

Basic instruction for Paul Harris' Twilight Angels, Plucked, and Mandolin Moves

For other Twilight Angel variations see DVD #1 of the True Astonishment Boxed DVD Set. Note that the Video performance uses a different (not better) switch than the one explained here. Below are the basic instructions for Twilight Angels and for the two bonus card effects included in the deck.

Twilight Angels

Set-Up: Use a normal Mandolin deck with the two matching jokers on the face of the deck. Put any one of the 52 special Twilight Angel cards onto the face of the deck. The two matching jokers are under this card. (Note: you do not use the two double backers or the two special jokers for this).

Scraped Angel Option: Some performers (like Wayne Houchin) prefer to use a knife to scratch off the single angel ink. This leaves a rough white background where the angel was on the card. When the angel vanishes it looks as though the printed angel was magically ripped off the card by the mirror.

Performance:

Step 1: Spread the face down deck in your hands and point out the angels on the backs then square the deck. You can casually shuffle the deck a bit...as long as you keep your three card set-up on the face.

Step 2: Hold the face-up deck in left hand dealing position and have someone sign the face of the special twilight card...then obtain a two card break under the two face cards (the twilight card and the joker under it). Your right fingers grasp the double card from above by the ends and lift them off the deck (there will be a joker now showing on the face of the deck). Show the back of the normal card to your audience. Point out the two angels at the opposite ends. You can even have someone rub the angels for good luck.

Place the double card face-up back onto the face of the deck. Then take the single signed face-up card with your right fingers. There will still be a joker on the face of the deck so everything looks as it should. Everyone will think you are holding a normal card. Actually you are now holding a signed Twilight Angel card.

Step 3: Make sure your right fingers are holding the face-up card so that your right thumb covers the double angel on your right. Your left hand puts down the deck and grabs an "angel catcher"...any small object with a mirror-like reflective surface (sun glasses, chrome business card/cigarette case/mint tin/make-up mirror etc).

Your right hand turns so the back of the signed card is showing (your thumb still hiding the extra angel). Just as the back of the card comes into view, position your angel catcher on the back of the card to conceal the end with the missing angel. Note that the angel catcher is positioned so that your audience sees the reflection of the single visible angel...so that there appears to be a normal angel at both ends of the card. Of course one angel is just a reflection but psychologically the two angels "feel" normal.

Step 4: Carefully watch the Twilight Angel demo. Wayne Houchin's performance clearly shows how to handle the rest of the effect. For complete details, see Wayne's thorough instructions on DVD #1 of True Astonishments.

Double Back option: There are many ways to get the special angel card into play. Here's another one you can try.

Set up: Place one of the 52 twilight angel cards face down on top of the face-down deck. Then place one of the special double backed cards (has the normal angels on both sides) on top of that. The double backer is now on top of the face-down deck. And yes, the double backer is face down (a tiny joke).

Performance:

Step 1: Spread through the face down deck and point out the angels on the backs. Square up the face deck into your left hand and have someone rub the two angels that are on the top face-down card (the double backer). Get a two card break under the top two cards for a double lift, and then turn the two cards over as one on top of the deck. Have the face of the card signed, then your right fingers slide off the single signed card (the twilight angel card). The top of the deck will still show a normal-looking face down card, thanks to the double backer. Put the deck into your pocket. The rest of the handling is the same as the first version. If you want to bring out the deck later, just thumb off the top double backer into your pocket as you bring out the normal deck.

Angel Bonus Card #1: "Plucked"

Effect: You point out one of the printed feather designs on the back of a card. Your fingers then impossibly slide off the printed feather and use it like a pen to write an actual inked message on the back of the card. It could be your phone number (or a weird demonstration of how to mark cards). The feather pen then vanishes...leaving you with just the plucked card with your phone number, or marked card, which can be handed out.

Set-up: Take out the Joker with the missing feather (it will have three feathers at three corners instead of four). Hold the card so the missing feather corner is at the upper right. Then use a fine line sharpie or pen to write your small message on the back of the left side of the card at about the middle. This should be in about the same position as your left thumb would be when holding the card in "dealing position". The point here is that the message should be written small enough so your left thumb can naturally cover the message.

