to go forward one more?”
  - o If they say yes, then they get the force card.
  - o If they say no, then take away a few cards before the force card and repeat the process
- If they stop one after, ask: “*Did you feel any kind of vibration before that card?*”
  - o If they say yes, then take away a few of the next cards
  - o If they say no, then ask them to try it again, only this time, really feel for any sort of tingling or feeling of vibration.

The process above does not need to be memorized; it simply needs to be understood. The psychological stop force (combined with an equivocation, if needed) is a very powerful and fair method of forcing a selection.

- Essentially what is happening is you are giving them multiple opportunities to choose either an elimination point or a selection, but they don’t know which.

Once the card is forced, after a couple equivocates or a successful “stop force”, they put the card in their pocket, without looking at it.

It does not need to be a triangle, but it will need to match whatever shape you use as the revelation with the FriXion Pen.

## Reading

Continue with: “*These pieces may seem disconnected, but I assure you, each piece has a purpose...*”

This section: “*Are we to leave the homes of our spirit..... of all our lucent empire?*” It is an excerpt from the poem: ‘*Hyperion*’, by John Keats. In the context of this performance, it is symbolic of childhood memory, and our journey away from it.

## Crystal Production

Hand one person a slip of paper and ask them to write a word which directly relates to the memory they have chosen. For instance, if the memory centers on a person of importance, then write the person’s name. If it revolves around a location or event, write that.

Move towards the box, remove the sheet of paper with your right hand, and use your left fingers to cover the corner of the lid where the crystal is stored. The sheet gets set on the table next to the box. Use your right hand to take the billet from the participant, peek it, and place it in the box.

- Personally, I use Millard Longman’s Acidus Novus Peek, though some other peek or impression device will work as well.
  - o I would not recommend using a center tear or anything involving burning the billet. This is because it feels wrong to have someone write a piece of intimate information on a slip of paper, and then tear it up. It feels like it doesn’t matter – that’s the only reason anyone tears paper, is to throw it away. I do have contexts for using this, but they do not fit in this routine, and I’ve moved away from tearing billets for this reason.

Use your right and left fingers to slowly guide the lid into place, allowing the false bottom to fall from inside the lid and down into the box. This will take some practice to get the feel for.

Once the lid is closed, the false bottom is covering the billet and the crystal will appear to have taken the place of the billet.

At this point, all the moves are essentially finished. The sheet of paper already has the Frixion Marker setup, the symbol is forced, the box switch is done, and the Invisible Touch is ready to go.

Wave your hand slowly over the box, and then open it. The billet is gone, replaced by a single crystal. Take the crystal out of the box and give it to the person to keep. Before they put it away, ask, as an afterthought: “*Wait, could you hold that on your palm?*” They do so, and you hold your hand directly over theirs, about 12 inches above the crystal. Allow your hand to slowly descend until it is about 6 inches above the crystal. Once it has reached this point, softly say: “*A park bench.*” Or whatever they wrote on the billet.

## Reading

Pick up the sheet of paper, and read it aloud. After reading it, inform the audience that it is the writing of Plato, concerning the kingdom of Atlantis.

- Whether Atlantis ever existed or not is irrelevant, but what is important is the impact it has had on all who have heard the legend – legends have a tendency to push us forward, to become better than we are, by taking us back to a time of wonder and mystery.

## Triangle Revelation

Ask the person to take a look at the paper. As they do, ask if they see any patterns or shapes in the letters. While they are looking at it, hold it a bit closer to the flame, allowing the heat to vanish the ink of the FriXion Pen. Because of how the text was written, the letters which remain reveal the shape of a triangle – the shape you forced at the beginning.

They will react to the vanishing, and they will say: “Triangle”. At this point, ask the person who chose the card to reveal it for all to see, and it is indeed a triangle.

- A note on this section, if you look at the image in the setup section above, you will notice that I have arranged the words in such a way that the outline of the lines forms two overlapping triangles, similar to the Star of David. This sort of thing has not, to the best of my knowledge, been used as a force or a revelation before. But, as will be discussed in the Additional Ideas section, it provides an interesting way to either reveal a forced shape, or force a shape, using a “subconscious influence” presentation.

## Invisible Touch

Bring your hands together and un-wrap one loop of the thread from your wrist (Now the loop is hanging freely from your wrist, rather than being double-looped).

Approach the person from the beginning (the pre-showed person), and repeat the process from the beginning, in which they hold their hand out, palm up, at about

eye level. Right before the thread is about to touch them, say: “*A single touch, of memory, from one heart to another.*” Allow the thread to gently brush their skin. They will react to the feeling of the invisible touch on their hand.

Take a pad of paper, and write the word you peeked from them during the pre-show. Hold the pad face-down, and ask what word they chose to represent their memory, they say it, you reveal it, and that is the finish.

## Ending

As an optional touch, after the applause, you can re-recite the excerpt from Dante, and draw the parallel between Atlantis and childhood memories.

## Additional Idea 1

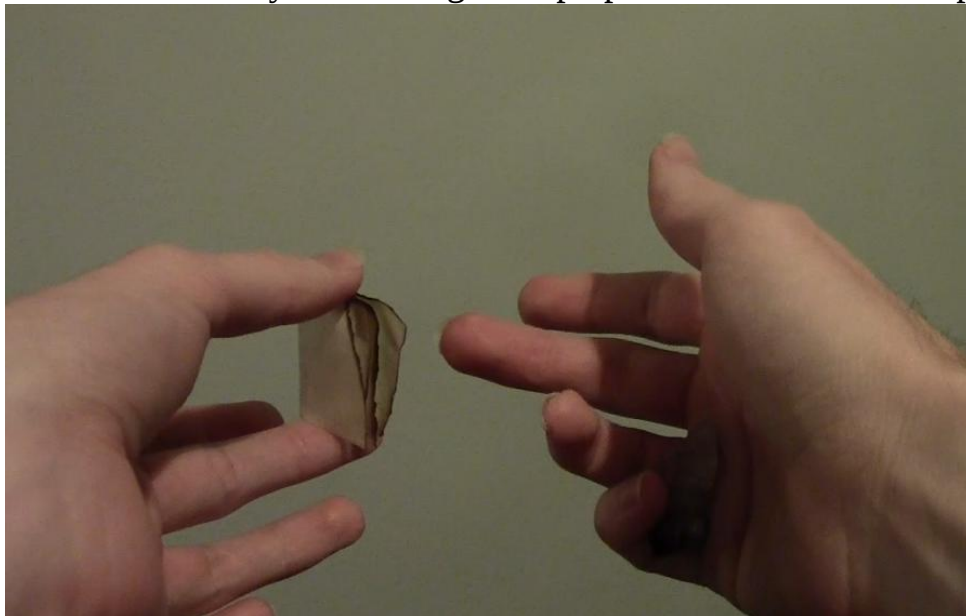
Instead of using the switching box to do the change, you could use the French Drop. This is usually reserved for coin vanishes, but it works reasonably well with billets, too. Yes, this business of changing a billet into a crystal is more on the “typical magician” side of things, and some mentalists would consider this to be blasphemy..... but..... I don’t call myself a mentalist.

