

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

Hello folks and welcome to the Ex Libris article for November 2018! If you are a regular reader of this column you will know that each December I usually describe a book that is rather generous with its contents or its intent – a gift to the readers of sorts. I will do exactly that this year, but I am starting a month early because this gift comes in two volumes. We will be focusing on ***The Art of Close-up Magic Volume 1*** by **Lewis Ganson**.

This book was originally published as a 401-page hardcover book in 1967, in a 6.5"x10" format. It was republished in 1996 by **Louis Falanga** of **L&L Publishing**, once again as a hardcover book in the same format and including a dust cover.

This book was written with the intent of showing magicians that not all magic had to be card magic and in fact, there is not one single card trick in the entire volume! There are effects where cards are used as props, but none where they are featured. The contents of the book various contributors and the book is very well-written in a clear, easy to follow manner with clear line drawings where necessary.

Some of the effects require props that you will have to buy in a magic store, others need no special props at all and some use props that may or may not still be available today. In any case, in reading this book you will quickly realize that the effects included have been tested over and over, proven to be useable in the real world. The book starts off with some basic principles in storing and transporting your magic props, the surfaces on which you can work, music selection, practice suggestions, etc. This section is full of great information for performers of all levels.

There are fifteen chapters covering a very broad range of topics from sponge magic to silk magic, coin magic without apparatus/props, coin magic with props and there is a whole chapter dedicated to the Okito Box and its variations. The gambling section teaches effects like the old *Endless Chain Game* (also called *Loopy Loop*, *The Chain Game*, *Pricking the Garter*, etc.), a purse swindle and a fun take on the Two-in-the-Hand, One-in-the-Pocket effect using dice.

There is a chapter that teaches some very interesting work with thimbles, another on magic with various tubes and even one that focuses on the Paddle Move. In fact, one of the best handlings for the old *Jumping Gems* is detailed in this chapter, a little gem (pun intended) by **Dick Zimmerman** called *Slippery Rocks*, which squeezes just about all you can out of the standard set. Noted and revered Hawaiian coin magician **Curtis Kam** uses

this exact handling with a very funny script but instead of the plastic rods, he uses earring-shaped rods made of Koa wood!

One of my all-time favorite effects, and the subject of my forthcoming book, is the **John Ramsay** *Cylinder & Coins*, a variation of which by **Dai Vernon**, called *The Cylinder & Chips*, is included in this book.

There is literally something for everyone in this book and a good majority requires simple props, or things you might already own. This is an excellent tome of high-quality magic that does not require a deck of cards and I encourage you to check it out! Join me again next month as I delve into Volume 2. – *J. M. A.*