

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

Hello everyone and welcome to the Ex Libris article for March 2019! As I write this, I am still reflecting on the Banquet that we held on the 23rd of February – WOW! What a night! There was quite a diverse crowd in attendance, given there were current members, past members and even a few guests. This gave me an idea of a book that I have enjoyed many times in the past and that is the one we will focus on this month. Which book?
Tangled Web by **Eric Mead**.

This book was published by Hermetic Press (**Stephen Minch**) in 2006 as a small, 238-page hardcover edition and illustrated by the late **Earl Oakes**. The book sold out rather quickly and was not reprinted. The book received great praise from the likes of **Teller** (who wrote the introduction) and many other well-known magicians.

This book was written by Eric at the urging of many who were familiar with his work. It is basically a compilation of three of his early lecture notes and the material really is diverse, and because of exactly that, they are not “categorized” in the book.

Just to give you an idea, the book contains things like his take on a no-gaff Copper/Silver transposition in their hands, which he calls *A Fine Howdy Do*. It involves using a produced lighter and a little fire to produce the first coin – it gets their attention right off the bat! If you are familiar with **Bob Neale**, Eric tips a cheeky use for his *Bunny Bill* origami fold for a banknote, which Eric calls the *Bunny Bill Swindle* – think a cheeky revenge effect on parents who leave you to babysit their children!

There is a great, impromptu 3-coin effect called *Bar Flight* in which three coins vanish and reappear under a napkin, the last one appearing right on top of the napkin in full view! *When Children Walk with Canes* is a handling for the *Appearing Cane* using picture cards, and there are plenty of ideas for cards including work on memorized decks, the *Topsy Turvy* and *Slop Shuffle* and more.

The real meat of this book are the essays on various points of view and subjects including performing, character, atmosphere, lessons learned and much more. Many of the things discussed in these sections can only be learned by performing in the real world for a diverse audience, and Eric started young. He worked the Tower Bar in Snowmass, Colorado back in the day when he was rather young. **Doc Eason** was the famous resident magician at that bar, which was owned by singer **John Denver**.

There are lots of interesting things in this book and it is a great read. You may not agree with all the points Eric makes in this book, nor should you, but they will at least give you a different perspective on them. That, and some of the various effects in the book are very, very good effects. Others will certainly give you something to think about!

This book is currently out of print, but they pop up for sale quite often, and they still sell relatively cheaply. If it sounds like a book that you would like to pick up, keep an eye on Penguin Magic – they recently bought the rights to reprint the old Hermetic Press books (and have already begun with books like the Tommy Wonder *Books of Wonder* and *PRISM* by **Max Maven**) – they are extremely likely to reprint *Tangled Web* due to it being in demand.

That is all for this month – join me again next month for another look into a great book! – **J.M.A.**