

John Doe

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“Unlikely Hero” Research Paper

“The Great Escape to Success”

Who can open locked cabinets to get pies and tasty treats? Ehrich can! Born on March 24, 1874, in Budapest, Hungary, Ehrich Weiss emigrated to the United States in 1876. He and his family moved to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and Ehrich, this “unlikely hero” would begin to work to achieve his magical American dream of success.

**To begin with, Ehrich’s early childhood was financially difficult, but it was filled with many bewitching adventures.** Because his family did not have much money, Ehrich had to start working, and he sold newspapers and shined shoes to help support the family. Even though he had to work hard as a child to support his family, he would put on shows to entertain people. Ehrich had a prodigious interest and talent in acrobats, so he would incorporate those skills into his acts. For example, he once put on a show by performing on a trapeze, and he was only nine-years-old!

He ran away from home when he was only twelve-years-old by sneaking onto a freight car that took him to Kansas City. A year later, he returned back home and worked as a messenger, a necktie cutter, and a photographer’s assistant to help his family pay the bills. Besides working many jobs, Ehrich and his brother Theo started performing shows together as they hoped to make it into show business. **Therefore, Ehrich’s early childhood was difficult as he had to work at a young age, but he often tried to escape the pressures of life.**

**However, Ehrich's early adulthood is when he would first begin his rise to fame and become a famous performer.** Ehrich's idol in his life was another famous performer, Robert Houdin. Ehrich decided that he would change part of his name in honor of his hero, Robert Houdin. After Ehrich changed his name, he began performing professionally at the age of seventeen with his brother, Theo. He and his brother would perform twenty shows a day at New York's Coney Island Amusement Park.

While performing at Coney Island, Ehrich met Beatrice Raymond, who was a singer and a dancer trying to make it big in show business like Ehrich and his brother. Beatrice and Ehrich fell in love and were married in 1894. Beatrice ended up replacing Theo as Ehrich's partner in show business. Ehrich would eventually credit Beatrice for his success, and Beatrice and Ehrich's marriage would be one of love and devotion.

Ehrich and Beatrice joined the Welsh Brothers Circus for six months. While they performed in the circus, they became famous for a trick they called the "Metamorphosis," where Beatrice and Ehrich would somehow change places while in locked trunks.

Eventually, Ehrich and Beatrice decide that they needed to travel to Europe to make it big in show business. When they first arrived, they had no bookings and only had enough money to survive for one week. Yet, he and Beatrice would become famous in Europe, and eventually cast a spell over America as well. **Thus, Ehrich struggle and had to work hard to become a famous entertainer during his early adulthood.**

**Furthermore, this “unlikely hero” named Ehrich Weiss worked hard to become the legendary magician, Harry Houdini.** Ehrich became famous while in Europe for his tricks where he would brake free from being handcuffed to a pillar in Scotland Yard. To draw even more attention to himself as a performer, he would make his tricks even more difficult by jumping into rivers while being chained and handcuffed!

Ehrich and Beatrice returned to the United States in 1905, and he was a star! He would escape from prison cells, get out of straitjackets while being hung upside down, and escape from packing crates that were nailed shut and underwater!

Being a perfectionist, Ehrich would practice escaping and working with locks in his own bathtub so that he could master all of his tricks. Ehrich would be considered the greatest magician of his time, and he even became so famous that he was offered a part in a silent film called *The Master of Mystery*.

Although Ehrich was a master of magic, he could not escape from the pain of losing his mother. His mother died in 1913, and it affected Ehrich greatly. Ehrich became interested in spiritualism so that he could speak with his dead mother; however, he was never able to achieve this, and it haunted him throughout his life.

When he almost lost his beloved wife Beatrice to food poisoning, he went many nights without sleep until she was out of danger. Finally, when Beatrice was no longer in danger, a tired and exhausted Ehrich went on the road to perform his magic tricks.

One night before a show, Ehrich had told some friends that he would not be affected by anyone who hit him above the waist. Before Ehrich could hold his breath and prepare for the blow, one of the friends tested Ehrich’s theory and punched him in

the stomach three times. Ehrich was in pain from the blow, but he went on to perform his shows later that night; however, he was not well. Ehrich did not realize that the punch to his stomach had caused his appendix to burst, which caused peritonitis, a fatal disease. No magic trick in the world would be able to rescue him from his fate.

Ehrich died on Halloween, October 31, 1926. Because Ehrich Weiss worked hard to become successful, this “unlikely hero” eventually became world famous as a magician.

**In conclusion,** Ehrich Weiss, who started out poor, worked hard to become the greatest magician in the world! Who started his or her magic career by unlocking his mother’s pie cabinets? Ehrich Weiss also known by his stage name, Harry Houdini is the answer to that question.

## Works Cited

“Appleton History.” *Harry Houdini*. Appleton Public Library, 24 Mar 2011. Web. 24 Jan 2012. <<http://www.apl.org/history/houdini/biography.html>>.

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## CREATIVE TITLE?

I am going to tell you about an unlikely hero. His name is Ehrich Weisz. He was born on March 24, 1874. He was born in Budapest Hungary. His father was Mayer Samuel Weisz, a religious teacher, whose first wife had died in childbirth. He was a child of his second wife, Cecilia Steeiner. His dad emigrated to America and changed the spelling of his last name to Weiss. Ehrich came to America in 1876, when Ehrich was a toddler. His mother claimed that as a child he learned to open locked cabinets to get at pies and sweets she had baked, but the story may be more legend than fact.

To begin with, his early childhood. The family moved to Milwaukee when Ehrich was about eight, but times were difficult. From a young age, Ehrich sold newspapers and shined shoes to help support the family. When not working, Ehrich engaged in athletic activities and practiced acrobatic stunts. Ehrich claimed October 28, 1883 as the date of his first appearance before an audience. The nine year old performed on a trapeze hung from a tree while wearing red socks made by his mother.

Furthermore, next few years of this hero. Yeah man. Lets see man. He ran away from home by hopping a freight car. It took him to Kansas City. He re-joined his family, but still work hard. He named hisself after his idol, Robert Houdin. Him and his brother began to pursue an interest in magic. He started his professional career at age 17 doin magic shows before civic groups in music halls, at sideshows, and at New Yorks coney Island amusement park, were he sometimes performed 20 shows each day. Holla. Him

and Theo stopped workin. He met up with a girl named Beatrice raymond. The performed a trick called "Metamorphosis," witch them traded places.

In conclusion, him was a great magician. Your suppose to guess. I am going to tell u his name. Its Harry Houdini.