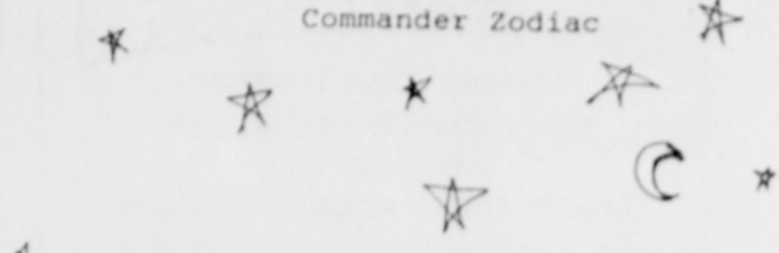


BLAME IT ON THE STARS

Commander Zodiac



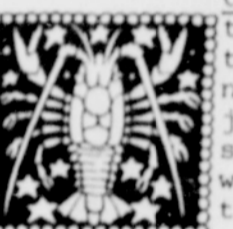
ARIES: Here you are again, you little munchkin, poised on the slippery edge of adventure. Do not go slapdash into the first day of what's left of your life. You're on the right track but can still be derailed by whimsy. Or greed, lust, envy, and sloth, for that matter. Bon voyage.



TAURUS: Ah, Autumn! The leaves are turning, the new sitcom season is upon us. And, as usual, you're in a grump. Give it a rest. If you think life's not measuring up now, just wait until we hit Scorpio and you start your traditional holiday short circuit. For the sake of your loved ones, eat a cookie and take a nap.



GEMINI: Once again, you've taken foot-loose and fancy free past all rational limits. Not to worry, the good will you've stored like acorns among the thousands in your circle are as real as the money you wish you had in the bank. Call your mom and stay away from helicopters on the full moon.



CANCER: The well-being and right action that have emerged from the lunatic swamp your scene had become are not just another of life's sadistic jokes. You really are reaping the seeds you've sown. Good work is always rewarded. Aside from a potentially nasty episode with a turtle on the 12th, it's your party and you can pass out if you want to.



LEO: If the velvet grappling hooks of fate weren't pulling in several directions, you'd have no problems this month at all. Which is to say, you have problems. Set priorities. If this were the last day of your life, how would you spend it? If you answered trying to meet everyone's expectations, you're a nitwit. Do what needs doing. Especially on the 5th, this should not involve trampolines, power equipment, or a new lover who wears a baseball cap.



VIRGO: When the going gets wierd, Virgos pass for normal. The sense of order and purpose you project is, as you well know, a hollow sham. Your life is really a neurotic pinball game of guilt and denial. But, bless their scrambled little heads, people still count on you for roofing nails and a car that runs. Some time after the 18th, a person whose name begins with an L, D, V, A, Y, or P will ask to borrow money. Laugh in their face.



LIBRA: If you want harmony this month, you'll need to make it yourself. Restrict your ceaseless judgments to this: there, but for the grace of dumb luck and backorder karma, go I. The balance you're looking for is what you see when you close your eyes. Avoid actuarial tables and rollerblades on the new moon.



SCORPIO: The hammering continues this month. Power trips stack up like cordwood and your ethics can become, if you're not careful, deliriously situational. Even if you know it's a lie, act as if there were more to life than sex and death. The rest of us are trying to have fun. Beware of Tauruses bearing gifts.



SAGITTARIUS: Your mantra this month is: satyrs will be satyrs. Stop biting your knuckle and dive in. The universe needs your manic spiritual glee to make up for all those Capricorns. Set the dial to Full Gallop, leave good cheer and sighs in your wake, and take your vitamins. On the 16th, you'll be in Barbados. Or maybe a tropical bar with a large candle. Your waiter's name will be Jerome and he'll be lying about the primavera.



CAPRICORN: You've always known your ship would come in and, once again this month, you've been robbed. Smile, keep score, and persevere in small things. Keep your paranoid delusions to yourself, taking no more pleasure in the misfortunes of scumballs than is necessary for good cheer. Just wait. Your chance will come and then they'll see.



AQUARIUS: Time to face facts. The life you've taken on sucks, as they say, big time. You've run this horse to its knees, buckaroo, and it's time to walk. As Marcus Aurelius must have said, "There's nothing to it but to do it." As my mom said, "If you're bored, go out and play." She also said, "You're driving me nuts," but she may not have been talking about you.



PISCES: You couldn't miss this month if you tried. Which, knowing you, you might. Your ditzzy dreaminess has coalesced into something valuable. As usual, you'll squander it with abandon. On the 12th, the moon transgresses your house of silly decisions. Between 11:30 and midnight, someone will stick their finger playfully into your ear. They will only be fooling.



ASK UNCLE MIKE

Dear Uncle Mike,

My girlfriend and I have been debating our positions for a month now and have agreed to let you decide. Is it politically correct for a man to open a door for a woman? She says it's a male power thing, I say it's just being polite. What do you think?

Brad and Sherrie
Eugene

I know and like his wife and hate to see this happen. Should I butt out or butt in?

Leon in Seaside

Dear Leon,

Butt in, by all means. Although Uncle Mike is old enough not to doubt the healing power of a fling with a fellow human who knows him only well enough to find him exciting, it usually ends in pain and sadness if anyone else is involved. It usually ends in pain and sadness anyway.

Suggest to your friend that he stop toying with this new woman's affections and lying through his teeth to someone who's supposed to be his best friend.

Being a hound is no end of fun, but it doesn't hold a candle to keeping your word to someone who trusts you.

Dear Uncle Mike,

My nephew is four. His parents call him 'spirited', I call him a spoiled menace. Markie's latest cuteness is biting. We're talking ankles, fingers, and on one occasion, my buttocks. His mother, my sister, laughs and tells Mark he's not being polite. Any suggestions?

Rabid in Newport

Dear Rabid,

Uncle Mike firmly believes one should never contradict the teachings of parents while they are in earshot.

Rather than creating a conflict in little Mark's moral framework, Uncle Mike suggests you wait for a quiet moment when the two of you are alone. Sit the little whelp on your knee, look him straight in the eye, and bite his thumb until he screams uncle.

Tell him this is the lesson called "Little Dog and Big Dog" and ask if there's any part of it he doesn't understand.

Dear Buffy and Muffy,

First off, Uncle Mike thinks it's hilarious and frightening that anyone would ask a total stranger to make their ethical decisions for them. He wonders if you've never heard of the I Ching.

This said, we press on. Is it politically correct for a male human to open a door for a female human?

Probably not. All gender based acts are suspect---as well they should be, given our mutual track record of emotional atrocities committed in the name of hormone toxicity and a fear of being alone.

Because he takes great pride in his political incorrectness, Uncle Mike opens doors for women relentlessly. He also picks up the lunch check, lights their cigarettes and, if he knows them well, compliments their appearance. Only rarely do they spit in his face. Some of them have been brought up well enough to say thank you.

Uncle Mike's feeling about the trench warfare raging between x and y chromosomes is summed up by Norman Mailer---in what may well be the only healthy though he's had on the subject: "Most of the problems would go away if men told women they were beautiful and women told men they were brave."

To this, Uncle Mike would only add that the lines should be switched daily.

Dear Uncle Mike,

A friend of mine who's been married for several years has started an affair with a woman at his office.

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