

Kenton Knepper's
"A Date With Destiny"

KENTON'S DESTINY CARD SYSTEM

There is an unusual stack used for this system. Use any deck you like. If you can find an odd or mystical looking deck, that may be so much the better. An unusual looking deck explains why it must be kept separate from any other card effects you may do. "There is a special energy in this deck, so I keep it in a special place" is a nice way to excuse a stacked deck. You may also want to have a mystical box or bag to place the deck in. The deck is stacked from the top of the deck to the face as follows:

(Top of Deck) 6H – 5C – 7S – KH – 8S – 8H – 3S – 6D – 7C – 4D – JC – 10S – 5D – 2S
– AC – QH – 8C – 4H – AS – 7H – 6S – 4C – 7D – QS – AD – 10D – 9S – KD – 9H –
QD – 3C – 5H – 10H – 2C – 9C – 4S – JH – 3H – AH – 10C – 8D – QC – 5S – 9D – KC
– JD – 2D – JS – 3D – 2H – 6C – KS - JOKER (Face of Deck)

Once so stacked, it is impossible to find any pattern. But put this stack together with the chart, and you will be able to discover anyone's "birth card" without complex mathematics or memory.

Here is the basic effect:

You mention a strange relationship between playing cards and people's birthdays. You ask a spectator the date only of her birth. Many people like the fact that you never ask for the YEAR in which they were born! You ask first for the day only, not the month, "...such as the 10th, 12th, 31st. Which DAY were you born?" As you say this, you spread the card faces before the spectator's eyes. "I am trying to see if you react strongly or unconsciously to any particular card".

Saying that you are unsure of her reactions, you ask for the month in which she was born. Frowning, you spread more cards from the deck before the spectator's eyes. Suddenly you seem to get an impression and set one card aside. If you prefer, you could set the deck aside and simply name a card that you sense. Most performers like to claim they get no clear impression, and have the spectator choose a card at random instead. This card, selected by the spectator, is set aside and the spectator is asked if they believe "in astrology, or simply destiny".

You may give a brief personality reading and mention how this fits certain types of symbols or "suits" on playing cards. If you do not feel comfortable doing any kind of reading, you need not do so.

Finally you ask the spectator to look at the chart, and find the card that falls on their birthday. Sure enough, the card they chose, or the card you named, is precisely their own "birthday card" listed on the chart. Keep in mind you never see the faces of the cards. The playing card chart can be closed or hidden away if desired. Still, the card they select matches the card on the birthday chart or in your personal calendar.

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It seems as if memory has to be involved, but the truth is the deck and the chart do the real work for you. The deck is your covert memory device. By secretly counting the cards over from the top of the face down deck, you come to a person's birth card.

Here is how to use this ingenious system. I strongly encourage you to get a deck now and set the stack up. Trying to follow this without a deck in hand is difficult. With deck in hand, it's ridiculously simple. You'll see in a moment why you need the deck. Trust me, get one now, and set it up.

Once the deck is stacked, spread the cards from your left hand into your right. For sake of explanation, let's say your spectator's birthday is on the 15th - we don't know what month yet. Once you hear the DAY of the spectator's birth, spread *that many* cards over from the top of the deck, from your left to your right hand. Don't count them separately - that would reverse their order. The deck must stay in order the entire time. Spread the cards over as you count, don't pull them off one another. I suggest you count in pairs to speed this process along. The cards should still be spread between your hands, but your right hand will hold the counted cards securely. Simply (and secretly) spread over the number of cards the spectator says into your right hand from the top of the deck.

Now get this: If the spectator, as in our example, was born on the fifteenth of JANUARY, the bottom card of the spread in your right hand will be HER birthday card! In our example, the fifteenth card from top of the deck is the Ace of Clubs. Now look at the card chart. That's right - the 15th day of January is the Ace of Clubs on the chart too!

But what if the spectator's birthday was some month other than January? There's a pattern for that as well. Just count each month in order, spreading over *two cards for each month*. You *already began with January* when you counted to the day. By spreading over *two more cards* from your left hand into your right, you are now at the card for FEBRUARY. Again the bottommost card held in your right hand is the spectator's card. The fifteenth of February is the Eight of Clubs on the chart, and that is what you should be holding at the bottom of the spread in your right hand.

What if her birthday was in March? Spread another two cards over from your left to right hand. Regardless of what month she names, count over two cards for each month to get to her month. **Important! : Remember you never really have to count January.** Just begin counting two cards for each month in order: February, March, April, May, June, July, August, September, October, November, and December. Stop spreading pairs of cards after you have counted her month. Like magic, the card on the bottom of your right hand spread will be the correct card on the apparently complex card chart.

