

Dustin' It Off!

How everything old
can be new
again!



Dustin' It Off

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ISBN 1-932086-80-3

Foreword

So, what is this little book about? Is it full of original magic? Certainly not. Does it brim with slick presentations worthy of the TV super stars or street magicians? Nope. Well, then what the heck is it?

This book is intended to be a face lift and a shot in the butt! Years ago, Julie Sobanski and I, (Dean Montalbano) co-wrote a column in Genii magazine called “Tarbell Treasures.” The basic premise of that article was that we started with Volume One, Lesson One, and each month examined the next lesson. Each of us would select any item at random and try to update it and make it fresh and new. Readers were also invited to write in and share their own creative ideas. Sometimes, these dusted off items were presentations; sometimes they were complete re-works where a whole new effect AND presentation came from a tried and true method.

Why did we choose The Tarbell Course In Magic, published by D. Robbins, as a resource? Well, we felt and feel that this set of books collectively is one of the single most valuable basic reference texts for every magician, mentalist and even escape artist. It is often over looked because of the age of the material- and yet Doug Henning, David Copperfield, Harry Blackstone and others have performed items from these books in their shows and on national television. It is also a popular resource owned by many magicians and before you spend any money on another trick- we suggest you invest your money in this must-have resource.

One thing we debated about was how much of each “method” to share in this book since it is really a book about creativity, ideas, and creative thinking. In other words, getting in to the idea of taking an old idea and.... Dusting It Off. In the end, I think we ended up with a happy medium respectful to everyone. Most of the items in this book are from some of our published and unpublished material from that old column. Many of these effects are well known and published bordering on being public domain. However we are going to refer you to the section and volume of The Tarbell Course In Magic for effects that come from there. If you have a decent background in magic you will probably know the effects and methods. What we are sharing are new presentations and ways of looking at old tired magic; a way to make it modern, different, new or YOU! In some cases, we will offer more details on workings, or when we have made further additions in methodology we will share more of that as well.



Toward the back of the book, several of the routines are for marketed effects which are old school, well-known dealer effects. Again, if you've been in magic for a while, you probably know the workings of these or can figure them out. However, as they are based on dealer effects we won't go in to them in any detail. We share these presentations for your enjoyment and would like to let you know that almost all of these have been audience tested! Many are geared toward children's entertainers, while another bunch feature a spooky theme.

Our styles of writing, scripting and type-setting are also very different, and we made a decision to KEEP it that way, so you retain a flavor of who is writing and speaking and when. We hope that makes sense and the alteration from quotes to brackets and so forth serves to act as tone of voice.

Here and there we will try to offer little ideas and insights into our thought processes and get YOUR creative juices flowing. Hopefully, this will make you start thinking about what YOU want to dust off from your repertoire!

Scrabbleishus!

By DM

Here— we started with a coin trick, and turned it into something more interesting.

The performer spreads a small, 12" opaque cloth on the table.

"Do you know what this is?" he asks. The audience will state that it is a cloth.

"WRONG-O! (Doing your best Rod Serling) What you are looking at is a doorway into another dimension. *The SCRABBLE DIMENSION!*"

In an effort to demonstrate his claim, the performer displays a scrabble tile. The tile is placed in the DEAD center of the cloth. One at a time the corners are folded over the tile until it is covered. A spectator is asked to feel that the tile is still there, which it is.

"What happens in the 'Scrabble Dimension' is that the tiles are actually SWALLOWED up and disappear!" As he says that, the performer unfolds the cloth, flicking it out in front of him. The tile vanishes!



The performer allows half of the cloth to rest on the table again as he says, "The other day I asked someone if they knew where the tile went and they said 'I don't know, perhaps it vaporized!' They were right!"

The performer flicks the cloth out again to show the words "I Don't Know" have appeared on the cloth. They are actually bonded to the fabric!

Method:

This is based on "*Vanishing Coin in Handkerchief*" from Volume One, Lesson 4.

Here we have applied the basic vanish to an object OTHER than a coin, and given it a bit of a routine.

The rear side of the cloth has the appropriate words written on it. The cloth should be thick enough to prevent this from showing through.

After doing the vanish as it was described, allow the front half of the cloth to touch the table.

When you get to the line "I don't know," let your hands, holding the back two corners, come forward and pick up the FRONT two corners. At this time you let go of the rear two corners. The rear (printed) side of the cloth will now be exposed and the tile will be hanging in the secret hiding place

ENJOY!



