Create-a-Prospect from 52 First Dates

52 First Dates is a rules-light tabletop roleplaying game for 4 or more players about going on 52 blind dates while plural.

This is an excerpt from that game; specifically, the rules for randomly generating a (singlet) date, called a Prospect, using a deck of playing cards.

There are three types of players for any given Date Night:

- The Collective, who jointly share the plural character called the System;
- The Date, who plays the singlet character called the Prospect;
- Opportunity, who introduce Opportunity Events to make the date a little less predicable.

Credits

52 First Dates was created by Cadera Spindrift as part of the Otherships Jam 3 hosted by Metaparadox.

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A System Introduction

Like many tabletop roleplaying games, 52 First Dates is a collaboration between a group of people. Unlike many, that group are all in the same body.

Hello! We're the Spindrift Crew!

This is a departure from the way we normally write TTRPGs, which is to try and maintain a consistent voice throughout. We're purposely doing things differently for 52 First Dates because we think it's important for this game, and thematically sound.

Rather than interjecting comments into the flow of the text, we decided to use sidenotes in the gutters, each signed with an emoji so you know you who's speaking.

This is who we are:

Cadera Spindrift 🌀

Primary (co-)fronter and project coordinator; she/her

Dera 🪁

Our self-described analytical headmate and game mechanics wonk; she/her

Carline Stone 🌿

Social justice druid and in-house sensitivity reader; will be your big gay auntie; she/her

Aura 🌹

Flirty lesbian disaster; looks like our WoW character; she/her

Valorie 🔗

Our generally quiet protector/warrior; sometimes Fusillade; she/her

🦊

Doesn't speak or write except in emojis; not literally a fox; fae/faer or he/him or it/its or they/them or 🦊/🦊

Creating the Prospect

Creating a new Prospect happens before each Date Night – unless you're going on a second date with someone from a previous Date Night. As with creating the System and the Headmates, creation of a new Prospect involves input from everyone.

The steps to creating a new Prospect are:

1. Name the Prospect
2. Determine the Prospect's pronouns
3. See how the Prospect compares to the ideal
4. Describe the Prospect's appearance
5. Draw 2 cards for Traits

Each of these is detailed in the following sections.

Gender and Attraction

One thing that *isn't* on the list is "determine the Prospect's gender and attraction." Why's that? [1]

1. An earlier draft had this section as "Gender and Sexuality," but we realized that sexuality isn't really the only thing we're talking about here. So we switched it to "attraction". 🌿

The assumption for game purposes is that the Prospect's gender and attraction are going to be generally compatible with the System's gender and attraction. While this is rarely a reasonable assumption to make in real life, it works for purposes of the game – because this ultimately isn't a game about being rejected by queer people, either by the System or by the Prospect.

Which means that it's handwaved as a non-issue – if you need more of an explanation than that, you can say that the friend-who-set-up-the-blind-date [2] knows the System and the Prospect well enough to make sure that they at least have a *chance* to hit it off in terms of compatibility.

The Prospect's Name

You can quickly determine a name for the Prospect by drawing a single card from the top of the Date's Deck, and comparing it to the following tables. These names have been chosen to have few gender assumptions attached. [3]

Card	Name		Card	Name
A ♣	Ari		A ♦	Aeden
2 ♣	Blu		2 ♦	Rook
3 ♣	Page		3 ♦	Jae
4 ♣	Taylor		4 ♦	Wren
5 ♣	Bee		5 ♦	Landry
6 ♣	Nova		6 ♦	Rain
7 ♣	Kris		7 ♦	Kai
8 ♣	Fox		8 ♦	Ember
9 ♣	River		9 ♦	Clio
10 ♣	Crow		10 ♦	Lynx
J ♣	Leaf		J ♦	Jan
Q ♣	Noel		Q ♦	Lumen
K ♣	Sparrow		K ♦	Thyme

2. Speaking of the "friend", if you ever need to figure out details about said mutual friend, such as their name or pronouns, you can use the tables for creating a Prospect for them as well. 🏹

3. Any player is free to veto any names that have negative associations for them, no questions asked – this is a place where safety tools help out 🌱

Card	Name		Card	Name
A ♥	Avery		A ♠	Ash
2 ♥	Jordan		2 ♠	Van
3 ♥	Star		3 ♠	Roan
4 ♥	Quinn		4 ♠	Finch
5 ♥	Archer		5 ♠	Kerry
6 ♥	Milan		6 ♠	Lark
7 ♥	Aspen		7 ♠	Storm
8 ♥	Mint		8 ♠	Jalen
9 ♥	Zev		9 ♠	Kirby
10 ♥	Parker		10 ♠	Sage
J ♥	Sky		J ♠	Harper
Q ♥	Riley		Q ♠	Rory
K ♥	Alva		K ♠	Angel

The Prospect's Pronouns

Once you have the name of the Propect, you'll need their pronouns. Draw one card to determine their primary pronoun, and then draw a second to determine another set of pronouns they also use. [4]

First Card Suit	Second Card Suit	Pronouns
♠ Spades	♥ Hearts	any pronouns
♠ Spades	♠ Spades	she/her
♠ Spades	♦ Diamonds	she/her + they/them
♠ Spades	♣ Clubs	she/her + chart
♥ Hearts	♥ Hearts	he/him
♥ Hearts	♠ Spades	any pronouns
♥ Hearts	♦ Diamonds	he/him + they/them
♥ Hearts	♣ Clubs	he/him + chart
♣ Clubs	♥ Hearts	chart + he
♣ Clubs	♠ Spades	chart + she
♣ Clubs	♦ Diamonds	chart + they
♣ Clubs	♣ Clubs	chart + chart
♦ Diamonds	♥ Hearts	they/them + he/him
♦ Diamonds	♠ Spades	they/them + she/her
♦ Diamonds	♦ Diamonds	they/them
♦ Diamonds	♣ Clubs	theythem + chart

