

GRAPHIC
BIOGRAPHY

HOUDINI



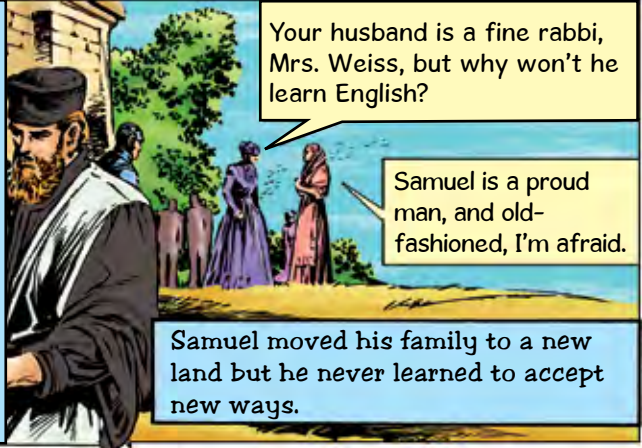


Harry Houdini was one of the greatest magicians of all time. Many of his illusions have made history in the fields of magic and mystery.

HOUDINI



Harry Houdini was born Ehrich Weiss, the son of Samuel and Cecilia Weiss, on March 24, 1874, in Budapest, Hungary. But soon after, the family moved to Appleton, Wisconsin, where Samuel became the town's first rabbi. The family spelled Ehrich's name a new way: Erich.



Your husband is a fine rabbi, Mrs. Weiss, but why won't he learn English?

Samuel is a proud man, and old-fashioned, I'm afraid.

Samuel moved his family to a new land but he never learned to accept new ways.

Young Erich was not like most babies.



Ah, my little son, you never cry. And day or night I always find you wide eyed and awake.

Several years later, Samuel lost his job and the family moved to Milwaukee.

We are sorry, Rabbi, but you are old-fashioned.

Thank you for your kindness. We'll get by.



The family had a hard time getting enough money for food. Young Erich and his brothers helped in any way that they could.



Extra! Extra! Read all about it!

But young Erich was always thinking of new things to do. At the age of nine he gave his first show.



Step right up. Only five cents. See young Erich—Prince of the Air!

At the age of twelve, Erich decided to run away from home and find a regular job to help the family. As usual, he thought of something that not many other boys had tried.

Can I come along?

Sure, there's plenty of boots to be shined here.



But this job didn't last long. Erich soon found himself moving from town to town to find work.

This one's postmarked Hanibal, Missouri.

What! Oh, thank you!



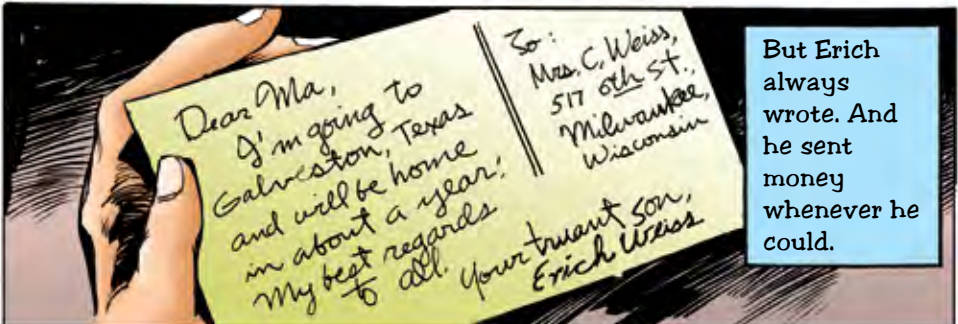
The Weiss family was never sure where Erich would turn up next.

Dear Ma,
I'm going to Galveston, Texas and will be home in about a year. My best regards to all.

To: Mrs. C. Weiss,
517 6th St.,
Milwaukee,
Wisconsin

Your truest son,
Erich Weiss

But Erich always wrote. And he sent money whenever he could.



Then Erich's father went to New York to open a small religious school there. He had to leave the rest of the family behind until he could make enough money to send for them.

Train to New York?

Sure is! All aboard! Train to New York!



Erich heard that his father was in New York. He went there and found him.

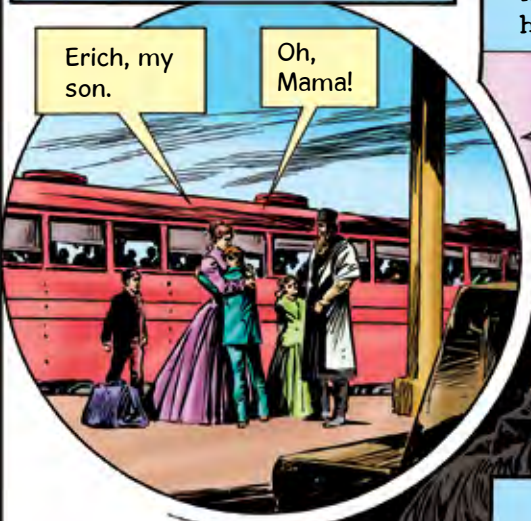
Oh, papa, we'll work together. I can help!



