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Say, Karen...have I ever told you about the time that several coworkers and I got locked in the big freezer over at the dairy?

Ha! I guess I did tell you that one. How about the time I accidentally knocked a crate of baby ducks into the yogurt vat?

Well, you definitely haven't heard about the time I rescued that kid who'd been trapped in an abandoned well for a whole year and forced to live on a diet of grubs and lichen.

Is that the one where you had to eat your friends?

Yep, I've heard all of your dumb, made-up stories.

Ew, yuck. When did that happen?

Oh...in about a year from now.

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free will astrology BY ROB BREZSNY

ARIES (March 21-April 19): "The only way to get a difficult feeling to go away is simply to love yourself for it," says author Christiane Northrup. "If you think you're stupid, then love yourself for feeling that way. It's a paradox, but it works. To heal, you must ... shine the light of compassion on any areas within you that you feel are unacceptable." While I personally believe this is a crafty strategy, I suggest adding a twist in order to double its effectiveness: As you're loving yourself for your difficult feeling, literally laugh out loud at how crazily worried and wound up you are about it.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): According to *Harper's Index*, 97 percent of us believe that following our own conscience is a sign of a strong character. On the other hand, 92 percent of us think that obeying authorities shows strong character. What that apparently means is that most of us feel we can and should heed the dictates of our own conscience and please the people who control things. In the coming weeks, I think that might be possible for you to do once or twice. But most the time, I suspect you'll have to decide between being either an impeccable rebel or loyal devotee.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Some people skip to the end of a book and read the last few pages while they're still in its early stages. They want to know what will ultimately happen without going through the steps that lead up to it. While it's harmless to prematurely peek at how a book's story resolves, trying a similar approach could cause problems if you do it with your life in the coming weeks. Distortions might arise from trying to "time-travel" to a future date and foresee the outcome of a process you're in the middle of. It could sap your ability to carry out the work you'll need to do. Or it may fill you with false expectations that cause you to misjudge your allies. Be patient.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): *Mazel tov* is a Hebrew phrase meaning "good luck," but its literal translation is "may the stars be good to you." It suggests that stellar energies influence our fate. In his book *Jewish Magic and Superstition*, Joshua Trachtenberg riffs on Judaism's ancient debate about the subject: "The stars determine human actions, but they too are creatures of G-d, established by Him to perform this special function, and therefore the influence they exert is subject to His Will. Repentance, prayer, piety, charity, good deeds ... are the instruments by means of which man can induce G-d to alter His decrees and consequently to modify the fate that is written in the stars for him." I offer this, Cancerian, as evidence that the title of my column, "Free Will Astrology," is not an oxymoron. You have more power to shape your destiny than you imagine - and now is a perfect time to prove it.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): This oracle was originally commissioned by a spiritual wilderness school to train its students in high-stress meditation. It has been tested by disciplined explorers who've learned to be fluid and resourceful in the midst of natural chaos.

Now it's being made available to you, Leo - just in time for the last stretch of your dash (or crawl) across the wasteland. By contemplating the code phrase that appears at the end of this message, you will discover the key for turning poisons into medicine, taking advantage of your weaknesses, and knowing your direction without a compass. Here it is: *Love the beauty and intelligence that are hidden in your darkness.*

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): In Terry Pratchett's book *Wyrd Sisters*, there's a passage in which he talks about how the sun conspires with the forest to pump millions of gallons of sap hundreds of feet from the ground up into the sky. And it all happens "in one great systolic thump too big and loud to be heard." That's the kind of activity I recommend for you in the coming weeks, Virgo. Collaborate with the source of all life - the physical sun, if that's your preference, or God or Goddess, if that works better for you - to pull off a huge movement of lifeblood that brings sustenance from below to above.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): In July 1969, astronaut Buzz Aldrin was the second human to walk on the moon. That was the good news. The bad news was that as he carried out his heroic feat, he wet his pants. He testifies to the event in the documentary film *In the Shadow of the Moon*. I suspect you may soon have a comparable experience, Libra: experiencing a little boo-boo or no-no while you're riding high. Though it may make you feel vulnerable at the time, it's trivial in the big scheme of things and isn't likely to stick with you. How many people even know that Aldrin accidentally peed at his moment of glory?

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): About nine million people see this column regularly. On average, nine of them experience a one-in-a-million coincidence each week. In the next seven days, however, I believe as many as 90,000 of my readers will have that kind of mind-blowing synchronicity, and most of them will be Scorpios. That's because your tribe is in a phase when happy accidents and miraculous flukes are practically unavoidable. Even if you don't brush up against a one-in-a-million stroke of lucky fate, I bet you'll be touched by a one-in-a-thousand event.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): "Dear Flow Meister: I've been surfing the tidal waves of emotion for many days, and am proud to say I haven't wiped out once (though here were two near-misses). But to tell you the truth, I don't know how much longer I can perform this balancing act. How much stamina can one person have? Do you psychically see signs that I'll reach shore anytime soon? - Wobbly Surfer." Dear Wobbly: I predict an end to your trials by Wednesday, July 23 - or earlier if you, too, become a flow meister.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): "Ice cream is both innocent and erotic," writes Klintron on Technocult.com. "Coffee promises to be both stimulating and relaxing." These examples illustrate the idea of "paradesence," or paradoxical essence, which was developed by Alex Shakar in his novel *The Savage Girl*. I suspect that you'll specialize in paradesence in the coming days, Capricorn. Will that make you feel tormented by crazy-making contradictions or will it excite you with an expanding sense of complex possibilities? It will be largely up to your intentions. Which would you prefer?

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): It's Wallow in Your Envy and Jealousy Week. During this holiday, you may in good conscience explore your covetous resentments and plumb the depths of your longing for what others have attained. Here's the payoff: Giving yourself this perverse pleasure should keep you relatively free from envy and jealousy for the next three months. To get yourself in the mood, read this excerpt from Dave Morrison's poem "Jealous": "I am jealous of those who do stupid things and feel no shame. I am jealous of the dead for their reduced workload, jealous of newborn babies for their clean records. I'm jealous of those older than me for what they know, and those younger than me for what they don't. I am jealous of dogs who don't think about living, or dying, they just do."

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): The world's oldest penises are 400 million years old. Discovered in Scotland in 2001, they're part of the fossilized remains of an arachnid species known as daddy long-legs. In reporting their find, the paleontologists marveled that the reproductive organ was two-thirds the size of the entire creature. Let's make this ancient genital a power symbol for you, Pisces. (If you prefer, you can focus on the 400-million-year-old daddy long-legs' vaginas that were also found.) I hope it inspires you to think back to the time when your sexual desires first began to stir. The future of your intimate relationships will benefit from you reconnecting to the primal purity of your original erotic urges.

HOMEWORK: Devise a plan not to get back to where you once belonged, but rather to where you must one day belong. Testify at FreeWillAstrology.com.

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