



Emily Robinson-Hardy

MAGIC OVER MINDSET MENTALIST

By Connie Boyd

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Emily Robinson-Hardy is a fresh new face in magic. With just under three years of magic mentalism experience and training, her work is most certainly refreshing. What she has managed to accomplish in a very short time is quite wonderful.

Upon meeting Emily, you gravitate to her youthful glow and genuine delight to be where she is, doing what she's doing. Her charismatic performances are making powerful impacts on audiences and the magic community alike.



Penn & Teller Fool Us

About her experience Emily said: "If you are able to "fool" esteemed magicians, who are clearly unable to fathom what has happened, that's the cherry on top."

At just twenty years old, Emily Robinson-Hardy, recorded her mentalism magic in Las Vegas. On April 19, 2024 her act was broadcast on *Penn and Teller Fool Us*, season ten, and she FOOLED the baffled duo with the "Perfect ACAAN." Her performance was impossible, she never touched the deck of cards. Penn Jillette stated, "It's a really, really good trick" and later acknowledged, "You fooled us." Emily was awarded the FOOLER trophy.

Brooke Burke, the show's host called Emily, "the fresh face from the UK" and stated, "a girl in sequins gets a trophy in my book."

About her recent televised performance Emily shared: "Filming and performing on *Penn & Teller: Fool Us* was one of the greatest experiences of my life. To be given the opportunity to perform in front of two magicians, that I believe almost every magician has idolized at one point in their lives, was incredible. It is something that I am unbelievably grateful for. I hope that my performance can convince more people to do the impossible and to prove people wrong, because that's exactly what I plan to continue to do."

Emily bravely shared that the biggest obstacle she's had to overcome in her career, and in her life is herself. She explained, "I was restricted by my own lack of confidence and self-belief. To people who have met me that might seem absurd, I appear to be larger than life and confident. They couldn't imagine that I have suffered desperate moments of self-doubt, but I have."

I endured debilitating anxiety for a while. I openly admit that I see a psychotherapist and that I have hypnotherapy treatments. I've had to overcome crippling stage

fright. Just the thought of performing on a stage was enough to make me breakdown and cry.

With professional treatment and determination, I've found the strength to overcome my fears and doubts. You cannot imagine the satisfaction I feel to be able to stand confidently on a stage and present my shows the way that I do. It fills me with so much pride. I know that my family and friends, who have supported me along the way, feel the same way and I am very grateful".

Emily shared a secret that she feels could be useful to other magicians who might be struggling to overcome lack of self-confidence. During her hypnotherapy session exercises she learned to create a character which embodies all the characteristics she admires into the human character version of

herself. In other words, to create the bigger stage version of herself, that she would play on stage.

She used inspiring actresses like Scarlett Johansson, Florence Pugh, Elizabeth Olsen, Sandra Bullock and Margot Robbie; all of whom had traits and skills she admired and that she wished to see in herself on stage. She envisioned those characteristics onto herself in her performances and it helped, a lot.

Emily is equally inspired by other women in magic who are pushing boundaries and who are successful thanks to their talent and creativity. She is particularly encouraged by contemporary magicians Gabriella Lester, Anna Deguzman and Laura London. Yet, she dreams of a future when all magicians will be equal and each individual will be known for their art and abilities, rather than their



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gendered identity.

She is very determined to continue growing and evolving as an artist. It's that ambitious focus on goals that influenced her decision to train and study drama and acting at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire. About the course she explained, "it's an intensive foundation course encompassing contemporary acting, Shakespeare, singing, dancing, stage combat and text analysis studies". Emily graduated with distinction in March this year.

"The acting course helped me tremendously to build confidence and awareness within my stage performances. It was so beneficial that I have decided to continue studying and to pursue a degree in Multimedia Journalism. That course will include lessons to present on camera and on radio. I know that if I continue to immerse myself in the industry, the way that I have been, I will become a seriously stronger person and performer".

Her favorite style of magic, both to watch and perform is mentalism, closely followed by sleight of hand and then anything that involves exciting stunts. She truly loves: "Watching the reactions of an audience or an individual as they process the impossibility of what they have just witnessed, performed right in front of their very own eyes".

