



Now you see It!

I ran out of paper clips this afternoon, and when I went to my stationery drawer to find some more, found that the little box was empty; I must have neglected to make a note to buy some more, last time I used some. But there is *always* at least one more paper clip in the desk ... somewhere ... so I started rummaging in the drawers, confident that I would be sure to find one.

Well, I guess I've done this before, and have 'mined' everything out, so I didn't find the clip I needed, but I did find something else I had forgotten was in there. It was a small envelope containing the components of a magic trick - a delicate red handkerchief, and another small piece, the 'trick' itself. It's not particularly complex magic, just a simple trick that allows you to show the audience your empty hands, and then cup them together and suddenly pull the red handkerchief out of nowhere.

I must have purchased this one day back when my children were very small, and over the years performed it for them on innumerable occasions. They never tired of it, always being astonished at the appearance of the handkerchief, and always demanding "Tell us how you did it! Tell us!"

Now I am of course not a real 'magician', but I do know the one basic rule that all magicians must follow - never tell the secret! And I didn't, no matter how insistent they were. The trick gave us incredible amounts of pleasure over the years, never failing to work its magic on them ...

The years rolled by, and my children grew up and left home. A couple of years ago though, younger daughter Fumi was visiting here one summer. She was looking in the drawers for something - perhaps a paper clip! - and came across that little envelope. Not knowing what it was, she looked inside. She was puzzled at first by the small piece of plastic she found, but then a moment later when she saw the red handkerchief inside it, she understood what she was looking at.

The 'solution' to the trick was immediately apparent to her, and she screamed "NO! Oh No! Daaaaaaaaad!!!"

I of course asked her what was wrong, and then saw what had happened. She was disconsolate, "Dad, I didn't want to know! I *never* wanted to see this!"

But it was too late; there was no way for her to 'take back' what she had seen. For her now, the trick was forever spoiled. She could never recapture that wonderfully happy feeling she had enjoyed while being fooled by her father ...

The two of us actually shed a few small tears together, standing there with the red handkerchief in our hands, in remembrance of those happy times, but I then pointed something out to her.

David Bull
Seseragi Studio
Nagabuchi 8-4-5 Ome City
Tokyo Japan 198-0052
<http://astoryaweek.com>

She has indeed, lost something 'special' from her life, but has gained something to replace it. Magic tricks bring pleasure to *both* parties, those being fooled, and those doing the fooling.

I have no idea when - if ever - she will have children of her own, but if they do arrive, she will have to be ready. She will need to practice this trick until she can perform it smoothly, and it will then be her turn to reply "Never!", to the insistent demands of "Tell us how you did it!"

And at some point, I suppose she too, will put it away in a drawer, to await the next time ...

David Bull
Seseragi Studio
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Tokyo Japan 198-0052
<http://astoryaweek.com>