



### Basic Effect

The performer names a card while explaining and demonstrating what the participant should do, and then gives her the deck. The participant deals as many cards as she likes, face-up into the performer's hand. At a time of her own choosing, she deals one card face-down, and then continues to deal the rest of the deck face-up. When the performer turns the deck over and spreads through the cards, it's seen that the only face-up card in the now face-down deck is the card he previously named.

### Credits and Inspiration

Maybe is a handling for an in-the-hands<sup>13</sup> Open Prediction.<sup>14</sup> The method for Maybe was inspired, in a way, by Open Prediction 999 by Mike Powers.<sup>15</sup> I really loved Mike's ploy of secretly planting the target card face-down, while ostensibly demonstrating what the participant needs to do, and then switching it for the card the participant later

13 Normally cards are dealt to the table in an Open Prediction. The handling in Maybe could be done with a table, I'm sure, but it might be a little odd to demonstrate the deal in your hands, only to have the participant deal to the table.

14 [http://www.genimagazine.com/wiki/index.php/Open\\_Prediction](http://www.genimagazine.com/wiki/index.php/Open_Prediction)  
<https://www.conjuringarchive.com/list/category/1066>

15 From the ebook *Power Plays* by Mike Powers, <https://www.mallofmagic.com/pp.htm>

deals face-down.

Mike's actual method to achieve this is very different, and I just couldn't feel confident doing it. No doubt that has more to do with the limits of my skills—especially compared to Mike's—than with any shortcoming in his handling. Anyway, I tinkered with other ways of accomplishing the same basic goal. I even shared one or two of my ideas with Mike, and he graciously provided feedback and helped me explore options.

Eventually, I came up with this one. In fact, I was not intending to make an in-the-hands Open Prediction, but this is the way that I found worked best for me. The fact that it works without a table is a convenient bonus in many of my performing contexts.

When I sent this handling to Mike for feedback, he was very encouraging. He even asked if he could publish it in his Card Corner column in *The Linking Ring*. I happily agreed. I believe it appeared in the November 2022 issue. Mike called it Open Prediction 1000, with attribution to Jon Hackl (that's me).<sup>16</sup>

It was while performing 51 Fat Chances<sup>17</sup> by John Bannon that I developed the presentation I would later use for Maybe. 51 Fat Chances is Bannon's self-working, hands-off take on the Open Prediction plot, and I think it's very fun and clever. Bannon's presentation is like a game, where the participant loses if she fails to turn the target card face-up. It's a better fit for my personal style to have the participant *win* if she gets through the whole deck *without* turning the target card face-up. I reversed the outcome of the “game,” but I credit Bannon with the inspiration for the presentation.

Some might like a deeper and more serious presentation. You probably already have a preference for how you'd like to present an Open Prediction. Feel free to use that instead, if you like Maybe's method but not my presentation.

## Method and Presentation

1. After your participant, Veronica, has shuffled the deck, retrieve it in left-hand dealing grip. As you deliver your patter, transfer the deck to right-hand end grip, gesturing toward the deck with your left hand. During this process, peek the bottom card (say, the Nine of

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<sup>16</sup> The origin of the pseudonym Jon Hackl is a story longer than it is interesting, so I'll spare you. Mike quite reasonably assumed it was my real name. When he learned otherwise, he tried to rectify it before printing, but was unsuccessful. I'm not bothered by that at all, and in any case it's mostly my fault for using a pseudonym in the first place!

<sup>17</sup> From John Bannon's *Move Zero* (Vol 2) video, <https://www.bannonmagic.com/move-zero-2>

Spades) and secure a thumb break over it.

I do the former simply by tilting the top of the deck casually toward the participant while gesturing. I do the latter with a motion similar to the preparatory move for the Ovette Master Move/Kelly Bottom Placement.<sup>18</sup> I shift the bottom card with right-hand middle and ring fingers, and settle it back under my thumb. The larger motion of my right hand's gesturing covers the smaller motion of its fingers. If you prefer, you could simply use your left pinky to pull down for a break and transfer it to the right thumb.



