

## THE MAGICIAN

By John OKeefe

THE LIGHTS POP ON.

*A MAN IN STANDING S.C. HE HAS A DECK OF CARDS WITH SIMPLE IMAGES ON THEM. HE IS DRESSED LIKE A MAGICIAN, TUXEDO AND TOP HAT.*

*HE HOLDS THE FIRST CARD UP AS IF SHOWING THE FIRST CARD IN A FATAL HAND. IT HAS A PICTURE OF AN EAR ON IT.*

The Ear of Hearts. Not that I hear anything out there. I don't hear anything. Sounds are there but they are not heard with the heart of the ear. The heart of the ear is MY heart, pounding and listening.

*HE LETS THE CARD GO. IT DROPS TO THE FLOOR.*

*HE FLIPS UP ANOTHER CARD AND SHOWS IT. IT HAS AN IMAGE OF A BED ON IT.*

This is a bed.

*HE LAUGHS. IT IS AT HIMSELF.*

It's my bed and...hers. I'm in the bed, she's not, but we're both in the house. No, she's not in the bedroom. I'm in the bedroom. She's somewhere else in the house. Within (*HE POINTS AT THE CARD ON THE FLOOR*) earshot. The bed. The bed smells like seaweed and soap.

*HE DROPS THE CARD.*

There is someone else with us in the house. A man.

*HE FLIPS UP ANOTHER CARD. THERE IS A SIMPLE IMAGE OF A MAN ON IT.*

I don't know him very well. He's good looking, but not pretty. He's not too tall but well built. We just met him a couple of months ago. At a party. (*LAUGHS*) Oh, it wasn't a drinking party. It was a "nice" party. A situation where people can concentrate on each other. Spend an afternoon, slowly milling about. She didn't meet him. WE met him. We got along very well. It was perfect.

*HE DROPS THE CARD.*

*HE HOLDS UP ANOTHER CARD. THE CARD SEEMS TO SPRING FROM HIS INNER FEELINGS. IT IS A PICTURE OF AN ICICLE.*

Ice. It always comes with ice, this feeling. What do they call it, the cold fires of Hell? But they're not repulsive. They're attractive. (*LAUGHS*) Magnetic. I actually shake like I'm cold. And I melt. I melt inside inside but it turns to ice. My senses come alive.

*HE LETS THE CARD GO. HIS HANDS ARE TREMBLING.*

*HE TAKES ANOTHER CARD AND SHOWS IT. IT IS A SIMPLE PICTURE OF AN EYE.*

This is an eye. But I am in the dark. I have turned out the lights. I told them that I was very tired. That I had to go to bed but that they should talk awhile. It was all very gentle. I had spoken very little in order to let their curiosity find its target. And it did. They talked about...I don't know what. It didn't matter. Their eyes had found each other. They looked so surprised and flushed when I left. And in the dark my eyes, my eyes are trapped in my body, but full of sight; astral eyes. I can see them murmuring together, bending closer in order to hear better. Perhaps smelling each other's breath and smiling. My heart is hungry. But they won't let it see further, my eyes.

*HE TURNS THE CARD AROUND. ON THE OTHER SIDE OF IT ARE THE LETTERS "ME".*

This is "ME" rolling out of the bed so as not to make a sound. Creepy-like. *(LAUGHS)* I must look funny. But here I am nearing the floor, feeling the whiskers of the rug rubbing my knees. The crack beneath the door nearing me like some huge vault opening up. My breathing is shallow and loud. I'm trying to hold it in and it is making my heart pound louder so that I can't hear my triumph. So many times I've tried to leave her alone with men and always she succumbed to custom. Like a proper wife she returned to the bedroom with me, and in my mind I became a thousand men as I worked myself into the softness of her body. But now this time, this chance, this terror.

*HE DROPS THE CARD.*

*HE HOLDS THE CARD DECK UP AND SLOWLY PUSHES A CARD INTO VIEW. IT HAS THE SIMPLE PICTURE OF A WOMAN.*

This, of course, is my wife. You didn't think I'd leave her out, did you? She is half beautiful, half pretty. Sometimes she's ugly. At times she looks like a man. She is ash blond and her pubic hair is kind of grey. It turns me on. *(HE LAUGHS)* It turns me on.

*HE STICKS THE CARD IN HIS POCKET.*

*HE SHOWS ANOTHER CARD. IT IS A DOOR.*

Here I am looking underneath the door. The floor is stretching out from me in long field of green carpet. The doric feet of table legs, flutes of chairs glow dimly in the powdery air. Light is falling from the kitchen. Murmurs, lisps, the brush of cloth, the rattle of a cup and silence, silence. The bawdy jiggle of the kitchen table. They've moved to the kitchen! How cozy and confidential.