Emily shared another of her secrets, "Music helps me, a lot, particularly the day of a performance. I use music to help me get into 'the right headspace' in order to perform." She's discovered that listening to tunes is a terrific way to deflect those nervous voices of self-doubt that are determined to creep into her head.

She elaborated, "Anything Rock or Metal helps. I listen to Mötley Crüe, Def Leppard, Kiss, AC/DC, Rob Zombie, Lorna Shore, TOOL and Slipknot. In the middle of that mix is Harry Styles and One Direction too. I've created a playlist that I play on shuffle that contains all of that music. If I am being 100% truthful, I listen to that playlist everyday not just on show days. I love it too much to save it just for days when I am performing!"

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hiccups and mistakes. "There is always a struggle or an unpredictable story in every single performance. I have learned from live performance to cope with the factors that I couldn't have practiced for.

I am naturally a bit of a 'control freak', so when I rehearse, I do everything I can to work through every imaginable issue. I practice every single aspect of an act; I challenge myself by repeating the work in different accents. I deliberately try to create barriers to overcome, I request that people heckle me as I rehearse and I react when I can and ignore them when I must.

Thankfully, I have got better at improvising and realizing what to do in high pressure



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situations. The reality is, that sometimes the magic doesn't work! Or rather, the magic works, just things just don't play out as they were rehearsed".

For the future Emily stated, "Show me women breaking stereotypes, show me women breaking records and show me women having fair representation in the media". Perhaps it is these sentiments that Emily Robinson-Hardy herself will show the world. Her career is on fire. Her *Penn & Teller: Fool Us*, FOOLER performance has launched her into the limelight, center stage and it is going to be a spectacular show to watch.

Emily's magic initiation, began in 2021 with a casting notice on a website called *StarNow* and an advert for *The Next Stunt Magician*.

It was thanks to her Mom's guidance that Emily was actively pursuing drama school and acting at the time. She admitted, "I am naturally very dramatic and I am fortunate to have very good memory retention and recall." She can easily remember all the lyrics to her favorite songs and/or entire scenes from a movie.

It all began with the *StarNow* notice, at a time that she was feeling both discouraged and dejected. She had submitted and applied to





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so many acting, modeling and presenting jobs that she'd lost track of the number. Without receiving any feedback or replies from any of the casting directors, producers or directors, she was disheartened.

Within twenty minutes of applying for *The Next Stunt Magician* she received a reply requesting her showreel. It turned out that magic manager, producer and director Martin T Hart was searching for talent and Emily was exactly the fit he was searching for.

Their first endeavor was a video reel submission for *America's Got Talent* and from there an audition on the show. Together they have not looked back.

About her magic start Emily shared, “my interest in magic began as a young girl with my brothers *Marvin's Magic Kit*. I had no desire to learn or perform the tricks. Instead, I was curious to learn the magic secrets. I would sit for hours trying to work it all out”.

Magic has always fascinated and been a family favorite. Her parents would often enjoy an evening out attending Derren Brown's magic shows at the local theatre. Emily and her brother were left in the care of a babysitter, with the promise that when they were old enough, they would attend the show as well.

Emily recalls, “one year my Dad ended up on stage as a volunteer helping Derren during his *'Something Wicked This Way Comes'* show tour. Dad was on stage holding the brief case for the grand reveal at the end of the show”.

Sadly, in her teens Emily's Dad battled cancer and lost the fight. She misses him deeply. In 2022, as promised, her Mum arranged a special outing for Emily, her brother and their babysitter to attend Darren Brown's latest show entitled, *'Showman'*.

It was an emotional night for all, with their father's memory close to their hearts. What made it even more poignant was that Emily's brother, Luke, was selected to participate in the show, as his dad had done before him.

Emily shared, “even though I didn't actually see Dad onstage with Derren, Luke being onstage mirrored him in my mind. It was a precious memory we all shared as a family and it was emotional and moving for us all”.

