



**FUTURE VISION:** Jane Fryer with psychic Joe Power, above; Chelsey Baker, right; and Jane with Yasmin Khan, left, and medium Suzanne Corbie, main



Pictures: FRANCES LEADER

by **Jane Fryer**

**S**IDE-STEPPING trailing fairy lights, stacks of Spirit & Destiny magazine, tubes of body glitter and crumpled KitKat wrappers, I squeeze into a wobbly black plastic chair facing the camera on the set of Your Destiny TV.

It is mid-afternoon and white witch Suzanne Corbie is on the home straight of the gruelling 9am to 5pm shift. Despite a recent hand injury, she's flipping over tarot cards like a croupier in response to text-message requests for readings.

"I sense a deep underlying sadness in your past," she tells Kate, 27, from Coventry. "You've been on your own a lot lately but I can see a life of love and cherishing ahead. And a family..."

Before there's time to expand in comes a text from Donna, born February 25, 1972, who is married to Paul but flirting with Carl on the internet and toying with the idea of a clandestine meeting. Flame-haired Suzanne flips over a "death" card and Donna gets short shrift.

"Don't forget what curiosity did to the cat, Donna," she says. "Remember, the grass is not always greener."

Welcome to the cramped and blisteringly hot west London studio of Britain's first and only TV channel dedicated to the weird and won-

derful world of all things psychic. Now it's the turn of Ruth, from Co-

from 9am to 2am, five days a week on channel 694 of the Sky network. Chelsey, 31, is a former model and actress turned TV entrepreneur, who dreamed up the idea, secured funding and, since February, when the channel went live, has put her life on hold to work 17-hour days.

As commercial director, she survives on a diet of treacle tart and Marlboro Lights and oversees every aspect of the show, from test-driving the mediums and retouching make-up to barking into the presenters' earpieces and stepping in front of the camera if one of the stars calls in sick.

"This channel will be a source of fascination and pleasure for the millions in Britain who realise that the future isn't what it used to be," says Chelsey.

"We are about helping people get on with their lives. People used to laugh at psychics but now they're taken very seriously."

At first blush the focus of Your Destiny TV appears to be the 12ft by 14ft pink and purple grotto, where tireless Suzanne gives on-air readings and predictions in response to the hundreds of texts and photo messages that pour in. But it turns out that the real work goes on behind the scenes.

Every few minutes Yasmin's earpiece rattles with Murdo's tinny voice, urging her to encourage viewers to call the advice lines for a full reading with one of 20 "incredibly talented, fantastically qualified and unbelievably good psychics" waiting at the other end of a high-earning, premium-rate phone number with specialisms ranging from tarot card reading to numerology.

"It's a bit like trying something out for free," Yasmin trails. "Now

all those involved with the show appear to have the bug. Broadcast director Jason Nicholls, who previously worked on Richard & Judy, was a hardened cynic when he joined Chelsey's team last July.

"I thought it was all end-of-the-pier b\*\*\*\*\* and I didn't believe a word of it. But even I could see the mediums were amazing. I became almost addicted and had constant readings for the first four weeks and, as a result, I've become much more psychic myself.

"It's crazy - I've started predicting all sorts of things. For instance, Jane, does the name Elizabeth mean anything to you and are you a smoker?" he asks, a bit hopefully. "Do you know how to open up your chakra points? Here, let me show you."

**N**OT surprisingly, Your Destiny TV has had to tread carefully among some fairly stringent regulations. Tarot cards are called "divination cards" to avoid occult connotations, ouija boards can only appear after the watershed, no advice can be given on legal, health or financial matters and any mention of ghosts, death and the afterlife is strictly prohibited between 9am and 9pm.

"By day it's all love, relationships and encouraging affirmations," says Nicholls. "We have to be very conscious of young and vulnerable viewers so the general rule is no ghosts before 9pm, some ghosts from 9pm to 10.30pm and then all the ghosts you want after 10.30pm."

And, according to Nicholls, that

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**'A white witch is flipping over tarot cards'**

derful world of all things psychic. Now it's the turn of Ruth, from Co-

# SWITCHING TO THE OTHER SIDE



known. Then, to test them, I sent in a text with my date of birth but with another name and they got that spot on too.

"Now I wouldn't dare say it was rubbish, though it's not exactly top of my list of topics for discussing with my mates."

One thing I couldn't quite get a handle on was how, even with 30 years' experience as a witch to help her, Suzanne could give any sort of accurate prediction from a one-line text message.

"Normally, in a one-to-one consultation I'd spend an hour with someone, pick things up from them, sense their feelings and their aura and wouldn't finish until I'd answered all their questions," she says.

"Doing it from a text message in a couple of minutes is very different. You don't have time to go um and aah. It is a much more challenging atmosphere, which has helped me hone my skills because I'm working blind and have to make snap decisions.

"Card readers such as myself find it more difficult than astrologers, who are used to working from just a birth date and time.

"But I can still pick things up about people and sense them, even through a text message. The number of people who tell us that we got

**'If we felt it was a con, it would come across'**

something right proves that it works."

When we review the text feed,