The L. W. MINDREADING MYSTERIES

THIRD EDITION

William Larsen and T. Page Wright

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IND READING is a branch of magic highly suitable for the average amateur, the apparent difficulty being that most published feats demand either excessive study, as of codes, or excessive expenditure. The married magician can always rely upon an assistant, and even the bachelors almost invariably have some friend-male or female www. would be only too glad to assist at any time by taking part in a magical program. A mind reading experiment forms a welcome variation to the more conventional conjuring mysteries, and to many people is far more effective because of the absence of apparatus. Moreover, the conditions under which the amateur usually performs, on a small stage or even none, create an intimacy between performer and audience that makes such an experiment more effective than it would be upon a large stage, if the ability of performance is anything like equal. Hence we feel that the advanced amateur or semi-professional may welcome these practical and inexpensive feats.

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Musical Mind Reading

E SHALL describe this experiment as we have worked it, in our home, with a phonograph, and then suggest variations.

Six records are shown, all double sided, making twelve selections. For convenience in handling these are best in a record container, or portfolio. The medium holds them, while the performer shows twelve cards; each having on it the name of one of the selections. A spectator freely selects a card, and is requested to concentrate upon the piece selected;

if possible to hum it to himself below his breath. The medium in a dreamy manner places one record on the phonograph and starts it. It is the selected tune. This is repeated, the card being freely selected. The performer now explains that frequently people disbelieve that it is genuine mind reading, and suspect that he has something to do with it, a fact that he will now disprove. If in double parlors, with the phonograph in one room and spectators in the other, the doors between are closed to cut off communication with the medium, a couple of spectators being invited first to go in and watch the medium to certify his innocence. Otherwise the performer invites a couple of spectators to leave the room with him, the other remaining with the medium. In the next room, out of sight of the medium, each spectator makes a selection. One of them steps to the door and in his own words invites the medium to play the selection of which he is thinking; this is done and the selection of the second spectator similarly played, though all communication with the performer is cut off.

It is to be understood that the records are not played clear through, as that would lengthen the feat unbearably, but simply started and left on long enough for the tune to be recognized.

The patter presentation is best of the serious thought transference variety, and concerns the sympathy which may exist between two minds, drawing an analogy to the miracle of radio, in which one station sends instantaneously through the universe waves which may not be seen, felt, or detected through any sense organ, yet can be received by a set attuned to receive them. Everyone knows that radio stations chiefly send out music. That is because music is especially suitable to wave transmission through ether, as is to be shown in the experiment to be tried.

The medium should play a purely passive part, not speaking unless necessary.

Two methods are used, it being this that makes the simple feat puzzling. There are two packs of twelve cards each. The first twelve have actually a different name on each card. The other pack has six cards with the same name on top, then five more with a different name, but all alike, and then one with a different name at the bottom. This forcing pack is in the pocket at start. The other pack is shown to consist of twelve cards all different and then spread for selection, blank side up, of course. The performer knows the order of the cards, so as soon as one is selected he signals the choice to the medium.

Records and cards are arranged in the same order, so the magician need only signal the number of the selection from 1 to 12 for the medium to place the right record on the phonograph.

Any code will do, so if you know a number code, use it. It may be spoken or silent; since the medium must play the phonograph, naturally he will not be expected to be blindfolded. Our code is partly spoken and partly silent; we have endeavored to make it perfectly natural, so that the spectator, though he may watch closely, will not be able to detect anything out of the way that might suggest a signal.

The cards are held spread out in both hands for selection. As soon as one is taken the cards are closed up and taken by the left hand. The right hand is naturally held about breast high in this move. It may either remain casually above waist height, or held at the waist (not on hip, but in a natural position) or allowed to drop to the side. These three possible positions represent, respectively, numbers 1, 2 and 3 when the hand is held loosely clenched. When the hand is held open they represent 4, 5 and 6. Thus these positions may represent numbers from 1 to 6, though any of these positions is perfectly natural for the hand to assume after shifting the cards to the left.