- As a side note, there is a hefty amount of mystery performers who are “purists”, in that they believe schools of mystery performance should not mix – particularly in the mentalism and magic circles. I understand the reasoning for it: “magic” is largely regarded as “tricks”, and “mentalism” is regarded as “real mindreading”. To introduce a “trick” into a “real” environment is to collapse your rapport as a “real mindreader”.
  - But, I would propose, in some instances and with the right presentation, magic and mentalism can go hand-in-hand. I aim to create experiences of wonder, not ego-boosters and not solely entertainment.
  - Back to the French Drop.

The crystal goes in your right hand, held in place by your little finger. Use your right hand to take the billet from the person and peek it (again, I really like the Acidus Novus Peek, which is done one-handed).



Put the billet into your left fingers to prepare for the French Drop.



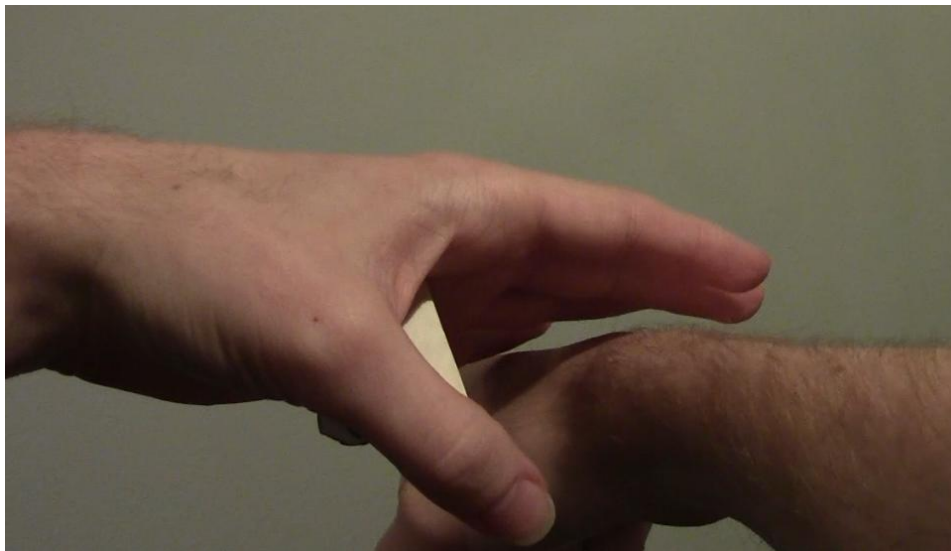
The right hand comes across, as if to take the billet, and you retain the billet in a left hand finger-palm while closing your right hand.



Point to the closed right hand with your left index finger.



Transfer the billet from finger-palm to a Tenkai Palm, in order to “open” your left hand to wave it over your closed right hand.



Now ditch the billet.

- If seated, then allow it to fall off the edge of the table, and into your lap.
- If standing, let your arm fall to your side (with the billet in finger-palm) and allow it to “swing” a bit. This is a subtlety I learned from one of Greg Wilson’s lectures. It allots for the dirty hand to be seen casually. Too often, we let our limbs get tight when we’re doing a move or trying to hide something. By letting the dirty arm do a slight swing by our side, it aids to eliminate any attention that may be drawn to the hand.
  - Now use your left hand to pick up the candle, and load the billet underneath the candle. Turn your right hand palm-up (fingers still

closed), and move the candle in a circle above the right hand. Open your hand to show the crystal. Set the candle down (with the billet underneath).

Whether seated or standing, reveal the billet has changed to a crystal.



## **Additional Idea 2 – The Pond Force**

Instead of using the FriXion marker to do the triangle reveal, use the negative space between the words of the text.

This is an interesting force of my creation, which works much the same as those “distance paintings”, where if you look at them closely, they will appear to have random specks or small, individual pictures, but if you look at them from a distance, a greater picture is revealed.

The “The Pond Force”, as I have called it, is done by taking a typed page, and inserting extra spaces between the words. These spaces form a pattern, and this pattern can be used as a force in addition to forcing one of the words on the page, as in the classic Hoy book test.

**Here is an example – an excerpt from “Walden”:**

In warm evenings I frequently sat in the boat playing the flute, and saw the perch, which I seemed to have charmed, hovering around me, and the moon travelling over the ribbed bottom, which was strewn with the wrecks of the forest. Formerly I had come to this pond adventurously, from time to time, in dark summer nights, with a companion, and making a fire close to the water's edge, which we thought attracted the fishes, we caught pouts with a bunch of worms strung on a thread; and when we had done, far in the night, threw the burning brands high into the air like skyrockets, which, coming down into the pond, were quenched with a loud hissing, and we were suddenly groping in total darkness. Through this, whistling a tune, we took our way to the haunts of men again. But now I had made my home by the shore.

**And here it is again, with the spaces inserted:**

In the evenings I frequently sat in the boat playing the flute, and saw the perch, which I seemed to have charmed, hovering around me, and the moon travelling over the ribbed bottom, which was strewn with the wrecks of the forest. Formerly I had come to this pond adventurously, from time to time, in dark summer nights, with a companion, and making a fire close to the water's edge, which attracted the fishes, we caught pouts with a bunch of worms strung on a thread; and when we had done, far in the night, threw the burning brands high into the air, and coming down into the pond, were quenched with a loud hissing, and we were suddenly groping in total darkness. Through this, whistling a tune, we took our way to the haunts of men again. But now I had made my home by the shore.

See the triangle in there? This can be printed onto a sheet of paper, inserted into a book, and forced, using the raffle force. I took out a couple words from the text, in order to make the spaces line up nicely, but it still reads like it should.

