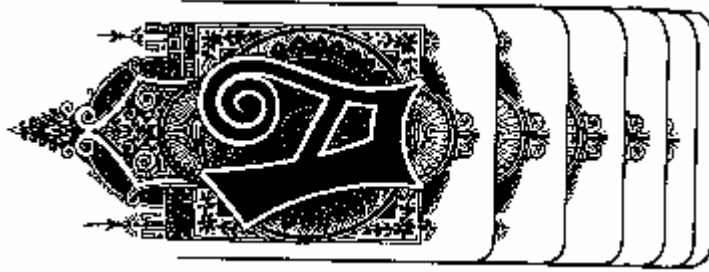


THE ANYTHING DECK



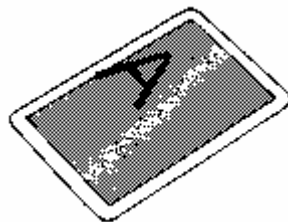
EFFECT -- For reasons unknown you remove a secret packet of cards from your wallet and secure them under the card case. You then get a seeker to dig deep into her soul and come up with a personal, meaningful magic word. Let's say her magic word is "ROSE." You use "ROSE" to help you locate a selected card, then reveal that the name of the card is also written on the card case. You're a mighty fine card guesser. But what about the secret packet? You SLOWLY, CLEANLY AND OPENLY spread the packet to display large bold letters inked onto the back of the cards . . . spelling out a single word: ROSE.

So now what? What do you say? Into what context can you put this moment of astonishment that would make this a meaningful positive experience. Hrmmmm. Depends upon her personal associations with her power word, her perception of your intent, where you've positioned her mind and how deep you want to take her in.

THE ANYTHING THEORY -- The deck is a disguised collection of "moveable type" which you can arrange into just about ANY word under cover of a simple card location. Then it's just a matter of traffic control to get the word cards under the case.

ARTS AND CRAFTS PORTION -- It'll take about 20 minutes to make up your "Anything Deck." You'll need a deck of cards containing 54 cards, a fresh magic marker and four extra cards from a matching deck.

Open up your 54-card deck and shuffle it. Put three cards aside for now. The rest of the cards go face down in front of you. Carefully write the letter A about an inch tall and half an inch wide on the LEFT side of the top face-down card. The exact size and position is shown in FIG. 1. (For the best contrast use a red deck and a thick black marker, or use one of the fancy two-tone markers that outline in silver or gold.)



Create another A in the same position on the back of the next card -- and then two B's on the next two cards after that. Continue drawing a double alphabet on the 51 cards so that when you're done you have TWO of every letter -- EXCEPT for Q, X, and U. You only have ONE of those. That's so you can have THREE E's and THREE A's. (Which are extra letters you'll use a whole lot more than a Q, X, or U.) The deck is now arranged in alphabetical order starting with the two A's on top.

Drop the three unmarked cards face down on top of the face-down spread. One of these will be your force card, so it goes on top of the deck. (We're using the Two of Hearts.) Use the heavy marker to draw a large Two of Hearts on the back of the case so the image is instantly identifiable.

Put the four extra cards (from the other deck) somewhere handy. The Anything Deck goes into its box. You're now ready to unleash a major M.O.A.

STEP ONE -- Bring out the case, writing side down, and remove the deck. Close the flap and put the case aside to your right so it's angled. (This position is for later so your left hand can easily grasp the case by its sides without re-adjusting.)

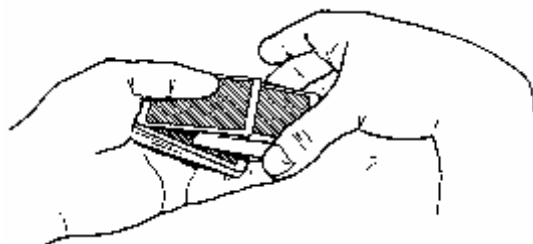
STEP TWO -- Hold the pack in left-hand dealer grip. Casually riffle a couple of cards near the middle with your left thumb to check where the letters are. Be sure no one else can see inside in case you're looking at the marked side. If by chance the letters are not on the left side of the deck, turn the deck so they are. (You could mark one side of the deck with a pencil dot, but then you'd always be fighting the urge to erase it.)