Remember, your counting should remain a secret. It should appear as if you are looking for a reaction by the spectator, as you show her the faces of the cards. You do NOT look at the faces, only the card backs. Keep the focus on her and her reactions. Whatever you do, do NOT let the spectator in on the fact that you are counting the cards. If they are aware of this, it is far less entertaining. Pay particular attention to not moving your lips as you count. Lips unconsciously moving can be a "tell" that you are secretly counting.

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Be sure you count over the DAY they are born FIRST. After this number, count over the month in pairs, one pair for each month after January, in order. Spread the cards from the top down. That's all there is to it. The rest is showmanship.

Once you arrive at their card secretly, you have numerous presentations literally at your fingertips. You may remark that you still get no impression whatsoever, and close the deck. In the process of closing the deck you can do a standard deck peek and glimpse the card. Now you may apparently use memory or intuition to name what you feel may be their unique birthday card. Let them check the chart to prove you are correct. This is especially good if you do a reading about their personality once you have secretly peeked the card.

You may instead close the deck and secretly retain a break below their card. Now you can execute a simple riffle force, having the spectator call out stop – using HER intuition. Of course you force her card on her, and prove that destiny or astrological card charts must work – as the spectator has selected her very own card! I like to do a classic force, but you need to be sure the card is returned to the stack properly afterwards if you do this.

There is nothing wrong with the classic "Cross Cut Force" here. Cut the spectator's card secretly to the bottom of the deck. You can undercut or simply cut the deck so her card is on the bottom casually as you speak. Suggest the spectator should use her own intuition. Hold the deck face down in your palm up hand, and have the spectator cut some cards off the top onto the table. Be sure she does this in one cut, not several, as that would destroy the stack. "Go with your first impression, don't second guess yourself".

Once she has cut some cards onto the table, mention the card chart. As you direct her attention to the chart, place the cards in your hand crossways on top of the cards on the table. If she thinks this is suspicious, mention you need to mark the cut, so it doesn't get lost while you look at the chart. Usually I try not to say anything other than directing focus to the chart itself. There is no suspicion unless you cause it by nervousness.

I have long used the following presentation as well: I put the *handwritten name* of the cards from the chart in a yearly pocket or desk calendar. I actually use the calendar for keeping track of dates and such. But I leave a little space in each day to write the notation or name of the card in red ink. I do this at the start of every year and I am set for the trick all year long. Best of all, I am not using anything odd or suspicious. It's just a calendar many have seen me use for appointments and such. This is especially good if you like to appear realistic in your mentalism effects. Such a standard business calendar is innocuous. The handwritten card notations or card names in red ink in your own handwriting seem to be impressions that have come to you. You might say that you "pencil in" each year the astrological card symbolism of that year... "Not that I believe in such things. But sometimes it is rather uncanny" and proceed with the birthday card force. This is one of my favorite uses of A Date With Destiny, and it may well be one of yours.

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Pre-printed calendars and such suggest trickery. I like many of the marketed versions of the card matching a date, but many fail in this "pre-printed" area. Pre-printed calendars are suspicious. If you wish to use a pre-printed device, use the card chart supplied. It seems odd, because it is supposed to be unusual and arcane. This is a printed version that works for you rather than against you. It makes sense that an ancient chart is reprinted for your use.

I have spent many a night doing readings using the stack and chart alone at well-paid presentations. Here are some basic reading tools to use with the chart:

Consider red cards as outgoing and artistic. Black cards are more reserved and intellectual. Red cards are more emotional, and black cards a little more aloof – but in a good way usually. Hearts are romantic and poetic, clubs are intellectual and mental, spades are pointed and dramatic, diamonds are cultured and social. If you take but a moment to think about this, you will see that you already know what the symbols suggest. You don't have to know anything about the numbers. If you want, you can imagine what some numbers mean, and work that into what I have said about the suits. High cards are "more": More travel, more wealth, more ideas, more expression, more highly evolved. Lower numbers are "less": less scattered, less distracted, and less open. You can imagine how the number 1 is about focus or a 2 is about relationships. You can see where a 3 is about creating more (a 1 plus a 2 is 3) and a 4 is about a solid person with a good foundation (4 walls, 4 corners, etc.). 5 is a "good, balanced number", as it is the middle number, and so on.

But I have made all of this even easier. On the opposite side of the large chart is a list of playing card suits. Under these suits are personality traits you may use for readings. In these lists are seemingly specific words, but they are in truth, less so. There are traits that are the opposite of each other in the same suit listing. That just means that you can never be wrong! A spectator is either a "magnetic" person or they tend to be more reserved and "internal". They may have little practical intelligence, but be a well-studied "intellectual". Or they may not be educated, but they are "intelligent" in ways that are practical, not theoretical. The spectator may be "down to earth" yet "digs below the surface". They might like "money" but then again, they may be "miserly". If a spectator isn't "pure" in motives, then they must be "impure" in motives, mustn't they? Many of these types of opposing ideas are listed for you under the suits.