Because this force is not surefire, I suggest having an alternative reveal ready, if you decide to use this in place of the FriXion Pen revelation.

### **Additional Idea 3**

Have the person at the end hold out their hand, palm flat, facing up, bent at the elbow. Their palm should be at about eye-level. Trying to hold this position acts the same as trying to keep your hands apart while during an induction. The effect is that the fingers start to curl. Use this to create the illusion of using an invisible force to slowly close their hand around an invisible ball. This ball can be used to hold memories. This is a similar technique used by faith healers and metaphysical workers when demonstrating energy transfer or the power of faith.

## How to Make the Box

The switching box I use is one which has a false bottom that is stored in the lid until the box is closed. The box can be purchased here for a few dollars:

<https://woodcrafter.com/bx5150-wood-hinged-box/>

I have stained the box using a watercolor pigment, but regular wood-stain will work as well. I have also painted a design onto the lid using gold spray paint and a stencil.

To change the regular box into a switching box, you'll need a few materials:

- Balsa wood
- Velvet/felt fabric
- Glue
- A strip of paper

First, stain both sides of the balsa wood, using the same stain as was used on the box.





- Both sides are stained because as wet wood dries, it begins to bow. Staining both sides keeps it relatively flat while drying.

Now, cut out a rectangle of wood which is *slightly smaller* than the inner dimensions of the box. For instance, the inner dimensions of my box are: 5.25" x 3.375", so the dimensions of the balsa wood rectangle are: 5.125" x 3.25".



In order to make a space for the crystal to be stored in the lid, we make a hinged section in the false bottom. Cut out the upper-right corner of the rectangle, and trim that piece so it is about 1/8" smaller than it was.



Turn the balsa wood over, and glue a strip of paper in place, like so:



Attach the other end of the paper to the small piece which was removed. The reason for cutting out and re-attaching this piece is: The hinge needs to operate. If the piece was not trimmed, then the hinge would not work, due to the edges of the pieces colliding.

Now, cut out a piece of velvet/fabric that has the same dimensions as the inside of the box. Glue this piece to the bottom of the inside of the box. Also, cut a piece of velvet/fabric that is the same size as the balsa wood piece.



Glue the remaining piece of fabric to the balsa wood piece, so that the paper is between the fabric (the paper should now not be visible from either side, as it is between the fabric and the wood).

The false bottom goes inside the lid of the box.



In order to conceal the crystal, place it between the actual lid and the fabric – this causes the hinge to swing outwards, but that is okay, because we will cover it with a sheet of paper and our fingers in performance.



To use the box, place the billet inside (or have someone place the billet inside), and use your left fingers to cover the hinged section which is concealing the crystal. Slowly close the lid, and allow the false bottom to drop from the inside of the lid, down into the bottom of the box. The billet is now covered, and the crystal is the only object in the box.





After performance, I have found the easiest (least frustrating) way to remove the false bottom, is to use a bent paperclip. Bend it into an “L” shape, and slide it down the side of the box, under the false bottom. Turn it 90 degrees, and lift up.



The action of allowing the false bottom to fall from the lid to the bottom is a little tricky and will take some practice. I have found that it is easiest to allow the bottom edge of the piece to begin to fall into the box first, followed by the upper

edge (the edge which contains the crystal). It will take some experimenting to get the feel for how the piece needs to fall into place, but once you know what needs to happen, the rest is downhill.

Altogether, the process of constructing the box should only take about 30 minutes, not counting the time it takes for the stain, glue, and paint to dry. When it comes to staining and painting the box, I highly recommend that you remove the latch and hinges, so they do not get stain on them.

- And keep track of which hinge goes on which side of the box, as well as the direction it was facing. The holes will sometimes not line up if the hinges get switched around, preventing the box from opening and closing smoothly.

## **Making paper look aged**

In order for the paper to look like it was not taken directly from an office drawer, it is nice to make it look older than it is. I use a method called: “tea-staining”. It’s exactly what it sounds like: make some tea, crumple and un-crumple some paper, and submerge it in the tea. Hang it up to dry overnight, and cut out pieces of the sizes you need the next day.

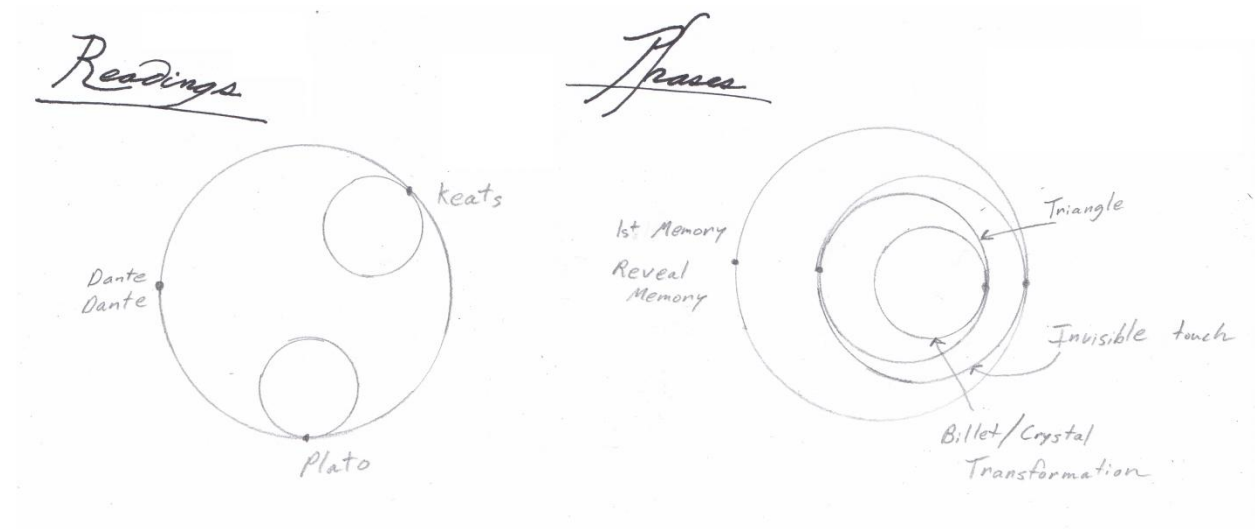
## **Making the balsa wood cards**

Making the cards follows a simple process:

- Get a sheet of balsa wood
- Stain it
- Cut out small rectangles, a little smaller than playing card size
  - o This is because sheets are easy to break when they are large. When using a smaller piece, they don’t break as easily.
- Burn symbols into each card
  - o These could be the typical ESP symbols, or druidic symbols, zodiac, simple shapes, sacred geometry, etc.
- In order to mark one of them (or multiple ones), slightly round the opposite corners of the desired card. Or put a little nick in the edge. Or use a darker line of wood stain in a specific area of the card, so that it looks like that area just had a natural dark spot.

