

Lucky Cards

Here is another little gem of a self-working card trick that comes from the fertile mind of my friend Richard Vollmer and which I will teach you here with his blessings. You can use it directly after «Belchou's Aces», or as a separate trick to be performed anytime with any deck. Even the professional performer will want to have a small repertoire of tricks that can be performed with a borrowed deck, which might even be incomplete and in bad condition – this is such a trick.

Effect

In a surprising process of finding their own lucky card, two spectators manage to mysteriously locate the performer's lucky card, which he had predicted!



Two spectators thoroughly shuffle a deck of cards.



Each spectator receives a packet of 13 cards.



As they deal their cards, a surprising match occurs.



The values of their two „lucky cards“ are added ...



...and that number of cards counted to in the balance.



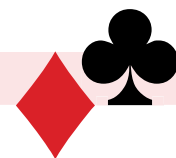
The card arrived at is the performer's card he had predicted!

Lucky Thirteen

Ask who from your audience would like to find out more about his or her lucky number and lucky card. Depending on whether you get two men, two women or a man and a woman, additional presentational possibilities open up...

Hand each of your two assisting spectators about half the deck, and ask them to shuffle and cut their cards. Explain that this is necessary, so that nothing is predetermined and everything is left to chance.

Reassemble the deck and count 13 cards face down in front of the first spectator, explaining that in magic 13 is considered a lucky number, and that in a deck of cards each suit consists of 13 cards. As soon as you have counted the first 13 cards, hand them to the first spectator asking him to recount the cards to make sure they are really 13. As he does that, deal the next 13 cards to the second spectator.



When counting, if possible drop the cards from a little height on the table in a pile, rather than putting them on the table, for more clarity. You retain the balance of the deck.



As I have repeatedly mentioned, *counting cards is a potentially boring action* and therefore needs to be managed accordingly. There are three things you can do to maintain interest and keep the process going when you count cards.

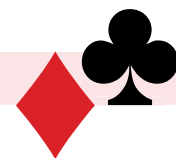
- First, *practice dealing* cards accurately but rapidly so that the dealing will take up as little time as possible.
- Second, think about *something meaningful to say* before and after you deal, or in very short breaks during the deal.
- Third, *count out loud*, making it sound important – this will automatically attract the audience's attention, provided you handle the cards smoothly and the count is not too long.

You Predict Your Lucky Card

Instruct each spectator to take his pile, which is made up of 13 cards, and to shuffle and cut it once more. This will do two things. First, it reminds them that they have initially shuffled the deck and that therefore there can be no previous arrangement of the cards known to you – a possible explanation of the effect that is about to come. Second, it gives you an outward reason to shuffle the remaining cards you are holding in an act of demonstration. As they are still shuffling, you briefly spread your cards face up between your hands and glimpse the second card from the back, i.e. the second card from the top, which we will assume to be the Four of Clubs. To cover this action, say, «This will leave the cards in your packet in a totally random order.» Immediately turn the cards face down again and place them aside.



Explain that the Four of Clubs is *your* lucky card, and that they will now try to find *their* lucky card. Instead of announcing the card openly, you could also write it down on a billet or on your business card, so that nobody can see it, and then put the prediction aside, in view of all. This will take up a little more time and I leave it to you as a little exercise to try either versions and then pick the one that appeals most to you.



Lucky Card and Number

Ask them to hold their packets as if they were to deal cards for a card game, and then deal the top card face up on the table and say, «King». Instruct them to deal the next card also face up and on top of the first card, saying, «Queen», then the next, «Jack», and so on, by naming the 13 cards in the suit from King backwards to the Ace. However, *as soon as a card that is named matches the card that is turned up*, the deal must be stopped.

Here is an example: Assume your first spectator deals cards, saying, «King, Queen, Jack, Ten, Nine, Eight...», and when he says, «Eight», he turns up the Eight of Hearts. Stop him and tell him that this is his lucky card, and eight is his luck number, although he might not have known before.



Take his remaining undealt cards and replace them on top of the balance of the deck, which you had previously placed aside. In our case these will be sevens cards, while the face-up packet is made up of six cards.

Do the same thing with the second spectator, who we will assume hits it on the count of three by turning up the Three of Diamonds. Again leave the face up packet on the table and take her undealt cards, placing them on the balance of the deck.

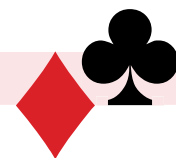


Before proceeding, allow me a few comments on what has just happened. To start with, these two coincidences will prove quite startling to some of your spectators, as one would think that a match is highly unlikely. This is a nice counter-intuitive thing, because mathematically the probability of at least one match is surprisingly high.

But what do you do if one or both spectators do not get a match? This will occasionally happen. Simply explain that luck is of course not something that falls into your lap, but has to be earned through hard work... Let the spectator who didn't have a match reshuffle his 13 cards and go through the deal once more. I have never had to repeat this more than twice in order to get a match, provided the cards are well distributed at the beginning.

So Lucky ... You Knew it Before!

You will now get to the actual denouement of the trick. Explain that luck always comes by threes through a lucky synergy. Ask them to add their two lucky numbers. In our example they will add eight (Eight of Hearts) and three (Three of Diamonds), thus obtaining *eleven*. (Notice that the King counts 13, the Queen 12 and the Jack 11.)



Say that *eleven* is *your* lucky number, and then proceed to slowly and clearly count down to the eleventh card. When you reach it, hold it face down in your hand as you very quickly resume that *they* have shuffled the cards themselves, and that *they* have done everything themselves in their own hands. Remind them your lucky card, which is the Four of Clubs, or show the written prediction if you chose to go that way, and then slowly turn the card you are holding over – it will indeed be the Four of Clubs!



Lest I forget...

1. The working of this trick is based on the same mathematical principle we have already seen in «The Cards Knew», Lesson 6, but uses a different procedure.
2. Here is a worst case scenario, which I never had to resort to, in case a spectator doesn't hit a match on his back-count: Have him exchange his 13 cards for new ones, saying they might be bad-luck cards. In this case have him cut the balance about in half and take 13 cards from the bottom portion, then complete the balance again, placing the original portion back on top – this contains your predicted «lucky card», so shouldn't be upset. Replace or riffle shuffle his original 13 cards into the center of the balance, again taking care not to put any cards above your lucky card.
3. When you turn the selection face up at the end of the trick, there will always be exactly 24 cards left in the balance of the deck. If you assemble all the cards that you have been dealing with, these will consequently be 28 cards. This can be used to your advantage in other tricks...you may try to find out in which way. Hint: you can set a key card.

A Phenomenal Memory

A version of this trick was shown to me by nobody less than the Spanish card genius Juan Tamariz. He, in turn, had seen it performed in Las Vegas by Jimmy Grippo². Grippo's method is a wonderfully simple solution to an effect called «Moe's Move a Card» by the American enigma, «Moe» Seidenstein³. Perform this trick as though it were really a feat of prodigious memory and, for those not in the know, no other explanation is possible.

Effect

A chosen card is shuffled back into the deck, which is then ribbon spreads face up on the table. The performer stares at the card spread for fifteen seconds, pretending to memorize them, after which he turns away. The spectator then moves the chosen card from its location in the spread to another part of the spread. The performer turns back, looks at the cards again, divines what card was selected and pulls it out of the spread. An amazing demonstration of memory.