

## **Half Twins**

On one of Jay Sankey's DVDs, he had a wonderful intro for a mentalism routine with cards that were torn in half. While I liked the premise, the effect didn't really suit me. So I started playing with different ideas, and eventually I went back to the classic Gemini Twins effect that many of us do as beginners and then leave behind when we get older. What I came up with is a "coincidence" card routine with a pleasing end image — an image that I think is more memorable than the conclusion of the original Gemini Twins.

### **Setup:**

The first task is to find a deck that I don't mind ruining. From this deck, I remove a packet of about ten to thirteen cards. I always include some nice-looking cards in the packet — cards with a lot of ink, like the Ace of Spades, a few court cards, and some Tens and Nines. Then, I tear the cards in half across their width. Tearing them in groups of about three cards at a time speeds up the process a bit without making all the tears look identical. I mix all the half-cards together into one packet, put a rubber band around it, and I'm ready to go!

### **In Person Performance:**

After performing one or two card effects, I put the deck away, take out the packet of torn cards, remove the rubber band, and spread the pieces on the table as I deliver Jay's fantastic opening line.

*"You know, there's a fine line between the paranormal and the paranoid. These cards are a perfect example. I was performing magic for some people, and they were so convinced that I was evil and using 'the devil's playthings,' they grabbed several of my cards and tore them in half! I of course grabbed them back and walked away! It's weird — I mean, if these really had some supernatural powers, then tearing them up wouldn't matter. Here give these a shuffle. Just a simple mix will do."*

Although some people have difficulty shuffling regular cards, I've seen laypeople take to shuffling these half-cards quite well. After the packet has been shuffled, I take it back and remove two half-cards. The cards I remove are actually the matching halves of the top card and the bottom card of the packet. For instance, if the top card is half of the Ace of Spades, then I remove the other half and place it face up on the table. I then remove the matching half of the bottom card — let's say it's the King of Clubs — and place it face up on table, just like in the original Gemini Twins handling.



*“Okay, now that you’ve shuffled, I’ll remove a card from the packet for each of you. And we’ll see if you can unlock any powers these cards might have. There’s a half-card for you, and a half-card for you.”*

I give the remainder of the packet to the first spectator.

*“I want you to deal cards from the top, one by one, into a pile here on the table. And when it feels right, just stop. Go ahead. You might get a gut feeling about when to stop, or maybe Satan himself will whisper in your ear. I don’t know, it could happen!”*

The spectator deals some cards into a face-down pile and then stops. I pick up the half-card that matches the bottom card, and I drop it face up on top of the tabled pile. I then ask the spectator to drop the remaining cards on top. I now have the first spectator slide the packet over to the second spectator. The same procedure is repeated with the second person. The handling is the same as in the original Gemini Twins.

When all of this is done, I spread the packet on the table.

*“I don’t think this could be any fairer. I put down both of those cards at the beginning. You shuffled, and you both stopped dealing whenever it felt right. Let’s slide out the face-up cards, as well as the card next to them, where you stopped.”*

Slide the first face up card, and the one above it, out of the spread. You or the spectator can slide out the second card and the one above it. The torn edges help hide the discrepancy that this is the card placed above the face-up card, not the one the spectator stopped at. Pick up the spread, turn it face up, and re-spread it so everyone can see the faces.

*“Keep in mind that you could have stopped on any one of these cards, but you both stopped on those. And I think I know why.”*

Turn over each face-down card and then match them together with their mates. Even the torn edges match exactly! This drives home the effect and gives a very nice ending picture.

*“I guess they weren’t so paranoid!”*

### **Afterthoughts:**

This instantly resets, fits in the pocket, and takes up less table space than the original effect — all of which are important qualities to consider when I’m looking for effects to add to my working repertoire.

I’ve played around with using Tarot cards, photos, movie tickets, and business cards in this routine. But I find that I prefer using playing cards, because the indexes help to make this effect very clear.

I’ve also tried using a photo as a “kicker” ending to this routine. The photo showed the four pieces of card matched up, just like the half-cards on the table. This was a nice image, but since I took the initial cards out, it didn’t add much to the effect. I suppose I could force the two “target cards,” but that would just add procedure, and I think the end image of the matching halves is strong enough on its own, without a photo.

Half Twins appeared in Joshua Jay’s “Talk About Tricks” column in the February 2012 issue of *MAGIC Magazine*.

### **2020 Updates for Virtual Shows**

This piece has been a staple of my online shows during the 2020 Quarantine. I use it on Facebook Live and Instagram Live frequently. I start by shuffling until someone comments STOP. I give it one face up mix, showing the faces are different, then turn them face down for the rest of the mixing.

I proceed with the effect per usual, taking out two cards. Then I ask two people in the chat to comment a number from one to twenty. Make sure to ask the second person for a smaller number if the first person asks for a really high number, to prevent dealing past the first selection.

On these platforms, I prefer to shoot vertical video since on an iPhone, I can usually get my face, hands, and the table all in one shot.

Over ZOOM, I just have both people say stop. There’s a slight delay, but if you deal slowly, it works fine.

I've also used this effect with old photos and Tarot Cards with great results.

Once I start performing in person again, I'll do this the same way I'd do it over ZOOM. Shuffling and dealing myself to prevent exchanging items.

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