

# Tantalizing Coincidence

## What?

A participant shuffles the deck and then places the top card sight unseen into the card case. The deck is then shuffled some more and the performer deals half to himself and half to the participant, explaining that it is 50/50 who has the mate of the selection. He offers to increase the odds in the participant's favour by dealing him an extra 13 cards, so that he now has a 75% chance of having the mate. This generosity on the part of the performer continues until the participant has 50 cards and the performer just 1. Nevertheless, the single card he has left is the exact mate of the freely chosen card in the case.

## How?

This is my super-clean handling of 'The Tantalizer' from *The Royal Road To Card Magic*. The use of the marked deck makes this a dream.

Firstly, remove and discard (temporarily!) any random card from the deck so that you are performing this trick with a 51 card deck.

To perform, bring out the deck and offer it for shuffling. Then have the participant take the top card and place it sight unseen into the card case. As he does so you get your read.

Now overhand shuffle the deck again and if you spot the mate of the card, shuffle it to the top of the deck. If you don't see it, spread the deck face-up as you remark that the card in the box is a truly random choice and no one could know what it is. As you are talking, spot the mate and cut it to the top as you turn the deck face down. Now overhand shuffle again, keeping the top card in place.

Dealing alternately, starting with yourself, deal half the deck to yourself and half to the participant. Tell him that there is a 50% chance that either of you have the mate of the card in the case.

Say that this isn't actually that fair, since you are a magician, so again deal your half alternatingly, starting with yourself. Explain that the participant now has a 75% chance.

Say that you want to make it even fairer, and deal your cards again, starting with yourself. Tell him he now has an 89% chance but that it's still not enough.

Deal again, once more dealing to yourself first, giving him a 92% chance. At this point you have just four cards left. Then deal again, to yourself first, telling him that he now has a 96% chance.

You now have two cards left and the bottom card is the force card (the mate of the card in the case). Hold that card in your left hand and the other in your right and ask the participant to point to either one. Whichever he points to, say nothing and drop the card in your right hand onto his pile and say "98% now" as you quietly drop the card in your left hand in front of yourself.

Direct him to open the card case and take out the card and turn it face up. Then direct him to turn all of his cards face up and look for the mate, He won't find it...

Conclude by turning over your single card to show that odds mean nothing to you.

Just to recap the dealing procedure:

First deal: You

Second deal: You

Third deal: You

Fourth deal: You

Fifth deal: You

Sixth deal: Point to either card gambit.

Dealing from what is effectively a 50 card deck (once the selection is in the case) means that the procedure is consistent: it always starts with you dealing a card to yourself. In other versions of the Tantalizer I have seen this is not the case - a weakness which is avoided in this handling.