## Atlantis Routine Structure

Now that you've read the **Geometric Design** chapter, here is an outline and diagram of how "Atlantis" was put together:



### Dante

- Forest stream intro (memory in mind)
  - o Invisible touch
    - triangle force

### Keats

- billet to crystal

### Plato

- Vanishing letters (reveal triangle)
  - o Invisible touch
- Reveal memory

### Dante

### Conclusion

The recursive point is the transformation of the billet to a crystal.

## **Beneath the Fells**

*This was originally given out in an on-going mentalism series I write.*

*I had reservations at the time, since I first intended to include this in “The Book of Wonders”, but decided against it. So I reserved it to the free mentalism series.*

*Yet now that I have finished writing this “Book of Wonders”, I feel the book would be incomplete without mentioning this method, as one of my favorite pieces to perform, called “**Vale of Stars II**”, relies on combining this peek with a couple of my own techniques.*

*A few months back, I was informed that this same method was taught by Looch in his Penguin Lecture. Then, I found out the idea started as a peek using a book, created by Sid Lorraine, and later expanded on by several other mentalists, including Fred Kolb, Bert Reese, and Phil Goldstein.*

*This pad has been done before, and I claim no originality. I simply re-invented it as a tangent from a different device I was working on. And I still lovingly refer to it as the “Beneath the Fells” pad.*

*Also, I purposely did not include this chapter in the description of the book. This is because I did not want anyone to buy the book thinking they would get a new peek-pad method of my creation. Though you are getting a couple of my own subtleties.*

For you Lord of the Rings fans, the title refers to a line in an unnamed poem, recounting the events of Smaug’s attack on Dale and the dwarves’ quest to reclaim the Lonely Mountain. The full line of the poem reads: “In hollow halls beneath the fells”. ‘Fells’ is used in the Norse manner (‘fjalls’), meaning ‘mountains’, and ‘hollow halls’ refers to the mighty kingdom of the dwarves.

The peek device works similarly – once it is constructed, a ‘hollow hall’ is formed, and it becomes a hidden element buried under your presentation.

### **Materials**

You will need:

- Stack of 20 or so business cards/billets
- Exacto knife
- Rubber band

## Construction

- Set aside 10 or 12 business cards. These will be your 'full' cards.
- Take the other 8 – 10 cards and mark out a rectangle in the middle of them.



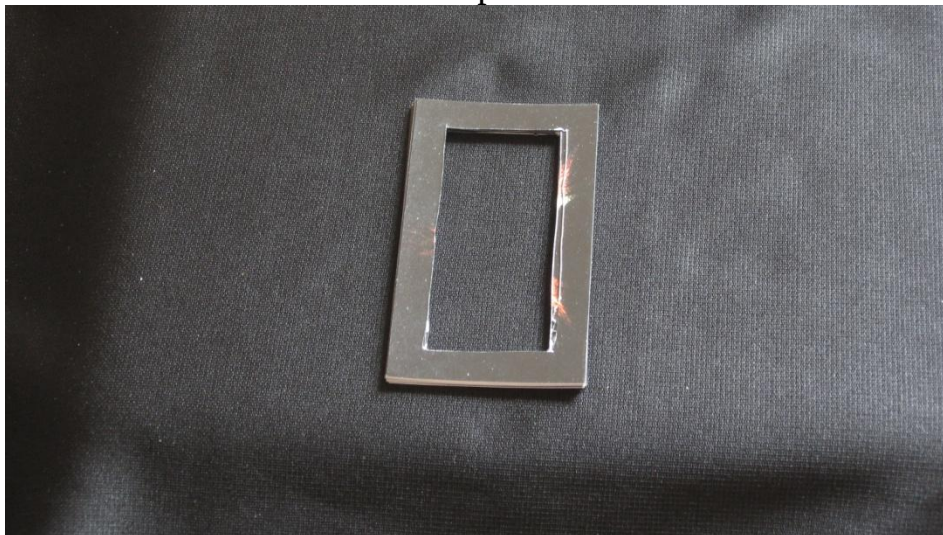
- Using the Exacto knife, cut out this rectangle. You're left with frames of cards.



- Cut one of those 'full' cards short (or trim opposite corners).



- Stack all the frames on top of each other.



- Put the short/trimmed 'full' card on top of the other frame cards.



- Put the 'full' cards on top of the stack.
- Put one 'full' card on the bottom of the stack.
- Wrap the rubber band around the stack.



- You are ready to go!

## Usage

- Have the participant write/draw something on a business card.



- Get a break above the stack of frame cards (that is what the short card is for).



- Slide the participant's card face-down into the stack.



- Turn the stack bottom-side-up and set it down.



- They now see the bottom of what appears to be a normal stack of business cards. What they don't see is the 8 frame cards behind the bottom card.
- When you are ready to get the peek, pick up the stack, and slide out the bottom card, saying, "I'm now going to try to look into your mind, to see the word/image you're thinking of." Put the stack back down, bottom-side down.



## Reset

Move one card from the top to the bottom of the stack. Or, if using the variation in the “Additional Idea 1” section (see below), put the loose card on the bottom of the stack.

## Additional Idea 1

The process consumes 2 cards each time you use it. In order to preserve cards, you can ‘change your mind’ about needing the bottom card, after you get the peek. For example: when you slide out the bottom card, you get the peek and then as an afterthought, say: “actually, I don’t need to write this down.” Put the loose card into your pocket. The process now only consumes one card.

## Additional Idea 2

Place two blank cards on the bottom of the stack. When you are ready to get the peek, pull both cards off the bottom, get the peek, and then spread the two cards. Make a remark: “Oops, got two cards.” And slide one of them back in. Now, you can place the stack bottom-side-up on the table/in view. From both sides, it appears to be a regular stack of billets.

## Hale of Stars II

### **Performance**

This version is intended for two participants, and can be done in front of an audience.

