

The Perfect Prisoner

CHESTER B. MORRIS

Most magical effects could stand enough of a "change of pace" during their execution (That last word is very fitting in too many cases. Ed.) to make them really seem different from the usual "here it is" followed by "now it's there," remarks. Of course, combining a number of separate tricks can produce some bad preponderosities. But there are exceptions, and I have thought the answer might be found by putting a strong finish effect with an otherwise mediocre and too standard start, together with a good starting trick of the mental type which so often begins well only to die a lingering death. At any rate, this is a good opportunity for finding out if my thought is ONE of the exceptions to every rule.

The performer shows two pieces of glass and a common frame together with its back-piece. It is a photographer's printing frame, easily obtainable in varied sizes.

A spectator stands, examines all, and locks the pieces of glass inside the frame after putting them together.

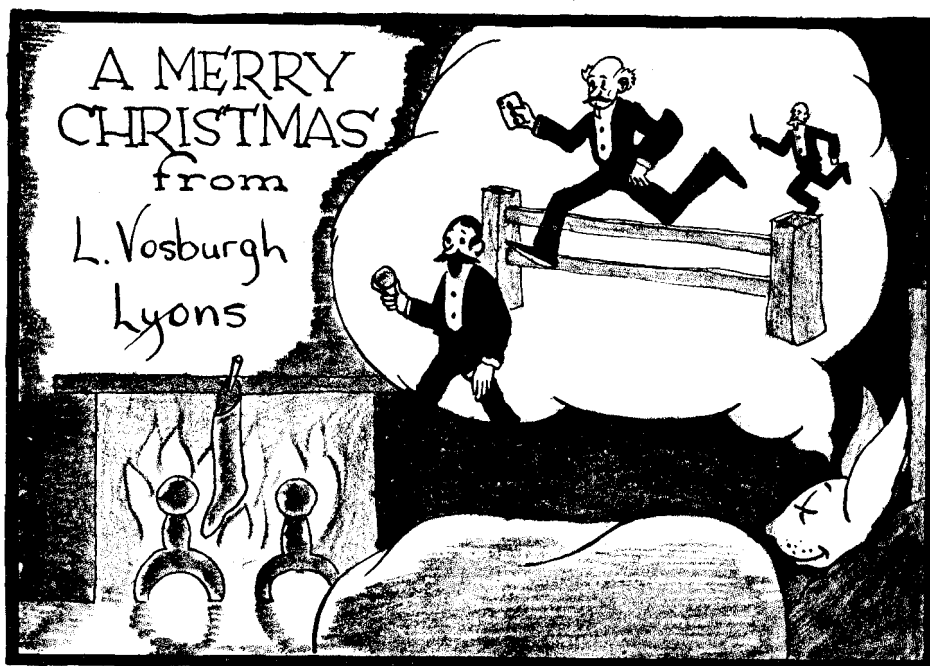
The performer rests this

frame upon a glass tumbler, away from all other objects.

From a wooden or metal box he removes a deck of cards. Someone shuffles them thoroughly and they are returned to the box which is handed to that person. The mystic now can pick up a crystal ball for effectiveness, or be a plain mentalist in bright light. He "sees" and names a card. The spectator removes the top one from the boxed deck, calling it and showing it to everybody. Correct. The man of mystery names another. He is proven right. Now, from his pocket, he takes a card and reveals it to be blank

faced. Saying that such a faux pas can be remedied, the apparent master of the unknown approaches several people close by and takes from under their laps or behind their ears, single "pips", putting them on the blank card where they stick. Two or three (as you wish) of these thus form, say, "Three of Clubs" in replica.

The performer now says that he need not concentrate this time, for the next of the spectator's cards must be the "Three of Clubs."



The spectator shows the next card from the box, but he cannot call it by name, for it is blank!

