



**CLASSIC
SECRETS OF
MAGIC**
BRUCE ELLIOTT

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CLASSIC SECRETS OF MAGIC

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Anyone who has seen a magician perform has almost certainly seen one or more of the tricks explained in this book. For these are great tricks of the magic profession, tricks that have proved perennially spectacular in performances on the stage, on television, or in private audiences.

The author explains first the basic scheme of each trick, then discusses the possibilities for variation and expansion as developed by a number of famous magicians. Each of the classic tricks included here is methodically described in detail and illustrated in line drawings; none of them involves expensive or complicated apparatus. From the cups-and-balls tricks dating back at least to the time of the Egyptian pyramids to Houdini's famous needle swallowing feat, these pages are full of invaluable information for magicians, beginners or advanced performers.

*Illustrated with over
sixty full-page line cuts*

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BRUCE ELLIOTT**

Illustrated by STANLEY JAKS

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CLASSIC SECRETS OF MAGIC

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FOR JUDY

The cutest trick I know

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Preface

I HAVE many crotchets as the result of twenty-five years of interest in and appreciation of magic. These likes and dislikes have reflected themselves in my choice of material. There has not been space enough to go into the reasons why I chose one trick at the expense of another. It will have to suffice to say that I think there have been cogent reasons involved in my selections.

Since magic can be all things to all men, it would be absurd to say that the tricks described here are the *only* classics of magic. No such claim is made. Two critical judgments were made, however. First, all the tricks described have proved their stature by having lived for years and, second, each trick is one about which I have some personal, specialized knowledge. For instance, there is no doubt that a trick like the die box is a classic. But I have never performed it, and I know nothing more about the trick than its actual *modus operandi*. Therefore, I have not included it in these pages. The same objections have ruled out the many wonderful silk tricks, thimble routines, and the like which are truly classics.

What I have attempted to give you are the best, most efficient, and in many cases closely guarded secret methods of performing those classics about which I know most.

I have restricted those tricks which demand advance preparation or special apparatus, since I think that by definition the true classics of magic require little of these. In most instances the tricks you will

learn here are those which can be performed under the most difficult circumstances, with a minimum of manipulative hazard and a maximum of effect on the audience.

Although I have described the various tricks in the course of this book in such wise that the complete beginner should have no trouble in the execution of any of them, it might be wiser if the tricks were learned in ascending order of difficulty.

The first, simplest routine for the cups and balls in Chapter 12 is a fine primer of all-around magic, since there are no complexities involved at all. From this simple beginning I would suggest that the student then progress to the chapter on coins called "The Miser's Dream Come True!" Once one has learned how to handle the small balls used in the cups and balls routines and the proper way to manipulate coins, one will be well on the way to a mastery of magic involving small objects. I would then suggest Chapter 11 as a good cornerstone for learning to handle a deck of cards. Once the ambitious card routine has been learned, all card tricks will become easier.

From this almost purely sleight-of-hand foundation I would suggest that the reader then learn a routine with the egg bag and the rice bowls, since these are tricks involving some slight preparation (in that a device is employed).

The razor blade trick and the pipes that smoke without tobacco or flame (Chapters 10 and 2) should be learned next, as these demand a degree of presentation and a flair for showmanship which should follow hard on the heels of learning the pure mechanics of magic.

Once these tricks, or routines rather, are learned, I would suggest that the student proceed to one of the billiard ball routines in Chapter 9. From then on the reader should choose those tricks that appeal to him most.

With these as a background any beginning magician will be well

on his way to a mastery of what is to me the most fascinating of all hobbies or professions.

The interested reader can explore this subject further in an earlier book of mine called *Magic as a Hobby*. In those pages he will find a great variety of fine magic, all of which is easy to present and astonishing in effect.

There has been but one aim in the over-all plan in *The Classic Secrets of Magic*. I have tried to make this the kind of book I would like to have read when I first became interested in magic. I hope these pages will save you as much time and work as they would have me had I found such a book a quarter of a century ago.

BRUCE ELLIOTT

New York City
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