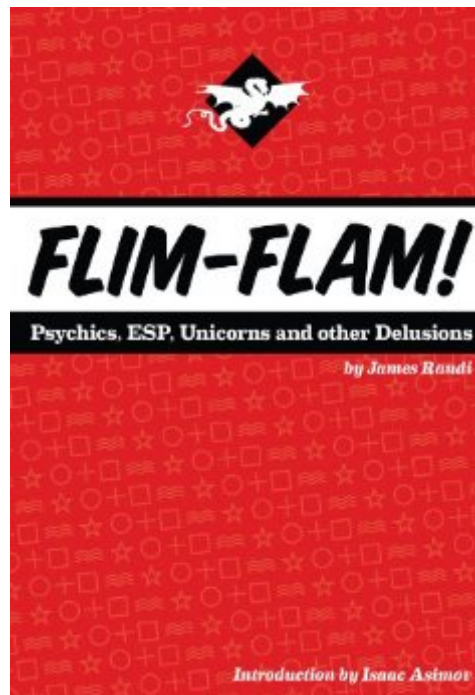


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# Flim-Flam! Psychics, ESP, Unicorns, And Other Delusions



## Synopsis

In this book, Randi explores and exposes what he believes to be the outrageous deception that has been promoted widely in the media. Unafraid to call researchers to account for their failures and impostures, Randi tells us that we have been badly served by scientists who have failed to follow the procedures required by their training and traditions. Here, he shows us how what he views as sloppy research has been followed by rationalizations of evident failures, and we see these errors and misrepresentations clearly pointed out. Mr. Randi provides us with a compelling and convincing document that will certainly startle and enlighten all who read it. The Kindle Edition features a new preface by James Randi.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

James Randi is well renowned as one of the world's most prominent skeptics, as well he should be. He has offered a million dollar prize to anyone who can prove in scientifically controlled tests that they possess some kind of paranormal power. Go figure, no one has ever been able to do so, and most self-proclaimed psychics, diviners etc have simply refused to be tested. A common excuse is

that 'negative vibrations/energy' from non-believers interferes with their 'powers'. Translation: "I can prove I can do anything... as long as it's only to people who are already firmly convinced that I can." This book's most interesting sections include accounts of some people who have tried to claim this prize, and often descriptions of the trickery they tried to pull. Famous scams and flim-flammy are also discussed. The perpetrators range from the honestly mistaken, to those manipulated by others (including children) to the deluded to the knowing liars. It's not a read that will lift your opinion of humanity, but it's well worth reading. The book is not without its flaws. Randi is correctly portrayed as pissed off - and given the insistent idiocy he deals with, perhaps that's no surprise. The topics veer through a hodgepodge of the allegedly paranormal, making it read a little too episodic. At times, the prose gets dry. For example, the chapter on the Cottingly Faeries goes into technical details about cameras, which I had a tough time understanding. Worth noting are some false claims that negative reviewers have made on . Randi does NOT maintain a dogmatic insistence that all paranormal claims are false. He bases his belief that such claims are hoey not on faith, but on evidence, having seen many (many, many) which are false, and none that have proven true.

I saw a TV show about James Randi recently. In one scene, he visited a college classroom, posing as an expert astrologer. He had prepared, he told the class, detailed individual horoscopes based on each student's birthdate and birthplace. The students read these horoscopes, then rated their accuracy on a scale of 1-5. One student gave his horoscope a 4. Every other horoscope got a 5. The students were amazed: astrology worked! Randi then had them look at each other's horoscopes. Cries of outrage filled the room. All of the horoscopes were exactly the same. They had nothing whatsoever to do with birthdates, or birthplaces, or any particular student. This book is full of such examples. Randi uses them, and scientific data, and consistently careful analysis of facts, to show that such ideas as astrology, biorhythms, transcendental meditation, UFOs, the Bermuda Triangle, ESP, and psychic surgery are, quite simply, nonsense. In 1964, he offered \$10,000 to anyone who could demonstrate a paranormal power under satisfactory observational conditions. As of the 1982 publication date, over 650 people had tried for the reward, none successfully. Some of the attempts are described in this book. Funny how psychics who have "demonstrated" the ability to bend metal rods by will power can't do it anymore when they are no longer allowed to wander out of the room with the rods during the experiment! A theme throughout the book is that people who want to believe something will accept the most absurd rationalizations in order to continue to believe it, in spite of overwhelming contradictory evidence. At the beginning of his chapter on psychic surgery, Randi quotes William Cowper: "To follow foolish precedents, and wink / With both our eyes, is

easier than to think.

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