The performer may appear nonplussed for a second, but he "muddles through" with the explanation, "It can be only that I've somehow transferred, unintentionally, of course, the spots from your card to mine! However, my thought at this moment is that your next card is the -----." And he is shown to be correct.

From his pocket the magician now takes an envelope which he gives the person with the box of cards. "Put the next card inside, after you have looked at it, and seal the envelope." As the spectator secures the card known only to himself, the performer takes back the box. Then he takes the envelope and, stepping back to the front, proceed either to tear it to bits or burn it up.

"You all should know that I wouldn't make my deck incomplete by destroying just one card," he says, (in reproachment or with a sneer? Ed.) "I've done quite a magical feat with it. By the way, sir, what was the name of that card?"

The card's identity becoming known to all, the performer picks up the frame from off the tumbler and turns it to reveal, under glass, that called out pasteboard. He opens the back, removes the pieces of glass, and slides them apart to allow the spectator to remove his card adhering to the front piece. Fini.

Some years ago, I think while still living in Mount Vernon, New York, a magic dealer had a card box the like of which I haven't seen advertised since. It was metal and held a full deck. The flanges of the lid, when the box was closed, held in place the front long side which also was hinged to drop down. When the lid was up and the front was down it was very easy for one to remove card after card from off the top of the deck. The lid was deep enough to hold five or six cards. They were concealed at the beginning by a flap of metal to match the box, the other side of which was covered by a glued on card, back outward. When a mixed deck was put inside and the lid closed by the performer this "load" was added to the deck for the spec-

tator's subsequent removal of cards from the top. Naturally one never went past the last card which was attached to the flap as a "cover up". This piece of apparatus could be made of wood instead and find use in other tricks as well as this one. I think it should be catalogued to-day as a standard item.

Set the box with five cards. From back to face you know the first two, the third is blank, you know the fourth, and the fifth is the card later found in the frame. The "masking flap" is last, and the packet placed in the box lid. Put the deck into the box proper and leave all on your table with the lid open. From the effect the handling of it should be clear.

In your right coat pocket have a blank card daubed properly in spots with rubber cement or diachylon. In the "change pocket", that little pocket at the top edge in all coats today, put the "pips". It is practical to ink them black on their back sides. When the card is reached for, the thumb and first finger pick up the pips and then the card is brought out and transferred to the left hand which shows it blank. From persons close you reach for something and then put "pip" after "pip" onto the card's face. Nothing can be seen by even the closest people until you stick the "pip" into place each time. It is your gesture, in each case, that tells a story of from where that "pip" has "appeared" or been "found".

The frame is a puzzle, even to wise magicians. There are three pieces of glass, but only two are evident. Two plates genuinely and properly fit inside the frame to be backed up. The third is cut smaller so that it fits into the frame edges FROM THE FRONT. Onto this piece is lightly stuck a duplicate of that fifth card in the box, its face against the glass. The glass, with card face down, is laid upon the top of a tumbler on your table. The tumbler rests on its bottom with mouth upward.

This is not a new principle, one depending upon the fact that a flat object upon a glass top lends itself to the invisible where the audience in front is concerned. It is ancient as a card force, by having one already there when a shuffled deck is placed on top. In this instance, though, a sheet of glass with a card is used. The narrow side of the glass is frontwards and the card is on top, face down.

The two glasses, frame, and back, are unprepared. A spectator looks them over and then locks all together. This part is so fair and beyond the pale of trickery that it almost hurts one's conscience. However, the performer makes up for his apparent lack of underhandedness when he puts the frame onto the glass tumbler -- it goes onto the glass plate there also! Until this moment no attention has been attracted to the tumbler. It is all over before anyone notices, and any "clink" of glass against glass is excused by the frame glass hitting the tumbler's top edge.

The "fake" front is removed thru the frame and the glasses are shown front and back with card inside. Then the front glass is slid off for the card's removal. The two original glasses are merely kept together as one piece and put down before you approach the spectator.