If the performer says "Thank you!" to the person who selected the card, these six positions represent the numbers from 7 to 12. That is, if the performer says "Thank you!" the medium adds 6 to the number the position represents by itself.

A trial of this code will show it to be simplicity itself; ten minutes practice should suffice for its practical mastery. The fact that the performer never speaks directly to the medium to most people eliminates the possibility of coding. After the first introduction, the performer should appear to pay no more direct attention to the medium at all; after the selection of a piece the performer requests the spectator to concentrate on it, and then stands passively waiting until the experiment has succeeded.

After a repetition of the first method, the performer offers to try the thought transmission with he and the medium in separate rooms. In moving into another room there is plenty of opportunity to switch the deck for the forcing deck in the pocket. One card must be selected from the upper half of this pack and one from the lower. If the performer doubts his ability in this simple amount of forcing, he may stand between the spectators and taking half the cards in each hand offer the packets simultanously to the two spectators for the selection of a card each. They are requested to take care and not let him glimpse the names on the selected cards; this gives them something to thing about, and takes their minds off the cards. Naturally the medium has no difficulty playing these two selections, though the performer is kept from him.

With slight alterations this experiment is easily adapted to club or stage procedure. In that case it is better to have the medium at a piano; when the selection is made the medium plays a few bars of the piece. To save any effort of memory on the part of the medium in this, it is usual to have a sheet of music on the piano; this sheet has upon it the opening bars of each of twelve pieces, so that any one may easily be read off by the medium.

In this case it may be more effective to have the medium blindfolded. There are any number of forms of trick blindfold that will not interfere in the slightest with the medium's vision, though if the code be verbal and the medium knows the music the blindfold could easily be genuine. Even in this case the use of the two methods is recommended, as making the feat more baffling.

Curious Card Reading

HIS is an effect for drawing room, club or church shows. It is intended purely for the amateur, and will probably make its greatest appeal to the beginner, as the expert will doubtless prefer his more advanced—and more difficult—methods of producing a somewhat inferior effect.

A volunteer is invited to come up front, to take a deck and shuffle it all he wishes, then select any card and look at it, further showing it to the audience that they may see he is playing fair, replace it with the others himself and shuffle all he wishes. During this the performer stands across the room or stage, his back to the proceedings. Yet when handed the shuffled cards, he merely runs them over face up, requesting the volunteer to think "Stop!" when his card appears, and then infallibly reads his assistant's mind, stopping at the proper card!

That all may be seen fair, the feat is repeated with whatever additional precautions occur to the volunteer assistant, yet this time the performer, starting to take the deck as before, suddenly changes his mind and without ever bothering to look at the cards merely gazes in the assistant's eyes and names the card!

We have described the experiment exactly as it appears to the audience, and it must be remembered that it is the effect that counts; we say this because many of you will doubtless be disappointed to learn that to perform the feat you must use a confederate. The confederate is not, of course, the volunteer, who must be genuine if the feat is to be convincing, and who should preferably be the man who is the center of the group for which you are performing—the president of the club or someone similar, as that adds greatly to the fun. Too, it sometimes adds to the effect if for the repetition a different volunteer is requested with whom to try the experiment. A man capable of putting over his material can gain much fun from these

assistants, and practically nothing they can do can incommode him, as there is no apparatus to be discovered, etc.

The assistant is a friend of the magician who watches the performance from the front row. When an amateur is invited to give a show, for friends or club, etc., he nearly always has some friend going to see it, and in the fact that he watches from the front row there is nothing suspicious, especially since close watch of his behavior during this feat would disclose nothing out-of-the-way to the most critical.

Now for the code itself; for simplicity and naturalness we believe this worthy of consideration over the number of similar codes that are known. The man who is to communicate the value of the cards has his hands on his knees or otherwise in sight. The suit is conveyed by left hand, and value by right. Let us first consider the suit; in this case fingers only are to be considered, thumb being ignored.

