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The Spirit Cabinet: A Novel

By Quarrington, Paul

Vintage Books Canada, Mississauga, Ontario, Canada, 2000. Soft cover. Book Condition: New. 341 pages. From Publishers Weekly: Canadian screenwriter (Due South) and award-winning novelist Quarrington (Whale Music) poignantly uses the tacky, tricky background of Las Vegas to tell the story of two magicians who pay the price for a great and dangerous wisdom. German Jurgen Schubert and Swiss Rudolfo Thielmann (think Siegfried & Roy) are sellers of wonder--a flamboyant Vegas magic act, spawned from a seedy club in Munich. At the height of their fame, they pay \$4.8 million for the much sought-after Houdini collection, which includes the Davenport Spirit Cabinet and ancient books containing history's greatest magic secrets from all over the world.

Labeled showmen, not "real" magicians, by their contemporaries, towering illusionist Jurgen and animal trainer Rudolfo are compared by the World-Famous Kaz to "chimps [who] bought some books about brain surgery." Quarrington reveals the pair, often rude and showy, as having been shaped by the traumas and disappointments of their pasts: Rudolfo was a pathetically lonely child raised in an opium den in Bern, and Jurgen is still desperately trying to prove that real magic exists. Jurgen proclaims to Rudolfo and to sensuous female assistant Miranda,...



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