

# THE JINX



I don't know where Mr. James got his title for this mystery, but anytime anyone can produce such a problem I'll be the last to argue over what it is to be called. Certainly no concocted effect has in years been so original in effect upon the watchers.

I have used the problem any number of times since learning it, and I have yet to find people who aren't amazed at the outcome.

I won't go into any reason why it works because of limits in space, but it does work, and that's about the most important thing.

The performer has a deck of cards and two pieces of paper with a pencil. The deck may be a borrowed one which has been in constant use.

A spectator mixes the cards, and the performer asks if he prefers black or red. Without touching the deck or seeing any of the cards, performer now writes a prophecy on one of the papers and puts it with the writing side down on the table. The

spectator is now asked to remove the cards from the shuffled deck two at a time and turn them face up. If two reds are together he is to keep them in a pile before him (we are pretending he wanted red - if black he'd keep black pairs). If two blacks are together he is to put them in a pile before the performer, and if the two are of opposite color, they are to go into a third or discard pile.

The spectator does as directed, taking the cards off in pairs, and putting them in their correct pile. As soon as all of the cards are separated in pairs, the performer asks the spectator to count the number of cards his pile and then the number of cards in the performer's pile. Then the spectator is asked to look at and read aloud the written prophecy which has not been touched. It reads: "Your pile will have four more cards than mine." AND IT'S RIGHT, DESPITE THE FACT THAT THE PERFORMER DID NOT TOUCH THE CARDS AFTER THE GENUINE SHUFFLE BY SPECTATOR.

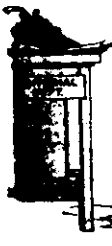
Immediately the performer tells another spectator to gather together the cards and shuffle them thoroughly. He writes a prophecy on the second pieces of paper AND THEN ASKS spectator which color he wants for himself, telling him to place pairs of that color in front of himself, pairs of the other color in front of the performer, and pairs of mixed colors to the side. Again the cards are separated and again the two piles are counted. The prophecy, this time, reads, "We will both have the same number of cards this time." AND EVERYTHING MAY BE EXAMINED AS THERE IS NO TRICKERY TO FIND.

This trick practically works itself. It is based on the actuality that, if a full deck of 52 cards be so separated after a genuine mixing, the red and black piles will always contain an equal number of cards. There is no way of telling EXACTLY HOW MANY will be in each pile, but they positively will be the same. Before starting, or during another effect, steal four cards of one color or from the deck. We shall say red. By stealing four cards of a color you unbalance the deck so that the red pile will be

four cards less than the black when finished. If you steal four black cards, the black pile will be four less than the red. You can also steal two or six cards of a color and the pile of that color will be two or six less, but four is about right. Don't ask me why it works. It does. Put these four stolen cards facing the body in right trouser pocket.

Now have the deck shuffled. Ask first spectator which color he prefers. Then write the prophecy to fit. If he wants the 'short' color, write that his pile will have four less than yours. If he chooses the other color, write that he will have four more than yours. Now explain how he is to separate the cards and let him go ahead. The outcome will be as you have prophesied. About half way through the cards you drop your hand to pocket and palm the four stolen cards. All eyes and attention being on the two piles, you carelessly

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**A** New York subscriber had to buy an extra copy of No. 23 for August when his dog chewed up the original copy. That's what I call a hound for magic. --- Mogul, at the N.Y. Paramount lounge, is pulling ticket buyers who do not bother with the show, according to a trade journal. His question answering, via Jinx No. 6, seems to have people buffaloed, and no wonder, because it's really good. --- Mickey MacDougal is a card detective