So here we see the first basic principle when getting creative: ask questions. Here we asked the question, "What else?" In this case the "What else" was, "What else can I use this method with, other than a coin?" The result was a fun routine based on a prop that most audiences will be familiar with. You could also use "Boggle" cubes, fake gem stones, pirate doubloons, bones, or any other small item and generate an entirely new routine and effect. Think about your favorite invisible thread routine, levitation, zombie gimmick or otherwise- and ask yourself "What Else?"

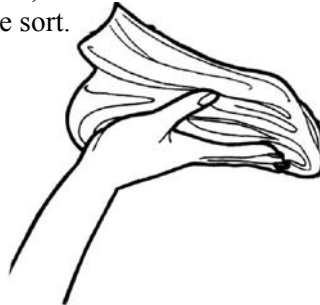


In the following routine, Julie took the basic Miser's Dream and made a fun fairy tale routine out of it.

Now, think about where you could go from here... You could do effects using words, psychic effects, spelling tricks. You could use a stack of tiles like a stack of coins or stacked checker effect. You could cause one of the tiles to miraculously expand in size several times.

How about this: Take a tile, wrap it in a sheet of (double) newspaper, and cause it to expand to a 12 inch square plaque of wood.

If this plaque of wood was already equipped with a matching flap (like a flap slate) the back of which is covered with newspaper, you are now set to make the tile change to a different letter, be used for a slate writing effect, or anything of the sort.



NEPO EMASES

By JS

Want some ideas for the time honored coin pail? Here you go....

Effect: Coins appear at your fingertips and are tossed in a pail.

<Soft strains of Arabian Music is heard. The magicienne enters wearing a turban, carrying a small pail.>

"I would like to take everyone back in time...just for a little while, to the time of the Arabian Nights."

<The music gets a bit louder for a few seconds, then trails off into soft strains for the rest of the routine.>

"I would like to tell you the story of...Ali Baba. He was a poor wood cutter in Persia. One day he discovered the secret cavern of the 40 thieves. It was a secluded place in the forest, filled with the thieves' stolen riches."

"The cavern was protected by a door. Ah, but it wasn't any ordinary door. This door had a magic spell placed upon it by an old sorcerer and only those who knew what the magic words were, could enter."

<Introduce pail> "This pail was found inside the cavern. It too has a special spell, one to make coins appear. Only those who know the magic words can make coins appear in this pail. Watch. NEPO EMASES!"

<A clink of a coin is heard. Show the coin. Go to someone in the audience, hand the coin to them, and have them drop it back in the pail.>

"Wave your hand over the pail."

<Hold the pail so the child can wave their hands over it, but not look into it. You say the words.> "NEPO EMASES!"

<Another coin clinks in the pail. Go to another kid and have them hold the pail.>

"Watch! NEPO EMASES!"



<Produce a coin from midair and drop it in the pail.>

"Kids, help me say the magic words on the count of 3.

1....2....3....NEPO EMASES!"

<Gently touch the kids nose and let a cascade of coins fall into the bucket.>

Based loosely on "The Misers Dream" Lesson 23; Magic With Coins

Ok, fun beginning to a kiddie effect, now where ELSE could you go with this? Why not do it with cookies, or jewels? Skip the bucket and use a turban. At the end, unravel the turban showing the jewels have vanished. Then use any version of the *Cut and Restored Rope* and or turban that you like (many to be found in any magic book you care to look at,) or perhaps a *Keller Rope Tie*. Most turbans are long enough to be used with a *Slick Post Escape* which you can make at home or purchase from your local magic dealer.

After that, the cloth could be used to go in to a silk fountain routine, large load production or more. What else can YOU think of to do with this theme or this effect?



Of SPICE And Men

By DM

At a recent dinner party several well acquainted friends were locked in an embroiled debate. On one side we had the 'believers', those who claimed that paranormal occurrences DID happen. On the other side, rest those who KNEW that things of this nature were pure BUNK!

"If you believe in this falderal, let's see you prove it!" one of the skeptics spouted.

Just then, a rather mysterious fellow entered. He wasn't terribly tall, nor terribly good looking. His hair was full, dark and combed straight back. Small hints of grey crept into his mane as proof of his life long strain. His temples were somewhat sunken, and his brow was ever raised in doubting impertinence.

The stranger spoke, " My name is Stark. I couldn't help but hear your argument and I wish to offer a bit of proof for the floundering cause of belief!.....gather 'round."

