

MORE MAGIC – PART I

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Once again Word Ways has received a manuscript from the elusive Thumpbindle. We still have not met him face-to-face but admire his ability to rehash old topics with a fresh twist. The Editor.

This 4x4 grid is both magic and a word square. The words are scrambled. The rows are Arrangements of UPON, MACH, BRIT and SLED, while the columns are SCOT, LARN (dia. LEARN), HIPE (a wrestling term) and DUMB. It is not so easy to obtain eight Different words in a square using 16 different Letters, scrambled or not.

O	N	P	U	4
C	A	H	M	1
T	R	I	B	4
S	L	E	D	1
2	3	2	3	2

Now for the magic. The effect will use five different colored cards with words written on them front and back.

	FRONT	BACK
1. Red	SNUB CHER	MAID PLOT
2. Blue	OUR CLIME	BANDS PATH
3. Green	SLUMP HURT	BEAD COIN
4. Yellow	CHOP SITE	DAMN BLUR
White	SUIT NAME	PORCH BOLD

The Effect. The magician shows the cards to the subject and lays them down on the table. The subject is allowed to turn over any cards he likes. The magician asks the subject to secretly choose any letter from the square and then separate the five cards into two groups, those his chosen letter is on and those his chosen letter it not on. The subject does NOT tell the magician which group is ‘yes’ or which groups is ‘no’.

Looking at the groupings, even from a good distance away, the magician quickly names the subject’s letter.

The Method. No matter how the five cards are laid on the table there will be exactly one letter that is either showing on all five or not showing on all five. This letter is the “key” letter and the magician notes it. The letter “D” is key on the above layout since it is on the back of all five cards.

If the subject has not reversed any cards so that D remains the key then suppose he chooses M as his secret letter. His two groups would then be BLUE, GREEN, WHITE and RED, YELLOW. The numbers on the sides of the square (which need not be written after a slight bit of practice) stand for the colors 1 = RED, 2 = BLUE, 3 = GREEN and 4 = YELLOW. WHITE will mean a unique diagonal jump on the square, i.e. I-O, N-B, P-T, U-R, C-E, A-D, S-H, and M-L.

To identify, in this example, the subject's chosen M, the magician starts at the key (here D) and chooses either of the two groups say RED = 1 and YELLOW = 4. He then mentally crosses 1 from D to B and then from across 4 to land on the M.

If the magician had chosen 2, 3 and WHITE instead his thoughts would be D to E for the 3 and then 2 for the L and then the WHITE diagonal hop to the M.

The square is to be regarded as a torus where the bottom and top edges are to be joined as well as the right and left edges. For example, from D the order 2-3-WHITE goes D to S to L to M. The order is never important. Here the order WHITE-3-2 from D would go D to A to C to M once again.

If the subject reverses any of the five cards at the start then the key letter will be changed in the following way. After the magician notes the key letter he places before the subject, the magician will move the key according to the reverses the subject makes. For instance, suppose the magician had started with D as the key and the subject turns BLUE and WHITE. The magician thinks D-using 2-to S and then S hops diagonally to H the new key.

The mathematics of the effect does not need to be understood but the square is actually a representation of a 5-dimensional hypercube with our 16 letters doubly listed on its 32 nodes. Of course the magician may tell the subject correctly that 5-dimensions are being traversed.

In the next issue another effect using our magic word square will be explained that will be an extension of one first used by Max Maven and Martin Gardner and others.

