

Hidden Thoughts

Part 4

By
Tom Phoenix

Introduction

Welcome to Hidden Thoughts Part 4.

This part has been long in the works, due to a bit of a dip in creativity, an immense amount of stress, a crashed hard drive, and the death of a close family member. But after several months, it's here, and I'm excited to share this with you.

This is slightly reminiscent of Part 1, being that it's not really structured and has a more random feel to it than Parts 2 and 3. I suspect Part 5 will be more-or-less the same kind of mess that Part 1 was. But that is okay.

Enjoy the magic, use what you wish, and as always, magic is best when it comes from the heart.

A crown of stars rests
Beyond winter's reign
A realm of beauty
Without sorrow or pain

In cold, quiet solitude
We find the wonders of life
But this peace is not to last
In such a world now wrought with strife

A tear is shed
For every life that's lost
And falls as snow
Upon endless tides of winter-frost

Trees will fall as ash tonight
No star will shine in joy tonight
The once-white ground now stained with death
Bound to rise, and fall again, without a final breath

Memories will fall as ash tonight
No star will dance in joy tonight
The once-white ground now stained with death
Bound to rise, only to fall again, without a breath.

Down halls of withered oak
And shattered stone
Souls linger, frozen in time
To ever wander, in search of home

The light of star fire
Within her eyes
Pierces the clouds
To drive darkness from the skies

Trees will rise from ash tonight
Stars will shine in joy tonight
The once-black ground will shimmer with life
To be white with snow again.

Memories will rise from ash tonight
Stars will dance in joy tonight
The once-bloodied ground will shimmer with life
To be white with snow again.

For every life that's lost,
Stars dim in agony
Shedding tears of light and blood
They must witness our sorrow for all eternity.

Now dawn has come
Bringing the light of her gaze
To ever grace this frozen land
And set the horizon ablaze.

The Jack in the Box Incident

Here's an amusing story, which happened several months ago.

Almost every Friday or Saturday night (but not both), I go to Jack-in-the-Box to get a burger and a strawberry shake. I highly recommend their "Munchie Meal Deal", and their Ultimate Cheeseburger is really good too. Either Friday or Saturday is my "sit back, watch a movie, eat my cheat meal, and un-fry my brain night".

This particular night was a Saturday night, and I didn't get out the door until about 11:55pm. But Jack-in-the-Box is only a 10 minute walk from where I live, so it's not a big deal. When I got there, it was closed. But the sign said "open 24 hours". So I waved to the person inside and pointed at the door. He waved back, pointed at his watch, and pointed at a different sign. Turns out, the walk-in closes at midnight, and you can't walk through the drive-thru.... Something about safety and liability. Tom was really looking forward to the burger and shake. Tom was not happy.

So I walked down the street a little ways, and the only other places open were bars and clubs. And they might have burgers, but they don't have milkshakes.

Me being a persistent bastard, I went back to the Jack-in-the-Box, walked up to the front window, and whipped out a deck of cards. I did quick ambitious card routine for the guy working the register, and he started laughing and pulled the other employees over.

They watched intently as I did a couple color-changes. And their jaws dropped as I ever-so-skillfully launched the card out of the deck and proceeded to NOT catch it as planned. I lunged for it (barely got it), tripped over my toes, dropped the deck while trying to catch myself, started to spin on the way down, caught the deck in my other hand,

almost got my balance, started to stand, did a complete spin, tossed the card off the deck and over my head, and smacked my face on the window on the way back up.

But I did catch the card.

Everyone inside was laughing and clapping, so I spread my arms, took a step back (so as to not hit the window again), took a great big bow, and then pointed at the shake machine. The guy waved me over to the drive-thru window, and said: “Dude that was freakin’ awesome!” I got an Ultimate Cheeseburger and a large strawberry shake, and Tom was happy once again.

Whoever said magicians can’t put food on the table?