MAGICIAN'S CONE E.G. ERVIN

Some of us elderly "bugs" often wonder why "standbys" from the performances of Herrmann and Kellar have been discarded. One of the masterpieces which lived after DeKolts was the paper cone production. The old-timers literally filled the stage with flowers, but why not, in this age, try something different using their basic principles (tried and true).

With the method I will attempt to describe, ten or a dozen silks, several flags, a glass of water or other commodities, all for future use in your program to follow, may be produced with no sleeve or body work, away from tables or chairs, and the paper cone can be shown empty unmistakably and repeatedly.

For the load: the silks and flags should be folded to six or seven inches square. Put folding flowers on the bottom if you wish to use them at the last. Upon the silks set a glass of water. A cover isn't necessary if the glass is not too full. Roll silks around glass endwise and fasten the whole load with an inch wide strip of the same paper as used in cone, leaving the strip long enough to make a handle five or six inches in length at top of load. Cut the corners of this to a point.

The cone should be of stiff wrapping paper a trifle longer than square, say 24 x 28 inches.

Your load, handle upward, is placed upon the back edge of one of your tables (or upon a servante if you use one) with the paper lying over it. The load is picked up with the fingertips behind paper as that is grasped by an extreme corner when you pass around the table as you enter, or at any later time. For ease in following the subsequent moves, and also to insure your personally proper handle length, you might mark one corner of your cone paper #1 and the opposite corner #2. Make up a practise load of anything, pin with the strip-handle and place behind #1 corner, holding both paper and handle between thumb and forefinger - we will say of left hand.

Pick up #2 corner with the right, bend paper outward, and bring up against handle of the load. Drop #1 corner, gripping handle and #2 corner in right finger tips. This movement has been used by many performers who dumped the load at this point. BUT, to go farther; show left hand empty, pick up corner #1, this time toward you, and pass it between corner #2 and load handle, gripping it in left as before, and allow #2 corner to drop. Pick up #2 corner toward you again, grip it and drop #1. Now bring up #1, grip it and drop #2. Drape it around the load which is held upright, form your cone, and make your production as best suits you. With a sufficient variety "any color" is an easy and effective request to make. Rid yourself of the handle behind one of the removed silks. A trial, with a little attention to angles, will prove its practicability.

GUM AT LARGE JACK VOSBURGH

For this perfect little bar or counter stunt two packages of chewing gum are purchased on the spot. One stick is removed from each pack. While still in their tinfoil and paper wrappers the performer tells the gums to change places. The gum of one flavor is found in the wrapper of the other, and vice versa.

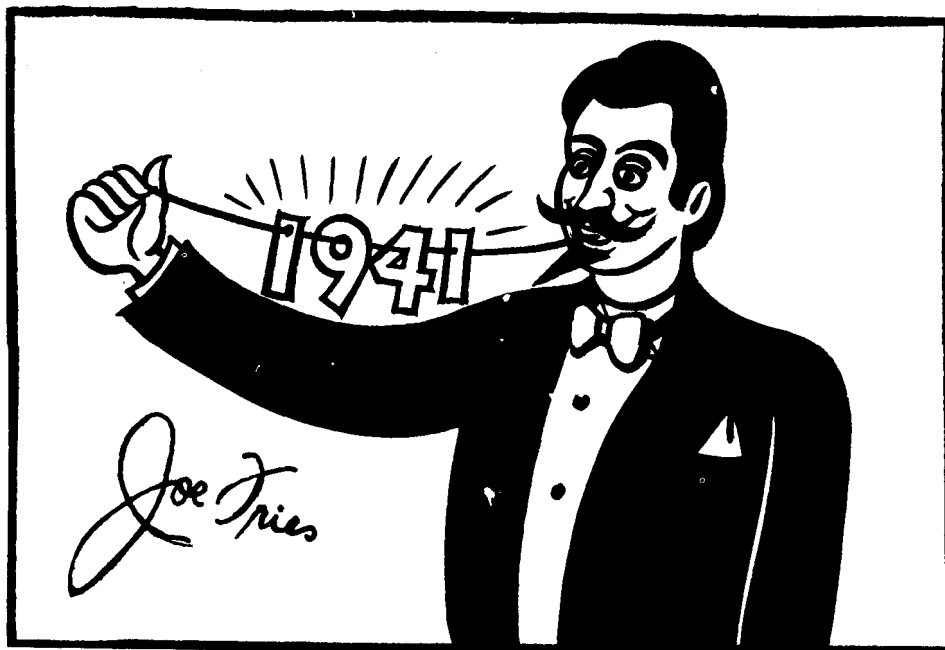
It all is a subterfuge but the conditions under which the trick is done are what make it so clean. In your pocket have a prepared stick of gum ready for any occasion. From a package of spearmint, for instance, remove one stick and slide off its paper wrapper. In its place put a wrapper from off a stick of peppermint gum. The tinfoil covering has not been disturbed.