Any suit order is to be memorized. In our case it is the old Clubs, Hearts, Spades and Diamonds order, as memorized by the order of the letters in the word CHaSeD. First finger extended signals first suit in order, or clubs. Two fingers extended is second (Hearts); three fingers extended is third (Spades) and four fingers is four (Diamonds). That is all.

The value is conveyed in a similar manner by the right hand. There are thirteen values; forgetting for the moment the thirteenth card, or king, the twelve remaining will be considered divided into three sets of four each, the first running ace to four, the next five to eight, and the next nine to queen. We use the four finger positions already explained; first finger extended signals first card of set; that is, ace, five or nine. Two-fingers extended signals second card of set, which will be deuce, six or ten, and so on. The set the card is in is conveyed by the position of the thumb. Doubled under the fingers it signals first set; alongside the fingers, pressed against them, it signals second set, and spread apart from the fingers it signals third set. The hand loosely doubled into a fist signals the king.

A reading of the above may give the impression that it is complicated, but five minutes is all that is needed for practical mastery of it. You and a friend could learn to present it in ten minutes; and with the above learned there is practically no possibility of error through misreading a signal.

The value of repetition in heightening the effect, especially when done as above, should be obvious. The whole theory is very simple, yet we should be far from surprised if a couple of conjurors who cared to work on this effect for a few moments could puzzle some societies of very good magicians.

Distant Card Reading



HE performer comes forward with a deck of cards, and permits four or five people to each select a card. He turns his back while the cards are shown to the audience. Now he lets one of the audience pass the deck about to have the chosen cards shuffled back in and while this is being done the performer introduces the medium, who is blindfolded, and to make it further evident that sight can be of no use to her is seated in a chair with her back to the audience. The medium, it is explained, has remarkable powers as a mind reader. She can

read a sympathetic mind, such as that of the performer, with ease, but since no one will believe, even if she reads the mind of the performer, that that was what he was thinking, he will this evening try to have her read the minds of various spectators. It is because that is so much more difficult that he must have them to concentrate upon such a simple object as a selected card. The medium will endeavor to read that image from their minds.

The medium begins speaking, hesitantly, as the first spectator concentrates upon his card. "I see a dark card—a black card—a card with spots on it—club spots—I see one, two, three, four—yes, four spots—the card of which the gentleman is thinking is the four of clubs!"

The effect is one which depends largely upon the ability of the medium to build up the effect, since the performer plays a more or less passive part. Little bits of side business in the answering make the effect more amusing and dramatic. For example, in endeavoring to read the mind of some man the medium may make an apparent mistake, declaring that the card is the Queen of Spades. Upon being informed that she

is wrong, the medium appears puzzled, and again gets an image of the Queen of Spades. Suddenly, however, she brightens and declares "Oh, I see! The card the gentleman selected was the two of diamonds, but instead of keeping that image on his mind he has had some brunette on his mind all the time!" In print this may seem foolish; properly done it adds to the effect.

The performer does his bit toward building up the effect by emphasizing that the cards are freely selected and shuffled back in by the drawers, and at no time since have he or the medium ever touched the pack. He may moreover point out that he himself has no idea of the identity of the selected cards.

Now for the method. The deck used is prearranged. Any prearrangement will do; the old "Eighty Kings threatened to save—" will serve as well as any. That is all the preparation.

The performer comes forward, false shuffling the deck with enthusiasm. The deck is spread for someone to select a card. When they do the pack is split at that point, the performer lifting away all the cards above the one selected in his right hand. The two packets are now placed together again, and the deck squared up, but in sliding them together the top card of the left hand portion is permitted to go on top of the deck, the rest of the left hand portion going beneath. This move is executed while crossing toward someone else for them to take a card.

As a result the card below the selected one is now on top, though otherwise the order of the deck is unchanged. Another card is selected, and the move repeated; this is done until four or five cards have been taken by different people.

