

your original family's expectations. Soon you'll be empty and light and free -- and ready to make a vigorous first impression when you encounter potential allies in the frontier.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): I suspect you will soon have an up-close and personal encounter with some form of lightning. To ensure it's not a literal bolt shooting down out of a thundercloud, please refrain from taking long romantic strolls with yourself during a storm. Also, forgo any temptation you may have to stick your finger in electrical sockets. What I'm envisioning is a type of lightning that will give you a healthy metaphorical jolt. If any of your creative circuits are sluggish, it will jumpstart them. If you need to wake up from a dreamy delusion, the lovable lightning will give you just the right salutary shock.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Signing up to read at the open mike segment of a poetry slam? Buying an outfit that's a departure from the style you've cultivated for years? Getting dance lessons or a past-life reading or instructions on how to hang-glide? Hopping on a jet for a spontaneous getaway to an exotic hotspot? I approve of actions like those, Virgo. In fact, I won't mind if you at least temporarily abandon at least 30 percent of your inhibitions.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): I don't know what marketing specialists are predicting about color trends for the general population, but my astrological analysis has discerned the most evocative colors for you Libras. *Electric mud* is one. It's a scintillating mocha hue. Visualize silver-blue sparkles emerging from moist dirt tones. Earthy and dynamic! *Cybernatural* is another special color for you. Picture sheaves of ripe wheat blended with the hue you see when you close your eyes after staring into a computer monitor for hours. Organic and glimmering! Your third pigment of power is *pastel adrenaline*: a mix of dried apricot and the shadowy brightness that flows across your nerve synapses when you're taking aggressive practical measures to convert your dreams into realities. Delicious and dazzling!

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Do you ever hide behind a wall of detached cynicism? Do you protect yourself with the armor of jaded coolness? If so, here's my proposal: In accordance with the astrological omens, I invite you to escape those perverse forms of comfort and safety. Be brave enough to risk feeling the vulnerability of hopeful enthusiasm. Be sufficiently curious to handle the fluttery uncertainty that comes from exploring places you're not familiar with and trying adventures you're not totally skilled at.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): "We must unlearn the constellations to see the stars," writes Jack Gilbert in his poem "Tear It Down." He adds that "We find out the heart only by dismantling what the heart knows." I invite you to meditate on these ideas. By my calculations, it's time to peel away the obvious secrets so you can penetrate to the richer secrets buried beneath. It's time to dare a world-changing risk that is currently obscured by easy risks. It's time to find your real life hidden inside the pretend one, to expedite the evolution of the authentic self that's germinating in the darkness.

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CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): When I was four years old, I loved to use crayons to draw diagrams of the solar system. It seems I was already laying a foundation for my interest in astrology. How about you, Capricorn? I invite you to explore your early formative memories. To aid the process, look at old photos and ask relatives what they remember. My reading of the astrological omens suggests that your past can show you new clues about what you might ultimately become. Potentials that were revealed when you were a wee tyke may be primed to develop more fully.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): I often ride my bike into the hills. The transition from the residential district to open spaces is a narrow dirt path surrounded by thick woods on one side and a steep descent on the other. Today as I approached this place there was a new sign on a post. It read "Do not enter: Active beehive forming in the middle of the path." Indeed, I could see a swarm hovering around a tree branch that juts down low over the path. How to proceed? I might get stung if I did what I usually do. Instead, I dismounted from my bike and dragged it through the woods so I could join the path on the other side of the bees. Judging from the astrological omens, Aquarius, I suspect you may encounter a comparable interruption along a route that you regularly take. Find a detour, even if it's inconvenient.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): I bet you'll be extra creative in the coming weeks. Cosmic rhythms are nudging you towards fresh thinking and imaginative innovation, whether they're applied to your job, your relationships, your daily rhythm, or your chosen art form. To take maximum advantage of this provocative luck, seek out stimuli that will activate high-quality brainstorming. I understand that the composer André Grétry got inspired when he put his feet in ice water. Author Ben Johnson felt energized in the presence of a purring cat and by the aroma of orange peels. I like to hang out with people who are smarter than me. What works for you?

ARIES (March 21-April 19): There are places in the oceans where the sea floor cracks open and spreads apart from volcanic activity. This allows geothermally heated water to vent out from deep inside the earth. Scientists explored such a place in the otherwise frigid waters around Antarctica. They were elated to find a "riot of life" living there, including previously unknown species of crabs, starfish, sea anemones, and barnacles. Judging from the astrological omens, Aries, I suspect that you will soon enjoy a metaphorically comparable eruption of warm vitality from the unfathomable depths. Will you welcome and make use of these raw blessings even if they are unfamiliar and odd?

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): I'm reporting from the first annual Psychic Olympics in Los Angeles. For the past five days, I've competed against the world's top mind-readers, dice-controllers, spirit whisperers, spoon-benders, angel-wrestlers, and stock market prognosticators. Thus far I have earned a silver medal in the category of channeling the spirits of dead celebrities. (Thanks, Frida Kahlo and Gertrude Stein!) I psychically foresee that I will also win a gold medal for most accurate fortune-telling. Here's the prophecy that I predict will cinch my victory: "People born in the sign of Taurus will soon be at the pinnacle of their ability to get telepathically aligned with people who have things they want and need."

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): While reading Virginia Woolf, I found the perfect maxim for you to write on a slip of paper and carry around in your pocket or wallet or underwear: "Let us not take it for granted that life exists more fully in what is commonly thought big than in what is commonly thought small." In the coming weeks, dear Gemini, I hope you keep this counsel simmering constantly in the back of your mind. It will protect you from the dreaminess and superstition of people around you. It will guarantee that you'll never overlook potent little breakthroughs as you scan the horizon for phantom miracles. And it will help you change what needs to be changed slowly and surely, with minimum disruption.

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Homework: What were the circumstances in which you were most amazingly, outrageously alive? Testify at FreeWillAstrology.com.

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