When the proper time occurs openly buy two packs of gum; spearmint, and peppermint. In most places you can pick up from a display stall what you want without naming it. Have one of the watchers remove any one of the peppermint sticks. Meanwhile you palm out from pocket the prepared stick. Next have another person remove any one of the spearmint sticks; and as this is done you switch the unprepared peppermint stick for the prepared one (spearmint in a peppermint wrapper).

Toss the fake stick down and have second man put his hand over it. You pocket the unprepared peppermint stick. He drops his spearmint stick and you cover it with your hand.

Command the gums to change places. Both of you lift hands. Nothing seems to have happened but you're positive that something did. Whereupon you unwrap your stick (unprepared) of gum (spearmint), put it into your mouth, and chew. Nod your head and say, "Just as I thought. This is peppermint."

Your word, of course, is doubted. Ask the other fellow to try his stick. He unwraps and chews upon it. You're right. It's spearmint! And - everything in sight can be examined.



EDITRIVIA

We aren't running opposition to other publications with the greeting card displays in this issue. They aren't advertisements. We requested ideas and print them as received. Here is the thought. You, you or you might like to have a magical type of yuletide announcement for certain friends -- and certain club agents or committeemen on your list.

The ones reproduced herein can be personalized for yourself at little cost. Follow thru;

Cut out the one you like best. Paste it, nicely centered, on a sheet of white paper exactly 6 1/2 x 8 inches in size. Next cut out a piece of paper of a size to cover the signed name on the card you have chosen. Paste it over that name. With black ink write your name in that place.

Take the finished product to any Photo-Offset printing concern in your locality, or mail it to Gray Photo Offset Corp., 216 East 45th St., N.Y.C. The design, with your name, will be reproduced on 100 8 1/2 x 10 20lb. stock sheets for \$2. Additional hundreds are only 25 cents each. You can get 1000 of them for \$4.25 if you wish and use any surplus to stuff up the chimney. It might be a cheap way to prevent Santa Claus getting in with a bill for those presents you'll have to buy for young Dante and little Dell.

Whether you pick Voz Lyons' "Xmas Wish of a Rabbit", Clayt Rawson's "Santa, Supreme Sorcerer", or Joe Fries' "Woodcut of a Wonderworker", it all means a happy and sincere thought. We wish we could draw. Our thoughts, just for our readers, would be very, very kind, provided the cats and their kittens didn't mess up the ink.

Dante, despite his showmanship on-stage plus his super press representation off-stage, isn't wearing well personally with U.S. magi as far as he has gone. The "nayas" far outweigh the "ayes" AFTER the show is over and the local stage long planned events in honor of the one man who, with a colored background and national publicity tie-ups, cannot help but give magic a boost in the public mind. It has long since been proven that an "outsider" can intrigue audiences more than can an entertainer from home. Hoboken chorus girls have "thumbed" their way to Europe to return as glamour stars. Successes invariably have talent, but it seems as if it takes a "label" to make the powers that be sit up and perk their ears and wipe the film from their eyes. Londoners have said the same of Americans in their midst.