**Participant 1 = Melissa (to your left side),**  
**Participant 2 = Vivian (to your right side)**

**You:** “There was a time, many years ago, when I stood with several of my best friends on the side of a mountain. The sun was going down and the stars were already visible. We were overlooking a small valley – there were some trees below and a small brook running along the contours of the mountain base. It was a beautiful moment – the sky was a brilliant orange, the mountains were purple, and the stars shown through the clouds. As I looked to the heavens and saw the constellations, something dawned on me.

I’ll get to that realization later, but for now, (*Addressing Melissa*) I’d like you to think of a symbol or simple shape, something of significance to you. It could be a circle, or triangle, a cross, something simple. Take this card and draw your symbol on it.”

**Melissa:** (*They do so.*)

(*Replace their card into the stack of cards, without looking at it and keeping it face-down.*)

**You:** “I have a tendency to look at things as something greater than what they are, which is why I asked you to think of a symbol which has an amount of significance to you. What I would like for you to do, is to imagine seeing the night sky, devoid of city light, and see the stars, hundreds and thousands of them, glowing brightly. Imagine drawing your symbol, creating your own constellation. Much how we, as children, used to look for shapes in the clouds. Can you see your symbol in the stars?”

**Melissa:** “Yes.”

**You:** “Now I want both of you to see this (*hold your hands palms up, with the stack of cards between the fingers of one hand*). This is empty space, but it will not remain empty for much longer.”

**You:** “I want each of you to imagine seeing a mirror, floating here, between my hands. See yourselves, your dreams, your accomplishments and aspirations. See you for who you are, and who you want to become.”

*(Take a card out of the stack, write a message on it, fold it, and set it in view.)*

**You:** “This pertains to both of you, but read it later.”

**You:** (*Address Vivian*) “Melissa is thinking of a symbol, as she has seen it in the stars. What we will do next, is attempt to connect your imaginations. I’m going to count backwards from three to one, and when I get to one, close your eyes. Are you ready?”

**Vivian:** “Yes.”

**You:** “Okay, take a deep breath in. Three. And slowly exhale. Clear your mind of all thoughts, take another breath in, focus on relaxing, and exhale. Two. Another breath in, your eyes are about to close, exhale, and one. Close your eyes. Imagine floating in a black space, you are not standing on anything, only floating. In the distance, you see a tiny pinpoint of light, it grows larger and brighter, and then you see another one. As you turn your head, more and more lights appear, and they begin to take forms of spiral galaxies and clusters of light. Some have hints of red and blue, and other pass by you, as you float gently through the cosmos.

**You:** “See some of the stars begin to connect, in lines of starlight, forming patterns and shapes. These shapes change and morph into others, some recognizable, some abstract. In a moment, I’m going to count down from three to one, and when I reach one, you will slowly open your eyes, and when you do, you will see a symbol floating in the air, just in front of my hand. You may see a little flash of light, as your eyes are trying to adjust. After you have seen the symbol, your eyes will close again.

**You:** “Nod if you understand.”

**Vivian:** (*She nods 'yes'.*)

**You:** “Three... Two... One, slowly open. You see the symbol briefly, and it begins to vanish, as you close your eyes. You now have a symbol in mind. You are back amongst the stars. Use your finger to draw this symbol, connecting the points of light. Nod when you have done this.”

**Vivian:** (*She nods 'yes'.*)

**You:** “Wonderful. Now see the symbol begin to fade, as the stars shrink back into the darkness. When I snap my fingers, your eyes will open. Three... Two... One... (*snap*)... How do you feel?”

**Vivian:** “Relaxed.” (*Responses will vary.*)

**You:** “Now, Vivian, could you draw this symbol here? And hand it face-down to Melissa, so no one can see. (*Give her a billet and sharpie*)”

**Vivian:** (*She draws it, and gives it to Melissa.*)

**You:** “Melissa, does this look anything like the shape you imagined (*gesture to her to turn it over*)?”

**Melissa:** “Yes, this is exactly it! I imagined a heart!”

(*Let them have the moment.*)

**You:** “This is wonderful! You may each read this now (*gesture to the folded billet*). Thank you, Melissa and Vivian. That was indeed a remarkable experience!”

(*They each read it and smile.*)

## Vale of Stars II – Method Introduction

This version does not involve any sort of pre-show or confederate work. The first person can think of any shape or symbol they wish, and the second person will always come up with the same symbol. And your hands are both shown blank before and after the second person sees a symbol in front of your hand.

How does that work? I must credit a good friend of mine, Alex, who had a problem with the original “hand-prompting” method of instant-stooging.

I first saw this method on hand-prompting in Peter Turner’s “Mind Plant” routine, which can be found on his “Freeform Mentalism” DVD and in his book “Devious Realities”. It is indeed a powerful way to force something, and in those two pieces, Peter provides in-depth explanations on how to cover-up the stooging, and adds further layers of deception.

Normally, the performer would write something on their palm, and keep it hidden from everyone. When the time comes to stooge a person, your hand comes up in front of their eyes, and you say something like: “*Now think of a word as your eyes begin to close.*”

I’ve used this method with great success, until I had an instance where a participant came to me after a show. He said something along the lines of “*I didn’t... really like that very much.*” I am always very careful to ensure that everyone (especially the instant stooge) has a good time and experiences moments of magic. But this bothered me, so I asked what he didn’t like about it. His answer (I don’t remember his exact words) was something about feeling as if his playing along was simply a means to an end, rather than something truly remarkable, which is what he expected. I then put some serious thought into how my previous performances may have been received by the person getting stooged.

I sat down with a friend of mine, told him this, and it turns out that he was having that same issue with hand-prompting. He felt he was almost “cheating” someone out of a potentially magical experience. Alex had an idea (but no method) which would allow for a participant to still become an instant-stooge, but at the same time, give them a moment of magic.

- Please note: This is not to discredit Peter’s method – simply to say that it is very difficult to do for small groups, and still have everyone feel like they’ve witnessed something impossible.

Alex's idea was to write something on his hand, stooge the person, close his hand briefly, and then open it and have the writing vanish. It would be like a having a brief hallucination – *did I really see that, or was it my imagination?*

But as said, he had no method. We brainstormed and tested ideas for a couple hours, trying to back-palm stuff, trying to tape slips of paper to our hands and drop them down our sleeves for a vanishing. We talked about creating a fake palm, storing messages inside thumbtips, hypnotizing them, etc. Nothing was working as well as he envisioned.

This has been our little secret for the past four years, and is only now being released to the magic community.