STEP THREE -- Table the deck and spread from right to left. The deck should appear completely normal and unmarked. (If the letters are showing say something like "ah, yes, the alphabet -- how nice." Then quietly put the cards away, walk out of the room and never come back.)

STEP FOUR -- Bring out the extra four-card packet and openly slide it face down under the case. (I like to take the packet out from my wallet so the cards seem to have been set aside for a "special purpose.") The packet should be held so no one except you knows exactly how many cards it contains. Say something like, "Here's a few secret cards for later."

STEP FIVE -- Spend some quality time with your seeker and have her dig deep for a powerful magic word (see "Magic Word" for details). We'll assume the magic word is "ROSE."

STEP SIX -- Gather up the cards, keeping them face down with the letters on the left side. Hold the face-down deck in left-hand dealing position. Slip-cut the top card into the center by using your right fingers to pull the top half to the right, retaining the force card with your left thumb (FIG. 2). As you replace the upper half, catch a break between the halves with your left little finger. (You now have a break above the force card.)



STEP SEVEN -- Lightly riffle your left thumb down through the deck's upper left corner and ask your magic buddy to call out her magic word. Stop riffling at that point and instantly lift off all of the cards above the break with your right hand, creating the misguided impression that you cut to the spot you were stopped at. (Yes indeed, it's a riffle force.)

STEP EIGHT -- Turn the left section down as you thumb off the top card onto the table face up. (The wrist turn hides the marked back of the next card as the top card is dealt.) Put the left-hand cards face down carefully under the right-hand ones.

STEP NINE -- Hold the deck so its face is toward the audience, and the secret letters on the back are toward you. (The letters are on the left.)

STEP TEN -- Begin spreading through the cards "to feel the faces of the cards for clues about the spectator's card." (You're actually looking at the backs of the cards so you can see the letters.) First pull out the top unmarked card. Let its normal back be seen then drop it face up on the table.

Now as you spread through the cards, pull out the ones with the letters that spell the magic word. You'll be going back and forth through the deck as you search through the alphabet to find the right letters. Try to make the cards you toss out seem randomly inspired.

In this case the next card is the "R" of her magic word "ROSE." Place it face up onto the tabled card so its secret letter is to the left. (Remove the card from the spread by its upper end and place it down so the lower end points away from you.) Then the "O" card goes face up on top of the "R." Be careful not to flash the letters. Continue until "ROSE" is secretly spelled (on the back of the tabled stack from the bottom up).

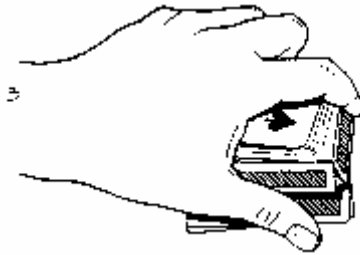
As you toss out the "random" clue cards, say things like "This is a black card, so the one you picked can't be black. This next one tells me it can't be a face card. These two tell me it's not an ace and it's lower than an eight." Make up anything you want, and then announce the name of the card you forced.

STEP ELEVEN -- Table the deck face down, with its marks to the left, and spread it (right to left) across the table to display normal cards.