There's little doubt but that we are a nation of magi who will turn somersaults to welcome anyone who can do tricks passably, especially the persons classed as professionals. With Dante's return from foreign lands after 14 years of exile while the Thurston menage paraded as THE magic show, we boys have been and are agog at the thought of the art's return to full evening performance favor.

To date, after three stops following an unprecedented N.Y.C. response (not from the profit standpoint but from the amount of publicity garnered -- of plenty value in the hinterlands it should seem), the show definitely is not making money as compared to Dante's former foreign reports.

And so we have friends of magic who are willing to applaud lustily, even at the drop of a gimmick, the wing-wise glance when a thread breaks or an assistant isn't on time, and the

dull click of a gun hammer upon a dud shell or empty chamber. Likewise we have would-be friends of any magician for himself alone, perhaps, in the case of professionals, as a sop to our amateur vanity.

Few of us overdo the friendship part. A meeting and even half-way cordial handshake with possibly an autograph in our pet book is enough to make us a life long booster. But maybe Dante has come back to a new generation of magic lovers, plenty of whom had never heard of him, with the attitude, because once he had a dinky club act, then half interest in a backlot Chicago magic shop, later elevated himself to a hop-skip-jump opera house and tent show with Thurston's name above his as sponsor, then took himself to other lands where he built a bankroll and reputation to return home a notable occasion, that he can afford to "brush-off" his eager-to-be satellites.

We're not deducting one iota of credit from Dante's success or his showmanship. We're not peeved personally. Dante has been pleasant and convivial to and with us on several occasions. We just don't like the barrage of letters tell-about, not his "sleights", but his "slights". It all appears inconsiderate from one who is planning to retire among us.

Have you sent a postcard to Leo Rullman yet? From 203 W. 81st St., N.Y.C., he mails you his #43 Catalogue of rare books on conjuring. Almost before we were born Leo started building his business on a strictly reliable basis. --- Life mag (Nov. 18, p31) had a great big picture of a hand with a piece of lead under the thumb nail. (It's a wonder some dealer didn't furnish a regular nail gimmick.) The dodge is used by ballot counters during elections, not, as some think, for making an X in a particular spot to benefit a candidate, but for making a smear or two at random so that the ballot will be thrown out. --- Incidentally, that Liberty mag writeup of Dante by George Jean Nathan, a critic, contained several exposures which were eliminated from the copy by editor Fulton Oursler who generously gave credit for the cuts to the S.A.M.

Have you heard about the fellow who, reportedly, has invented a better one-man levitation than that ascribed to Winston Freer? Pictures, no less, next week. --- Max Holden hit an entire N.Y. columnist's daily stint lately, it having to do with Max's various emporiums and a discourse on magic and amateurs in general. No exposes unless "sold a thousand cigaret vanishers and reproducers" line applies to one who makes his living using such apparatus. George Britt, the writer, was a reporter assigned to Houdini, when, around 1925, that highwayman of mediums exposed P.L.O.A. Keeler in Lily Dale, N.Y. Remember that later day expose of Keeler, now active in Washington, D.C., away back on page 376 of The Jinx? --- Burling Hull keeps turning from side to side all night now because that "Encore Rope Trick" being marketed was his principle advertised during the early 1920's.

Was that painting on Liberty's Dec 7 cover taken from Roberta Byron's entrance appearance in that superlative act? She and her sister Marion have recently completed a Philadelphia Food Show engagement where, for a coffee concern, they did 50 shows in ten days. The point of this scuib, though, is that the check managed to get into the four figure class, so help us. Maybe we should put away our gadgets and concentrate upon having a couple of daughters like that. Gabbatha!! *The Anunnaki*