After a couple hours, I came up with a dumb idea. I said to Alex: “*Hang on, stop talking, I need to try something.*” So he waited. I tried it on myself. It worked. I set it up again, and showed him. His jaw dropped. When I showed him the materials, he tried it, it worked, and we started laughing. We laughed for 10 minutes straight, and chuckled for the next 15.

The method is SO STUPID that no one would ever think to try this. But it works like a charm. Because of the absurdity of the method, he and I would hint at it on Facebook threads concerning instant-stooging. It became an inside joke between he and I, as we could openly talk about a method in front of other magicians and mentalists, while on the topic of instant-stooging, and NOBODY ever put two-and-two together.

Without his idea/concept, I never would have come up with this method, and without his refining, it never would have been practical. So my hat is off to you, Alex Borton, for holding onto an ideal, which will benefit all performers.

Here is the method: Chap-stick + dry-erase marker.

Yes, that is it.

Here's how it works:

- Put a chunk of chap-stick under the finger-nail of your right (dominant hand) index finger.

- Replace the tip of a sharpie marker with the tip and cartridge of a dry-erase marker.
- During performance, squeeze the chunk of chap-stick out from under your nail, and spread it on the base of your left thumb/palm.
- Now, you can write on top of the chap-stick with the dry-erase marker.
- When you close your hand, and begin to open it, all that is happening is you are rubbing the marker off the layer of chap-stick.

That's what happens when you work at an idea long enough, and are open to trying odd combinations of materials.

There's the big secret – how to give someone a magic moment while turning them into a stooge at the same time. Using chap-stick and a dry-erase marker.

## **The Drawback of that Method**

The chap-stick will coat the tip of the marker very quickly, which means you can only draw very simple figures, and you may need to rotate the marker tip as you write. But it works great for one and two-digit numbers, simple shapes, or letters.

Because of this drawback, I created a similar method, which will allow you to draw more intricate shapes/symbols, longer numbers, or short words, without ever having to worry about the tip of the marker getting clogged/coated.

## **The Other Instant-Stooge Method**

This method is more practical, and it uses the Alex's premise of having writing vanish from your palm.

You will need:

- A sharpie which has the tip replaced with a dry-erase marker tip and cartridge.
- A Ziploc bag
  - o The bag should be made of heavier plastic, not that extremely flimsy stuff. I use the quart-size freezer bags.
- Double-stick tape

You'll cut out an oval from the bag, small enough to fit in the lower-left quadrant of your left palm (or your non-dominant hand). I'm using a sheet of paper in these pictures, so it is more visible:



Put a strip of double-stick tape on one side of that plastic, and tape it to your palm.

Now you can write on the plastic, and use your fingers to wipe off the writing when you want it to vanish.

In the following explanation of “**Vale of Stars II**”, I will detail how to set up and ditch the plastic, so that you can show your hands openly before and after the stooging.

For the record, I am titling these two techniques (the chap-stick method and the plastic bag method) the “**Un-provable Stooge**”, Version 1 and Version 2, respectively.

## Vale of Stars II – Method

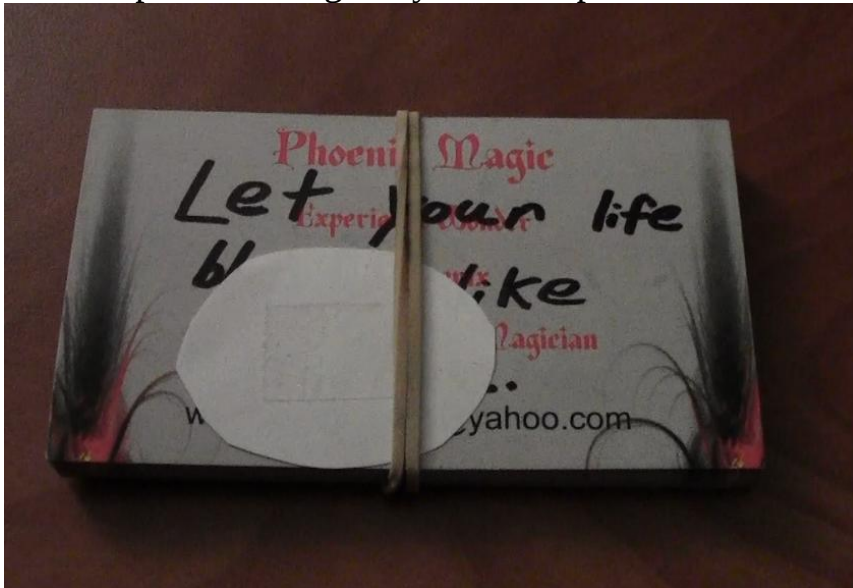
For this routine, we will use the “**Un-provable Stooge Version 2**”, involving the plastic piece.

### Materials

- The “**Beneath the Fells**” peek-pad
- Sharpie gimmick (with tip replaced with a dry-erase marker)
- Regular sharpie
- Plastic piece for stooging

### Preparation

- Pre-write (in sharpie) this onto the bottom card of the “Beneath the Fells” pad: “*Let your life blaze like starfire.*”
- Partially slide the plastic piece under the rubber-band of the pad.
  - o Tape side facing away from the pad.



### The Story

As in Version A, start out by telling the story of standing on a mountain, while watching the sunset. Ask the person on your *left* (the side opposite your dominant hand) to think of a symbol. It could be a word as well, it depends on how large your slip of plastic is.

They are to write that symbol on the business card/billet, and you replace it into the “Beneath the Fells” peek-pad.

- I like to draw a circle/oval in the middle of the card. This implies that they should draw inside the circle, and thus prevents anyone from writing around the edge of the card. With this peek device, that won't go well for the performer.



## Looking to the Stars

You now ask the first participant (the one on your left) to imagine drawing this symbol in the stars. This is what the second participant (on your right) will imagine in just a moment.

## The Mirror

Here is a quick phase which serves two purposes:

- 1) It is an implicit method of showing both of your hands blank. This way, everybody watching can verify that nothing was written on your hands.
- 2) It's a nice moment. Most people go through their week without ever thinking about what they are and what they want to be. It gives everyone something to think about.

Hold your hands out, palms facing up. The pad is held face-down in the fingers of your right hand.



After a few seconds, you are going to “write something” on a card.

