

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

Hello everyone and welcome to the Ex Libris article for May 2020! If you read the article last month you will know that we started delving into *The Art of Astonishment* books by **Paul Harris**. If you did not read the article, go and read it now. I will wait... ..

Back now? Good. We will pick up again this month with *The Art of Astonishment Volume 2*. This is a 324-page hardcover book originally published in 1996 by **A-1 MultiMedia** with illustrations by **Tony Dunn** and additional writing by **Eric Mead**.

There are a lot of interesting pieces of strange in this volume. Some of the more esoteric ones include *McGimmick*, which is a way to do the old *Rice Jar Suspension* only you are suspending a McDonald's milkshake on one finger...then there is the storied *Fizz Master* where you cause the carbonation to travel from one can to another! Both of them really work, but they seem ridiculous!

One of my absolute favorite effects is *Cardboard Connection*, a *Linking Ring* effect that uses two cards with their centers torn out. There are also some four or five variations given for the different phases. This naturally leads to the impromptu three-card version called the *Immaculate Connection*, which was performed on the *Champions of Magic II* by **Luis DeMatos**.

*Overkill* is a very strong and easy-to-do prediction effect with multiple prediction revelations, thus the title. *Double Decker* is an engaging presentation for an easy Color-Changing Deck and an interesting tabled false cut with a funny name, *Up the Ladder and Down Your Shorts*.

One of the best and purest coin effects ever created will be found in this book – *Twilight*, created by my friend **Tayari Casel**. The next time you talk to **Don Oesterwind**, ask him how amazing a guy Tayari is! *Twilight* is an effect that uses a mirror to produce four coins, which are eventually vanished back into the mirror. There are a few very nice variations in the book, including a version that makes parts of fingers appear! This is one of my top five coin effects that is always in my repertoire.

Some other interesting bits include *Carpet Critters*, a strange and perhaps untested way of getting the impression of a lamp rim to appear in your carpet. Most of you will no doubt be familiar with the **Harry Eng Impossible Bottles** – small glass bottles into which unaltered objects are impossibly

placed. You will learn the process and how to go about making one of your own in the section called *Eng's Bottles*.

Last month I mentioned the curiosity called the *Perpetual Motion Coin Myth* and this month I will close with the mention of another: *The Collapsing Marble Myth*. The idea is that you show a clear glass marble, which is then placed on top of a tiny eye drop bottle. The marble then slowly shrinks until it falls through the teeny tiny hole and inside the bottle. You can then shake it and hear it rattling around inside. A solution to this exists, and I have been chasing it for years, but I have yet to find the perfect blend of necessary things to make it happen.

Well that is all for this month folks – join me again next month as we wrap up our look into the AoA series with Volume 3! Keep the magic alive!

*Dr. J.*