

LET'S PRETEND

WILFRID
JONSON



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BY

WILFRID JONSON



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24 Buckingham Street, Strand, W.C.2

1937

FOREWORD

When I had written the descriptions of a number of tricks, drawn a few illustrations, pinned the lot together, and called it a book, there arose the difficulty of what to call the book.

If you read on a little way you will discover why I called it "LET'S PRETEND."

WILFRID JONSON.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
FACE UP	3
THE LADY'S SCARF	4
THE CARD AT ANY NUMBER	5
THE PAPER HAT	6
PREDICTION	7
TWO HALF CROWNS	8
NAP	8
THE PEARL MYSTERY	10
HEY PRESTO	11
STOCKING	12
THE TORN AND RESTORED STRIP OF PAPER	13

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FACE UP

You may remember that a year or two ago someone discovered that if a card was placed in the centre of the pack face up it could always be brought to the top by simply making the Charlier pass. If the pack is held lightly in the position for the pass it will break at the reversed card when you raise the ball of the thumb. The thing was quite popular for a month or so, and then forgotten. Here is a nice little trick with it.

You require a small scribbling pad which should be in your hip pocket. Borrow a pack of cards and give them a riffle shuffle, noting the card that falls to the bottom. Palm this card by the side steal and hand the pack back, saying "Perhaps it would be better if you shuffled them."

Take the scribbling pad from your hip pocket and leave the palmed card behind. Write the name of this card (let's pretend it is the nine of clubs) on the scribbling pad, tear off the sheet, fold it, and drop it on the table.

Now take the pack and, holding it behind your back, have a card selected. When the card has been noted rest the pack on your open left hand, still behind your back, and ask the chooser to cut the pack, replace his card *face up*, replace the cut, and square up the pack.

You now turn to face your audience, still keeping the cards behind your back and quickly do three things. You take the nine of clubs from your hip pocket and place it *face up* on the top of the pack. You make the Charlier pass, which brings the selected card to the top of the pack and takes the nine of clubs to the centre. You take the top card, the selected one, and place it in your hip pocket. While you do this you call attention to the "fact" that the cards being behind your back it is impossible for you to know even what part of the pack the card is in.

Bring forward the pack and say, "Let's see where it is." Spread the pack, face up, in a ribbon on the table so that the back of the reversed card shows in about the centre of the row of cards. Remark, "Now you know what that card is. What is it?" The chooser names his card. (Let's pretend it is the king of diamonds.) Ask him to read what you wrote on the piece of paper. He reads "The nine of clubs." Raise one end of the ribbon of cards and turn the whole lot neatly over so that all are faces down except THE NINE OF CLUBS.

Then take the king of diamonds from your pocket.

THE LADY'S SCARF

This is an opening effect which I have found successful with the public more perhaps because of the presentation than the principle involved.

The performer enters holding a lady's silk scarf and says, "The management have asked me to announce that a lady's scarf has been picked up. Has any lady lost a scarf?"

"No! I am glad. You see, the stage manager and I have been tossing for it. We agreed that if the coin came down heads *he* should have it, and if it came down tails *I* should have it. And if you'll believe me, some people do, the thing came down and stood on its edge. So we've got to have half each."

He cuts through the centre of the scarf with a pair of scissors.

"Oh dear! There will be trouble over this. Look! One piece is longer than the other. Anyhow, half a scarf is not much use to me, is it? I think I'll let him have it . . ."

He gives the scarf a smart shake and shows it completely restored : then tosses it into the wings.

Let me first describe the scarf, which is specially made for the job of white Japanese silk. The main part is a flat tube of silk 4' 6" long by 8½" wide. At each end is a 5" silk fringe. In the centre of one side there is an oblong opening 3" long by 1" wide. To the inside of this side are sewn two double strips of silk 4½" long by ½" wide in the position indicated by the dotted lines A—A in the illustration. A tube of silk 9" long and 4" wide is attached by safety pins to these two strips.



The performer displays the scarf with the opening towards himself, then grasps it by the middle with the right hand, transfers it to the left hand, and pulls up the centre of the short tube of silk. It is this short tube that is cut. When he desires to restore the scarf he simply takes it by one end and gives it a quick shake, when the cut ends are automatically drawn into the scarf.

THE CARD AT ANY NUMBER

This is one of the old, well-tried effects, and I am sufficiently egotistical to believe that the method I use is the best way to produce this effect.