according to the August 8th Liberty. He risks his life, exposing cheaters at bridge, as often as does a police detective who is running down other types of criminals. This is an excellently written description with illustrations of the bridge cheating method in one of Frank Lane's last manuscripts. --- When the London stage hit "White Horse Inn" opens at the Center Theatre in New York sometime in September, fifty waiters will color change their napkins to as many flags of all nations. As Tess Holden sewed them together she muttered, "I never knew there were so many countries." I wonder if the theatre owners will return the Nazi flag, demand a rebate, and ruin the profits of the deal? --- "One of the boys", whose chatty column in a monthly magic magazine bounded back to him when he entirely wasted it by writing a tirade about me, has stopped the column in a rage and confines his side remarks to the bottom of his advertisement. Now it costs him money to argue! --- Brunel White's columns of real magical news in London's World's Fair (theatrical weekly) is to be admired. There's much of it, and it is all solid reading matter of interest. We should have something like that over here. Not since back in the early twenties, when Mark Henry (Henry Marcus) used to fill three Billboard pages a week with magical news, articles, and pictures, has there been any weekly news of value for magi. --- What allegedly noted mystifier was soundly booted where it counts at Eighth Avenue and 33rd Street, New York City, for starting a certain gimmick on its way to oblivion through popular and muchly misused presentation by the follow-uppers in magic? --- Harry Blackstone has finished the Sunday roto exposures with No. 7. The series was beautifully pictured and included "Squash", which seems like an under the table shin kick at his old pal Percy Abbott. I'll still dare or challenge any exposor to expose a trick or illusion he uses in his own performances, and that goes for Blackstone or anybody else. One fellow wrote in, "Don't be too hard on him; vaudeville is dead and after all, he has to eat." --- C. Rosencrance has put out a book on systematic card work called "The Red Five of Diamonds" and it has fifty tricks with an entirely new arrangement. Four more books are to appear in the series, making a total of 250 tricks. I didn't know there were that many tricks possible with a stacked deck. It's a monstrous work. --- I've got quite a nice bundle of letters here about my suggestion last month for determining what is and what is not an exposure. I think I'll bind them together and loan them to magical societies to help make up their minds. --- Magic, like the song, seems to go 'round and 'round. In May 1935 Max Holden put the shrinking dollar bill in his Linking Ring column. In September 1935 I gave it a more complete going over in Jinx No. 12 with congressional patter. Now it pops up in the August 1936 Sphinx as a Political Trick! Also poppeth up a mention regarding a nice World-Telegram article about I.I. Altman that was Jinx covered last March! The article appeared last February 20th! Yea, verily, the sun doth move. --- From the foregoing lines as I read them back it seems as though I'm being vain. If I am, it's an attempt to give readers a giggle. --- I hope Herman Weber is selling a lot of his "Money From Magic" books. Magicians, as a rule, want only tricks and pass by advice. For once, however, they

have the chance of getting a book which has taken much time and thought, and which contains much valuable advice for the man who has the tricks but needs a way to get them before the public, at a profit. --- On August 12th I journeyed to the Rajah Restaurant on West 48th Street in New York at the behest of Dr. Daley to watch the Mankari Ponde (Mong-care-ee Pond-ee). Jud Cole and Ted Arnold were there to listen to the marvels of Yoga and see the intrepid Yogi stop an electric fan with his fingers. So what? --- At the Cherry Lane Theatre in Greenwich Village has been a magician named Solitaire. From the size of his audience at each performance thus far recorded, the name is appropriate. Solitaire does stock magic, ventriloquism (with two dummies and at which he is best), and a few ghastly apparitions make their appearance. --- Up at the Bronx Opera House for a week was The Great Richiardi with his illusion show. This Spanish magi carried about seven tons of apparatus and practically changed his show every performance. His billing read, "You have seen Houdini, Thurston, and the Great Hermann. Now see in Person, on the Stage, the King of All Magicians." --- Also, at the Roxy Theatre, appeared Miaco, the deaf mute wonder of New York manipulators. The routine smacks loudly of Cardini, but the execution of his work is quite all that can be desired. --- Hardeen, Gordon Alexander, and Jim Collins have returned from the wars and strife of the Fort Worth Centennial. From all reports, business wasn't so forte or worth the journey. --- Verrall Wass, of London, is publishing a Mystery Monthly with a few tricks and advice. The dissertation on colour schemes in the current issue is of value to magi when making up their drapes and settings. --- On the west coast is plotted a new magic monthly called "The Genii" and it will be piloted by that prolific writer on things magical, William Larsen. Those acquainted with Larsen's reputation as a writer of good tricks won't miss a copy. --- I've had a nice response to the article about Bert Reese in the Summer Extra. One said, "Incidentally, the Reese article was one of the best yet. Where in h--- did you get the information - psychic connection with Bert? I had read accounts of his work (in an article, "The Man Who Fooled Edison") and could find no explanation of his method. Must reread the item in the light of your disclosures." I'm glad to know when the customers are satisfied. --- One of the great reasons why many magicians slump is because they take themselves too seriously, especially with modern audiences who want to be entertained first and mystified second. For example, in a circular at hand; "Abe Lincoln said, "You can fool some of the people some of the time, but you can't fool all of the people all of the time." Mr. ----- fools all of the people all of the time with his "Klever Konjuring." It's too bad Abe isn't around to correct the quotation and call the wizard on his statement. No doubt others will. --- Why do many magicians get mad and peeved when a spectator (this is very common for table workers) catches them? Don't they know this is bound to happen often what with exposures and the dissemination of magical knowledge so prevalent? If you, you or you get your ire up when somebody cracks wise with the explanation, stop it. It only helps antagonize the rest of your watchers. If you kid the chump by saying something like, "That was only to find out what trick books you've read; here's one that hasn't been printed yet," or any other remark that serves to show you aren't upset by the disclosure, you'll be tops with every spectator even if it burns the wise fellow. But don't leave him, if you do you're licked. Stick with him and do every trick you know until you fool him, and then, when you have done that just once, leave him. And that's a secret the top notch professionals have had to learn through experience. You're getting it