The other patrons of the restaurant had left during our debate. We had the hall for the balance of the night, and figured nothing could distract us.

We all sat round a table with this mysterious 'Stark' sitting across from us.

This unusual man had one of the skeptics remove a package of sugar from the table. He examined it and handed it to Stark.

Stark neatly tore the package open and offered an unusual demonstration.

Several members of the group were asked to taste small quantities of the sugar....It was definitely sugar.

Stark then had one of the most adamant of the skeptics open his hand, and poured the contents of the packet in his palm.

The skeptic, a man named Ron if I recall, quickly closed his fist around the pile of sugar.



Stark reached over, lightly touching Ron's fist, and then tossed the empty packet on the table.

Stark placed both of his hands on Ron's fist, and began to mumble what I would call nonsense words.

Obviously these words meant something to the sugar!

Ron played along, claimed that he could feel slight movement within his hand.

Stark instructed Ron to open his palm. The sugar was still there, at least that's what we all thought.

We were told to TASTE the sugar and, to EVERYONE'S amazement, the sugar had become a pile of SALT! Stark had actually transformed the sugar to another substance!

We rose to accuse Stark of trickery, but the door was shutting behind him as he left..... Alas, we may never know the truth!

Method:

Based on Volume 1; Lesson 6, The Thumb Tip.

Don't underestimate the power of the thumb tip!

The salt was concealed within the tip which was secreted behind the packet of sugar. When the first tastes were allowed, they were taken right from the packet. When the sugar was supposedly dumped into the palm,, the packet was pinched allowing the salt to flow from the thumb tip. This creates the perfect illusion.

As Stark leaned forward to touch Ron's fist, he let his hand drop to his side and he dumped the sugar onto the floor.

The rest is simply presentation, but oh how important it is!

ENJOY!

A note about Bizarre magic, or Magick, with a "K." Back when this was written, the bizarre magick movement was still young. Those of us who



embraced this “weird stuff” were looked at a bit askance. Today, there are more and more bizarre performers and those who have realized that one of the things that bizarre magick teaches us is that the power is in the story and the performance NOT the methods.

Often bizarre magick relies upon the simplest of methods, woven through the most dramatic of stories, to create a sense of horror, suspense, or joy within the heart of the spectator.

Authors such as Ron Dayton, in his *Darker Light* and *By Darkness Influenced*; Dean Montalbano in his *Stark Collection*, and Shane in his *Pentalogy* collection have offered us the practical, the poetic and the positively chilling!

Investigate bizarre magick and you too may be compelled to explore what a bit of coffin dust, melodrama, and a good ‘yarn’ can do to dust off YOUR old magic ideas and props.

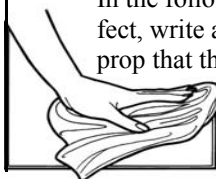


So much of what we traditionally think of as bizarre magick is based on simple methodologies draped in a bit of melodrama. Thumb tips have been used to produce and vanish things for years. Of course the issue with this is that the spectators are LOOKING for the object that vanished afterward.

Here the approach was: “How can I use this gimmick in a way that is out of the norm?”

In the following item, we take a standard effect, write a fun little story, add a kid friendly prop that they are familiar with, and Voila!

Something new and fun.



The Genii & The Checker

By JS— Her first, so many years ago!

Effect: A checker disappears, reappears, and melts through a see-through scarf. In the end both the checker and scarf vanish.

"People say that seeing is believing. Sometimes though, seeing isn't believing---believing is seeing. I'd like to show you something that you're going to have a hard time believing, using this see-through scarf and checker."

<The magicienne displays a see through scarf and a single checker.>

"Check out the scarf and checker." <Hand both out for examination.>

<Get both items back. Direct yourself to the person who examined the checker.>

"When you were looking at this checker, I don't know if you noticed this crown imprint on it."

<Show it so everybody can see.>

"I've noticed that a strange thing happens. With one rub of the crown and snap, it activates its magical properties. An invisible genii surrounds it, like an aura. This Genii protects the checker from trouble and keeps it safe. If I were to try and capture it..."

<Do French drop.>

"...the Genii would make it disappear and then make it reappear, somewhere else."

<Show checker has vanished and produce it in the air, at the finger tips. Reintroduce the scarf.>

"If we take this scarf and place the checker in the center... trapping it..."

