

Ex Libris by Joaquin M. Ayala, Ph.D.

Hello folks and welcome to the Ex Libris article for September 2018! I do not know about you, but I am ready for the autumn season to begin and these horrible, hot and steamy days to be over with! This month we see the school year start up again and with that, right around the corner, is October, which means to many of us, Halloween season! If you attended the August meeting and sat in with **Mr. Peshick**, one of the books he mentioned a lot is the one we are going to focus on this month. It is called **Tales of Enchantment - The Art of Magic** by *Walt Anthony*. It is a 252-page hardcover book published by *Leaping Lizards Magic* in 2010. As of this writing, it is also available as a softcover from Penguin Magic.

This is one of my favorite magic books of all time because it takes some familiar effects and gives them a bizarre twist or a wonderful storyline. You see, most bizarre and storytelling magic books focus on the close-up arena, but this book is the first to focus on those effects for a parlour/stage setting.

You will see effects like *Professor's Nightmare* set to a story about three monks, each with a different body type, a *Sucker Die Box* with a tea chest theme and a story about a young druid apprentice who learns a valuable lesson, and there is also a most wonderful and perfect story which illustrates what makes a *Light and Heavy Chest* is so heavy, and then so light! The point of this book is not to teach you how to perform the mechanics of every effect, rather how to create a better script or story or background for each of them. As such he does not necessarily describe in detail the mechanics of every effect, but it will be easy to figure them out and see how they work within the context of the presentations given.

There is a great story in here for those of you who have an old Lota Vase and wondered how you would present it – it may be *just* a story, but the faeries will make you ponder about the human condition. Another story used for a PK Touch effect harkens back to the horrors of World War II and the death camps of Nazi Germany – a very emotional and deeply touching story when presented well, and it requires nothing more than a feather, plenty of practice and good storytelling. Examples of some other classic prop-based effects that are given the Walt Anthony treatment include the *Haunted Key*, *The Rice Bowls*, *The Zombie* and the *Milk Pitcher*.

In between these effects, Walt talks about the more important aspects of this particular genre, including character development, costuming, staging, ageing of props, setting the mood, creating the proper atmosphere, caring for your audience and much, much more. These are the most important

aspects of this book and even though some of them are rather specific to the bizarre/storytelling genre, you can still cherry pick the lessons and apply them to any other form of magic. These are the true golden nuggets...but the rest of the book is just so yummy too!

That is all for this month folks – join me again next month as I dive deeper into this rabbit hole and explore yet another bizarre book! – **J.M.A.**