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# THINK IT OVER!



If your appearance is O.K. and your first trick well selected why not get away from the stereotyped introductory speech in vogue for a score of years or more? "Ladies and gentlemen, I will endeavor to entertain you with some experiments in the art of legerdemain, better known as sleight-of-hand or magic," with variations of the same doesn't mean a thing. Surely your ingenuity will prompt a neat way of making an introduction. There are many thousands of words and phrases from which to choose.

Vary your methods and switch your systems. I mean by this, don't present an effect in which you employ the same modus operandi used in the previous trick. This shows very poor judgement and great lack of showmanship.

Ten minutes daily practice before a mirror will work more wonders with your wonders than the criticisms of ten magicians.

Try to remember never to borrow anything from the audience unless such be necessary to the working of a trick. For instance if you require a lead pencil see to it that you have one. Don't annoy those whom you should be entertaining.

Don't drop into the habit of making fresh remarks. While such may seem funny to you, or to some of the others, the one to whom they are addressed feels embarrassed. As an example it is bad form to say to a prospective selector of cards. "Can you tell the cards apart?"

Work out your own combinations and remember it doesn't in the least matter who originated the Rising Cards, but rather who does it the BEST.

The art of magic does not end with the ability to perform a certain effect well, nor in rattling off a line of patter. Give attention to every angle of the presentation, and don't forget there is such a thing as dramatic import, atmosphere, grace, style, continuity and proper routing.

One of the main differences between a professional and an amateur is, the professional knows the VALUE OF TIME! This doesn't mean that you should rush through your tricks, but that you should not waste time in longwinded explanations between them, and in getting ready for the next effect.

A little more attention should be paid to the angle of vision. Those who sit in the balconies and boxes paid to be mystified, too.

It has always seemed poor showmanship to me for a magician to rapidly present a number of unrelated effects, either as an initial flourish or otherwise. Primarily it seems like showing off rather than entertaining. When done on the first entrance it tends to make it harder to put over subsequent single effects. It is furthermore difficult if not impossible for the audience to follow, and confusing and ment-

ally annoying instead of pertinently alluring.

A trick or two with an ordinary handkerchief, a coin, a piece of paper, or any common object that one finds in a house, will often do more to establish the fact that you are clever than some special piece of apparatus or trick that you carry with you.

If you would rather use a real egg than some of the terrible imitations I have seen, try blowing the contents and enlarging the hole in the broad end of the egg. After, fill the eggshell with a not too stiff solution of plaster of paris and allow it to harden. Such an egg, if handled with reasonable care, will last a long while.

