

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

Hello folks and welcome to the Ex Libris article for October 2019! The season has not quite begun to change just yet, but we have officially entered the transformational season of Autumn here in the Northern Hemisphere – my favorite time of year! Last month you will recall the article discussing a booklet on the topic of bizarre presentations using tarot cards. This month, we will go a little further down the tubes but with a broader scope of items.

This month we are talking about *Brain Food* by **David Parr**. It was originally published by **David Parr, Stephen Minch** and **Hermetic Press** in 1998 as a 136-page, small format hardcover book. This is not exactly a bizarre magic book (though there are a couple of pieces that fall squarely into that category), so why am I discussing it here in October? Because if you take what is offered, most of the pieces can readily be turned into bizarre effects because many of them already have a strange weirdness about them.

Power of the Mind is a great take on the vanish of a lit match, but David has gotten rid of the movement that normally looks suspicious. *Lucky Penny* will show you a fantastic way to use your Lippincott Box that you never knew what to do with, *Werewolf* is the old **Eugene Burger** effect, *The Burned Card*, given the Parr treatment and in which a spectator realizes that she is marked to be the next victim of a werewolf...

Dinner with the Borgias is one of my favorite takes on the classic mentalism piece called *Bank Night*. David offers up a handling for stage and another for close-up, but three spectators (ahem: 'guests') each choose one of three goblets and the magician gets the last one. The three guests find out they all chose poisoned drinks and the one left for the magician is the only one that is not!

As with many other books written by a practiced author, the real meat here, however, are the essays offered up by David Parr in which he discusses various topics, including connecting with an audience, making memorable magic, making it meaningful and using powerful concepts like suspense and surprise.

This book was updated and released as an e-book, retitled as *Brain Food: Gourmet Edition*. This edition included handling, scripting and updated methods for all eight effects, as well as the things discussed above. As a bonus, because it is a digital product, it also includes printable props for some of the effects, which will save you a little time as you will not have to make them up yourself. It is available from David Parr himself, as well as various magic shops and retailers for \$25.00/USD – worth every penny!

Well now, that is all for this month folks – be sure to join me again next month and enjoy the Halloween season! Happy Haunting!

- J. M. A.