<Have a spectator hold the checker in the scarf, emphasizing that it's really in there. Take it back and flip the scarf over to show the checker.>



"It's in there. One rub of the crown, and..."

<Have the spectator rub the crown. Quickly flip over the scarf (secret move per Lesson 4). Now coin is behind scarf. Twist the scarf so the checker appears to be trapped. Ask spectator to hold out their hand. Hold scarf on the other side of the twist, so that the checker is facing down. The checker automatically drops in the spectators hand when the twist unwinds.>

"...it melts right through the scarf. If too many people rub the crown and snap....."

<Have several people rub the checker and snap their fingers.>

"The magical properties over activate..."

<Do another French drop. Show the checker has vanished.>

"Making the checker disappear forever."

<With checker palmed in hand, casually reach to get silk pull. Ditch checker.>

"Gee, I guess we don't need the scarf anymore."

<Poke the scarf in the pull, gently let the pull snap back in your jacket or coat. Gesture that the scarf is gone.>

Based on Lesson 4; Coin Through Hank.

Here, a classic is combined with a utility item to make a nice routine. This could just as easily be a witch's talisman wrapped in the dead witch's shawl.

Semi-sheer handkerchiefs work very well with this, as they can always be seen, and lend themselves to a great many silk effects. They seem as if they can not conceal anything, yet combined with this technique and/or black art they can be used for switches wherein it seems everything can always be seen.



Ashes To Ashes & Dust to Dust

By JS

Effect: A ring is borrowed. It's crushed to glitter and reappears in your key case.

"Does anyone have a finger ring I may borrow?"

<Have two thumb tips in your pocket, one filled with silver glitter, and the other one with gold glitter. Depending on whether or not someone hands you a gold ring or a silver ring, secretly put on the thumb tip with the appropriate glitter.>

"Wow, that's a very nice ring."

<Admire the ring in the non-thumb tip hand.>

"You know what this ring looks like? It looks like the ring that Superman gave Lois Lane. Do you remember when Superman took a piece of coal..."

<Using "Ring Flight," put the ring in the hand without the thumb tip.>

"...and put it in his hands and squeezed it..."

<Bring other hand, over to cover ring cupping it. Let ring snap back to key case. Slowly ease thumb tip into hand, slightly moving hands to hide thumb movement. Bring thumb back outside with fingers and dump the glitter.>

"...and changed it into a big diamond!"

<Slip thumb tip back on and slowly open hands letting glitter dust sprinkle out of hands showing them empty.>

"Geesh, I'm sorry! We didn't start with coal, did we?"

<Look disappointed. Play with glitter dust. Pick up envelope...

"You know I hear that jewelers can do wonders. They ought to be able to just melt that right back for you. <Smile> No no, I'm just kidding."



<Take envelope and toss it on the floor.>

"I'm so sorry. I'll pay for it."

<Ditch thumb tip in pocket, feel around for wallet.>

"I seem to have forgotten my purse and wallet, sorry. The only thing I have with me are my car keys."

<Reach to get key case--ring flight. Flick the keys out. Let them notice the ring among the keys.>

"Why lookie there. It looks like a ring. Does that ring look familiar?"

<Unclip it.>

"Is that your ring? Thank you so much."

Based loosely on Lesson 6: The Thumb Tip.



This item was topical when the Superman movies were in theaters, and will be when the 2006 version comes out. The neat thing is, often you can take a piece of pop-culture and adapt it to an existing piece. In the case of certain items, the inherent nature of the item may lend itself to other effects. Think Rubik's Cube, The Clapper, the Survivor TV Show, I-pods and any other current or long ago fads. Now ask what would take advantage of a quality of those items and stretch it to an impossible extreme.

Looking to the next item, there are millions of variations on the gypsy thread. Here is a simple little idea-- think of expanding the comedy routine and do it with a tooth brush hanging out of your mouth. Continue on with a vanishing tooth brush, or bizarre swallowing effect. You could go anywhere!

The thread COULD also be a spider's silk, or left over from a Cat's cradle, by using a theme of childhood game, take the spectators back to their younger days.



Flossophy

By JS

Effect: A piece of dental floss is torn to pieces and restores itself to one long piece.

"As a magicienne, people always want me to perform some sort of little miracle, to prove that I really am a magicienne. I really love doing magic, but sometimes people pressure you for that "instant miracle" and it's usually at the goofiest times.