Do not make the unprofessional error of talking about what other magicians do or do not do, nor how much better you do a certain trick than the others. Just do it - the best that you can; the audience will be the judge anyway. Your saying so does not make it so - only your DOING.

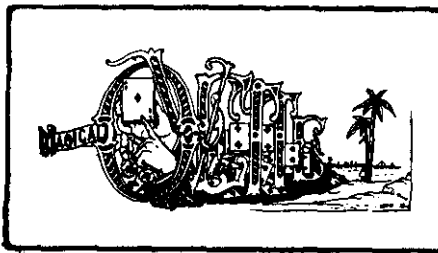
Keep well in mind that if you please the ladies half the battle is won. Watch your appearance, speech and manners. Don't say or do anything that would not be said or done in good society. It will get you much farther.

Music helps to build "atmosphere". "Just a waltz" or "a chord on and off" is not sufficient; that is, if you want to get the best possible results. There are so many gems that could be employed and are not. "The Song of India", "Oriental", and many others. Select your own - something that fits your presentation; something that you like; something that makes YOU feel in the spirit of the thing - and this will subconsciously be transmitted, to an extent, to those you are trying to impress.

It is ALWAYS best to buy the best. The best is not too good. This is true of black silk thread, elastic, cards, or anything else. You can't get distance on a four dollar radio - nor can you go any distance in magic if your paraphernalia is of the cheap and poorly constructed variety.

Don't go to sleep on your advertising campaign. All of the really big magicians spend and have spent thousands on advertising, and had some of the finest paper obtainable despite the expense. Good stationery is very important and an influence on the committee. And don't make it gaudy! I know of one private entertainer who spends more for one order of stationery than it would cost to replace his act. And I know of another who has quite a few hundreds of dollars tied up in his act, but his advertising is mostly blotters and a rubber stamp.

Don't build up combinations that become so involved that it is only with an effort the members of the audience can follow or cannot follow at all. Some pretty combinations are possible, but the more direct they are presented the better.



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pick up those in the discard, square them, and put back, but you have added the stolen cards which sets you for the second time. No one ever pays any attention to the discard.

The first prophecy having been found correct, the performer, without touching the cards, asks that they be picked up and mixed again. This time you write the prophecy BEFORE asking the spectator which color he wants. As the deck is now complete, the piles will be the same and it doesn't matter. Now try out this masterpiece and you'll find it to be one of the best card mysteries in years.

**THE CANDY KING. Stewart James.**

**A**nd now comes a variation of the card principle just explained but in an entirely new dress for those who have children's shows with which to contend.

One boy and two girls from the audience assist. The performer explains he is going to teach them a kissing game. One girl is given a picnic plate painted red and bearing two dozen candy kisses in red wrappers. The second girl is given a white plate with two dozen candy kisses wrapped in white paper. A third plate, half red and half white, is placed on the stage at center. The boy stands just back of it with a girl on each side.

A crown is placed on the boy's head and he is given a paper bag into which the kisses on both plates are dumped and well shaken up. He now removes two kisses at a time, and they are dealt with like the cards in the original version. The colored plates avoid any confusion. When all the kisses have been distributed, each girl counts hers and the winner announced. The paper bag is now turned inside out, and in large writing is not only the prediction of who shall win, but also how many more kisses they will have. They are given their kisses and retire contented and happy.

A variation of the revelation is to have a cardboard crown, gold outside and plain inside. It is held together with paper fasteners at the back. At the finish the crown is opened out flat to reveal the prediction written across the inside.

This is a really effective stunt for children, and at the same time a real puzzler for any adults who are present. The result is varied by having two or four (always an even number) kisses less of one color. The other color will then be the winner by that many kisses.

**A MENTAL TEST REVAMPED. (Herbert Hood)**

**B**ack in the March, 1935 issue of The Jinx, (No. 6) there appeared a billet reading method of great value. The test, in that case, used a news paper and on a torn out piece a word was encircled. I have found that many are not in a position to read the paper stolen, and this variation in a slightly different dress, will make for greater ease in the reading.

