

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

Hello folks and welcome to the Ex Libris article for August 2019! I hope everyone is having fun in the sun and enjoying the not-rainy weather lately! This month I am going to pick up where we left off with Mr. Tom Stone in June, when I discussed his first book, *Vortex*. This month we will focus on his second book and the second book in the "weather title" series, ***Maelstrom***.

*Maelstrom* is a 259-page hardcover book published in 2011 by Hermetic Press. This book is a follow-up of *Vortex* and it is written in the exact same style with the exact same layout. The marginalia contain a wealth of extra hints, tips, ideas and credits, just like the first book. As before he has lots of little boxes or even entire pages here and there where he poses an unfinished or untested idea, a nice little presentation for an effect or an idea kick starter for you to try.

The very first stand-alone effect in the book is called **Of Dice and Men**, which is a fantastic opener for parlour or stage (it was also released in 2018 as a single item through magic dealers). A roll of a die and the card with the matching number is taken by a volunteer, and its back says "HUG..." but when you hug them the rest of the audience sees the backs of the others, which all say "KILL!"

**Silver and Sorcery** is one of the more unique handlings of the *Ramsay Cylinder & Coins* effect, **Wet Russian** is a humorous take on the *Russian Roulette* but using squirt guns. There are almost twenty pages dedicated to ideas for presenting the **Multiplying Bottles** plot, **Chairport** is a great version of the *Chair Test* and **Bank Naught** is another mentalism piece based on the classic *Bank Night*, with two presentations suggested.

As with *Vortex*, this book covers a very wide variety of things from coins, cards and eggs to mentalism with various props, suggestions on building your own props, techniques and sequences with billiard balls and even a great comedy effect with a banana that is NOT the Bandana Trick (it is actually a 2-person effect where a fake banana becomes real).

Although this is the second book you do not have to have read *Vortex* first to appreciate anything in this one. If you have read and enjoyed *Vortex* (and even if you have not read it), you will love this book. Tom is an excellent thinker and teacher and the material in here does not disappoint!

That is all for this month folks – "see" you in September! – **J.M.A.**