

## The Kings' Misfortune – Jack E. McCoy

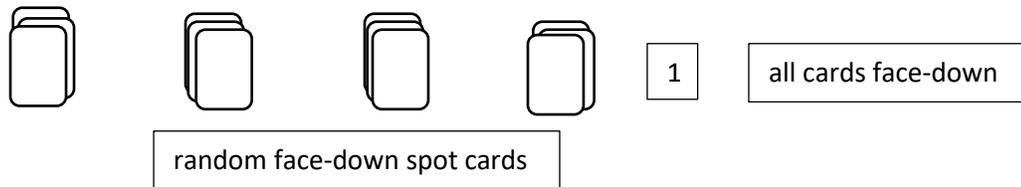
A man's wealth isn't measured by his fortune, it's measured by his wife, literally. I mean this in an Al Bundy kind'a way of course, "Ah, Nohoho, Why Peg, Why!?"

**Effect:** 4 small discs are shown. They have the numbers 1 through 4 on them, one value per disc. 12 random spot cards are removed from the deck and arranged into a row of 4 stacks with 3 cards in each. The 4 aces are removed from the deck, displayed, turned face down and placed on the 4 stacks, 1 ace per pile. The magician explains that those 4 aces represent the treasures of the kings. The spectator is requested to place the kings in front of the 4 stacks, 1 king per stack. Their arrangement is completely up to them. Now, he / she is requested to place a number disc on top of each king, one per king. It also is a complete free choice of which number goes to which king. Each of those stacks (3 cards + ace) are picked, one stack at a time, and cut where the aces are in unknown locations within each pile. Now, those piles are collected and redealt onto the table into 4 piles. The magician explains his challenge was to somehow make each of the treasures (aces) to end up in front of their suit-matching king. Referring to the number disc that the spectator put on each king, the card at that number position in the stack is removed and placed on top of its king, but slightly in-jogged. The remainder of the stacks are turned face up and ribbon spread. There are no aces among them. The magician speaks, "Ah, success! I managed to get the aces into the randomly chosen number positions of your randomly placed chips! Wouldn't it be amazing if I managed to get the suits matching as well? Remember, both the number discs and the kings were randomly arranged by you." The spectator agrees. "Well, I must confess, the suits do match but the kings don't have their fortune, they're all married!", spoken in an Al Bundy sort of way as each of the cards are turned face up and now they are the 4 queens, and their suits match the king they're with! The aces have completely vanished! This trick is impromptu and with a borrowed deck. 4 quarters with the numbers 1 – 4, made by a permanent marker, can be used in these cases.

Requirements: A normal deck and 4 discs that have the numbers 1,2,3, & 4 written on them, 1 value per disc. An excellent prop for impromptu situations is with 4 quarters. Use a permanent marker to write the numbers. I do recommend making a more unique prop if you like this trick. I made a set out of wooden discs. I designed and printed the rings and numbers using Microsoft Word, printed and cut them out, stick-glued them onto the discs and decoupage them. They look nice and can withstand the worst of abuse, even hang out with the coins in your pocket and not give a *flip* (get it, 'flip', coin, 'flip'? Never mind). Note: Print the number rings a little smaller in circumference than the discs so the decoupage can lock down onto the disc, sealing the drawing safely inside. Also, decoupage a. This makes them very rugged, waterproof, and will outlast you probably. Alternatively, stamped metal blanks also look great, which if you purchased this trick, you may have received. Toss them in your pocket and you're always ready to go anytime a deck comes into play.

Prior to performance, manage to get the 4 queens on top (back) of the deck per a cull or during a private moment and arrange them in the infamous Clubs, Hearts, Spades, & Diamonds (CHaSeD) order, the Clubs being the top card of the deck. Also, to make things a little safer, ensure that no kings or aces are in the exact middle few cards of the deck. The 4 number discs are still in your pocket.

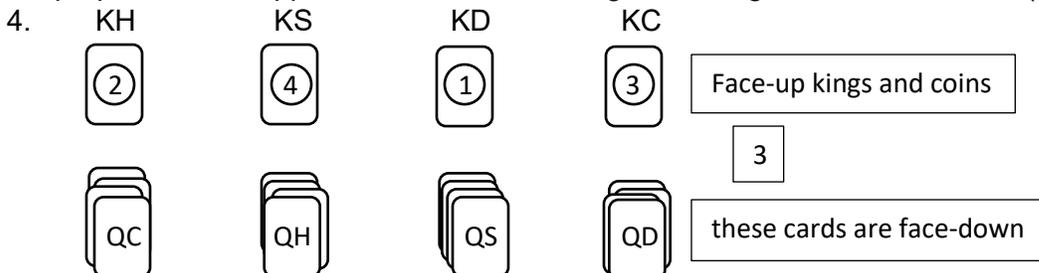
1. Gently spring-flourish the face-down deck to create a very slight convex bridge in it. Revolve the deck face up, spread through it and remove the 4 kings, dropping them into a face up pile on the table as you come to them. Close the deck and revolve it face down. Fiddle with it as you talk about the 4 kings and during that time catch a pinky break below the top 4 cards (queens). Braue-reverse to the break, which turns the deck face up but keeps the 4 queens face down and transports them secretly to the bottom. There are many tutorials for the Braue-reversal online. If you don't know it, go online and learn it, I'll see you in about 5 to 10 minutes. Back? It's a cool move huh?
2. O.K., with the deck face up and the queens secretly face down on its bottom, openly spread the top cards and remove the first 3 spot cards you come to, revolve them face down and place them onto the table, in a stack. In similar fashions remove 3 more sets of 3 spot cards, turning each clump face down and placing in a stack on the table, next to each other, in a straight row. The ending situation will be like this (ill. 1).