We suppose that a card has been chosen and returned to the pack, which is shuffled. Someone is asked to name any number under twenty. Let's pretend he says "sixteen." He is handed the pack and asked to count off fifteen cards and place the sixteenth in his pocket. Then, and not till then, the chooser names his card. The second person takes the card from his pocket and it is the chosen one.

The method used calls for facility with the riffle count and the slip. First bring the card to the top of the pack, then hold the pack in the riffle counting position and riffle off seven cards. Thus you are half way towards the number before it is named. Then ask for a number, and immediately it is given proceed with the riffle from eight to the desired quantity. Immediately the number is reached grasp the cards that have been riffled off between the right thumb and second finger and slip the top card beneath them. Then hand the pack to the second person to count down.

THE PAPER HAT

"All we like sheep" might well have been written of magicians. Years ago Cecil Lyle invented the Paper Hat trick, in which the pieces of paper are crumpled into a ball and left on the hat to represent a rosette, or a pom-pom, as you prefer. On the Music Hall stage it is possible that this ball of pieces may look something like a rosette, or a pom-pom, but at closer quarters it looks like neither a rosette nor a pom-pom, but just like a ball of pieces of torn paper. Yet countless magicians have continued to perform the trick in exactly the same way, leaving the ball of pieces for all to see and exposing half the trick at every performance.

I wish you would try it this way. It is one of the best of all tricks for children.



First make a conical hat to fit yourself, something like the one I have drawn. My own are made of green tissue paper with black decorations.* Fold it first lengthwise and then from the point downwards until you have a little packet about $1\frac{1}{2}$ " square. Enclose this in a pocket in a sheet of black paper in the usual way *but do not paste it to the black paper*. Place a sheet of green paper with the black one and you are ready.

Tear the papers in the usual way, tearing the pocket open and releasing the hat. Screw the papers into a ball and turn the bundle round so that the pieces are concealed behind the hat. Slowly open the hat, drop the ball of pieces inside it and place it on your head. Strike an attitude and await the applause. Then bow, and at the same time remove the hat so that the pieces remain inside.

At your leisure you can get rid of the ball of pieces and then you can put the hat on one of the children who later assists you without the child discovering that that rosette, or pom-pom, is really the torn pieces of paper.

* You can therefore have an *original* trick by using red tissue.

PREDICTION

The principal asset in the performance of this card effect is confidence. The performer first writes something on a piece of paper, or upon his card, and drops it into a spectator's pocket. He then shuffles the pack and deals cards out upon the table. A spectator says "Stop" at any moment and the performer places on one side the card he is then holding. The person guarding the piece of paper reads what is written upon it, which is the name of a card. The card placed aside is turned up and found to be the one predicted by the performer.

First borrow your pack, note the bottom card, and write its name upon the slip of paper. Then shuffle the bottom card to tenth from the top. This can be done by slipping it to the top and making two riffle shuffles, dropping first five and then four cards on top, or by an "Erdrase" shuffle, as follows:

Draw off top and bottom cards, run eight, injog one and shuffle off. Undercut threequarters holding break at injog, shuffle off to break and throw on top.

Now, addressing one of the spectators, say, "I will deal a few cards on the table"—deal out three cards—"and I want you to say 'Stop'"—deal a fourth card—"whenever you like." Deal the next three cards fairly quickly, then the eighth more slowly, and the ninth more slowly still. Remove the tenth card as though to deal and for the first time during the dealing, *look at the spectator*. He will almost invariably say "stop."

Place the tenth card on one side and say "I stop immediately you tell me to. Place your hand on that card please." Then ask the other spectator to read what is written on the paper before having the card turned up to verify the prediction.

This may appear to be one of those tricks that "only come off when you are lucky," but experience will show that it is practically certain. It is obvious, of course, that it does not matter if you are stopped at the ninth or the tenth card.

But do not try this on a brother magician for it is almost sure to fail.

TWO HALF CROWNS

I have added a little to an old sleight and made what has been for some time my favourite pocket trick. Just work it up and you will like it.

You need two half crowns and, in your right trouser pocket, a piece of sugar.

Palm the two half crowns. Show your left hand empty, then casually pass the right hand above it, dropping one of the half crowns into the left hand. Immediately half close the left hand, turn it over, raise it to your lips, and kiss the back of the hand, saying, "I shall never starve, or go thirsty, because I only have to kiss the back of my hand to find half a crown." Open the left hand and show the half crown lying on the palm.

