

## Magic, Clown Magic, and Magic in Clowning - What's the Distinction?

Within this article, I'd like to make some brief comments concerning the functionality of magic in clowning -- where it is acceptable, and where it's not. As an illustration, it could be out of character to get a bumbling clown to suddenly place on a serious demeanor, and using the aid of a lovely assistant, saw a lady in half, or levitate her, or cause her to mysteriously vanish & reappear. Any of these would be totally out of character for virtually any clown.

However, it will be perfectly in character for any him to attempt to be the suave magician, and be revealed for the charlatan he is, either by his own bungling or that of his assistant (likely an auguste or tramp clown). Since the [spectacle de magie en francais](#) is, by definition, a bungler, this would be fine, and totally in character. In fact, once having been exposed/failed, it could be fine for him to successfully complete the magic (together with the help of the audience, a volunteer from the audience, or perhaps with a clown assistant).



There is another way for the clown to perform magically, however. Something that we forget too often is that the clown is, himself, a magical character, a 'toon come to life. Whereas he cannot perform magic in character (most of the time; if it's in character for your clown to successfully perform magically, do so! No one complains that a clown juggler can successfully juggle, or that a clown balloon artist can twist latex into wonderful shapes without them popping), magic can (and perhaps should) happen to the clown, without his even being aware of it. For example, it is perfectly in character to get a clown assistant to a magician to be handed three rings, only to have them magically link in his hands - using the clown having a befuddled expression as to how this could have happened!

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Likewise, why not have the clown pull out a handkerchief to hand to someone (or blow his own nose), only to give it away/leave it lying and pull out a second from the same pocket (followed by a third, fourth, etc.)? Why not have things magically multiple, change color, disappear -- using the clown acting nonchalant, as though this is an everyday occurrence?

Now, if your clown doesn't perform magic, that's fine -- not every clown should, any more than every clown should twist balloons, use puppets, or have the same make-up as every other clown. But if your clown does perform magically, why not broaden our horizons a little, and truly portray a magical clown.