

## Cupid's Crooked Arrow

***"I have learned to use the word "impossible" with the greatest caution."***  
Werner von Braun

### **Effect:**

This is the mentalists answer to magic's Anniversary Waltz, created by Christopher Carter.

### **The Performance:**

We always ponder the idea of love. Did you simply blunder into each other in this galaxy of chaos and chance . . . or . . . are there greater forces at work here? Shall we put it to the test?

You say there is love between you two and I like to believe that real love . . . true love . . . speaks louder than random cosmic noise that blankets most of humanity.

**The performer spreads a deck of cards.**

We will let this deck of cards represents the chaos of the world. Somewhere within here you must find true love.

**The playing cards are set down. The performer takes out a business card case and set one of the business cards on the table and draws a line on the back of the card.**

The line represents the connection you both have, even when you are apart.

**The performer tears the card in half and hands half to Jenny and the other half to John.**

Jenny, please think of any card in a deck of cards and print that card on the line of the back of the business card. Don't let anyone see what you have written.

**She does so and the performer places it back in the business card case face down so that whatever she wrote is unseen.**

John, I would like you to think of a number between 1 and 50 and print on the back of your half of the card. Don't let anyone see what you have written.

**The performer places that half of the card back in the business card case as well, face down so that no one can see what is on the back of the card. The performer picks up the playing cards and gives some of the cards to Jenny and some to John.**

Please shuffle them up and see what coincidence, fate, or random luck will bring.

**The performer gathers the cards together and places them on the table.**

Jenny, what playing card did you write down on your half of the business card?

**"The Seven of Hearts" Jenny replies.**

John, what number did you write down on the back of your half of the business card?

“35” replies John.

Would it not be interesting if we were to count down to the 35<sup>th</sup> card and find that it is the Seven of Hearts? I mean, if that happens, what does it mean? Surely that can’t be mere coincidence or luck, for I would think greater forces would be at work here.

Well, let’s see.

The performer carefully counts card off the top of the deck and pauses at the 34<sup>th</sup> card.

Here it is, the moment of truth.

The next card is turned over and shown to be the Seven of Hearts.

### **Method:**

You will need the following items:

Peek wallet

Business card

Pen

Deck of playing card with jokers

Let’s talk about getting the pick and everything that can go wrong with that.

How you imagine people will write on the card is much different from how they will actually write on the card. You will want whatever they write on the card to be quickly and easily understood within the confines swift glance. Without your guidance, however, this will not be the case.

First, you will want people to print rather than write information. Too many people’s writing too closely resembles the scribbling of a delusional mental patient that has been given too many hallucinogenic drugs.

Second, for whatever reason many people love to print letters extremely small, so small that one might need to break out an election microscope to validate the actual information. It is best to have them print the information large. Many times lighting is a factor when we get our peek. Large print is a great ally.

Finally, you will want to control the orientation of the writing. When you take your glance at the information, you want it to go unnoticed. It helps if you already know the orientation of the information. You don’t want the additional weight of wondering if you are going to have to decipher the information upside down.

I solve the aforementioned problems by first drawing a large heart on each end of the back of the business card. I draw a line that connects the two hearts. I found that most people will print in a manner that fills the heart. It is a kind of psychological guide that prompts them to print large.

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Taken from the book of Christian Painter - Protoplasm

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I explain to them that the interesting drawing with the hearts and line is a metaphor for two fates connected. I then tear the business card in half and give each of them half to print their information on. The hearts gives them a place to print the information.

I have the first person print her playing card first. I will want this information first so that I can locate the card within the deck.

I exploit that I want her to use only two, letters or a letter and a number to designate her card. I explain how to do this; for example the Seven of Hearts is 7H and the King of Clubs is KC. I tell her to print it boldly inside the heart.

Once the first person prints her selection of her half of the business card you will place it in the peek wallet. You will get your quick glance and put the wallet down.

Once you know her selected card, you will have the second person print a number on his half of the business card. However, before he does that, I spread the deck in front of him and comment that his lover's card could be anywhere in the deck. I spread the deck so that I and the second person can see it easily but the first person (the person who selected the card) cannot. My real goal is to locate what bank of cards the selected card resides in.

You now instruct the second person to print a number between 1 and 50. The reason I do not say 52 or 54 is to make my math easier. You will understand this in a few more paragraphs.

Now, let's talk about the set up of the deck:

You will use all 52 cards and the 2 jokers.

- Bank One: You will have 17 cards and then a Joker.
- Bank Two: You will have another 17 cards and a Joker.
- Bank Three: The bottom of the deck will contain the last 18 cards of the deck.

Both Jokers will have a big, honking crimp in them. When you spread the cards out you are looking to which bank contains the selected card. For purposes of this explanation, let's say it is in the second bank.

You set the cards down and wait for the second person to print a number. Once completed you slide it into the peek wallet, get a glimpse of the number and set it down.

