

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

Hello folks and welcome to the Ex Libris article for June 2019! I hope everyone is doing well and that everyone had a safe Memorial Day. I had been very busy over the holiday, so to all the military veterans in the club, please allow me on behalf of the Ann Arbor Magic Club to give a heartfelt THANK YOU to all of you!

Having been very busy the last few weeks and meeting a variety of people from a variety of professions and industries got me to thinking about just that – *variety*. The book we will focus on this month gives you exactly that, and much more! *Vortex* by **Tom Stone** and **Stephen Minch** is a 254-page hardcover book published in 2010 by Hermetic Press, Inc.

For of those that have no idea who Tom Stone is, you need to look him up! I will wait. Go on. Okay, you are back! Tom is a very prolific magician from Sweden and is one of the best performers and magical theorists in the world. He was a dear friend of **Tommy Wonder** and you will see a lot of his influence in the work that Tom does. Tom Stone thinks like Tommy Wonder, has the studied manner of **Dai Vernon** and the varied repertoire like **Michael Skinner**.

In this book you will find many different things from cards to ropes, coins, silks and much more. The unique thing about this book, however, are the little side snippets and the marginalia. All through the book you will see these shaded boxes or marginalia pop up with a completely unrelated 'something' in them. It might be a thought experiment, an idea for a standard effect in magic for you to try, an untested idea, etc. For example, one such snippet says, "On the table there is a jumbo deck, a normal deck, a mini deck and a card box. What happens next?" These are absolutely brilliant, and they break up the monotony that many books can have, and it also makes it a lot of fun to read!

Tom is also very good with giving credit to others and, in this book, the credits appear in the marginalia as well. Among the excellent effects in this book you will find *King Castling* – a startling and visual Sandwich/Transposition, *Mr. Fogg* – a hard-hitting effect where four cards travel to one pocket, then to four different pockets! *Concerto for Cutlery* is the Piano Card Trick...*done with silverware!* *A Toast for Charon* is a coin effect which sees three coins appear in a champagne glass, travel to a silk, vanish and it all ends with the production of a champagne bottle!

Gold Wielder is the **Al Koran** *Linking Finger Rings* with the Stone treatment. The real masterpiece in this book is what many consider to be one of the

finest Benson Bowl routines ever created, which Tom calls *Benson Burner* – you get appearances, vanishments, transpositions and more, and the finale is a spectacular shower of balls flying out of the bowl which fills the stage floor. *Twice!* In between all this are ideas for things like the Dove/Chick Pan, Appearing Candles, salt shakers, an idea using sound, tweaks for effects from other performers, staging, routining, etc.

This book one of those that you can pick up and read all the way through, or, even better, pick it up, open to a random page and read what you find. Either way you will be utterly delighted with the material in this one and I cannot recommend it enough!

Until next month, take care, be safe and stay magical my friends!

Dr. J.