"You see here are potential traits of the chart. You either lean towards positive trends, or more negative ones. You may not have any of the negatives, but the potential for you to be that way is there, which is why they are listed on the chart". Such words spoken to the spectator give you all the "outs" you will ever need when doing this type of reading.

Such seemingly sensible words are really subtle shades of deception. The words allow spectators to fit the descriptions into their own ideas about who they are. Many spectators do half of the reading by themselves. You mention they "seem to be a heart type personality" for instance, and often a spectator will look at the list and begin telling YOU why that is the case.

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The best part of all this is even if a spectator says your analysis of them is wrong, you must be somewhat correct – as what you say matches the very card that is on their birth date!

Spread through the deck, secretly counting until you learn the card that is their birthday card. Set the deck aside, or force the card, but be sure you do not openly look at it yet. Now do a short, simple reading and say at the end... "Which tells me, if what I said is correct, that your birthday card must be the such-and-such, is that right"? They will admit the card is correct – they have to acknowledge that when they turn over the card and also look at the chart! In this process, spectators tend to accept that if you knew the card, you must have been somewhat right about the rest.

Other spectators that may pass by hear the phrase, "...is that right?" They see the spectator agree. The spectator will be agreeing that the card is correct. But a passerby will often take the spectator's affirmation as confirmation that the spectator believed everything else you said in the reading. This is true even if the spectator disagreed with the reading portion. The spectator's agreement to the question "is that right?" does the real trick. There are many sneaky factors at work for you, and you need not know about them all. But I hope you get a sense of how well planned out this entire set-up is, and how easily it can work for you.

Many diary card force books have been out since I first published my original chart in Wonder Readings. That chart is different than the one presented here. You might wish to look into Wonder Readings or some of my other works if you wish to do a reading with playing cards as well as the birthday card effect. The Wonder Readings version has a great many options that the "Destiny" version does not. "Destiny" is simplified and direct. The version in Wonder Readings is far more complex, but has more options due to the complexity. For most people however, the "Destiny" version is just right and not unnecessarily over-complicated. I know it works perfectly for me.

As there is no stack to find in the deck, even mentalists and magicians are thrown by my method. This makes the chart more confusing and much more difficult to find patterns in the chart itself. Many patterns do exist, which you need not know for the present effects. But you may look into Wonder Readings for more on this special chart and others like it that I have created. Perhaps you are of the mind to decipher and discover some of the other patterns in this chart for yourself.

But you need not be concerned with any such thing. The straightforward presentation and methods given here is how I use the chart most to this day. Many performers like to make copies of the chart and insert their name, phone number and promotional logos. These make for fine giveaways that people will talk about, and the cost is little.

You might want to pencil dot the backs of the cards at every 10 cards, to make counting the face down cards that much quicker. I prefer to do this, for those cases when I run into someone who has a birthday late in a month. I usually darken in the angel's hair on a deck of Bicycle cards making them "brunette" or a sharp "redhead" – for a red backed deck. No one notices the hair is darkened; yet it can be easily spotted by me.

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If someone has a birthday on December 31st – the end of the deck – no need to count! Their card is THE JOKER. The Joker on the *face* of the deck also makes it easy to cut the deck back to its properly stacked order after a reading or performance.

Here's a quick bit for you close-up workers: When you learn it is someone's birthday, remark that to celebrate you would like to demonstrate your "physical as well as mental agility". False cut the deck, ending by cutting out the proper birthday card. Just be sure you use a false cut that does not destroy the stack! Have the spectator look up the date on the chart or in your pocket calendar, and they will be impressed, I assure you. You may want to sign the card and give it away as "That's the birthday card I brought for you tonight". It's worth carrying an extra deck to replace the stack, as this is often a cherished and memorable moment for a celebrating spectator.

Let's discuss some other tricks and details about the full color chart itself. This is a remarkably effective prop for getting attention at parties, coffee shops or in restaurants. Rest the chart closed against a book or bottle. If you put a bottle in the middle, like propping a book open, the chart will stand and you can read the top line or two of the chart itself. The "A Date With Destiny" faces out towards spectators or possible clients for readings. Though the chart is not seen by the spectators and appears to be essentially closed, you can read helpful hints at the top line.