And we speak with the tongues of serpents,
For we thirst the taste of darkness
And the light of truth it will bring
The truth of creation
And yearn for destruction
The door to shadow opens,
And we may meet our king.

Those who wander the earthen realm
Journey to no end
For they wander without purpose
Without guidance, ever helpless
Without destruction there can be no creation
They themselves have condemned.

MD5 is the start
The French ciphers’
Key is yourheart

Thisa Christmas

Title inspired by: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yo7_qW4pPrc

Something I've thought a lot about is the gifts we give, and how we choose them. On numerous occasions, I've overheard conversations that include: "I didn't know what you'd like, so I got you a gift card" or "I wanted to get you something nice, but I was in a hurry, so I hope this is alright" etc.

I don't know if this is general laziness or genuine "not knowing what to get".

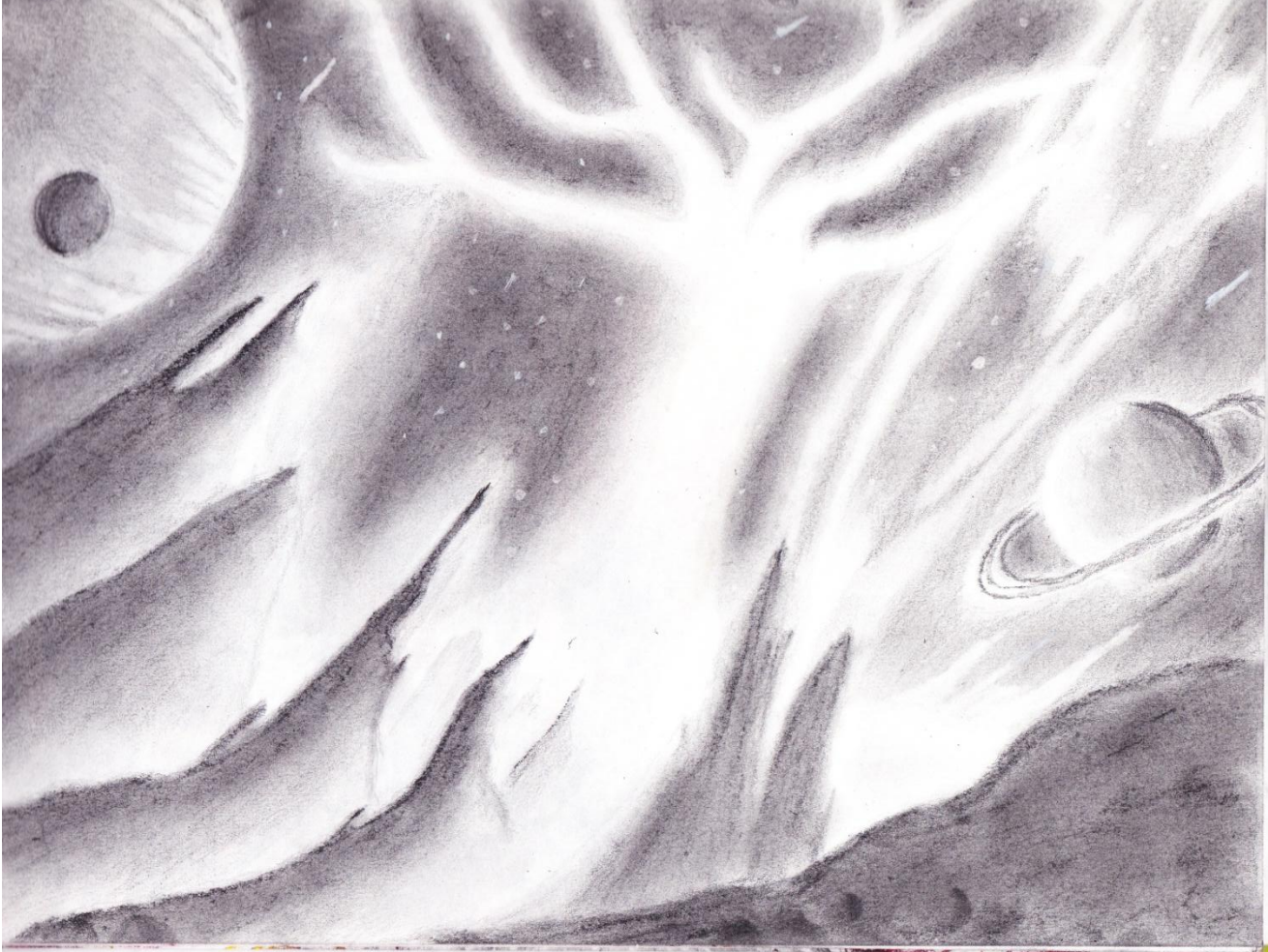
There is a growing trend of people not taking the time to *know* each other, especially among high school age kids and young adults. Walk into any restaurant and find a table of people, count how many are engaged in conversation, and how many are on their phones... this is a perfect opportunity to listen and interact with people, yet so many people are wrapped up in the digital world to care about what is real.