Pick up the coin with the right hand, at the same time dropping the second half crown from the right palm on to the left fingers, and immediately turning the left hand over. Spin the first half crown in the air and pretend to put it into your trouser pocket, but really palm it again. Once more kiss the back of the left hand and show the second half crown, saying, "I can do this as often as I like, and I like to do it often."

Repeat these moves two or three times and then really place the coin in your pocket and palm instead the piece of sugar. Kiss your hand once more and show the coin, taking it and leaving in its place the piece of sugar. Drop the half crown into your pocket and ask one of the ladies to try it. I am presuming, of course, that you are performing with friends or have made friends with your audience. The lady will laughingly peck your hand, which you open to show the lump of sugar, saying, "Thank you. How sweet of you."

NAP

The apparent ability to win at games of cards always makes an impressive demonstration. This is the Nap routine I have used for some years. American readers, to whom the game of Nap is a profound mystery, may read on with the assurance that the trick is equally well suited to the great American institution, Poker.

A little pre-arrangement is necessary. Place the ace, king, queen, jack and ten of, say, hearts, in the left waistcoat pocket. Arrange the ace, king, queen, jack and ten of, say, clubs, in the pack so that they will fall to the dealer in a three handed game. That is to say they should be the third, sixth, ninth, twelfth, and fifteenth cards in the pack.

Get two men from the audience and station them on either side of your table. Ask them if they play Nap and tell them you will show them how a conjurer plays the game. Give the pack your best false shuffle and best false cut. Hold the pack in the position for bottom dealing and tell them to watch the deal very closely "as it is the dealing that does it." Deal out three hands by ordinary dealing and ask "what do you think of that?" As the deal was quite in order they will agree they could see nothing strange. Show their hands to the audience and then display your own, the royal flush of clubs.

Hand all the cards to the man on your left and ask him to shuffle them. When you receive the cards back quickly palm five or six and say to the shuffler, "I see you are a good Nap player, but you can't play tricks like that on us," and put your hand inside his coat and produce the palmed cards. Turn to the man on your right and say, "I think he was trying to swindle us." Put your hand inside your own coat and produce the nap hand from your waistcoat pocket. Say "Sorry"—grin—and place the Nap hand on top of the pack without letting the faces of the cards be seen.

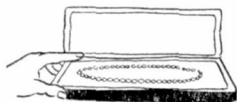
Say, "Of course, really it is the shuffle that does it." Shuffle the top five cards to the bottom. Simply run five and shuffle off, a shuffle that appears to be perfect. Now false cut and deal three hands again, dealing your own winning hand from the bottom. Hold the pack in the position for riffle counting, show their hands and replace the cards one by one, pushing them into the pack. Show your hand and replace the cards one by one, setting them for the next deal by means of the riffle. That is, riffle off two cards and replace the ace, two more and replace the king, and so on.

False shuffle and cut again, slipping one card from the top, and say, "Of course, as you see, it is really the deal that does it. Will you deal and prove my words." Hand the pack to the man on your left and let him deal, and once more you get the ace, king, queen, jack and ten.

THE PEARL MYSTERY

A string of pearls is removed from its case and the case is handed to a member of the audience for safe keeping. The pearls are dropped into a silk handkerchief, the corners of which have been brought together to form a bag, from which they vanish and are removed from the case by the person who has been holding it all the time.

The familiar double handkerchief is responsible for the vanish of the pearls. It should not be too large and is best made of good white silk so that it can be worn as a handkerchief in the usual pocket. The case should be of the long narrow kind and is quite unprepared. There are two strings of pearls. One is in the case and the other is in the right



trouser pocket. This string has several pearls removed so that it is flexible and will bunch up into a small packet.

Stand naturally with your hand in your pocket during your preliminary remarks and gather up the duplicate pearls in the finger palm. Pick up the case and transfer it to the right hand to cover the palmed pearls. Open the case and display the pearls therein, then pass the case to the left hand, holding it as in the illustration, which shows the performer's view. Now the right hand apparently takes the pearls from the case. Actually it simply comes up behind the lid and moves away again dangling the palmed string. The left hand simultaneously shuts the case.

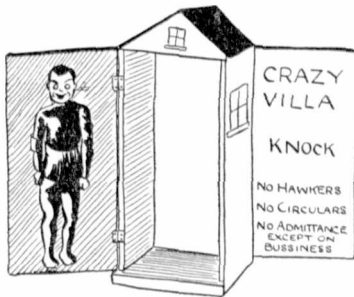
The move is deceptive because it is so natural and it seems to me that the idea could be used with other objects.

I leave that to you.