In your left coat pocket have a deck of cards and a match or two. Give the pack to a person with the request that he look them over well and merely think of one. Take deck back and put it in pocket again. Hand him a slip of paper with the request that he write down the name of

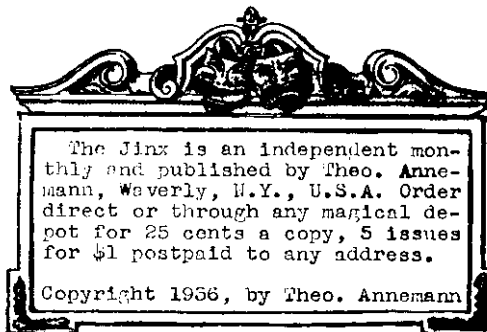
his thought of card. Then he is to fold the paper once each way. You take it from him, holding the closed corner of the doubly folded paper to the upper left and tear the paper through center the long way. Put the outside or right hand section in front of the other piece and tear these in half. Put the right hand pieces in front and the left thumb draws back with the folded middle of the slip still unturned. The right fingertips take the loose pieces in view and deposit them on an ashtray as the left goes to coat pocket, leaves the torn out center and brings out a match. The match is given the writer to burn the pieces. There should be no difficulty in understanding the above moves as they are very simple. In the No. 6 issue the point was illustrated, but pictures are no necessary if you have a piece of paper in hand and try it.

Now, as the paper burns, your left hand drops to pocket and opens the torn out middle against the face of pack. Bringing out the pack slightly spread and fanning it facing towards you as you look over the cards, you read the writing, draw out the correct card and place it face down on the table. The rest of the deck goes back to pocket, with the paper. The thought of card is named, and the card turned over. This will be found as fine a way as any for doing a thot card trick without impressions, switches, guesswork, pumping, or preparation of any sort.

**THE RETICENT QUEEN. (Newton Hall)**

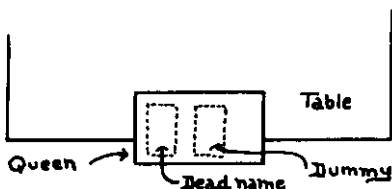
**I**f you have one of the P & L metal card boxes sitting around, this makes an excellent effect as an after dinner or parlor trick. Any card box that locks though, can be used. In short, the spectator writes the name of some dead person on a small card which you give them, and it is placed writing side down and covered with a Queen from the deck. You then put the Queen to your ear, leaving written on card on table, but she says nothing. You try again, but still no result. Then, with the remark that perhaps she needs a little solitude, you drop the Queen in the box, close, open and listen again. Still no result. You now ask the spectator to put the written on card under the queen himself. This time you listen and correctly reveal the dead name, and spectator can examine all.

The piece of pasteboard upon which spectator writes is a blank visiting card cut to about 2"x5/8" in size. Make two of these and have one covered on one side with a back of a card to match deck in use, although this isn't necessary. Have a deck handy with a Queen on the face, and underneath this Queen at one end, have the piece of card. In the regular part of card box have a duplicate of this Queen face up and have



box open at trick compartment.

Start by handing spectator a piece of card upon which he writes the name. Either take it from him face down and place at table edge, overlapping a little, or slide it there after he has put it down. Mention that the Queen of Hearts is the only card that can talk to you, at the same time taking it from deck with the duplicate piece of card underneath. Put the Q face up over card on table, so that the piece held underneath is right by the side of it. Wait a moment, and then raise the Q facing the spectator, but pick up the name card with it and glimpse it, as you say you'll listen to the Q. Hold to ear, shake head, put the Q back on card on table. Wait a moment, lift Queen again but take the dummy card this time leaving original card on table. Listen again and shake head. Mention solitude for Her Highness and drop her face up in card box. Close lid which locks compartment. Open lid (which reveals other Queen which is apparently the same one, listen, but still you have no result. Now hand box to spectator who puts written on card underneath. Now you hold box to ear, reveal the name, and hand box back.