Soon they earned enough money to send for the rest of the family.

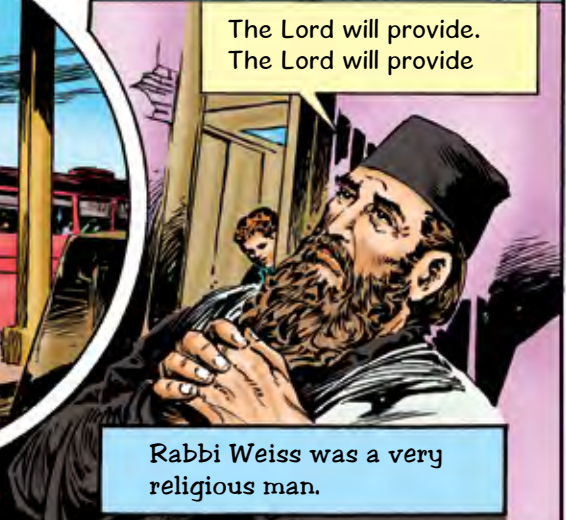
Erich, my son.

Oh, Mama!



But things were not easy. It was hard for Rabbi Weiss to earn enough money to support his family. Erich and his brother helped as much as they could.

The Lord will provide. The Lord will provide



Rabbi Weiss was a very religious man.

Erich was working as a messenger for a department store. He had an idea.

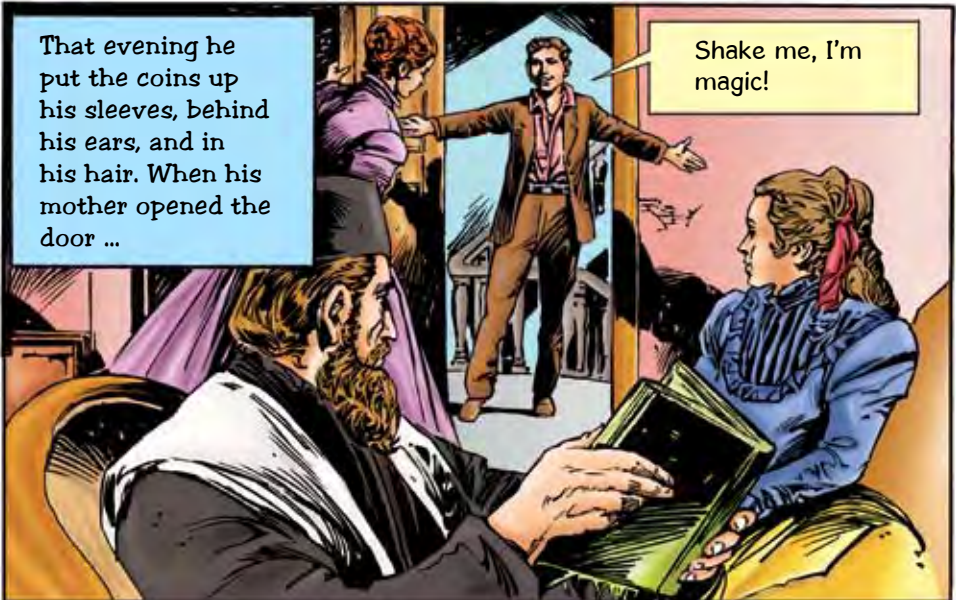
It's the holiday season. This should work.



Erich's plan worked even better than he thought it would.

That evening he put the coins up his sleeves, behind his ears, and in his hair. When his mother opened the door ...

Shake me, I'm magic!



Oh, Erich, you are magic!



Now the holidays looked much brighter.

About this time Erich's younger brother showed him a simple coin trick.

Now you see it.



Now you don't.



Soon, Erich was reading everything he could get his hands on about magic.



You should go to sleep, you must get up early.

In a minute, Mother.

But none of the jobs lasted long. Again he needed a job, but he knew he wouldn't stand a chance with the other boys that were waiting. He had read that a magician needs to believe in himself. Perhaps it would work here too!



Thank you for waiting, but I'm afraid that this job is already taken.



It worked. The other boys walked away.

I want this job.

It looks like you've got it.



On weekends, Erich ran with the Pastime Athletic Club track team. For the rest for his life he kept himself in good physical condition.

Good time, Erich!



His father was against tobacco and alcohol for religious reasons. Erich's coach was against them because he felt they slowed up the body as well as the soul.



He read many books on magic. He gave neighborhood shows as his skill blossomed.



Then he chanced on a book by a great French magician.

If I could only become like Robert-Houdin.

