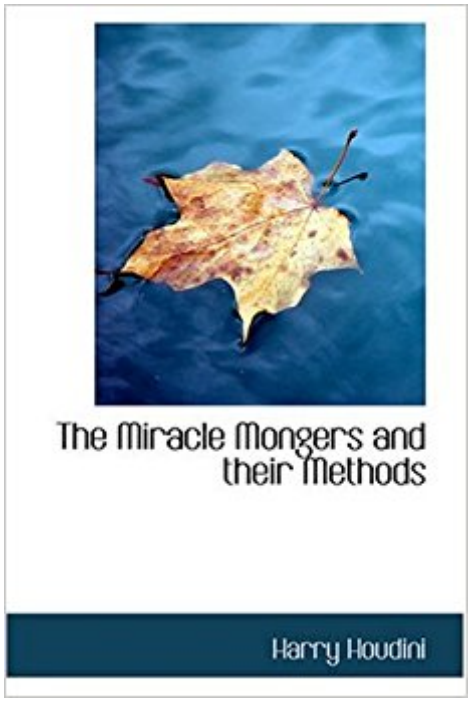
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The Miracle Mongers And Their Methods



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Book Information

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Customer Reviews

For a skeptic this book is pure heaven. I realize how stupid that sounds. Sorry. For a skeptic this book is really...good. Better? Hmmm. Let me try again. For a skeptic this book is a spectacular example of how far the movement has came and how much we owe to this man. That seems better to me. Nope. One more time. I like book. It good book. There we go!Some of the claims of Houdini's time are a bit more over the top than the simple cold readers of today and thus, the debunking of said claims are equally over the top. There were multiple times when I had to put my Kindle down, go outside and just take a few deep breathes. If one comes across a charlatan who can swallow red hot swords by claiming they have the power of the gods, what's one to do? Well, swallow a sheath and try it yourself of course! There's some very heavy stuff in here that makes you one, appreciate how crazy/dedicated Houdini was to his second profession and two, donate to the JREF for keeping the spirit alive and well.

Written by Houdini, it’s a fascinating look at the odd and bizarre people he shared the stage with in a long ago era. Today these people would be looked at as strange oddities but a hundred years ago they were minor stars. Houdini, (Eric Weiss’s) writing is surprisingly contemporary, considering how long ago the book was written but some of the long passages from periodicals of the time are written with an almost foggy fussiness which makes them difficult to understand. Especially when referring to illustrations that aren’t included in the kindle edition. Still, if you are interested in stage magic and Houdini in particular this is well worth reading.

This is a crude reprint of an older book. There are none of the "figures" referred to in the text. I would have been willing to pay more for the complete book.As for the content, several early chapters describe the history of "fire-eating" performers, followed eventually with a chapter that describes the tricks used to handle these seemingly dangerous materials. Likewise he covers blade-swallowing performers and their techniques, followed by descriptions of performances of stone-eating, poison-eating and similar amazing feats, with accompanying explanations of the tricks and/or conditioning needed to perform them.To me, the big surprise was in discovering how eloquent and informative Harry Houdini could be, well beyond his carnie-like colleagues.

This book is probably only of interest if you want to pursue a career in stage magic. For one thing, it is very old, and the techniques he exposes as frauds have long been publicly exposed over and over. Secondly, much of the content is rather gross, and used to be done only in freak shows and county fairs, where the whole point was to gross people out. This book caused me to lose respect for the memory of Harry Houdini.

Got this as a gift for my husband for Christmas. He loved it.

They don’t write books like this anymore. They can’t its a new century and people don’t talk or write like this anymore. If you are fasinated with fire eating ans sword swallowing this is not an instruction book. I imagine most of the items mentioned in the book are available today. On the other side if you are a Houdini reader as I am its a fun read.

The Great Houdini tells about various performers he has known or heard about; fire eaters, sword swallowers, stone eaters, magnetic and electric people, and others, and then he apparently tells

how they did their tricks. There are recipes for concoctions that will supposedly help withstand fire or poison.But I would risk my life by trying them. Still it’s fun to get his take on so many different a acts.

For those unfamiliar with Houdini, he had the utmost respect for magicians/illusionists and folks who did tricks to entertain and mystify crowds. But he despised those same practitioners who would take advantage of people in any respect and in his later life, he set about exposing a number of charlatans and giving away tricks to shield people from being duped. He was famous for de-bunking seances and mediums who could conjure ectoplasm -- not because he wanted to expose the trick (he respected how they did it) but because these people were taking advantage of grieving spouses and children and charging top dollar to contact their dead loved ones.This book focuses a great deal on fire tricks (fire eating, heat resistance, etc.) which date back to pre-historic times and were used as proof that someone was superhuman or godlike because mortal are not immune to fire. He mostly takes umbrage with the fire illusionists of his day because they were quacks -- not only could they pull off impressive feats but they also were selling their elixirs for burns and healing products that were, in actuality, junk science but the performances that they gave lended undue credibility.I would agree with other reviewers that this book is VERBOSE and very long-winded, although excellently researched. It’s a bit of a slow read, but full of interesting tips on how anyone could be "fire resistant" if they had the same arsenal of trickery.

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