

CARDOPOLIS

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Plenty of Fish

U. F. GRANT RELEASED his "Novelty Fishing Trick" in 1933. It's a lovely premise: the performer fishes out a chosen card from a hat, using a rod and line to which is attached a magnet. Paperclips, by way of bait, have been sprinkled into the hat. It's one of these paperclips, that finds its way to a card and enables the performer to fish the selection out of the hat. Grant's trick involved forcing three cards and fishing their paper-clipped duplicates from the hat. But it wasn't long before magicians figured you could perform the trick using a simpler handling if you restricted the choice to just one card. There have been several handlings like this over the years. The one here is very similar to that described by British magician Henri De'Seevah which he marketed as "Cardangle" in 1941 and later described in *The Linking Ring* (June 1943).

Set Up: You'll need a deck of cards and a small foldable paper bag instead of a hat. The bottom of the bag is rectangular and not much wider than the deck. A small box of colored paperclips, magnetic of course. A small magnet attached to a length of string. You can use the traditional horseshoe magnet or create any novelty magnetic object. The one in the photos is a haberdashery magnet used for picking up pins and needles (fig.1).



Have the paper bag folded in one pocket along with the magnet and the deck of cards and paperclips in another pocket. The bottom card of the deck has a paperclip affixed to one end, its long side against the face of the

card (fig.2). The color of the clip should match the back of the card. In the photos I'm using a blue-backed deck and a blue paper clip.



Presentation: Take out the paper bag, unfold it, show it empty, and stand it on the table. Bring out the deck and give it an Overhand Shuffle but keep the paper-clipped card on the bottom. Spread the deck face down between the hands and ask the spectator to select one.

Divide the spread into two at the point they made the selection. As the spectator looks at and remembers their card, reassemble the two halves of the deck so the paper-clipped card is in the middle. [Associate Editor's Note: The selected card can be signed on its face.]

With the deck in the left hand, the right hand cuts at the paper-clipped card so it is the bottom card of the right-hand packet. The right thumb picks up on the paperclip that extends beyond the inner end of the deck. Extend the left-hand packet toward the spectator and ask them to drop their card on top.

As you bring the hands together, the left thumb pushes the selection to the right. The right hand moves forward and toward the left-hand packet and, in doing so, clip the selection to the paper-clipped card (fig.3). This is easier than you think. Slide the selection into the paperclip as you bring the hands together. But make sure that the paperclip finishes in the center of the selection's inner end.

An alternative handling is to square the selection on top of the left-hand packet but take a left pinky break below it. Secretly raise the inner end of the selection from the deck



as you would if creating a Depth Illusion Break. This facilitates sliding the selection into the paperclip as you bring the two halves of the deck together.

As soon as the two halves of the deck are together, lift some of the upper cards in the right hand and dribble them back onto the deck. This makes the action look less studied and more casual. Give the deck a couple of Overhand Shuffles. I like to make it a very loose shuffle. The two paper-clipped cards will stay together during the shuffle. You'll know by touch where the paper-clipped cards are at any point during the shuffle. Because the paperclip is the same color as the back of the cards, it won't be noticed, even if it comes to the top of the deck, and for the next part of the trick you need those paper-clipped cards on top of the deck.

But let's assume that after the shuffle the paper-clipped cards are somewhere in the middle of the deck. Turn the deck, sideways, face up in the left hand, keeping the inner end toward you, so the spectators don't see the paperclip. Cut the deck immediately below the paperclip. The right thumb lifts at the paperclip and then cuts the deck, sending the paper-clipped cards to the rear.

Ask the spectator if the card on the face of the deck is the selection. It isn't.

As you show the face card of the deck to the spectator, the left thumb pulls down on the outer corner of the top card (fig.4). This action is hidden from the spectators. The right hand then pulls the deck away from the left hand, which keeps a grip on the top card between thumb and fingers (fig.5). This frees the top card from the paperclip. Ask if the top card of deck is the selection. It isn't.

Dribble the deck onto the face-up card in the left hand and then turn over the deck sideways to bring it face down. The selection is now the only card held by the paperclip. It lies second from the top. Take the deck from above in the right hand and then dribble the cards face



down into the open paper bag.

Because the bag is not much bigger than the width of the deck, and the cards don't flip over as they fall, the paper-clipped selection will remain second from the top.

Tell the spectators you are about to do some fishing. But first you need some bait. Take out the box of paperclips, remove some, and sprinkle them into the paper bag. Pick up the bag by the handle and give it a side-to-side shake as if mixing everything up. The shaking just shifts any paperclips that are lying on top of the deck.

"This is a very special type of fishing. Magnet fishing. It's very popular on YouTube. People fish in canals with magnets to see what treasures they can bring up: shopping carts, bicycles, old strollers. You never know what you might find."

Bring out the magnet, show it, and then holding one end of the string, dip the magnet into the bag. The paperclip will be at the inner end of the bag so that's where you position the magnet. You'll feel the magnet adhere to the clip, and when you do, haul up the magnet. It will bring



the paper-clipped selection up with it (fig.6). Your fishing expedition is over.

Notes: I do not know whether magnet fishing exists outside the United Kingdom, but it's certainly made good content for YouTube videos here.

If your spectator management skills are good, you can have the spectator dip the magnet into the bag and find their own card.

When I first toyed with this effect, I had some paperclips 3D printed in plastic. That way you didn't have to worry about the magnet pulling anything out of the bag other than the selection. The plastic paperclips weren't an exact match for the regular paperclips, not that they were ever seen together, but it wasn't really necessary for this routine. Still, I thought it was an interesting idea and might be useful in another effect of this kind.

If you want to develop the presentation further as a close-up piece, you might investigate the variety of novelty paperclips that are available. So instead of throwing paperclips into the bag you are throwing carrots or pineapples i.e., novelty-shaped paperclips. I even bought some that looked like bicycles, of which there are more in British canals than fish.

Henri De'Seevah dropped the deck into the side pocket of the spectator's coat. The deck was placed so that it was paperclip side uppermost. If he pulled out some other magnetic object of the spectator's instead of the card, a cigarette case for instance, he made the most of the comedy, and then pulled the card out on a subsequent attempt.

I got the paper bag idea from Juan Luis Rubiales, who uses it in the "Fished Card" routine he explains this on his 2017 DVD album *Olé* (Essential Magic Collection) and is, to my mind, the best version of the popular Snake Cord effect, a trick originally marketed by Max Andrews in the 1950s. As with Rubiales's routine, you can place the paper bag on the floor and fish the card out, that way making for a bigger effect.

Finally, if the effect appeals, I recommend revisiting Robert Harbin's "Dippy Magnet," a trick he marketed in the 1940s and has been varied over the years. It's a clever and puzzling effect. •