Now the performer turns his back "to give the selectors a chance to show everyone their cards." It also gives him a chance to slip the five top cards from the deck into his inner breast pocket under cover of his body.

The deck is given into the hands of the audience to be passed about so that each person may shuffle his own card back into the others. While this is being done the medium is introduced and blindfolded, being seated in a chair with her back to the audience and performer. The blindfold may be genuine; during the adjustment of it the performer has all the chance in the world to slip the cards from his pocket into the hands of the medium. Since she is seated with her back to the audience there is no danger of anyone catching a glimpse of them. In working for an audience of any size, however, it is better to seat her facing the audience, and let her hold something in her hands (a handkerchief is enough) to conceal the cards, the reason being that when she sits with her back to the audience her voice does not carry so well. With a small audience this does not matter.

To name the selected cards in order the medium need merely hold the cards she has face up, and name in each case the card next in arrangement to the one she has. The genuine blindfold will not prevent her from looking down alongside her nose to see the cards in her lap. The rest depends upon the dramatic ability of the medium.

The Devil's Phone

OR the small audience, up to the size found at the average club show, the usual crystal gazing acts are clumsy and burdensome. It is seldom the magician has time to go through a long routine of answering questions, which is at best likely to become tedious, and the majority of methods are decidedly unsuitable for such occasions. Here is a brief and inexpensive mystery which produces the same effect, but with some novelty of presentation.

An assistant passes about slips of paper to have questions written upon them. Five or six questions are enough to prove the performer's ability; to answer more is merely repetition. The slips are folded into pellets by their writers, and that the assistant may never touch them with his hands he collects them in a small tumbler. This is given the performer, who tips out the pellets (still without touching them) into a dish containing a small quantity of alcohol or gasoline, so that when once ignited the questions are consumed in flame.

The performer now explains the problem. Since the questions have gone up in flame no persons living, save the writers, can tell what they are. Ah, but how about persons not living? It is well known that whatever goes up in flame, or even down in flame, is in the special charge of the Devil, and so the magician will appeal to his friend the Devil. Not all people know how to communicate with the Devil, but the magician has a phone which is in direct line with him.

The assistant brings the phone to the magician, and he rings up the Devil. He has rather a difficult time getting him, but as he points out of course in the infernal regions they have a hell of a phone service. At last he gets him, however, and asks him about the first question. He is surprized at the answer, but delivers it to the audience and naturally the Devil is found to have answered the question more or less correctly. This is done with all the questions, though the performer warns the people not to put too much faith in the Devil's answers, as he is well known as a terrible liar—in fact, as the Prince of Lies!

The patter for this portion of the effect must depend upon the cleverness and wit of the performer, but the fact that the Devil is (supposedly) doing the answering gives opportunity for considerable fun, which is not necessarily at the expense of the person whose question is being answered.

As in the usual crystal gazing act, the feat involves two problems: the switching of the questions for dummies, and the getting of the substance of the questions of the performer in a secret manner.

The switch of questions is worked largely by the assistant; though it requires some practice it requires comparatively little skill, and is very deceptive. The question slips are folded into little pellets by the writers and dropped into a small tumbler which the assistant passes around. When they are all collected, as a still further precaution, apparently, he throws a small handkerchief over the tumbler. Here the one trick move is executed, as in doing so he turns over the tumbler so that it is bottom up, the slips falling into his palm. As the tumbler is the same size top and bottom the tumbler under the handkerchief appears still right side up. A rubber band is snapped around the "top" of the tumbler, outside the handkerchief, to prove the slips inside cannot now be tampered with. The move can be further covered by doing it while making a half turn. The smaller the tumbler, the easier the move, though the tumbler should not be too small. Once more upon the stage, the assistant hands the still covered tumbler to the performer, who has previously palmed the dummy pellets and introduces them into the upside down tumbler in the act of taking it. The real pellets are carried off by the assistant. In the act of removing the rubber band and handkerchief the tumbler is once more inverted. The dummy pellets drop into it from the hand in this action, and now the performer burns them as impressively as he can. This is merely to fill in the interval of time required by the offstage assistant, who is busily engaged in copying off the real questions onto a card of a convenient size to be palmed. This done he holds the card flat against the base of the phone, and brings it in to the magician, who has just about had time enough to complete the burning and call for the phone.

