

Layer Mask Magic



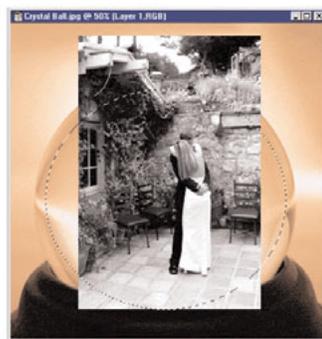
Step 1:
Open two photos you want to collage together-- in this case it's a photo I took at my friends' wedding and one I found of a crystal ball. Once you've got the images open, use the Move tool to drag and drop one photo into the other.



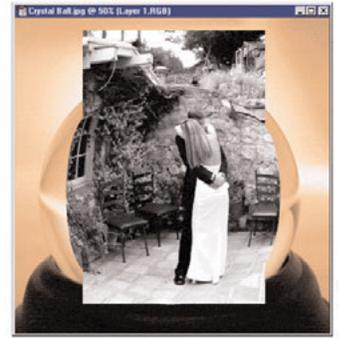
Step 2:
The photo of Steve and Darla is slightly bigger than I want. Simply pressing Ctrl+T (or Command+T) brings up the Free Transform tool, so I can size it down a bit to better match the crystal ball...



Step 3:
I'll use Photoshop's Spherize filter to give the image a slightly, well, spherized look. Simply select the part of the image you want to spherize and then select Spherize from the Filter menu (Filter...>Distort...>Spherize).



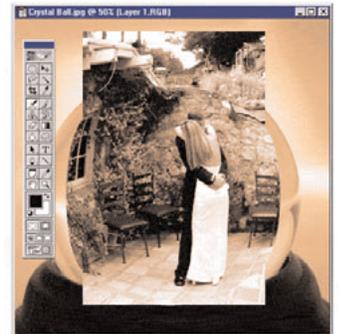
Step 4:
Since the base image has a sepia-like tone, I'm also going to colorize the image of Steve and Darla to match it. To do this, simply open the Hue/Saturation palette by pressing Ctrl+U (or Command+U) and check the Colorize box. Then adjust the Hue and Saturation sliders until the photos match.



Step 5:
To blend the photos together, I'll first add a layer mask by clicking on the layer mask icon in the Layers palette...



Step 6:
Then, once the Layer Mask is added, grab a nice, soft-edge airbrush, make sure that Stylus Pressure is checked and start painting on the mask! Painting with black masks the image and painting with white reveals it. The pressure sensitivity of the Wacom Pen allows me to blend with great subtlety and delicate control. The best part is that because we're working on the mask, not the actual image, we can work and rework the image until we get exactly the look we want...



Step 7:
Cool... my friends' magic moment sealed forever in a crystal ball!