HEY PRESTO

I have modernised one of the world's oldest tricks, the Bonus Genius.

I use two dolls and a little house. The dolls I carved from wood and painted. The bodies are $4\frac{1}{2}$ " long, the heads $1\frac{3}{4}$ ", making $6\frac{1}{4}$ " the total height. One doll has a loose head while the other is solid. The little house is 9" high, 2" deep, and $3\frac{1}{2}$ " wide, and the doors are hinged to opposite sides. A clip of springy metal is fixed to the back door to



hold the solid doll. On the front door is painted, "Crazy Villa. Knock. No Hawkers. No Circulars. No Admittance except on Bussiness." The last word is deliberately spelt with an extra "s" for patter regarding "Bad spells." The back door bears the words "Tradesmen. Beware of the Dog." The last property is an 18" silk handkerchief with a slit in the centre. The slit is just large enough for the head of the doll to go through and is edged with tape to stiffen it a little.

In the beginning both the dolls are in the house, which is just large enough to hold them both, the solid doll being in the clip. The front door is opened a little way and the loose headed doll removed and shown. The house is next shown front and back and then both doors are opened together, with the solid doll hidden behind the back door. The house is closed again and put down.

The silk is shown and placed over the doll, the head going through the slit. The left hand goes beneath the silk and draws the body away from the head, palming it like a large playing card. The doll, which is addressed throughout as "Mr. Hey Presto" is asked to vanish, but refuses because he has not been paid his last week's wages. The left hand takes an invisible coin from the pocket and leaves the body behind, and the imaginary coin is given to Mr. Presto, who then calls off the sit down strike.

The head is held by the neck with the left hand, through the silk. The right hand holds a corner of the silk between the first finger and thumb. At the word "three" the hands swing upwards. The two middle fingers of the right hand close over the head, finger palming it. The left hand releases the silk, which is given a sharp flick and left dangling from the right hand. The empty left hand comes up to the top of the silk and the second finger and thumb encircle it and grasp the head. The left hand slides down with the head to the other end of the silk and takes the silk away, allowing the right hand to be seen empty.

Finally, Mr. Presto is shown to be back in his house.

STOCKING

This has nothing whatever to do with hosiery.

In many card tricks it is necessary to arrange a few cards in a certain order, generally on the top of the pack. When using a borrowed pack the problem is to do this unobtrusively. This is how I do it.

Let's pretend you want the four queens on the top of the pack.

First sight the bottom card and force it, saying, "Will you take a card and place it in your pocket without looking at it, so that there can be no question of telepathy." I do not think sufficient attention has been given to the question of patter facilitating forcing, but I have found that a remark such as I have quoted, which gives the chooser something to think about, makes the forcing of the card considerably easier.

Now ask if he thinks it possible for you to tell what card he has in his pocket by simply looking through the pack once. Whatever his reply may be, run through the pack without letting anyone see the faces of the cards and calmly push the four queens to the top. Mutter to yourself and murmur, "Two ninety eight plus sixteen—your card is the ten of spades." And you are ready for your trick with the four queens.

Young conjurers, and some older ones, I know have little confidence in their forcing ability. If you are one of these, omit the placing of the card in the pocket and just ask the man to take one "with his left hand." Now, if you miss the force simply have the card replaced below the one you know and proceed as before.

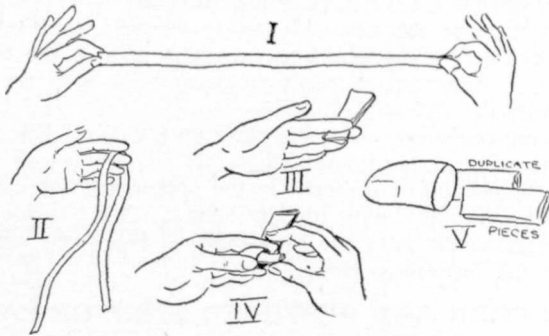
THE TORN AND RESTORED STRIP OF PAPER

On many occasions I have been asked by young magicians to show them how the torn and restored strip of paper is worked and I include the following minute description to dispense with further demonstrations.

It is, at first sight, a curious thing that no proper description of this trick has ever appeared in print, which, perhaps, is why it is so often done so badly. Well done it is undoubtedly the finest of all the torn and restored effects. It was a favourite effect of Oswald Williams', who did it beautifully, but I have never seen anyone else do it even passably well. It is not until one tackles the task of describing the trick that one realises why it has not been described before.