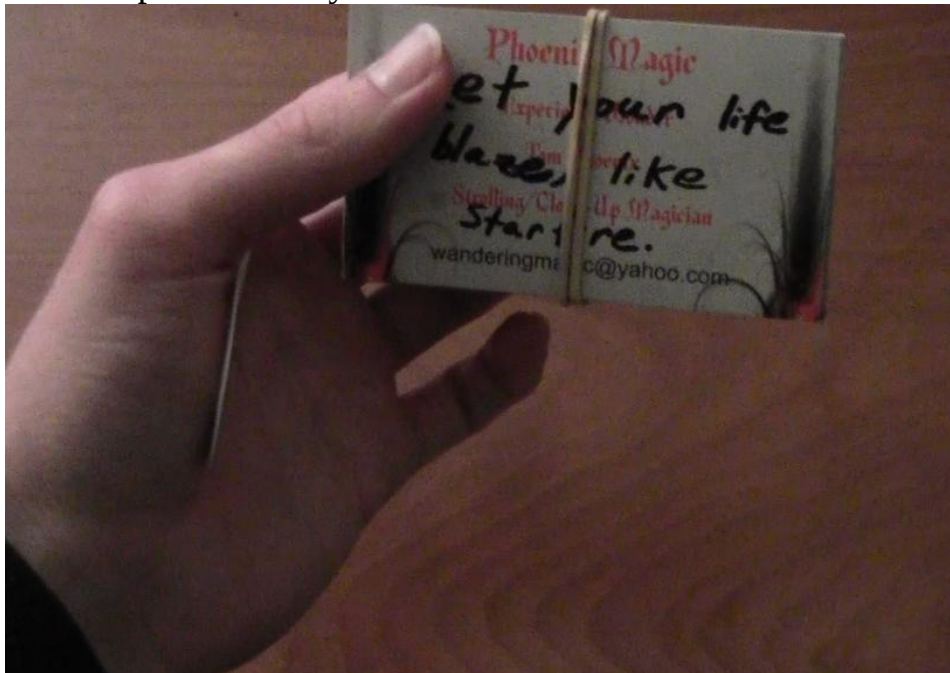
Place the pad against your left palm, so the tape on the plastic sticks to the base of your palm.



Pull the pad to the right, allowing the remainder of the plastic to slide out from under the rubber band.



Turn the pad towards you.

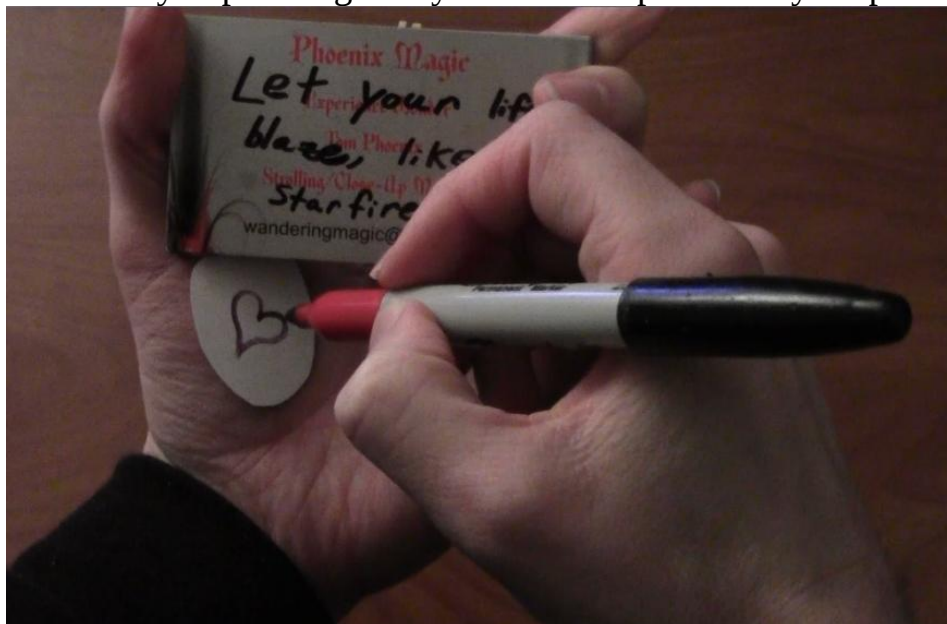


Holding the pad in your left hand, slide the bottom prepared card out from under the rubber band, allowing you to peek the symbol they drew.



Un-cap the Sharpie Gimmick (with the dry-erase tip).

Place the prepared card on the bottom of the stack, and pretend to write what appears to be a prediction about the stuff they were imagining in the mirror. You are actually duplicating the symbol on the plastic on your palm.



Fold the card unevenly, so the sharpie writing is visible on the card. This reinforces the illusion that you actually did write on it.



Put the Sharpie Gimmick back into your pocket.

## The Trance

You now turn to the second participant (on your right side), and put them into a “trance-like state”. In the performance section, I detailed the script I use. It does fluctuate from performance-to-performance, but that is the structure of what I say. The point is to get them to imagine floating through space, passing by stars and galaxies, and then asking them to imagine shapes, symbols, and patterns forming in the stars.

The way I phrase instructions is important: I say things like “*when I snap my fingers, your eyes will open.*” To the participant, these are simple-enough instructions to follow, but to the audience, it appears as if I am doing something along the lines of hypnosis or trance-work. To be clear, the participant is never truly in a trance, they are simply following instructions.

Before you tell them to open their eyes, you mention they “*may see a little flash of light, as your eyes are trying to adjust*”. This provides a built-in safety net if any light reflects off the plastic.

