



The Rise of the Indian Rope Trick: How a Spectacular Hoax Became History

Peter Lamont

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A rope rises up into the air. A boy climbs up the rope and when the boy gets to the top he vanishes into thin air, explains Peter Lamont, winner of the Jeremy Dalziel prize in British History, and author of *The Rise of the Indian Rope Trick*, about a tall tale that found its way into legend. The rope trick is one of the most successful hoaxes of all time, created by an amateur magician and printed in the *Chicago Tribune* in 1890. Despite a later admission that the story was false, it continued to spread in newspapers and journals throughout the world. Some claimed to have seen the trick performed on trips to India. Others added their own spin to the tale. Using the original legend as a starting point, Lamont, who has performed as a magician and psychic, explores how easily people will believe stories that are fed to them as truth despite all logical senses and their outright impossibility.

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