

Deck of Cards

Wink Martindale

NARRATIVE:

During the North African campaign, a bunch of soldier boys had been on a long hike and they arrived in a little town called Casino. The next morning being Sunday, several of the boys went to Church. A sergeant commanded the boys in Church and after the Chaplain had read the prayer, the text was taken up next. Those of the boys who had a prayer book took them out, but this one boy had only a deck of cards, and so he spread them out. The Sergeant saw the cards and said, "Soldier, put away those cards." After the services was over, the soldier was taken prisoner and brought before the Provost Marshall. The Marshall said, "Sergeant, why have you brought this man here?" "For playing cards in church, Sir." "And what have you to say for yourself, son?" "Much, Sir," replied the soldier. The Marshall said, "I hope so, for if not I shall punish you more than any man was ever punished." The soldier said, "Sir, I have been on the march for about six days. I have neither a Bible nor a prayer book, but I hope to satisfy you, Sir, with the purity of my intentions." And with that, the boy started his story: "You see Sir, when I look at the Ace, it reminds me that there is but one God. And the Deuce reminds me that the Bible is divided into two parts, the Old and the New Testaments. When I see the Trey, I think of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. And when I see the Four, I think of the four Evangelists who preached the Gospel; there was Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. And when I see the Five, it reminds me of the five wise virgins who trimmed their lamps; there were ten of them: five were wise and were saved, five were foolish and were shut out. When I see the Six, it reminds me that in six days, God made this great heaven and earth. When I see the Seven, it reminds me that on the seventh day, God rested from His great work. And when I see the Eight, I think of the eight righteous persons God saved when He destroyed this earth; there was Noah, his wife, their sons and their wives. And when I see the Nine, I think of the lepers our Savior cleansed, and nine out of the ten didn't even thank Him. When I see the Ten, I think of the Ten Commandments God handed down to Moses on a table of stone. When I see the King, it reminds me that there is but one King of Heaven, God Almighty. And when I see the Queen, I think of the Blessed Virgin Mary, who is Queen of Heaven. And the Jack or Knave is the Devil. When I count the number of spots on a deck of cards, I find 365, the number of days in a year. There are 52 cards, the number of weeks in a year. There are 4 suits, the number of weeks in a month. There are 12 picture cards, the number of months in a year. There are 13 tricks, the number of weeks in a quarter.

So you see, Sir, my pack of cards serves me as a Bible, an Almanac and a Prayer Book." "And friends, the story is true. I know, I was that soldier."

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