

Ex Libris by Dr. Joaquin M. Ayala de Cédoz, PhD.

Hello folks and welcome to the Ex Libris article for October 2026! Spooky season is here and so too is the cooler weather, longer nights, and the beautiful color changes on the trees, one of my favorite times of the year.

Speaking of changes, we will be looking at *Sub Rosa* by **Ariel Frailich**, which is a 180-page, 6 x 9 hardcover book, originally published in 2019 by **I Saw That!** and illustrated with high quality photographs.

This book is really something else, but it is really about one thing and one thing only, however, that one thing is useful for many things. Sounds strange? Allow me to clarify: This book focuses on a singular technique which is used to accomplish many different effects, ranging from close-up to stage magic, mentalism to bizarre, and even more beyond that.

There are more than a few classic effects in magic that can be accomplished in a different way using this utility move (which is probably the best way to describe this technique, which is hard to describe) – Cups & Balls, Color-Changing Knives, Linking Rings/Pins, etc. and in fact, those are described in this tome. There are other effects which could benefit from its use to either clean up the ending or make the actual effect cleaner than before.

To be fair and clear, this technique is easily categorized as a switching technique; it is not a demanding thing to learn or execute, it is direct and yet, very subtle and it is decidedly an open move, but at the same time, not at all. It is in fact done exactly as the title of the book would suggest: *sub rosa*, meaning ‘concealed’ or ‘in secret.’

That being said, you will find some absolute gems in this as far as effects are concerned, many of them coming to you fully scripted and ready to go. You will find things like Bill/Card in Cigarette, Linking Finger Rings, Coin in Bottle, transpositions, transmutations, a great mentalism effect using borrowed coins where you apparently never touch the coins and yet, you can divine their dates and even throw in a design duplication for good measure.

One of my favorite effects in here uses a gold ring (held by your assistant) and a silver coin. The assumption applied by magicians would tell you that the objects will change places, but instead, the *metals* change places, the ring turning silver and the coin turning to gold.

On his Instagram channel, Ariel described an effect using the Sub Rosa technique that does not appear in the book because it came about well after publication. I had to work out the details of the flow, but it is absolutely fantastic. You bring out a small cloth bag and dump out, say, ten silver dimes. You introduce a lump of gold or a magic stone, pick up

one of the coins and touch it with the stone and the dime turns to gold. The rest of the coins are picked up and put back into the cloth bag and given to a spectator to hold. They pick up the stone, tap the bag and dump out its contents; all the dimes have turned to gold. Because of the way the effect is accomplished, you finish clean, and everything can be inspected.

This technique can also be used to switch out a gaffed/gimmicked item(s) in and out for a normal duplicate, such as a color changing knife, gaffed coins, etc. Once you learn the technique, you will find lots of uses for it and you will not have to spend years on it. As alluded to previously, this technique is also useful to anyone, regardless of what kind of magic you perform, be it coins, cards, mentalism, bizarre magic, mathemagic, etc.

Well, that is all for this article. Please enjoy the spooky season and the colorful Autumnal changes coming your way (it has already started up here in the Charlevoix/Petoskey area), and have a fun, safe Halloween!

J. M. A.