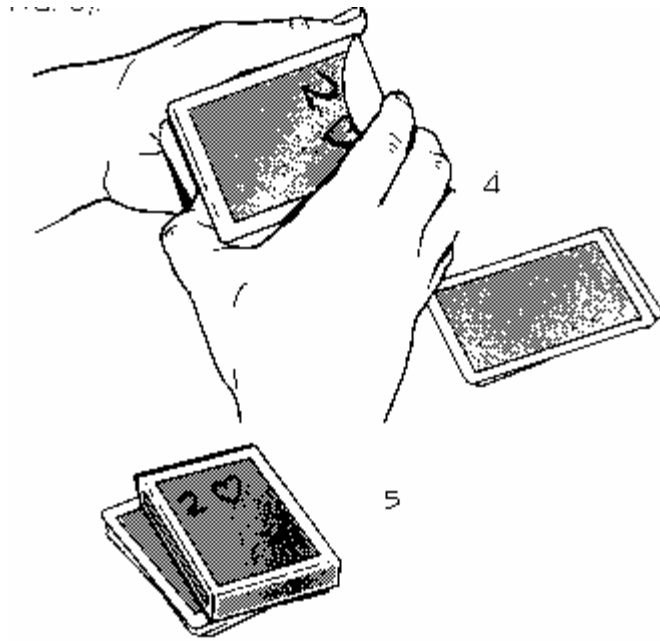
STEP TWELVE -- Reveal your lucky guess by turning the force card face up, then use it to scoop up the face-up word packet so the force card ends up at the back. Take this packet with your right hand, and pick up the deck with your left. Drop the word packet face down onto the deck (so the stacked letters are on the right side) and hold a break between the deck and the packet with your left pinky.

Slip-cut the top card onto the deck, retaining your break beneath the word packet. (The slip-cut leaves the hazy impression that the entire packet was cut into the center of the deck. The exact nature of this cut is of no great interest to your audience.)

STEP THIRTEEN -- Comment that you had a backup plan in case you guessed wrong. Your left hand is holding the deck with a break below the word packet (one cover card and then the word). Turn your left deck-hand palm down to pick up the box by its sides (which you've previously positioned for an easy grab). The packet above the break goes squarely onto the box (FIG. 3) as you pick up the box and turn your left hand palm up to reveal the written case **prediction**.



Your right fingers immediately grasp the box by its ends . . . picking up the box along with the PACKET above the break (FIG. 4) . . . and sets the box back down onto the tabled packet. This secretly loads the word packet onto the other four cards that are tabled under the box (FIG. 5).



This all happens in two seconds. The audience sees you pick up the box and turn it over to reveal its written prediction. This is perfect misdirection for stealing the packet off the deck. (All eyes will be on the case prediction during the brief moment that the tabled four-card packet is exposed.) "Predicting your card was only a 52 to one shot." Spread the deck face down (right to left again) to show normal cards. Just a mild warm-up for something that will make her whole body smile and turn her into a walking happy face. Scoop up the face-down deck into your left hand.

STEP FOURTEEN -- Your empty right fingers lift the box off the tabled packet. Box the deck and put it away.

Slide off the bottom two normal cards from the face-down packet. Display them as you say "Do you notice anything unusual about these secret cards . . ." Then place the two cards on top of the packet (centering the word between three normal cards on top and bottom). "How about now?"

STEP FIFTEEN -- Turn the packet so your spectator will be able to read the writing, then slowly spread the cards to reveal her personal magic word.

Deep astonishment. Let it breathe.

TO RESET -- Put the magic word cards back into the deck in their correct alphabetical spots and the three non-alphabet cards back on top of the deck. Box the deck and put the four extra cards back into your pocket or wallet and once again you're ready for anything.

THE MAGIC WORD -- Direct her toward a word that has no more than six or seven letters. Less is better. Do a quick mental spell to be sure that all the letters you need are in

"The Anything Deck." On the rare occasion you can't use a word just direct her toward a "more potent" word.

When you ask for a powerful magic word, most people will say something uninspired like presto or changeo. Tell your wordsmith it's too common, that she should try for a special word that's personally magical. A word or name that when she hears it something lights up inside and says "howdy" (try to avoid the word "howdy"). This usually leads in a better direction. The more powerful the imagery the word evokes in your spectator the more powerful the final moment of astonishment.

PHOOTNOTE -- You can pump up the power of the imagery by doing this with Tarot cards where you do a reading with the random cards. Don't mess with this until you understand the nature of the game or you could be pissing in someone's church. When authentically presented (with Tarot imagery) this can take people over the line and zero them out. You've got to be there with a gentle nurturing non-ego presence or it's just another irresponsible use of deep astonishment.

Workshopped with my good buddy PATRICK SNOWDEN who also convinced his wife Bonnie into thinking that I'm somewhat normal. (This didn't hold up for long but it was a noble effort.)