It was the families, fascination with magic and mentalism that triggered Emily's interest into the subject. “My Mom actually knows two card tricks that she entertained us with”. She cites magic DVD's, Derren Brown and Dynamo as influencing factors for her general interest in novel performance and magic.

Emily would not have discovered magic had it not been for her mentor, manager, producer and stage technician Martin T Hart. Martin has provided essential guidance in learning, behind the scenes preparation and the development of performance.

Emily has “fast-tracked” her repertoire and learning thanks to Martin's tutelage. She explained, “he has helped me to learn basic methods, to fine-tune techniques, plus, how to use rehearsing and filming of walk-throughs to improve my work. We study the material together, to perfect each minor detail, to enhance the performance.

The art of cardistry has caught Emily's attention and interest as well. She's been avidly watching Ekaterina's and Yannick's excellent YouTube tutorials on the subject and she's following their pages and uploads.

Having acting skills is a huge benefit to any magician. Emily explained, “I think that the main difference between acting and performing magic is sometimes misunderstood. When you are performing magic, you're playing a character that's based on yourself.

A wise magician from New York, Jeremy Pasternak, once told me that, “there are no magicians, there are only actors playing the part of magicians”. With magic, you need to be able to trust yourself more than you do with acting; there is always an unpredictable element of uncertainty.

For example, when I'm performing in a play I will be rehearsing with a group of actors, my cast members, that I will ultimately be performing the show with, usually until the very end of the run. When you perform a magic show you are never going to have the same audience, the same reactions, the same volunteers and possibly not even the same crew working on the show.

With magic, you need to be faster at thinking on your feet and you must react to various external stimuli, because no two shows or experiences will ever be the same”.

Emily never dreamed she would be where she is today. She looks at her accomplishments and feels that each performance has been the greatest opportunity. Before being discovered by Martin she had little professional theatrical experience. Emily has blossomed with each opportunity and she is very grateful to Martin T Hart for opening so many doors and recognizing her creative artist within.

Martin T Hart

“I have worked with Emily on several TV shows where she performs baffling magic and mentalism. It was very clear to me from the start that she had something very special to bring to the artform.

Emily doesn't dilly dally through her performances, she goes straight for the 'throat' and delivers the miracle.

Emily's Penn & Teller: Fool Us performance of the 'Perfect ACAAN' is a great example. She tells us about a trick that is said to be impossible, which is absolutely true. Then she tells us that she's going to perform it, and she does.

Not only did we finally witness the Holy Grail of magic, something magicians have been trying to perform perfectly for years, but it was a twenty-year-old girl magician who delivered it, and delivered it spectacularly.

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SECRETS REVEALED

- I did Karate (Wado Ryu) from when I was around 5 years old until I was 15 and I still remember my 72 move kata, Kushanku.
- I can recite the monologue that Tom Hiddleston says in Latin from the first series of Marvel's Loki. I absolutely adore Loki.
- I'm a massive adrenaline junkie. I love rollercoasters and I've drifted cars around a track, driven supercars and raced a Mazda MX5. I would love to be a trained stunt driver.
- I'd like to convince my Mom to approve of me working on more dangerous stunt magic in my routines. Maybe a fire walk too!
- I can rap! I know all the words to a number of rap songs, but the most impressive one I know is Eminem's Godzilla!

Favorite Quote:

"Feel the fear and do it anyway", resonates with me because of my anxiety, panic attacks and self-doubt. When I "do it anyway" I enjoy the feeling of adrenaline and that it's easy to channel that energy into performing.

Dream Encounter:

Tom Hiddleston! I think intelligence is an incredibly charming quality and having watched almost everything that Tom has been in film and TV wise, I would love to sit with him and ask questions about Shakespeare, his experiences at Drama School, in the industry and probably ask him to recite the monologue in Latin and a few more iconic Loki lines over tea and cake.

Favourite Photo:



The promotional poster for my very first 'one-woman' magic show. It was even more memorable since my Mum and one of my best friends, Lauren, attended the show

It was very nerve wracking to perform, but it was one of the most fun nights I have ever had on stage!