“This is actually more like a game than a trick. Mix up those cards as much as you like, and then I'll show you how to play.

“Now that you've mixed the cards, I'll tell you the rules of the game. I would have told you earlier, but I was afraid you'd cheat when you shuffled.”

2. As you explain to Veronica what she needs to do, thumb over and flip a couple cards face-up into your left hand. Then, as you explain that she's going to deal one card face-down, thumb over a third card without flipping it, but execute a Biddle Addition<sup>19</sup> at the same time. Your left fingers take the target card from the bottom, as your left thumb takes the top card from the deck.

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18 [https://www.conjuringcredits.com/doku.php?id=cards:master\\_move](https://www.conjuringcredits.com/doku.php?id=cards:master_move)  
<https://www.conjuringarchive.com/list/category/1430>

Ed Marlo describes using this kind of movement to prepare a thumb break in his *Off the Top*,  
<https://trickshop.com/marlo-off-the-top.html>

19 [https://www.conjuringcredits.com/doku.php?id=cards:biddle-style\\_card\\_load\\_into\\_packet](https://www.conjuringcredits.com/doku.php?id=cards:biddle-style_card_load_into_packet)



All Veronica sees is that you have put two face-up cards and then a face-down card into your left hand, but the target card is also face-down, hiding second from the top in that small packet. When you give the instruction for dealing one card face-down, make sure to suggest something like “somewhere near the middle” or “in the middle of your dealing.” Ideally, you want the face-down card to come near the middle.

“You're going to deal cards face-up onto my left hand. You're going to deal through the whole deck this way, except that at some point, in the middle of your dealing, you need to deal one and only one card face-down.

“Then keep dealing the rest of the deck face-up until it's all done. At the end, we'll check which card you dealt face-down.”

3. Raise your left hand so that Veronica sees the back of the bottom card. Thumb the top card to the right so that she can see its face. With the deck still in end grip in the right hand, you should be able to take this card between the tips of your thumb (at its top right corner) and middle finger (at its bottom right corner).



Turn the right hand down so you can also see the face of this card (say, the King of Diamonds), and put it face-up on top of the left hand's packet, covering the target card. Now return your left hand down to a normal dealing position. As far as Veronica knows, you have three face-up cards in your left hand, but the target is still hiding, face-down, second from the top.

“But the card you put face-down won't be this King of Diamonds. Hopefully, you'll put the Nine of Spades face-down. That's how you win the game. You have to turn the whole deck face-up, one card at a time, except for one card which you choose to leave face-down.

“If, at the end, we check that card and it's the Nine of Spades, you win! But if at any point one of the cards you turn face-up is the Nine of Spades, then you lose. Does that sound fair?”

“You're right. It's not very fair. Your chance of winning is pretty low, if you just choose which card to deal face-down at random. But wouldn't your chance be a lot better if you were, I don't know, psychic or something?”

“Seriously, I think if you follow your intuition, you'll find the Nine of Spades. You'll just be able to sense it when you get to it. Give it a try and see how you go.”

4. Hand the deck to Veronica, asking her to start dealing face-up. Encourage her to keep dealing, because ideally you want the face-down card to be near the middle of the deck.

“That's it. Keep dealing face-up, just like that.”

“Somewhere in the middle, deal one face-down. It's up to you.”

During this dealing process, I like to look for opportunities for jokes or comments. For example, if she deals the Nine of Clubs face-up:

“Uh oh! Nine of Clubs! You lose!

“Oh, did I say Spades? Alright, then I guess you can keep going.”

If she hesitates on a card and then deals it face-up:

“Close one! If you had dealt that one face-down, you'd have lost. Be careful!”

5. Hopefully, she deals enough face-up cards that she gets close to the middle of the deck. At this point, if necessary, remind her to deal one face-down.

“Any time now, you can deal one face-down.”

In English-speaking cultures, the phrase “Any time now” often implies impatience. I deliver this line very gently, so that it doesn't come across as pushy. Still, I'm hoping the association of the phrase with impatience in common usage will have an effect.