Back to gifts, hearing comments like those are not isolated incidents – I hear these *all the time*.

Gifts should not be something to give out of obligation, or to give out of custom or manners. Gifts should be meaningful, they should be something you are happy to give, and they should come from one heart and arrive in another.

Most of my Christmas shopping is finished before November, partially to avoid the entire season bustle, but mostly because I'm always on the lookout for things to give to people who are important to me. There are roughly 60 people reading this right now. Your gift is already prepared.

Yggdrasil



I get pulled over on a regular basis because I look shady. Profiling works – that’s why police use it. I am well-aware that I look somewhat intimidating, so it’s understandable for the police to stop me and question me when I’m taking a walk at night. Frankly, I’d rather be stopped and questioned, and know *the cops are doing their job*, than have them skip over me and risk this sketchy-looking guy doing something illegal.

The mind boggles when people get so offended and pull the race card and don’t comply with simple instructions, like “take your hands out of your pockets”, “what’s your name?”, “do you have a weapon?”, “stop coming towards me”, etc. People need to understand that police *must* assume that a situation could turn hostile in the blink of an eye, so these instructions and questions are attempts to keep situations from escalating.

Yup, I’m armed, and the first thing I tell the officer approaching me is that I am armed. If I don’t mention that, and s/he sees me reaching towards a pocket where – oh he has a weapon – things could get ugly real quick, and it doesn’t matter that I’m a white guy.

Beneath the Fells

By
Tom Phoenix

This was going to be released in my “Book of Wonders”, as a means of getting a peek in the “name and location” phase of “From Beyond”, but a few months back, I was informed that this same method was taught by Looch in his Penguin Lecture. So even though I created it independently, I don’t feel it would be right to publish it in a book that is monetized.

For you Lord of the Rings fans, the title refers to a line in an unnamed poem, recounting the events of Smaug’s attack on Dale and the dwarves’ quest to reclaim the Lonely Mountain. The full line of the poem reads: “In hollow halls beneath the fells”. ‘Fells’ is used in the Norse manner (‘fjalls’), meaning ‘mountains’, and ‘hollow halls’ refers to the mighty kingdom of the dwarves.

The peek device works similarly – once it is constructed, a ‘hollow hall’ is formed, and it becomes a hidden element buried under your presentation.

Materials

You will need:

- Stack of 20 or so business cards/billets
- Exacto knife
- Rubber band

Construction

- Set aside 10 or 12 business cards. These will be your 'full' cards.
- Take the other 8 – 10 cards and mark out a rectangle in the middle of them.



