This Row and That Row

Books or magazines

THE TRICK: Two rows of books are placed on the floor and the magician then leaves the room while the boys and girls choose the book to be identified. When the magician returns, his assistant begins pointing at the books one by one, with the magician shaking his head "no" until the assistant points to the correct book.

THE SECRET: The magician and his assistant had worked out the whole trick beforehand. The upper row is designated "this row"; the lower row, "that row." If the secret book is in the lower row, the assistant begins by pointing to the books in the upper row. As he points he asks "this book?" When he reaches the lower row he switches and asks for each, "that book?" But when he reaches the secret book, instead of saving "that book," as is proper for the lower row, he says "this book," giving the clue to the magician. When the secret book is in the upper row, he says "this book," for each until he reaches the one to be identified and then says "that book."

VARIATIONS: In This One, That One. the clue is much the same. Four books are laid out in a square formation. The book at the upper left has been predesignated "this," the one at the lower left, "that"; the book at upper right, "this one," and the book at lower right, "that one." When questioning the magician, the assistant uses any words but the correct ones except when he is pointing to the secret book. When pointing to the books, the assistant might say, "Could it be this one?" or "Could this be the book?" But if he is pointing to the secret book he uses the predesignated words. Thus if the secret book is the one on the upper right, the assistant will ask, "This one?" The trick Nine Books is performed in a similar manner, but the clue is given wordlessly. Nine books are arranged in three rows with one selected as the secret book. When the magician returns to the room, the assistant points to various books. The clue is in the way he points to the first book. If, for example, he touches it on the upper-left-hand corner, be is telling the magician that the secret book is on the top row, left; if he touches it square in the middle, the book is in the center of the middle row, and so on.