Place two normal matching Jokers face-up on the face of the deck, then place the special Feather Joker face-up on top of that. This leaves the marked plucked Joker on the face of the deck with two matching normal jokers under it. An optional set-up is to have all three jokers in the card case. Then just bring out all three (as two) and place the unit onto the face of the deck.

Performance:

Step 1: Hold the face up deck in left hand dealing position as your right fingers double lift two jokers as a single card (another joker will still be visible on the face of the deck). Point out the four printed feathers on the back of the joker. You can even have someone touch them to make sure they are real.

Replace the double Joker back onto the face of the deck and push off the single Joker into your right fingers and put the deck aside (or into your pocket). They think the single face-up Joker in your right fingers is a normal Joker with four printed feathers on its back.... actually it's the special missing feather joker with the message.

Step 2: Hold the Joker so its face is toward the audience. Your left fingers take the card as your left thumb covers the message at the back. Your left hand then turns down to show the back of the card as your right fingers grasp the missing feather corner...and your right thumb covers the spot where the feather is supposed to be. Keep in mind that your left thumb still hides the message.

Pretend to slide the feather off the card with your right fingers and thumb. The small printed feather is now missing from that corner and is apparently now held between your right fingers and thumb. The printed feather is small enough to where it's possible that it really is held between your fingers...like a tiny pen.

Step 3: Now tilt the back of the card toward you (away from the audience) and pretend to use the feather as a tiny pen to write your message on the card. Move your left thumb off of the message...then reveal whatever you "just wrote" on the back of the card.

You can now make the "feather pen" vanish...or you can pretend to place it into the card box where a spectator can later discover that it's been plucked.

Card Saver Option: This approach allows you to use the same plucked card over and over. Simply have the secret message on a completely different card. You can do a double lift to show this as an unmarked card. Do the same double lift handling as before, but after you pluck off the feather pretend to write the message onto a different card. So now you keep the special plucked card, while the spectator can keep the message card.

Sample Angel Bonus Card #2: "Mandolin Moves"

Effect: A card is selected and lost in the deck. You then bring out a Joker and point to the two mandolins on the back. "The mandolins are finely turned to locate your card, sort of like a funny shaped dowsing rod". You give the face-down Joker to your spectator to hold...and have her slowly wave it over the face-down spread deck.

You tell her to stop whenever she feels that her selected card is under her mandolin. She stops...but the card under her mandolin is not the right card. You insist that the card under her mandolin is her card! You finally have her look closely at the Joker she's holding. The printed mandolin has swung away from the angel's body...revealing the spectator's mini card printed under the mandolin on the angel!

Set-up: Same three card Joker set up as in "Plucked"... but with the mini-card Joker on the face of the deck.

Performance:

Step 1: Force the card that matches the mini-card and have it lost in the deck. Double lift two Jokers off the face of the deck to show a normal mandolin back. Slide off the single face Joker (the mini-mandolin Joker) and let your spectator hold the Joker face up at her finger tips. Note that her fingers hold the Joker face up in her palm-up hand. Spread the deck face down then have her turn her card hand palm down (so the Joker is now face-down). Her fingers should still hide the sideways mandolin.

Step 2 Direct her to slowly move the joker like a dowsing rod over the spread of cards...and then to stop when she feels that her missing card is under her mandolin. She stops...and it's the wrong card. Insist that her card is in fact under her mandolin. Have her take a look at the Mandolin back to reveal that the happy and glad mini-card is indeed under her mandolin!

LuckyNote: If she has exceptional mandolin dowsing skill and actually locates her selected card that's a truly wonderful thing. You then raise the stakes by revealing the matching mini-card.

SlideNote: You can also hold the Joker in your own fingers and do the dowsing yourself. For the big mini reveal you can pretend to slowly slide the Mandolin off to one side for a more visible happy ending.