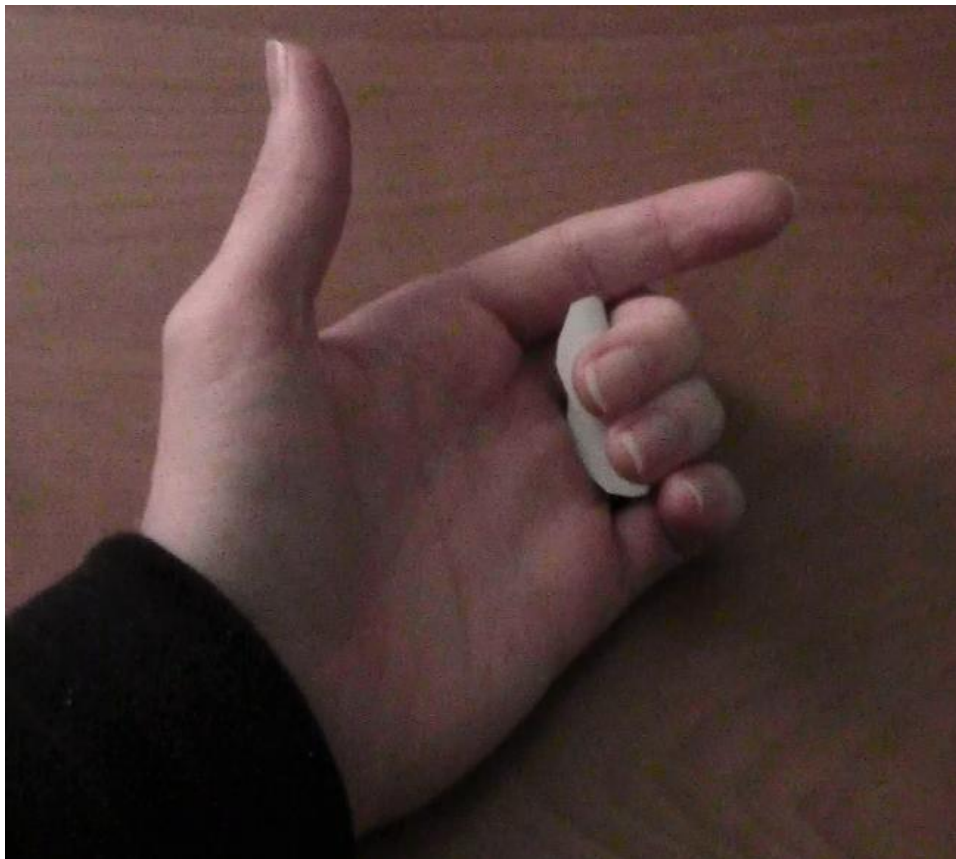
- You can reduce that chance of light reflecting into their eyes by tilting your hand towards them a little. See how my hand is not straight up-and-down in this picture:



When you ask them to open their eyes, you are holding your palm (with the symbol on it) about four feet away from their face. As mentioned above, tilt your hand downwards just slightly. Allow your hand to gently bob up and down, and then close your fingers, rub off the dry-erase marker, and say: “*and it begins to vanish, as you close your eyes.*”



Drop your hand to your side, and use your fingertips to grab underneath the bottom edge of the plastic, dislodge it, and ditch it in your pocket as you pull out a real sharpie.



Hold your hands out again, palm up, implicitly showing everyone that your hands are blank. This is important. It is a pre-caution, *just in case* the second participant says something about you having writing on your hand. Everyone will be able to confirm that you never had any writing on your hands.

Now you tell them to imagine drawing this symbol in the stars.

Bring them back out of the “trance”, and hand them a sharpie and a billet from the top of the stack. The rest of the stack goes in your pocket.

At this point, all the work is done, and you are clean.

## The Reveal

Present the reveal of having two people each seeing the same symbols in the stars.

And now let them each read the message you wrote on the folded card. Remember from earlier, you were acting as if you were writing something which pertained to what they saw in the imaginary mirror, so when each participant reads it and smiles, the rest of the audience gets the impression that you “saw/divined” some piece of correct information from that phase of the performance.

Here are some pictures of what the plastic looks like. These were taken from about 16 inches away, and the plastic is hardly visible. From about 4 feet away, the only way some will see this is if the light reflects directly off the plastic, but you have a built-in safety net which covers that possibility:





### **Alternative Reveal**

If doing this for an audience larger than say, ten people, then it would be good to hand the “stooged person” a large drawing pad, and have them draw the image they saw. Ask the first participant to say what symbol they thought of, and then have the stooged person turn the pad around. This way, the audience can have a

higher appreciation for the revelation, as they are clearly able to see what symbol was drawn and hear what symbol was imagined.

This is fine to do for small groups as well, even if it is just you and the two participants.

## **Vale of Stars I & II Conclusion**

This method of instant-stooging someone using removable plastic should not be limited to this routine. The combination of the peek-pad, gimmicked sharpie, and instant-stooge is *incredibly powerful*. With this, you can have a very good-looking drawing duplication between two participants, visual hallucinations, and synchronicity of thoughts, with a non-backtrack-able method.

It is also nice to use a different color dry-erase marker inside a black/other color sharpie.

This story was based on a real experience I had many years ago, and was inspired by the song: “Black Sky”, by the band “Thrawsunblat”. I have referenced them in a couple of my other works, so if you enjoy *meaningful and symbolic* music, I highly recommend you give them a listen. That style of music is an acquired taste. Personally, my favorite song from them is: “Once Fireveined”.

In “**Vale of Stars II**”, there is really not much happening throughout the routine. The bulk of the work is done in those few seconds of combining the peek-pad and single-writing, which leads into the instant-stooge.

This story of standing on a mountain, overlooking a valley is true, and here is a picture I took of the scene. The stars aren't visible in the picture, but that's due to using a disposable camera:



You are welcome to use this same premise/story, but try to make it personal to you. Magic is best when it comes from the heart.

## Conclusion

Thus concludes the third volume of “Magic, Mentalism, and Mysticism”.

I would like to take a moment to reiterate something I mention in my other writings: Much of my creative process comes not from reading magic books or watching videos, but from reading stories, taking long walks in the woods, listening to music, looking through art books, getting rained on... The classic methods are found in magic books, but *real power* lies in the imagination. By sparking your imagination, you will find yourself with many ideas for presentations.

Magic, to me, is the experience of wonder. And where wonder is involved, there lies an adventure

## Farewell

Remember that time, nearly twenty years ago, when you showed me that rope trick? Where you hold the ends of the rope on either side of the ring, drop the ring, and by some sorcery, the ring becomes knotted at the middle of the rope? You performed that seven times for me, and I couldn't figure out how it was possible. In fact, I still don't know. I haven't looked for the method. But that is okay. It's one of those things I want to remain a mystery.

I don't think I thanked you for starting me on this path, so you should know that it was the magic show we did as kids, at Christmas, which introduced me to Magic.

There are not many things I believe in, but I do believe, somewhere out there, you are watching, and as always in life, you are smiling.

One day, we'll look upon the mountains together.

Goodbye, Matthew.

*All the bleak words that have failed me  
Lamenting a truth untold  
Entombed in a frail cross of stone  
To vanish from within*

*These sorrows will be burned away with me, to be told in  
oblivion*

*A final stand before I melt to dust  
The memories of now, penned in blood.*

*- Windfaerer*