(Editor notes) I don't do much of this type of trick but was interested enough to try this one out and was surprised at the result. It is really quite good and the by-play up to the finish seemed to build it. That was what I was skeptical about. I also tried it without duplicate cards or cardbox. Using the right coat pocket for the solitude part, I put the Queen in but after dropping the Queen, I dropped the dummy card in the small match or coin pocket at top of pocket. Then I had spectator drop the writing card in with Queen. He also took Queen out, I listened and revealed name. Then he reached in and took the name card out. It makes a nice and practically impromptu table trick that way.

#### CLIMAX! (Henry Christ)

Anyone who doesn't try this at least once before a fair sized audience is passing up a nice bet. It is so much to the point and fast that the effect is always startling. Take a deck and, holding it face outwards, make a RIGHT TO LEFT fan remarking that the cards seem pretty well mixed. The audience sees this. Close fan and approach a spectator at one side. You fan the cards again in front of him so that he alone can see the face of fan. This time you make a LEFT TO RIGHT fan and say, "I want you to just think of any card you see." (This right to left, and left to right fanning is from performer's view of the back of the cards.) As the spectator looks at face of fan and looks at you, just wink once with your offside eye, and say, "You have one? Please remember it."

This method of fanning makes it impossible for him to see more than one card, the bottom one! Close deck and walk to other side of room or audience. As you go, overhand shuffle the

bottom card to top. Ask someone to stand and tell you when to stop as you riffle end of deck. Deck is in left hand and you riffle outer end. When stopped, the left fingers around side of deck press down a little as right pulls upper portion away a little towards left, and the top card drops to top of lower portion and is removed by spectator. Or, force it in any way you please. Now ask first spectator to "name the card he saw." Then have second man show his card. This fanning principle has been used as a gag heretofore. This makes a stunning bit.

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for a quarter -- if you take it. --- That bit of psychology reminds me of an angle told me a long time ago by a half legitimate and half 'con' man. Many (too many) fourflushers will make up a roll of bills with the large one on the outside. Then, to get a lone dollar out, they have to dig deep, and the ruse is apparent to any dumb onlooker. The cute angle is to put the big bill second and the single on top. Now take out the roll and take off the single. The big bill flashes, and is so unexpected that it registers for evermore. If you saw a fair sized roll of bills with a lone one on top, would you think of bigger money underneath? And that little bit of skullduggery subconsciously impresses them that you aren't merely flashing. --- That paragraph wasn't so magical, but it's good psychology, and if more magicians would play to their audience's reaction they would be better off. --- Frank Lane's new "Ideas" Mss. is to hand with complements. His introduction reads in part, "These booklets will come out periodically. No special month or time. I am taking the best of the ideas that come along. There are too many monthly papers where it is impossible for the editor or putter-out-er of the paper, to give good stuff ALL THE TIME; and thus, before long, they peter out." Outside of the first handcuff escape trick, which has been sold as a secret in a dollar set of escapes for years by Lyle Douglas and Blair Gilbert; and a new (?) method for doing the popular lock and key trick by switching the key as given in Jinx No. 12 for September 1935, the Mss. is up to Lane's standard and good. The Poker Demonstration is especially workable and different. --- Bob Nelson, from Columbus, Ohio, was in New York on a pleasure trip this month. His conversation around magic emporiums veered to the combine of dealers who will organize shortly to the advantage of all magic buyers. Fly-by-nights and unreliable depots are thus to be smoked out for all to know. What magician-buyers need to-day is a magazine to guarantee its advertisers and see that its readers get satisfaction when they spend their money. Every magus would welcome it. Dr. Gordon Peck, of Glens Falls, N.Y., has been nominated to run for the State Assembly this fall on the Democratic ticket. --- The August Sphinx carried quite an article about 'Effective Control' which had to do with the way exposing via the films has been curtailed through the power of the S.A.M. At the same time, N.Y. theatres were playing a 'short' produced by Van Buren and distributed by R-K-O featuring the radio team 'Easy Aces' and Dave Allison as the magician. Titled 'Fool Your Friends', the exposures included the birdcage vanish, Squash, the coin between two playing cards with the French Drop vanish (one N.Y. night club artist uses this steadily at tables) and a four-ace bit. Control? Phooey! ---

*Theo. Annemann*