Keeping the deck face up, spread through and remove the 4 aces, removing each as you come to it, revolve it face down and place on the bottom (back) of the deck. Once done, close-up and turn the deck face down which brings the 4 aces face up on top. As quickly as possible, get a break below the top 8 cards, made easy due to the convex bow shape in the face up queens. Spread the top 3 cards to show the 4 aces, sloppily close-up and flip all 8 cards, face down. Deal the top 4 cards onto the 4 stacks, one card on each, starting on the left and moving rightward. The spectators think you turned the aces face down then dealt one on top of each pile. Actually, you've dealt the queens on top of the piles and are in Clubs, Hearts, Spades, and Diamonds order from left to right (ill. 2). Put the remaining deck away.



3. Tell the spectator to take the 4 kings and place 1 in front of each stack, all kings face up. He has a complete free choice which king goes where. Remove the 4 discs from your pocket, hand them to the volunteer and request him/her to place 1 on each king, in any arrangement he/she chooses, and with their values showing on top. For teaching purposes let's suppose the volunteer arranges the kings and coins like this (ill. 3).



Remember, the arrangement on the previous page is just one example of how a spectator might arrange them but for explanation purposes arrange your kings and coins identically. This will make understanding the process easier.

5. Pick up the leftmost 4-card stack (it has the queen of clubs), and at the same time notice how many positions from the right the king of clubs is. In our example, the king of clubs is in the 1<sup>st</sup> position from the right side so with the packet you're holding, cut that many cards from the top to the bottom. In this example 1 card would be transferred from the top to the bottom. Put the packet back down in its original spot. Pick up the next packet (2<sup>nd</sup> from left w/ the queen of hearts) and secretly notice how many positions from the right side the king of hearts is. Cut that many cards from the top to the bottom, and put the packet back down at its original spot. In the above example, the king of hearts is in the 4<sup>th</sup> position from the right, and since there are only 4 cards in the packet to begin with, nothing needs to be done. However, to give an impression of cutting the ace(?) into a random location, cut 1 card, then 2 cards, then 1 card, or any other combination of 4 so the packet still gets cut a few times but the queen is still on top when the packet is returned to the table. Pick up the next pile (2<sup>nd</sup> from the right w/ queen of spades on top), at the same time noticing how many positions from the right the king of spades is. Cut that many cards to the bottom. In the illustration 3 cards would be cut from the top to the bottom. Put the packet back down at its original location. Pick up the last pile (rightmost) and secretly notice how many positions from the right the king of diamonds is. In the above example, it's in the 2<sup>nd</sup> position from the right so 2 cards would be cut to the bottom. Put that packet back down at its original spot. Remember that the queens were on top of the stacks in clubs, hearts, spades, and diamonds order, so this can be done with very little thought needed. Also, it's recommended to do extra false cuts, like was done with the queen of hearts group, to give them more cuts than just the one and by cutting various numbers to equal 4 will make the cuts look totally random. Now, the coins' values come into play. You're going to collect the 4 stacks, but in a certain way. Quickly, notice which king is below coin #1. Pick up the stack that has the queen with the same suit as that king. For an example, in illustration 3 (previous page) the king of diamonds is under coin #1, so the rightmost pile (with the queen of diamonds) is picked up 1<sup>st</sup> and placed into the left hand. Next, look at the king below coin #2, and pick up and stack that has the matching suited queen in it, then place it on top of the 1<sup>st</sup> packet you're holding. In illustration 3 the king of hearts is under coin #2 so the 2<sup>nd</sup> from the left packet (with the queen of hearts) is picked up and placed on top of the 1<sup>st</sup> held group. In a similar fashion notice which king is under coin #3, pick up the stack that has the matching queen and drop it on top of the first 2 already gathered. In illustration 3 you would have picked up the leftmost packet and dropped on top of the others since the king of clubs is the card under coin #3. Finally pick up the remaining stack from the table and drop it on top of all in the hand.
6. Deal the combined stack, all 16 cards, poker style, one-at-a-time, from left to right, in front of the four kings.
7. Starting with the king on the right, mention the number that's on its coin, then remove the card that's the same number position, counting from the top of its packet. Start a discard pile with the remaining 3 cards. Moving to the next king, mention the number value on its coin and remove the card at that position from the top of the packet in front of it. Continue this with the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> kings. Each card removed is placed slightly on top of each king, the leftover cards added to the 'waste' stack.