For teaching purposes we will say the selected card is the Jack of Hearts and the number is 28.

So you now know their card (the Jack of Hearts) is in the second bank and the number is 28. You must get the card to the 28<sup>th</sup> position in the deck, which by the way is pretty easy. Here's how you do it.

In this case we know the Jack of Hearts is in the second bank of cards. You will allow your two audience members to shuffle (part of) the deck with you. Hand one person the top bank. This is made by the huge crimp you have in the Joker. You simply cut there and hand him that portion.

You then cut the second crimp Joker and hand the bottom of the deck (bank three) to the other person. Have them both begin shuffling their respective banks.

You hold the bank of cards that contains the Jack of Hearts. Start shuffling by running the face of the card towards yourself and run singles until you see the Jack of Hearts. Stop there and keep it on the bottom of your bank of cards.

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You will now need to perform some simple math in your head. You only have 18 cards in your bank; since the selected number, 28, is higher than 18, you will need to put one of the other banks of 18 on top of yours. But before you do that, you must maneuver the Jack of Hearts to the 10<sup>th</sup> position in your bank, because  $18+10 = 28^{\text{th}}$  position.

So how you do this? Nonchalantly. Nobody suspect what is coming next. Besides, two audience members are also shuffling and taking plenty of attention off to you. Mechanically, there are so many ways to move the Jack of Hearts from the bottom of your bank to the 10<sup>th</sup> position. I just move it to the top with either a cut or a shuffle. Then shuffle 9 cards on top of it. Maybe you prefer heavier sleight, what you do is up to your skill level and performing style.

Now reassemble the rest of the deck by placing the other bank on top of your block and then placing these card on top of the third bank.

Place the cards on the table and refer back to the wallet that contains the information. Remember neither person knows what the other wrote on his or her card. And . . . apparently you don't know either. This is the motivation for pulling out the torn business card.

For maximum dramatic effect have the gentleman count down the cards to one shy of the selection. Then in a dramatic moment, you turn over the card. I like having them deal the cards down to the final card because it emphasizes the fairness. However, you need to turn over the last card so that everyone can see it at the same time.

This can be a very strong moment for the couple. It hits them hard and emphasizes the strength of their relationship. Don't underestimate the power of this simple effect.

### **Further Thoughts**

This could also be looked at as an Any Card At Any Number (ACAAN) routine. However, I think that the ACAAN is more interesting for magicians than for lay people. Part of the problem is how magicians / mentalist look at ACAAN: for them it is the search for the perfect method, the cleanest method.

For lay people what's important is the story, the premise of the effect. As long as it is entertaining and surprising they will enjoy it and be amazed. I think this presentation fits that requirement.

The shuffling procedure also makes sense since it lets everybody shuffle the cards, putting their energy in the cards.

You will need to practice this. The math is the most difficult part of the effect. Let's practice this again:

Let's say that their card was in Bank One and the number written is 45. You hand out the other two banks keep Bank One for yourself. When you reassemble the blocks you will put the other two on top of your block, this puts 36 cards on top of your bank ( $18+18 = 36$ ). To determine where to move the selected card, you must determine the number, when you added to 36, equals 45. The answer is 9. You will move the selected card to the 9<sup>th</sup> position. With the deck reassembled, their card will be in the 45<sup>th</sup> position.

To review: the first step is to determine which bank the selected card is in. once done, you have that bank in your hand, it is time to determine how you will reassemble that banks and get their card to the desired number. It sounds a little difficult but once you practice the procedure a few times, it is relatively easy.

**One more time to make sure you understand.**

With Jokers the following is true:

Bank One has 18 cards. (17 and a Joker)

Bank Two has 18 cards. (17 and a Joker)

Bank Three has 18 cards.

**Step one:** The first spectator writes her card selection on half of the business card and you put it back in your wallet. You peek at it and now you know the card.

**Step two:** Identify which bank of cards the selected card is in when you spread them for the second spectator.

**Step three:** After the second spectator has written down the number and you have put it back in the wallet ( and gotten the peek), you divide up the banks and retain the bank with the selected card .

**Step four:** You determine how the banks should be assembled when you put the deck back together.

This is the most difficult part of the effect because there are many variations. However, if you passed grade school math you should be able to perform the calculations provided you practice this many times before you perform it.

Example A: If the selected card was in the bottom bank and the chosen number is 20, you will have to place one of the other bank of yours and the other bank beneath.

Example B: However, if the selected card was in the bottom bank and the chosen number is 17 then your bank will go on the top of both the other banks.

**Step five:** Have everyone shuffle their packet and move the selected card to the necessary position. If you use the previous example A, then you would move your card to the second position. If you use the previous example B, then you would move the card to the 17<sup>th</sup> position or the second card from the bottom.

After reassembling the deck, I will sometimes perform a series of false cut and ask them to stop me anytime. This adds to the mystery and makes it more difficult to backtrack especially if my bank ends up on top.