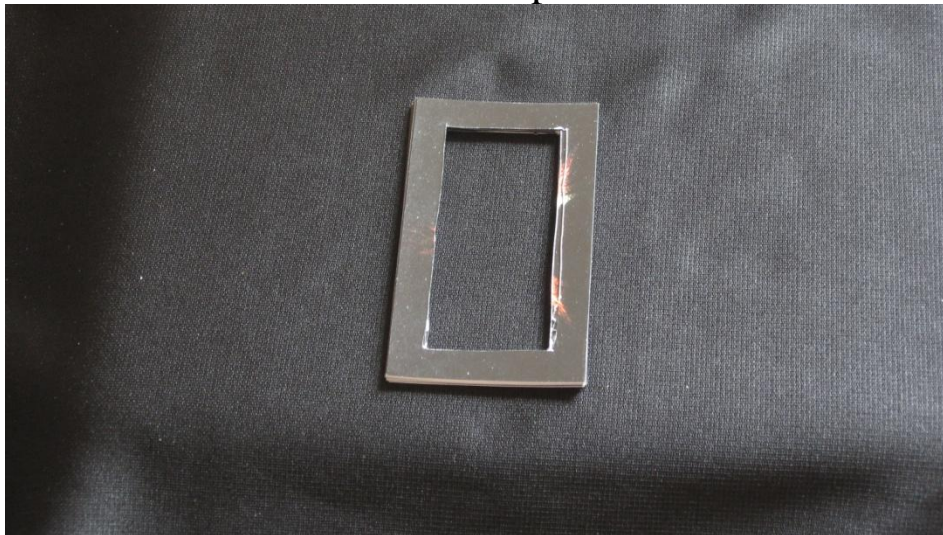
- Using the Exacto knife, cut out this rectangle. You're left with frames of cards.



- Cut one of those 'full' cards short (or trim opposite corners).



- Stack all the frames on top of each other.



- Put the short/trimmed 'full' card on top of the other frame cards.



- Put the 'full' cards on top of the stack.
- Put one 'full' card on the bottom of the stack.
- Wrap the rubber band around the stack.



- You are ready to go!

Usage

- Have the participant write/draw something on a business card (let's say a house)



- Get a break above the stack of frame cards (that is what the short card is for).



- Slide the participant's card face-down into the stack.



- Turn the stack bottom-side-up and set it down.



- They now see the bottom of what appears to be a normal stack of business cards. What they don't see is the 8 hollow cards behind the bottom card.
- When you are ready to get the peek, pick up the stack, and slide out the bottom card, saying, "I'm now going to try to look into your mind, to see the word/image you're thinking of." Put the stack back down, bottom-side down.



Reset

Move one card from the top to the bottom of the stack. Or, if using the variation in the “Notes” section (see below), just put the loose card on the bottom of the stack.

Notes

The process consumes 2 cards each time you use it. In order to preserve cards, you can ‘change your mind’ about needing the bottom card, after you get the peek. For example: when you slide out the bottom card, you get the peek and then as an afterthought, say: “actually, I don’t need to write this down.” Put the loose card into your pocket. The process now only consumes 1 card.

You can, of course, use more full cards on top of the frames. The idea is to have a block of frames below the participant’s billet, to give the appearance of it being lost in the stack.

From “Deadhouse Gates” – by Steven Erikson
“Children are dying.”

Lull nodded. “That’s a succinct summary of humankind, I’d say. Who needs tomes and volumes of history? Children are dying. The injustices of the world hide in those three words.”

Those magic trailers which show the end result of the effect, with people laughing, the actual magic moment, and that’s it are a great reflection of the “social news media”. The video shows the end result, but not the massive setup which needs to happen for the effect to work. Or shows only the situation where all the stipulations were perfect. And call it the best thing ever. People still buy the product and complain when it turns out that it’s crap and really isn’t practical. If only more people would realize this is the same tactic used by the news media – show the end result, call it police brutality, call it racism, sexism, xenophobia, and not bother to show the background information – as long as people take the bait with the initial video, it doesn’t matter what comes after, the people want truth, but not all of it.

Saor – Guardians: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fcSjFG87jQs>
Those pipes gave me the chills, and the drums beat like the heart of the mountains. This music is filled with sweeping landscapes, raging waters, and otherwise the essence of Nature.

Shadowed Limbs

This might make an appearance in my Vegas lecture in February. I'm not sure about that yet.