Once finished, pick up the 4 coins and put them away. Turn the 'waste' pile face up and ribbon spread, right-to-left. This displays the 12 random spot cards and orients them where the spectator can easily see their pips. Mention the kings supposedly getting their fortunes. Ask if it would be fascinating if you somehow were able to match the suits. After the spectator agrees turn the single cards face up to show the suits do match, but now the aces have turned into the queens.

**Afterthoughts:** Use discretion on the 'married' joke thing. This trick can be presented in many ways. The trick can be 100% self-working if you desire. The price you pay is you won't be able to do the aces to queens transformation, which is really the only sleight of hand in the trick. Instead, simply use the queens or aces, and show them openly, turn face down and drop onto the 4 stacks of 3 cards, in clubs-hearts-spades-diamonds order from left to right. Then have the person randomly arrange the kings and coins. In the end you match their suits, which is a cool trick alone. The transformation however really catches the audience off guard and I feel worth the extra effort.

If the deck wasn't yours, when done, drop the waste pile on top of the deck, then the kings and queens. This shifts the 4 aces deeper into the deck and should someone choose to examine it they won't find them right next to the others. You may choose to scatter the aces with quick shuffles or something. Personally, I don't think it's necessary. After all, it is just a card trick and if someone notices them together in the deck, so what? You never said you made them disappear or anything.

**History:** The matrix principle that's involved in this trick goes all the way back in time to Horatio Galasso and from his Italian book *Giochidi Carte Bellissimidi Regola, e di Memoria* (Most Beautiful Card Games Based on Rules and Memory Techniques) printed in the year 1593. Interestingly, according to Phil Willmarth and described in his published expansion of Peter Tappan's *The Impostress Princess*, a brilliant book pertaining to the principle, the secret of this one follows along fundamentally rooted methodology. You may find of interest that Horatio Galasso's book was the first known offering extensively information on card conjuring and introduced mathematical card magic and only 43 years after what is believed to be the first ever printed explanation of a card effect ("*Cardano*"). Galasso's book is also where the infamous '21-Card Trick' originated. Yes, that good'ol 21-Card trick that we know so well is one of the very first card tricks ever documented for magical entertainment pursuers. That should make you proud if you know it. I also recommend searching for Phil Goldstein's *Van John* (Thabatical – pg. 99) as well as Ed Marlo's ideas taught in his book '*Marlo Without Tears*', published and authored by Jon Racherbaumer for other great ideas with the 21-card premise.

I like magic that involves the royalties of a deck (face cards), because they're more visually enticing. So, I decided to use a 4 X 4 matrix and give it a royalty theme. I then added a floater positioning variable with the discs to allow random placements of both the kings and coins but not add any steps in the methodology. I mean, after all, why not? Lastly came the idea of switching the aces for queens with a simple card sleight so a transformation can be added to the already strong mystery and some light-hearted comedy is always a nice touch to end with, I feel. Magic is a surprise for the mind and having an equally self-intrigued, light-hearted approach and attitude with your magic is

as equally effective as pretending to be some wizard who shifts the universe to make something happen, in the audience's mind. Everyone does love to laugh.

**More on Performing:** During step 5, when you collect the 4 piles, practice making it not look like you're purposely collecting them in any certain order. Gather the piles using both hands, as you say something to the order of, "*Well, hopefully I got it.*", referring to your previous cuts with the piles, as if what you're doing now isn't of importance. Often at least 2 adjacent cards' suits will already be in the correct sequence. Practice noting the kings' suits and quickly knowing the sequence to gather the queens' piles, using their CHaSeD order. After a few times, you'll be surprised how fast you'll get.

The matrix principle is fundamentally simple: During step 4, when you cut the queens into the packets, all you're doing is putting them into certain positions so that when each packet is dealt out, left to right, that queen gets dealt on the row its matching king is in front of. During step 5 you're collecting the 4 packets so that, when you deal them into the rows, each queen will be the number down in their new packets according to the numbers on the coins. In other words, the queen that matches the king with the #1 coin on it must be collected first, so it's the bottom packet once all four are collected. That way when the packet of collected piles are dealt out again, that packet will be the last group dealt. Therefore, that queen will become the top card in whatever pile it's dealt onto to match the number on that coin. As another example, the stack with the queen that matches the suit of the king with the #4 coin must be collected last, so when the combined stacks are redealt out, that packet of 4 will be the first group dealt, which puts it in the 4<sup>th</sup> (bottom) spot in its packet. Think about it a little and you'll see what I'm talking about. When the 4 piles are collected, they're not mixed together or anything, they're just simply stacked on top of each other. So, the 2<sup>nd</sup> poker-style dealing into 4 stacks divides each previous group of 4 out one card-per-king.