When she deals her face-down card, she will likely need a reminder to keep dealing the rest of the cards face-up.

“That one? Are you sure? Then you need to deal the rest of the cards out face-up, because if you're wrong about this one, you'll turn up the Nine of Spades at some point and lose the game.

“But if you get all the way through the deck without seeing it, then this must be it and you win!”

If you'd prefer not to continue the deal all the way through the deck, you could let her deal just a few more face-up. Then have her spread the rest and look for the Nine of Spades, putting them on top when she's done.<sup>20</sup>

“You know what, to save time, just spread those out and look

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<sup>20</sup> Suggested by Mike Powers.

at the faces. Is the Nine of Spades in there? Ok put them here with the rest.”

Personally, I don't mind having Veronica deal the entire deck. I look for opportunities for patter, either for humour or to build suspense. If I didn't have the chance to use my stupid Nine of Clubs joke earlier, soon I will.

“The suspense is killing me! I keep expecting to see the Nine of Spades. I hope we don't, because I'd like to see you win.”

“It's only a game. There's no shame in losing.”

“Oh no! That's ... Wait, that's just the *Eight* of Spades. Keep going.”

6. When she's finished, the whole deck will be in your left hand. There are two indifferent cards face-up on the bottom; then the face-down target card; some number of indifferent, face-up cards; then the card she chose to deal face-down; and finally the rest of the deck face-up on top.

Give a little recap, spreading through the cards to show they're all face-up except for one, being careful not to spread all the way to reveal the other face-down card near the bottom. As you close the spread, catch a pinky break above the card she chose to deal face-down.

“You dealt all these cards face-up, and we never saw the Nine of Spades. That must mean that this card, the only one you dealt face-down, must be it. I think you've won! But let's double-check.”

7. When you turn the deck over to “check” whether she got the target card right, execute a turnover pass<sup>21</sup> at the break. The result is that you now have a mostly face-down deck

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21 [https://www.conjuringcredits.com/doku.php?id=cards:turnover\\_pass](https://www.conjuringcredits.com/doku.php?id=cards:turnover_pass)  
<https://www.conjuringarchive.com/list/category/1600>

There are many variations of the turnover pass, and you may already have your own preference. I recommend these two sources: Cody Nottingham's video tutorial, <https://magicstream.com/programs/turnover-pass-cody-nottingham>, and *The Invisible Pass* by Jean Hugard and Fred Braue, <https://www.lybrary.com/the-invisible-pass-p-178.html>.

in your hands, with the target card face-up somewhere in the middle, and the card she actually chose face-up on the bottom. Deliver some patter and make eye contact, just to be safe, as you execute the pass. For me, the following gag<sup>22</sup> never fails to get a reaction and some eye contact:

“Hey, wouldn't it be funny if I had taken out the Nine of Spades before we started?”

“No I didn't, but it would be funny, wouldn't it?”

8. Spread the cards again, showing all face-down except for the target face-up, being careful not to flash that the bottom card is also face-up. She won the game, or your prediction was correct, or you influenced which card she dealt face-down, or whatever.

“Here, all these face-down cards, with one and only one face-up in the middle. And it's ... the Nine of Spades! You won!”

9. To clean up that reversed card on the bottom, you have options. I usually just pull that bottom card into cop position and turn over the rest of the deck on top of it. Alternatively, you could use the reversed card as a set-up for another trick. Or you might simply turn it back over on an off-beat, reverse it against your leg,<sup>23</sup> or use some fancy method to reverse it secretly. You could teach Veronica another game: “52-Card Pick-Up.” I leave it to you.

## **Trouble-Shooting**

What if your participant does something awkward, like dealing her first card or her last card face-down, instead of one somewhere in the middle? The usual advice of being careful in selecting your participant applies here! Choose a good-natured participant, like Veronica, who seems to enjoy your performance. This is also one advantage of the light-hearted, game presentation, where the participant wins if the trick works. It inspires cooperation.