I've been playing with an idea to make the shadows of the limbs of a tree morph into a thought-of word. I have one solution, and a friend of mine came up with another.

My solution is to take advantage of the brains' natural desire to find order in chaos. When you look at the shadow of a tree, especially in winter, the branches form a mess of shadows, which can be "manipulated" into letters. Similar to connecting stars in the sky to create "new" constellations. Or to watching a fountain long enough and the falling water begins to resemble human bodies.

Anyway, the solution is to ask someone to write down the name of a loved one, you peek it, they stand next to you and you both look at the shadow of a tree on the ground (works best on pavement). Ask them to imagine seeing the person's name spelled in the shadows. You use your finger to "draw" their name in the air, pointing to the shadows, as if you are seeing the letters formed by the shadows.

An interesting idea, given to me by a good friend of mine (Lance, that's you), is to prepare a tree, by cutting out branches to form letters of a force word. Since the sun will only pass by the tree from the perfect angle to create the word for about a minute, you will get this REALLY COOL effect of the shadows slowly moving to reveal the word. This is obviously caused by the negative space between the branches. So think about it, time the performance to match the movement of the sun, and a couple minutes before the sun reaches the sweet spot, force the word, move them into position, and have them imagine seeing the word spelled in the shadows. The sun shines through, causing the spaces in the branches to be revealed, similar to how shadow-puppets work. And as

the sun continues to move, the shadows distort the word, and everything goes back to normal.

Yes, I'm aware the sun doesn't move, it's the rotation of the earth.

I do have a little work on this same kind of idea, in timing performances to match the movement of the sun and clouds, but I had not thought to use it in this context.

Moral of the story: Lance is a genius. One heck of a performer too.

I dropped an invisible deck once. Never found it.

I dropped an invisible deck once. The good news is that I managed to fumble it a bit on the way down, so the cards would start to separate, and no one would notice some cards sticking together. The bad news is that it landed in a puddle. It was a nice lesson for me in never losing focus. Nothing more needs to be said on this.

I opened an account a couple months back, and the bank asked for my job. I said "self-employed". They asked for my job title. I said "magician". The bank representative looked at me oddly, shrugged and said, "yeah, I can see that", and started to type it. I replied, "Wait, magician doesn't quite cover it." She asked what to change it to, I told her, and she entered the correct job title into the form.

Needless to say, somebody, in some credit union, is going to be a little confused when my profile hits their desk. My friends, I am *officially recognized*, as a sorcerer.

Commandeering Soap Boxes

I really don't have anything against street preachers. They are clearly devoted to what they believe in, and I do have respect for anyone who stands up to voice a highly unpopular opinion, regardless of whether I agree with them. *But there was this one guy...*

- Note: For anyone who hasn't seen me, I have long blond hair, and an 18 inch-long, semi-scraggly, red beard.

I was on my way back from a class, and passed near a crowd which was gathered around a street preacher. This was the same preacher who was there every Wednesday, starting arguments, getting people riled up, and then accusing them for sinning when they try to stand up for themselves.

He was saying something about how we must properly prepare ourselves before going to God for help, just as we would dress nicely and be clean for a job interview. I was going around the crowd towards the sidewalk, when he called out and said. "*Hey, you with the beard!*" I turned, and he waved me over, so checked the time and thought '*well I have a few minutes*'. So I went over. He addresses the crowd and says: "*Here's an example of what I'm talking about, someone who looks like this shouldn't expect to get a job anywhere.*"

...this guy's a dick...

So I looked at the guy, at the crowd, and back to the guy, and replied, "*Well it's a good thing I run my own business then, isn't it?*"

He said, "*Really, what kind of business?*"

I told him I'm a magician.