*HE STUDIES THE CARD, HIS HAND RELUCTANTLY PREPARING TO DROP IT. HE RELEASES THE CARD. HE SLOWLY LOOKS UP, AT THE SAME TIME REVEALING THE NEXT CARD. IT IS A PICTURE OF A DOOR KNOB.*

This is a door knob. I can't believe it, I'm reaching for the door knob! My heart is knotting in my chest, my ears are pounding.

*HE PULLS OUT ANOTHER CARD. IT IS A KEY HOLE.*

This is a keyhole. And through the keyhole, like in some fairy tale, I can see shadows lurching. Is that breath I hear? Steady, deep, gauzy. (*GIGGLES AT HIMSELF*) It's my breath! But they're whispering. There is a the groan of a kitchen chair.

*HE DROPS THE CARD WITH THE KEYHOLE.*

That was laughter. (*LAUGHS TRIUMPHANTLY*) Ah ha! Not that funny kind. That other kind. The kind that licks its tongue on your eyes. Quietly, on tip-toe, turn the latch without a sound, no snap of suspicion's bugs crawling at me from that kitchen. Crack it open hard and silent. This is no school boy going to work. I wear a suit! The animal of my curiosity is awake. It is licking the bottom of my heart, its big wet jowls flapping against my lungs. Yes, yes, those ARE shadows. That IS whispering.

*DROPS THE CARD.*

*HE HOLDS UP A CARD. IT IS BLANK.*

This is the light at the end of the hall. Nova bright. The walls are made of ice, the floor is rushing water. There is no sound, only the crackle of silence. Can't you hear that?

*HE TOSSES A SERIES OF CARDS RAPIDLY AS HE SPEAKS. THESE ARE THE THINGS HE HEARS. HIS SENSES DAWNING.*

*FLASHES AND TOSSES THE CARD.*

That's a car passing by.

*FLASHES AND TOSSES THE CARD.*

There's a buzzing of street light.

*FLASHES AND TOSSES THE CARD.*

That's the wind blowing on the maple near the west side of the house.

*FLASHES AND TOSSES THE CARD.*

Is that rain?

*FLASHES AND TOSSES THE CARD.*

Is that rain?

No. It's the sound of them kissing.

*HE HOLDS UP A CARD WITH "ME" WRITTEN ON IT.*

Me? I'm sliding along the wall. But there are no walls really. No walls, no walls, just distance. Miles and miles of distance. Nothing is small, only far away. I can feel a bathroom warmth on my buttocks. I'm naked! I'm naked and I don't care. Ah ha! The animal is creeping into my spine. See?

*HOLDS UP A CARD WITH FANGS ON IT AND GROWLS.*

*HE TOSSES THE CARD AWAY.*

But I'm not angry. I'm amazed! The chilly ants of white-out are sizzling in my ears. I am fainting and I am rising. I feel their skin brushing on my cheek.

*FLASHES A RED CARD AND TOSSES IT.*

Blood!

*FLASHES A CARD WITH THE WORD 'BLOOD' WRITTEN ON IT AND TOSSES IT AWAY.*

Red!

*HOLDS UP A CARD WITH THE WORD "LUST" WRITTEN ON IT.*

Love!

*LOOKS AT THE CARD.*

Call it what you want.

*HE TOSSES THE CARD AWAY.*

And now the magic begins.

*HE HAS NO MORE CARDS.*

The quick clear light of the kitchen is on my body. I think it's burning my hairs off. Perhaps I'm merely asleep. My hunger gone astral, like my eyes. I don't care, I'm standing up. (*CHUCKLES*) Homo Erectus. I can hear them. They're not talking. They're slushing enzymes.

Cunt!

Bitch!

Whore!

Slut!

I love you.

My hand, a soft pink club on the door frame. My astral eye is alive now. He's fucking her. He's fucking her. He's fucking her. He's got her bent over the table and he's fucking her. An elephant humping a cow. And she's grunting with a primal lisp, grunting and looking at me. Kali, Isis, Hathor, Venus. I am her mate, but he doesn't notice, the pleasure of her inner flesh is too much for him too care. She's speaking. I can barely hear her through the hiss.

*THE LIGHTS POP OUT.*

HIS WIFE'S VOICE: Tommy?

*SILENCE, THEN...*



Yes.

HIS WIFE'S VOICE: ARE YOU AWAKE?

Yes.

HIS WIFE'S VOICE: Make love to me.