The thumb tip used should be fairly short. Mine measures an inch and a quarter from tip to opening. The best paper to use, if it can be obtained, is cigarette paper, the end of the roll of paper fed to a cigarette machine. This is just over an inch wide, and a strip at least a yard long should be used. One strip should be pleated into sixteen folds and then rolled into a loose cylinder. This cylinder should then be flattened, and the little bundle that results is placed in the thumb tip. The other strip is folded down to a sixteenth of its length and placed, with the loaded thumb tip, in the waistcoat pocket, or if preferred in a little box.

To perform, remove the folded strip from the pocket or box, bringing out the thumb tip in position on the right thumb. Open the strip and display it as in Fig. I, between



the first fingers and the thumbs, the palms of the hands towards the audiences and the fingers separated. The thumb tip is hidden by the paper, as it should be practically throughout the trick. Amateur conjurers sometimes talk hopefully of perfect thumb tips that will be imperceptible. When and if they arrive these same talkers will not be willing to pay the high price that will be asked for them. In practice the imperceptible thumb tip is quite unnecessary.

Now, still keeping the right hand in the position indicated in Fig. I, drop the left hand end of the strip and grasp it loosely with the first and second fingers about two inches from the right thumb. Slide these fingers along until the centre of the strip is reached and then drop the right hand end so that the strip hangs from the left second finger as in Fig. II. From this position the strip is re-taken as in Fig. I, but just on either side of the centre, and a tear is started about half way through the strip. The fingers are then slid along the strip for two or three inches and the tearing completed, the hands moving away each holding half the strip. This makes a *decisive* tear which is at the same time a graceful one, and is important. There must be no doubt in the mind of an onlooker whether the strip is really torn or not.

The two pieces are then brought together, adjusted in neat alignment, and doubled over the third finger as before. In all these actions endeavour to keep the palms of the hands towards the audience and the fingers apart. The strip is again torn as before, first the tear is started, then the fingers and thumbs slide apart along the paper and the tear is completed. Practically the same actions, twice repeated, reduce the strip to sixteen pieces which are freely displayed between the right first finger and thumb, the thumb tip being hidden by the pieces.

The pieces are now transferred to the left hand and held between the first and second fingers as in Fig. III. The right hand approaches and grasps the strip in the same manner. This brings the right thumb behind the left fingers. The left thumb clips the thumb tip against the left first finger, and the right thumb withdraws, dragging the duplicate strip out of the thumb tip against the bottom of the torn pieces (Fig. IV).

From the position illustrated the left thumb reaches round the mouth of the thumb tip until the extreme tip of the thumb can hold the duplicate paper against the torn pieces. The right fingers then fold the pieces three times towards the audience, making both bundles practically the same size. The two bundles are then turned over together so that the duplicate piece is towards the audience. Throughout these actions care should be taken not to cover the pieces completely with the fingers. The paper should never leave the sight of the audience throughout the trick.

You are now ready for the switch. Draw the bundle of pieces back a little with the right thumb and place the rim of the thumb tip on the duplicate piece. This is shown in Fig. V in which the hands have been omitted for clearness, but the position of the hands is very similar to those depicted in Fig. IV. Push the bundle of pieces forward with the right thumb so that they just enter the mouth of the thumb tip. Move the left thumb back to the "nail" end of the thumb tip and push the thumb tip over the bundle of pieces *and over the right thumb*. This gets the pieces safely away without covering the paper and without bringing the hands too close together, the usual faults with this trick.

Unroll the duplicate and hold it between the fingers and thumb of the left hand. Apparently you still hold the pieces. Fan the apparent pieces out and display. Now take the fan between the first and second fingers of the left hand and insert the first finger between the end fold and the rest of the strip. Grasp this end fold with the right hand and draw out the strip. The pieces seem to join themselves together as they flutter through the left fingers. Display the paper as at the commencement and take your bow.

This is a trick that every conjurer thinks he can do until he tries it, when he finds that it requires a very considerable amount of hard work. Badly done it is just another trick, well done it is a beautiful illusion.

* * *

The little MAGIC WAND publications, of which this is one, have been characterised by two things—brevity and practicability. That the effects I have described are practical I can assure you, and I trust that while aiming at brevity I have still made the descriptions clear. I have assumed that the reader has a good knowledge of magic and the standard sleights of card manipulation.

The great majority of my readers will be amateurs pursuing magic mainly as a hobby, and, after more than twenty years of this pursuit, I can assure them they will derive more enjoyment from the study and practice of card manipulation than from any other branch of magic.

WILFRID JONSON.

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