I remember one time when I went camping with a group of my friends, deep in the woods of East Troy. We slept outside in platform tents and the only running water that we had, was from an old rustic pump. One early morning, as I struggled to brush my teeth, toothbrush in mouth, my friend asked to see one of those "instant miracles." Never one to let opportunity go to waste, I picked up my dental floss, and proceeded to tear off small sections of floss."

<Grab the piece, concealing the knotted floss. Tear off 5 to 6 strands.>

"I gathered all but one of the strands in my hand and rolled them into a little ball."

<Take the ball and grip it between two fingers, while pretending to adhere it to the other strand. Show the ball of floss stuck to the strand. Gently blow, restore the floss to one long piece. Hand out for examination, ditch the ball of floss in pocket or ground.>

"With my toothbrush still in my mouth, my friends looked at me in amazement. For they, and you, have just seen an instant miracle."

Method:

Based on "Kellar's Cut and Restored Cord"
Lesson 7; Impromptu Tricks.

Like the original cut and restored cord, this is handled in the same way.

Note: Using the waxed kind of floss works the best.



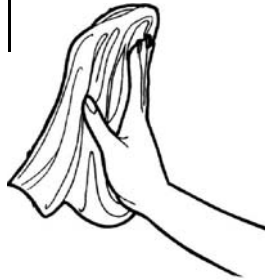
The set up: From a floss container, with a closable lid, unroll at least a foot of floss. Begin loosely coiling it around your two fingers. Stop when you get about an inch and a half from the end, which is still attached to the spool inside the container.

Start balling up the coiling and wrap floss around it so it looks like a tight knot. This floss ball has to look like the other ends of floss you're going to twirl into a ball. Tuck the floss knot into the inside of the floss container, but leave an end sticking out. When you open the container act natural like you are picking up the strand of floss. Actually, you will grab the knot and conceal it between your thumb and first finger. Tear off a small section, and continue to do that 6 more times.

Strip the other strands out still holding on to the floss knot. Twirl the loose ends into a ball. Grip the ball of loose ends between your fingers, but pretend to stick it on the single strand of floss. Show the ball of floss on the single strand. Blow, and gently pull the ends apart slowly letting the ends untangle.

Now, for some further thought.... how about adding a breakaway toothbrush? Perhaps a double ended toothbrush with dentures attached as a site gag? Use a toothbrush gimmicked as in Timothy Wenk's, "Mislead" and do toothbrush through toilet paper.

In Volume 7 of Tarbell is a REALLY cute effect based on misdirection called "Ear It Is." Use this as a way to vanish the tooth brush and have it reappear tucked behind your ear. You could also do a vanish ala the "Flipstick", also found in Volume 7.



An Unusual Prediction

By JS

Effect: A card that is selected appears written on the magicienne's forearm.

"Mind reading and Palm reading... did you ever stop to realize that those two art forms are connected by something?"

"Really they are.

Mind reading <Point to head.>

and palm reading <Point to palm.>

Mind reading <Point to head and follow down to shoulder, down forearm.>

and palm reading" <Point to palm.>

"Those two art forms are connected by... your forearm." <Roll up sleeve.>

"Tonight, I thought that we would try something that has never been tried before... forearm reading."

"It's a little like mind reading... Sir I'm going to attempt to read your mind. Aha! 20 and no. I just answered two questions he was thinking of. He asked how old I was and if I was a real Princess." (Julie's stage persona is the Princess Of Magic.)

"And it's a little like palm reading. You sir, have you ever had your palm read?" <Playfully slap it.>

<Take his hand and look like your reading it.> "Hmmm... it says here that you have the secret desire to date a magicienne." <Smile.>

"Your forearm, like mind reading can read a thought, and like palm reading can predict the future. Tonight we are going to test the ability that my forearm has in predicting a future event."

<Take out a deck of cards and shuffle them.>

"I'm going to have this gentleman here select a card. <Force the K of clubs.>

"Ok, I'm going to turn around and I'd like you to mentally get an image of the card in your mind. In fact, take this piece of paper and write the name



of the card down. I want you to really mentally lock in that card. Take the paper, fold it in quarters and set it in this ash tray. Carefully set it on fire and let it burn. Let me know when everything is done."

"Let's review what has just taken place. A card was selected and hidden, and I have no way of knowing what that card is. You wrote the name of the card on a piece of paper and burned it, which brings us to ash. Using my forearm, and a little of this ash, let's see what my forearm will reveal."
<Reveal the king of clubs written on your arm.>

Tip: Make sure that you have extra ash in the tray.

