

The Ambitious Card

Effect: A great classic. A selected card mysteriously appears at the top of the deck again and again after being sent into the middle of the deck. The final appearance is a real stunner.

Preparation: Put the eight of spades face down on top of the deck followed by the nine of spades face down on top of it.

Method:

(i) While announcing the following: "I have discovered that in every deck there is always one card that is more ambitious than the others. It likes to be the top dog and will always push its way up to the top of the deck.", perform a false overhand shuffle (if you know how to) or any other other shuffle that retains the two cards on top.

(ii) Execute the double lift and reveal the eight of spades adding, " Apparently, the ambitious card in this deck is the eight of spades." Put the two cards down, seize the top card and insert it into the outer end of the deck so that about 2/3 of an inch of it protrudes out. So, when you next put the tip of your right middle finger on the face of that card only the closed loop of the 9 can be seen. Do that and casually tip the pack upwards so that it will appear to be the eight of spades to the spectator. Insert that card fully in. Tap the deck and reveal the eight of spades.

(iii) Have the spectator sign the face of the eight of spades so that she knows that you are not using duplicates. Have the spectator place the card on top of the deck. Now get ready to perform the overhand shuffle. Holding the deck in your left hand in the overhand shuffle position, grasp the bottom half of the deck with your right hand, run one card (say card X) on top of the eight of spades, run the next card (say card Y) on top of card X but have card Y stick out an inch below card X, shuffle off the remainder of the cards on top of card Y and then take the pile below card Y with your right (this should be easy to do due to the placement of card Y) and throw it on top of the deck. At the end card X should be on top of the deck with the eight of spades below it. Perform the double lift again and put card X into the middle of the deck taking care not to reveal its face. Tap the deck and reveal the eight of spades. And place it on the top of the deck face down.

(iv) Again prepare to do the overhand shuffle. With the deck in your left hand, seize all the cards except the top one with your right hand (this can be done by applying a slight pressure on the top card with your left thumb. Shuffle off the cards in your right on top of the card (the eight of spades) in your left hand. Now by applying pressure on the bottom card with your left third and ring fingers seize the bottom half of the deck except the bottom card with your right and then shuffle them off on top of the deck. So the eight of spades should be at the bottom of the deck. Tap the top card and say, "This is not the card." Then turn the deck face up exclaiming, "Here it is. At the top of the bottom!"

(v) With the deck still face up, do a double lift and while bending the two cards (they should look like one) by making their shorter edges meet, say, "To make the ambitious card easier to follow, I shall bend it like this." Then place the two cards face down on the deck which should also be face down. Hold the two cards down by gripping the deck with the left thumb on top of the deck and left fingers below the deck. While maintaining this grip, pull out the top card and insert it into the middle of the deck. Now hold the deck with the left hand palm up, thumb on one of the long sides of the deck and the third finger on the other long side. By exerting a slight pressure with the thumb and the third finger, you should be able to prevent the top card from popping out.

(vi) For the finale, announce to the spectator: "If the eight of spades does rise to the top, then the top card must pop up." Tap the top of the deck and pause for several seconds. Next tap and whistle, pretending to coax the card to rise up. Do not release the pressure on the top card yet. Give some excuse like: "Maybe the ambitious card is a bit out of shape and is not feeling so well right now." Then finally add that you will try one last time reminding the spectator to watch carefully. Now tap, whistle and release the pressure on the top card while raising the deck a little. If done well, it will look as if the card had just pushed its way to the top. Take a bow and any free drinks that come your way.

Note: This is a hard trick and you need to really practice all the shuffling until you can do them with ease and while maintaining eye contact with the spectator. But having mastered that you are well on your way to mastering one of the great classic card tricks

A word or two on the overhand shuffling position: (from The Royal Road To Card Magic by Hugard and Braue)

Hold you left hand half closed, palm upwards, and place the pack in it face downwards, so that the third phalanx of the index finger is bent against the outer left corner. The middle and ring fingers, slightly bent, rest against the face of the bottom card; the little finger curls inwards so that its side rests against the inner end and the thumb rests on the top card, its tip near the middle of the outer end. The pack should slope downwards towards the left at an angle of about 45 degrees, its lower side resting along the palm of the hand.