



# Fooling Houdini: Magicians, Mentalists, Math Geeks, and the Hidden Powers of the Mind

By Alex Stone

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From the back rooms of New York City's age-old magic societies to cutting-edge psychology labs, three-card monte games on Canal Street to glossy Las Vegas casinos, *Fooling Houdini* recounts Alex Stone's quest to join the ranks of master magicians.

As he navigates this quirky and occasionally hilarious subculture populated by brilliant eccentrics, Stone pulls back the curtain on a community shrouded in secrecy, fueled by obsession and brilliance, and organized around one overriding need: to prove one's worth by deceiving others.

But his journey is more than a tale of tricks, gigs, and geeks. By investing some of the lesser-known corners of psychology, neuroscience, physics, history, and even crime, all through the lens of trickery and illusion, *Fooling Houdini* arrives at a host of startling revelations about how the mind works--and why, sometimes, it doesn't.

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### Editorial Review

#### Amazon.com Review

Before reading this book, I thought magic was a little inane. The magicians of my memory wore capes and makeup; they pulled doves from their hats and deployed a lot of smoke. But in *Fooling Houdini*, Alex Stone reveals a world far deeper and more fascinating than I ever imagined. After failing at the Magic Olympics in Stockholm, Stone gets *serious* about the art of illusion: He attends magic schools and seeks out one of the best "card mechanics" in the world. Along the way, he learns how criminal empires were built on age-old magic scams. He studies the art of mind reading. And he explains how magicians exploit cognitive blind spots to make the impossible happen in public. He pursues every dark nook of the magic world in pursuit of the ultimate goal--a routine so mindboggling that it will fool other master magicians. Does he succeed? I'd tell you the answer, but that would ruin the magic. --*Ben Moebius*

#### Review

"Stone's engaging journey into his amateur magic career is as enlightening as it is disturbing. Not only does he reveal closely guarded secrets hoarded, in some cases, for thousands of years but he tears open the psyche of the archetypal magician. . . . Stone also brilliantly melds the sciences of physics, biology, mathematics, neuroscience and memory with thieves, grifters and card sharps. It is an intelligent and fascinating treatise on the working brain."

—*Winnipeg Free Press*

#### From the Back Cover

When Alex Stone was five years old, his father bought him a magic kit. Years later, in New York City, he plunged headlong into a vibrant underground magic scene populated by a fascinating cast of characters: from his gruff mentor, who holds court in a rundown pizza shop, to one of the world's greatest card cheats, who also happens to be blind. As he navigates this quirky and occasionally hilarious subculture, Stone pulls back the curtain on a secretive community organized around a single need: to prove one's worth by deceiving others. In trying to understand how magic fools us, Stone uncovers a wealth of insights into human nature and the nature of perception. Through his investigation of the lesser-known corners of psychology, neuroscience, history, mathematics, and even crime, all through the lens of trickery and illusion, *Fooling Houdini* arrives at a host of startling revelations about how the mind works—and why, sometimes, it doesn't.

### Users Review

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#### Tracie Wright:

In this 21st millennium, people become competitive in every way. By being competitive right now, people have to do something to make them survive, being in the middle of the particular crowded place and notice simply by surrounding. One thing that occasionally many people have underestimated this for a while is reading. That's why, by reading a book your ability to survive improve then having chance to endure than other is high. To suit your needs who want to start reading the book, we give you this specific *Fooling Houdini: Magicians, Mentalists, Math Geeks, and the Hidden Powers of the Mind* book as beginning and daily reading e-book. Why, because this book is usually more than just a book.

**Ronald Walker:**

Now a day folks who Living in the era exactly where everything reachable by talk with the internet and the resources inside it can be true or not need people to be aware of each facts they get. How people have to be smart in acquiring any information nowadays? Of course the solution is reading a book. Reading through a book can help people out of this uncertainty Information mainly this Fooling Houdini: Magicians, Mentalists, Math Geeks, and the Hidden Powers of the Mind book as this book offers you rich data and knowledge. Of course the knowledge in this book hundred per cent guarantees there is no doubt in it you know.

**Bradley Harshbarger:**

Reading a book tends to be new life style in this particular era globalization. With examining you can get a lot of information that could give you benefit in your life. Together with book everyone in this world can easily share their idea. Guides can also inspire a lot of people. Plenty of author can inspire their reader with their story or even their experience. Not only the storyline that share in the books. But also they write about the ability about something that you need example. How to get the good score toefl, or how to teach your children, there are many kinds of book that exist now. The authors in this world always try to improve their proficiency in writing, they also doing some exploration before they write with their book. One of them is this Fooling Houdini: Magicians, Mentalists, Math Geeks, and the Hidden Powers of the Mind.

**Shawn Stoltzfus:**

As a scholar exactly feel bored to reading. If their teacher asked them to go to the library as well as to make summary for some guide, they are complained. Just small students that has reading's soul or real their interest. They just do what the teacher want, like asked to go to the library. They go to there but nothing reading significantly. Any students feel that examining is not important, boring along with can't see colorful photographs on there. Yeah, it is for being complicated. Book is very important to suit your needs. As we know that on this period, many ways to get whatever we wish. Likewise word says, many ways to reach Chinese's country. Therefore this Fooling Houdini: Magicians, Mentalists, Math Geeks, and the Hidden Powers of the Mind can make you feel more interested to read.

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