Based on "The Numbers on the Arm"; Lesson 9; Math Mysteries.



There have been LOTS of historic examples of this effect including John LeClair's Soothsaying Soot!

You sexy ladies could make use of your feminine advantages and do this on a leg, While you body builder type men could do it on a bicep or Pec.

If you need to set this way in advance, you can use rubber cement or post-it-note glue in place of soap to set up the writing, just check to make sure your skin doesn't react badly to either.

The extra preparation for this effect is really worth it, it really takes an audience by surprise.



The Ring Of Doom

By DM

"How many of you have seen or read the "Lord Of The Rings" Series by J.R.R. Tolkien?" asks the performer as he places a small velvet pouch on the table.

"You may recall that there was an elfish ring that figured heavily in the series. It was the charge of one of the hobbits to take that ring, and cast it deep into the crack of a volcano to destroy it.

The ring, you see, was far from normal! It actually had a mind of its own. IN FACT, it controlled who found it, and who lost it...

It just so happens that I have such a ring!"

With that bit of background set, the performer removes a small, simple ring from within the pouch. He offers it to a spectator to examine, but cautions him not to wear it lest he fall under the ring's spell.

The performer tries to demonstrate just HOW the ring can control who 'owns' it at any given time.

The performer places it on his finger, but it is much too large, and so slides off when his hand is tilted.

"If the ring wished to stay with me, it would become too tight to remove! But as it does not wish to remain on my hand, there is little I can do to keep it there."

To demonstrate, the performer slides the ring on his finger and TRAPS it there with a rubber band. Each finger has the rubber band looped around the tip, thus imprisoning the ring on the performer's hand.

The performer tilts the hand with the ring over the pouch.

Passing his free hand over the ring for a moment, the ring drops softly upon the pouch!

"Likewise, if I wanted to keep the ring off, I could not stop it if it wanted me to wear it!"



The performer places the ring on the tip of his finger, ABOVE the rubber band. His hand passes over the ring for a moment, and it instantly penetrates the rubber band and rests at the base of his finger.

The performer removes the rubber band, and then slides the ring off of his hand.

The rubber band is set aside and the ring is carefully held at his finger tips.

"I know that you doubt what I say. You probably believe that you could easily put this ring on your finger, and that is true... IF THE RING WISHED YOU TO!

I have served this ring for many years and it has NO DESIRE for a new guardian. Please TRY to put your finger through the ring!"

The spectator will try, and get the SHOCK OF HIS LIFE when he finds that the ring is now SOLID!!!!

Yes, that's right, the center of the ring is now completely solid!

Method:

This is based on "The Penetrating Ring" from Volume 1, Lesson #7 of the Tarbell course. The only real addition is the kicker ending.

You will need two simple band style rings that are too big for your finger and easily slide off. One of them is filled either with solder, glue, epoxy, clay, or fiberglass resin. Paint this with silver or gold paint to match the ring.

The solid ring is concealed under the pouch. When you place the rubber band aside, move the pouch, and steal the solid ring. Any simple switch can be used to switch the two rings. A shuttle pass, Downs pass, modified french drop, whatever you please. Then, hold the ring at your finger tips so the spectator looks at the edge and can't see the solid center. Watch his face when he tries to insert his finger!

ENJOY!





In the former effect, we basically see one of Dean's favorite approaches when it comes to updating an oldie, and that is to give it a kicker and take it a little bit further. Wrap the whole thing in a theme or story that justifies an otherwise peculiar process of wrapping a rubber band around your fingers, and you have taken a puzzle and made it a fun routine.

This routine was written way before the modern remakes of the Tolkein books, but that recent series makes this a very nice, topical routine.

One thing to keep in mind when dusting off an old effect is your own personality. Dean was always a fan of the Lord Of The Rings series, and semi-creepy fantasy theme routine fit his personality. Julie is more about fairy tales, I could definitely see her taking the same idea and making it a story about a genii ring and three wishes. Think Harry Anderson, and this would become some kind of gambling con where he, as a young'un, met a man who bet him he couldn't guess where the finger ring would be. I think that having a basic idea of who you are as a performer is something one really **MUST** consider when creating your own magic because it will help you realize when something isn't a comfortable fit.

Red Marks The Card follows from Julie, and here she combines several effects as well, and gives them her own twist.

