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BY ROB BREZSNY

ARIES (March 21-April 19): The planning for a typical wedding lasts from 7 to 12 months. Getting ready for the birth of a child usually requires every minute from the time people find out they're pregnant until the delivery day. I foresee you experiencing an event in early 2006 that will resemble both of these happy yet challenging events. It might be something like the birth or dramatic renewal of a relationship. Or it could be the launch of a partnership that will ask everything of you, and give just as much. I suggest you start your preparations.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): On a family member's 60th birthday, the Japanese celebrate a holiday known as kanreki. It's a time of rebirth, when the celebrant ritually becomes a baby again and enters a second childhood. Among the many gifts given on the occasion is a red kimono, which signifies that in a sense the person is now freed from the responsibilities of adulthood. I recommend that you treat yourself to a similar rite of passage, Taurus. Even though you may not be turning 60, you are at the beginning of an extraordinarily fresh new cycle. You deserve a red kimono and at least a temporary respite from adult burdens.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): It's time to declare amnesty for the part of you that you don't love very well. Forgive that poor sucker. Hold its hand and take it out to dinner and a movie. Tactfully offer it a chance to make amends for the dumb things it has done. And then do a dramatic reading of this proclamation by the playwright Theodore Rubin: "I must learn to love the fool in me—the one who feels too much, talks too much, takes too many chances, wins sometimes and loses often, lacks self-control, loves and hates, hurts and gets hurt, promises and breaks promises, laughs and cries. It alone protects me against that utterly self-controlled, masterful tyrant whom I also harbor and who would rob me of human aliveness, humility, and dignity but for my fool."

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Every hundred years, says a Scottish myth, a scrap of paradise appears on Earth for just one day. Hidden from the profane world for decades at a time, this little town, known as Brigadoon, briefly materializes out of the mists, becoming accessible to any lucky person who happens by. I predict that something resembling Brigadoon will appear to many members of the Cancerian tribe in the coming week. To increase your chances for being in the right place at the right time, you should not simply follow your heart. Rather, follow the most audacious impulses of your heart, radiate mischievous warmth, and be vigilant with your peripheral vision.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): According to legend, influential blues guitarist Robert Johnson made a pact with the Devil in a crossroads.

In exchange for his soul, the Devil gave him tremendous musical skill, including an unparalleled ability to affect his audiences emotionally. I predict that you will soon be tempted to negotiate a comparable deal in a crossroads, Leo. Please keep in mind that there will be some extremely fine print in the proposed contract. Besides that, I want you to know that while the progress you'd make with the Devil's help may initially be faster, in the long run it wouldn't be anywhere near as great as what you can accomplish without it.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Of all the world's landlocked countries, only one maintains a navy: Bolivia. Until 1879, it had a sea port, but lost it in a war with Chile. Over a century later, it has thousands of sailors but only a single sea-worthy ship, which it keeps docked in Argentina a thousand miles away. Its quixotic fixity of purpose seems to be a symbolic declaration that it intends to someday once again have land bordering the ocean. I see a certain resemblance between Bolivia and you right now, Virgo. You also cling fiercely to a starry-eyed commitment that might appear unrealistic to casual observers. The difference is that your dream, as opposed to Bolivia's, is not entirely hopeless. You will receive a sign this week that reveals why.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): "The proverb warns that 'You should not bite the hand that feeds you.' But maybe you should, if it prevents you from feeding yourself." So said the critic of psychiatry, Thomas Szasz. He was urging us to think about how our dependence on seemingly benevolent providers might paralyze our free will and interfere with our ability to take care of ourselves. In the song, "The Hand That Feeds," Trent Reznor of the band Nine Inch Nails expresses a further doubt about the proverb. He suggests the hand that feeds us may supply us with stuff that doesn't really nourish us and that is tainted by the supplier's questionable motivations. "Will you stay down on your knees," he sings, or "will you bite the hand that feeds you?" I present these views for your consideration, Libra. It's a good time to re-evaluate your relationship with authorities who purport to be helping you.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): For about half the year, Cambodia's Tonle Sap River flows north. Soon after the beginning of the rainy season, however, it reverses its direction and flows south for six months. I bring this up, Scorpio, because the astrological omens suggest that you're now in a phase comparable to the time when the river makes its turnaround. The experience may feel a bit odd at first, but it's completely natural. Go with the opposite flow.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): History's longest conflict between nations was the Hundred Years' War, which England and France fought for 116 years between 1337 and 1453. The

shortest war ever was between Zanzibar and England in 1896. It lasted 38 minutes. Whether the hostilities you enter into in the coming week will resemble the former or the latter may all depend on two factors: 1. how open you are to learning from the other side; 2. how willing you are to acknowledge your own role in creating the circumstances that led to the dispute.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Studies show that judicious chocolate consumption promotes longevity. People who ingest it three times a month are more likely to live into their 90s than those who either refrain from eating it or else gorge on it frequently. The astrological omens suggest, however, that your health will be well-served by eating 300 percent more than the judicious amount this May, beginning with a virtual orgy of chocolate feasting this week. I recommend that you also seek out other experiences that generate feelings similar to those stirred by a chocolate feast.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): You now have the power to modify three situations that are overdue for change. First, you could heal a nagging ailment. Second, you could expand your awareness so much that you will detect an important fact about your life that you've been oblivious to. Third, you could end your preoccupation with a trivial problem, thereby freeing up energy to be used for the first two tasks. But none of these things will transpire, Aquarius, if you merely think about them and talk about them. You need a special kind of jolt that bypasses your rational faculties: a new medicine song. So call on all your resources – friends with vast musical knowledge, Web radio stations like Radio Paradise or 3WK, the playlists of people whose taste you like – to track down the tune that will rejuvenate your soul. (Here's one suggestion: "Stones" by Sonic Youth.)

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Sniffing basil and rosemary can make your thinking processes more agile and effective, say aromatherapists. You probably won't really need any such boost in the coming week, though, since according to the astrological omens your mental faculties will be at their peak. But on the other hand, why not go for the super-brain effect? If you feed the odors of basil and rosemary to your already dexterous mind, you may break through into a new order of intelligence, allowing you to solve puzzles that have confounded you for months.

HOMEWORK What's the single most important question you have to find an answer for in the next five years? Deliver your best guess to me at www.freewillastrology.com.

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