4. Here's a mnemonic for these – Spades starts with an "S", as does "she/her"; Hearts and "he/him" with an "H"; C for both Clubs and *chart*. There's no "d" in they/them, though. 🌀

If the result above says "chart" (i.e., is Clubs) then check the card's rank on the next table.

| Card	Pronouns
A ♣	ae/aer/aers/aerself
2 ♣	ze/hir/hirs/hirself
3 ♣	xe/xem/xyr/xyrself
4 ♣	ey/em/eir/eirself
5 ♣	zie/zim/zir/zirself
6 ♣	per/pers/perself
7 ♣	ve/ver/vis/verself
8 ♣	it/its/itself
9 ♣	sie/hir/hirself
10 ♣	e/em/eir/emself
J ♣	fae/faer/faerself
Q ♣	ne/nem/nirs/nemself
K ♣	no pronouns

Is This an Ideal Partner?

During the Headmate creation part of the game, you wrote one quality that the Headmate was looking for in an ideal partner. Now it's time to see if the Prospect measures up to that ideal. Here's how you do that.

- For each Headmate, the Date writes the Headmate's name and desired quality on a line on the Date Sheet.
- One player flips the top card from the System's Deck and the Date flips a card from the Date's Deck.
- If the cards **don't match at all,** the Prospect doesn't have that quality.
- If the cards **match color,** the Date marks a check on that line; the Prospect has that desired quality.
- If the cards **match suit,** the Date marks a plus (+); the Prospect has that quality in abundance!
- If the cards **match suit and rank,** the Date marks a star; the Prospect is a perfect match on that quality!
- If the cards **match rank but not suit or color,** the Prospect doesn't have that quality at all. The Date marks a minus (-) on that line.

Here's an example. Let's say the Headmate's desired criteria is "enjoys tabletop RPGs" – so that they have someone to share their hobby with.

The player holding that sheet and the Date both flip cards; we'll keep the player's card consistent, with a Two of ♥ Hearts, and examine different draws by the Date.
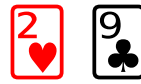
In this case, the cards don't match at all. The Date doesn't put any mark on that line. The Prospect isn't into TTRPGs.

The cards' colors match. The Date marks a checkmark in the box. The Prospect plays TTRPGs, hooray!

The colors match, but more important, the suits also match. The Date puts a "+" on the corresponding line. The Prospect not only plays roleplaying games, but really likes the hobby. Maybe they're a gamemaster, or just a die-hard roleplayer?

The cards exactly match, one from each deck. [5] [6] [7] We can intrepret this as not only does the Prospect play tabletop RPGs as often as the Headmate, *but also* their group is looking for a new player! The Date player marks a star in the box.

Uh oh. The ranks match, but the suits don't match either color or suit.

The Date marks a "-" in the box. Not only does the date not play tabletop roleplaying games, but actively *dislikes* them. This could spell problems for that Headmate.

5. There's a 1 in 52 chance of this happening, which is 1.92% of the time. 🛰️

6. "Never tell me the odds." 🌹

7. Han Solo is kind of a creep, though. 🌀

The Prospect's Appearance

To learn what the Prospect looks like, we use the same technique that gave the description of the System: Each player provides one part of the Prospect's general look, and the Date player records those on the Date Sheet.

Simple, isn't it?

The Prospect's Traits

When you've completed the rest of the details about the Prospect, the Date player draws two cards from the top of the Date's Deck, placing them face down in front of them.

Each card is tied to one personality Trait; these are listed in the table below, as well as on the Date Sheet. The Date player uses these cards as a guideline when roleplaying the Prospect. In addition, the trait cards are used in the Wrap-Up phase to determine the outcome of Date Night.

If you're the Date, don't reveal the two trait cards until Date Night is over! This is the only situation in 52 First Dates where anyone is meant to keep secrets from other players – it's to maintain a sense of surprise and mystery.

Card	Trait[8]	Card	Trait[9]
A ♠	Witty	A ♦	Teasing
2 ♠	Creative	2 ♦	Guarded
3 ♠	Punning	3 ♦	Flamboyant
4 ♠	Contemplative	4 ♦	Thirsty
5 ♠	Sly	5 ♦	Ostentatious
6 ♠	Clever	6 ♦	Reserved
7 ♠	Bookish	7 ♦	Enigmatc
8 ♠	Fastidious	8 ♦	Insecure
9 ♠	Sarcastic	9 ♦	Coquettish
10 ♠	Resourceful	10 ♦	Curious
J ♠	Long-Winded	J ♦	Evasive
Q ♠	Snarky	Q ♦	Insincere
K ♠	Sharp-tongued	K ♦	Suspicious

8. I compiled this list; the rest of our system produced the other lists. 🏹

9. I wrote this list and it rocks! 🌹

Card	Trait[10]	Card	Trait[11]
A ♥	Supportive	A ♣	Forthright
2 ♥	Listening	2 ♣	Jovial
3 ♥	Empathetic	3 ♣	Humble
4 ♥	Hopeful	4 ♣	Stoic
5 ♥	Spiritual	5 ♣	Cheerful
6 ♥	Happy	6 ♣	No-Nonsense
7 ♥	Emotional	7 ♣	Honest
8 ♥	Frustrated	8 ♣	Meek
9 ♥	Oversharing	9 ♣	Vulgar
10 ♥	Dour	10 ♣	Direct
J ♥	Vivacious	J ♣	Pretentious
Q ♥	Passionate	Q ♣	Humorless
K ♥	Thoughtless	K ♣	Blunt

10. These were my suggestions

11. Mine.