Above each month is a number and above that two odd words. The words are really shortened versions of the astrological signs belonging in each month. As each astrological sign spreads between two months, it is listed twice. Here is the long form of astrological dates and signs:

Aries	Taurus	Gemini	Cancer
Mar. 21 - Apr. 19	Apr. 20 - May 20	May 21 - Jun. 21	Jun. 22 - Jul. 22
Leo	Virgo	Libra	Scorpio
Jul. 23 - Aug. 22	Aug. 23 - Sep. 22	Sep. 23 - Oct. 22	Oct. 23 - Nov. 21
Sagittarius	Capricorn	Aquarius	Pisces
Nov. 22 - Dec. 21	Dec. 22 - Jan. 19	Jan. 20 - Feb. 18	Feb. 19 - Mar. 20

The top line of the chart itself will help you recall this if you wish to incorporate someone's astrological sign. You might begin the effect by asking for their sign. Secretly steal a look at the chart and name the two months at the sign saying (for example) "Scorpio! Ah, October or November?" Now ask for the date. You have secretly discovered all you need to know to count to their birth card, and perhaps sounded a bit informed about astrology too – indirectly. "Scorpio" on the chart is shown as "SC0". This is your cue; you need not tell them later that this is anything but "arcane markings that go back a long time". The numbers under these astrological cue words, and above the month, are the number of cards down from the top each month is in the deck. In other words, it is a secret cue to help you count quickly to the months. Keep in mind the chart seems closed and you peek only at the top few lines, as it is propped open.

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You can instead lay the chart face up on the table and cover the chart with a piece of paper. Allow the first few lines only to show. This way no one will assume you are looking at the chart. The main idea is to make it appear that you cannot read the chart itself, yet you do read the top several lines if desired.

The number cues help get to a birth card quickly. For instance, if I said the birth date was July 16th, the chart shows that July (Jul) is 12. 12 (July) plus 16 (the date) is 28. So I count 28 cards over from the top and I am at their birth card. You may want to count down to your third marked card (30th from the top) and then count backward two cards to arrive on their card instead.

Of course, you need not use these cues at all. They are aids for those who may find them useful. Here is something in the chart everyone will find useful: If you mess up your stack, you can check it easily with the chart itself. The entire vertical row in January, from January 1 – January 31 is the stack from the top, down to the Three of Clubs. To complete the stack, simply go to where you find the Three of Clubs in the LAST row (December) and the next card – the Five of Hearts – is the next card in the stack. Continue down this last vertical column to complete your stacked deck. Look at the chart with the deck in hand, and this will become very clear to you. It's easy, and a nice safeguard!

The chart itself is meant to look arcane, and great effort was used to make it appear esoteric as well as hand-tinted. I ought to know – I tinted the old woodcuts myself. The front cover is, as I have said, meant to draw customers or attention to what you are doing. The "Destiny" cover is a built-in advertising plaque, or as one of my friends put it, "an instant readings and sales kit for coffee shops and fine parties". Virtually anyone can begin to do personality type readings right away with this set. Wisely, the only thing you predict with this kit is their birth card. You can give the spectator a satisfying reading about their traits and personality, complete with dramatic ending, and not become involved in unscrupulous advice.

About the back cover: The back cover faces you when the chart is set book wise on your table. The spectators are usually not aware of the back at all. The first two paragraphs on the back cover provide you with deceptive Wonder Words for you to use as an opening speech or introduction to what you are doing. That's right, I also made sure you had your own interesting and sneaky opening lines ready-made if you choose. All you need do is direct the spectator's attention to the sign/chart and casually read what is on the back cover. Read the first two paragraphs only. The last two paragraphs are for those who want to allow a spectator to read the opening remarks themselves. In this case, position the chart so that it is wide open like a large "V". The inside of the chart faces you, and the front and back covers face spectators as they approach your table. Now they can read what you do, and why you are there, and you need not say anything right away. Allow the sign to draw them in. You will note that the third paragraph mentions my name. This was done so that dealers could display the effect in their shops, and you would know it was my creation. But spectators do not know that!

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The back cover was so conceived as to make it appear that YOU were selected and specially trained by a "Master symbolist" personally. The cover suggests directly that you went through some sort of training, and that indirectly; you passed some sort of test to be able to do what you do. In other words, you appear to have been educated and trained by a person knowledgeable in the matters of the arcane and symbolic, to be able to do a special type of reading or experiment. You have near instant credibility, and all you had to do was buy and learn my simple methods to "pass" and "graduate".

If all education were so simple!

Some people like to cut the chart in half, and position the signs and charts part as a mat on a table, another part as a sign leaning against something. There are many options due to the way I designed the chart. Feel free to do what works best for you.

No doubt you now understand why the instructions are not a permanent part of the chart and sign itself. The chart/sign is the "prop" in more ways than one. As it is meant to be handled by spectators and displayed, the instructions had to be removable.

Finally, should anyone mention the cards are repeated on the chart, the answer is obvious: "There are 365 days in a year, and only 53 cards, so of course some must be repeated"!

I hope I have given you an ample feel for what this great tool has done for me, and still does to this day. You need not perform it as a character reading, keep in mind. It is the perfect solution to the "calendar card trick" premise, without all the hassles of the usual mathematical mental troubles or tricked calendars. It has long been my favorite solution, and I am very pleased that I may finally share it with you.

My best wishes for your true success in this and all endeavors.

Kenton Knepper

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