The phone need not, and indeed will not, be a real one, but quite good imitation phones can be obtained at toy stores, and are most suitable. The performer takes phone and card at the same time; the card he palms in the left hand and then holds the phone by the stem in that hand while the right hand holds the receiver to the ear. In this position it is easy to read the questions off the palmed card while pretending to talk or listen through the phone. The rest is mere talk, though do not think that part of the feat unimportant and undeserving of practice therefore, since now to the audience the feat is only beginning, and by what happens from now on will the feat be judged.

Obviously, if desired, this can be made into a regular crystal gazing act, the card with questions written on it being palmed in the hand that holds the small crystal. There are performers to whom a more or less serious style of presentation appeals, and to such the use of the crystal or something similar is preferable. To the magician who presents his act straight for amusement, however, the mis-en-scene with the phone will help in providing both novelty and comedy.

The "Test" Card Act

HIS is a subtle and easily learned card transmission act, to be used in drawing room or club, or very suitable for a publicity demonstration in a newspaper office or the like.

A card is looked at in a freely shuffled deck; without the performer's speaking a word the genuinely blindfolded medium names the card. This is repeated three or four times; then the performer turns his back and three or four people take cards, and they are instantly named in rapid succession.

The medium of course employs due dramatic effect in naming the cards; nothing more need be said of that here.

First someone is permitted to shuffle the deck. Now a card is selected—the performer must get a glimpse of it. There are many sleights for this purpose; if you do not regularly use any, turn back to Erdnase or Roterberg. Here is a sleight for the purpose which will suffice, though it is not a bad idea to vary the method; the deck is held face down between the tips of right fingers and thumb and sprung into the left hand, after the usual fashion. The spectator is requested to say "Stop!" at any point in the springing; when he does the cards are in the right hand so he can see the card at their face, at which he stopped. Since they are naturally bent concave in springing, this brings the lower index corner in line with the performer's vision, so he sees what the card is. The cards are placed together and squared up, and the performer gives them a couple of riffle shuffles and ends up with an overhand shuffle while the medium names the card so glimpsed by the performer.

The name of the card is transmitted by the shuffle. Riffle shuffle indicates the suit, and overhand shuffle the value.

Using the same suit order as before (Clubs, Hearts, Spades, Diamonds) one riffle shuffle indicates Clubs, two Hearts, three Spades and none Diamonds.

In overhand shuffling the performer runs a number of cards and shuffles off, the value being indicated by the number of cards run. Thus if seven cards are run the card is a seven; if twelve cards are run, a Queen, etc. As each card is run it makes a distinct snap, so that the medium has no trouble in counting with the performer to discover value. To run the cards, in case you are not familiar with the term, is to shuffle them off one at a time.

This code is easily learned, and easily read by the medium. Practice in presentation details is more essential than practice of the actual reading and code, which can be learned in ten minutes.

After repeating this three or four times the performer extends the deck to be cut and then places it behind his back, remarking, "I shall let several of you gentlemen take a card off the deck behind my back, and the medium will endeavor to read it." Then he turns his back, holding the deck behind him, and shoves the top cards off into the hands of four or five people. They are all read by the medium.

When the performer placed the deck behind his back, the above remark gave him time enough to add to the top half a dozen cards held behind him under his belt. When he turns his back to the spectators the thumb pushes the cards off the top into their hands, without giving them much time for thought. As the deck has previously been shuffled and cut so much, this seems fair, but as the medium has previously memorized these few cards they can be named without trouble of coding, and rather rapidly, making a good finish to the effect.

So much for our mindreading mysteries. You can test them with but little expenditure of time and money, if any. We have tested them and found them practical and effective; we trust that you will find them no less so.

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