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<sup>22</sup> Credit to John Bannon, 51 Fat Chances, for this little joke.

<sup>23</sup> “First Method” for reversing a card in *The Royal Road to Card Magic*.



What if your participant is not Veronica but Kate, and Kate *does* deal her first card face-down? You never know with Kate. You have, from bottom up in your left hand, two face-up cards, the face-down target card, a face-up card, and her first dealt card face-down on top. I would have her deal a few more face-up and then simply look through what's left for the target card, finally placing them face-up on top of the packet in my hand.

I would spread through the faces, but not all the way to the face-down cards, asking if she's sure she didn't miss it. In this process I would cull<sup>24</sup> one more card to the back of the face-up spread. Then I'd close the spread and turn over the deck, no pass. I'd spread to the face-up target card, and worry about the other reversed card on an offbeat, maybe double-cutting it to the bottom and reversing it there.

Something like this should work for any early card. You can count the cards she deals face-up, until she deals her face-down card. Once you count, say, to 15 or so, then you can stop worrying about counting. If you are under that number when she deals one face-down, remember the number. At the end, when you're "double-checking" the face-up spread to see if she missed the card, cull that number of cards, minus 2. Then turn over and spread to "check" her card. If you don't want to count, just estimate how many you'll need to cull. It won't need to be precise.

What if Kate deals the *last* card face-down? I think this is highly unlikely, but knowing Kate, I'd rather be ready. In your hand, you have two face-up cards on the bottom, then your face-down target card, followed by the 48 face-up cards and, finally, the face-down card on top. Turn the deck over in your hand so that it's now all face-down except for the target card, third from the top, and the bottom card.

Use a pinky count or similar method to get a break under the third card, beginning your recap patter with something like, "Look at all these cards, the whole deck facing the same way ...". Push off those three cards from your break into your right hand, and quickly start spreading the deck on top of them. You are holding those three now in the same position you would if you had culled them. Spread a bit further than halfway

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24 [https://www.conjuringcredits.com/doku.php?id=cards:spread\\_cull](https://www.conjuringcredits.com/doku.php?id=cards:spread_cull)

An economical but excellent introduction to the spread cull is Carl Irwin's *Magic Bullet* video, <https://www.penguinmagic.com/p/16014>. Two more detailed resources are Kostya Kimlat's *The Roadrunner Cull*, <https://www.kostyakimlat.com/shop/roadrunner-cull>, and Iain Moran's *The Cullfather*, <https://www.iainmoran.com/the-cullfather/>. There is a small but significant difference between Kimlat's and Moran's handlings of the cull. It may be worthwhile to explore both to see which you prefer. Irwin's is more like Kimlat's, so you could start with Irwin, then compare to Moran, and if you like Irwin's better, then maybe check out Kimlat as well.

through the deck, continuing your recap, "... except the last card, the one you chose to deal face-down." Close the spread, pushing the "culled" three to the bottom. You can now turn the deck over again and have Kate remove "her" card to check it.

What about a late card that's not quite the last? In this case, do the pseudo-cull, as above, after turning the deck face-down. But as your spread gets near the bottom, try to block-push just a couple cards past her actual card, and insert the trio with the target into that point as you close the spread. Finish your recap, then turn the deck over again, spread carefully to the face-down target card, and remove it for her to check.

Clean up the extra reversed card, in these cases, when you have a chance. But I doubt any of these measures will be necessary, if you're careful in selecting your participant, and your presentation doesn't come across as confrontational or provoking a challenge. Nonetheless, as a former Boy Scout, I like to "Be prepared."

Finally, what if Kate fails to heed your instructions, and actually does check her face-down card before going through the rest face-up? In my presentation, she will have lost the game, because she didn't follow the rules. I might offer her another chance to continue. I think a similar dodge could be applied to other presentations, something like, "Well, now that you've turned it over and looked at it, of course it's not the card I predicted! My prediction is of a face-down card in an otherwise face-up deck. Please keep going, but make sure to deal only one face-down, and leave it that way until the end."