He said, "*Oh a magician? Can you do a trick for us right now?*"

I said sure, he put the microphone in the holder, and I did a really quick card force + wallet prediction. Everyone loved it, got a standing ovation (they were already standing... but it still counts, right?), and he took the microphone out of the holder and said: *“Not bad, now the only reason I commanded him to do a trick – you can leave now (addressing me) – was to show how easily Satan can deceive us - ”* I interrupted, and said: *“Actually, I wasn’t quite done yet.”*

He replied: *“Oh, is there something more you’d like to say?”*

I said yes, and he put the microphone back in the stand. I couldn’t resist. I addressed the crowd: *“There are some people in this world who seek to piss you off and accuse you of sinning when you get angry. I’m doing a free magic show, right now, right over there, anyone who wants to attend, please follow me.”*

THE ENTIRE CROWD left the preacher, followed me, and I made up a quick act in the course of about 30 seconds. We had a magic show, many laughs were had, and it was a good time.

A note: Had he not been so condescending and rude to me and others, I probably would’ve made a snide comment and walked away.... But this guy was something else.

Symbolic Audience Arrangement

I've started doing this, particularly after stealing the audience from street preachers: when conducting more serious performances, involving anything which resembles "bizarre-magic", I like to arrange the participants in patterns, such as stars, circles, stars within circles, triangles, etc. It gives the feel of a ritual, rather than a performance, in which everyone is involved. It is, I feel, a rather powerful thing which can be added to performances to make it into something that is REAL.

Magic in general, has a reputation for being a spectacle: The performer is on stage, and the audience is in the seats. By making everyone involved, we are now together, on the same level, and "all the world's a stage."

"Look at seven winters past—the changes to the world. What, in seven winters more, could dare to be revealed?

So now is pattern visible, and conversation opened, for us, the treaders on the cusp of now and coming moments.

For in this age the choice is ours when to connect or flee. But soon is the time when we will learn the meaning of ubiquity."

"If we must take strength from something greater than ourselves—for all that you hope and all that you are—why not revere the sun and stars?"

- Thrawsunblat – She Who Names the Stars

Opening Eyes

This is a card magic piece. Several years ago, I created a color change, which I call the “AA Change”. To learn it, go here: <http://wandering-magic.teachable.com/p/free-magic1>

An application I have for it is to use the color change as symbolic of the inner eye opening to see the light of freedom.

- Draw a closed eye on the end of the back of one card, and an open eye on the back of another card.
- Put the open-eye card on top of the deck, and the closed-eye card on top of that.
- Swing-cut, and hold a break.
- Riffle force the bottom section of the deck, and cut it to the top, pointing out that they selected the only card with a drawing of an eye on it.
- Double-lift to show the face of the open-eye card.
- Have them sign it, and turn both cards face-down again.
- Do the AA Change, to show the eye has opened.

It's a good idea to keep in touch with the people we care about. Anything can happen at any time, and I'm still kicking myself for not answering my cousin's email. Well, I did answer it, but it was after he was killed. Maybe he still read it. I don't know if ghosts exist. But I believe he's out there somewhere, and as always in life, he's smiling. Sorry Matt. I'll see you later. If you get a random email from me, it's probably because I want to keep in contact and am hoping that you're doing well.

Something big is coming.

If you could describe your soul in one word, what would it be?

The “Mindpath” is a term I’ve started using to describe the journey people take when I ask them to imagine a memory taking place, or accomplishing a dream they have, or going to a magical realm in their imaginations. “Mindpath” is a word I made up. And when people here it, they aren’t entirely sure of what it is, but it becomes clear as to what it means.


When I say “And I hope to follow your mindpath”, this translates to “I will read your thoughts.” But mindpath sounds better. At least I think so.

Let’s not let kindness become systematic.

Conclusion

And that concludes Part 4. I have no idea when Part 5 will be ready – it could be a couple months or a year. As said in the introduction, it will likely be similar to Part 1, in being highly disorganized. But that's okay. There is beauty in chaos.

In Magic,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light background. The signature is written in a cursive style and reads "Tom Roenic". The letters are connected, with a prominent loop at the end of the word "Roenic".

Good luck,