

FREE WILL ASTROLOGY

BY ROB BREZSNY

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Light, electricity and magnetism are different expressions of a single phenomenon. Scottish scientist and mathematician James Clerk Maxwell (1831-1879) was the first to formulate a theory to explain that startling fact. One of the cornerstones of his work was a set of 20 equations with 20 unknowns. But a younger scientist named Oliver Heaviside decided this was much too complicated. He recast Maxwell's cumbersome theory in the form of four equations with four unknowns. That became the new standard. In 2017, I believe you Aries will have a knack akin to Heaviside's. You'll see the concise essentials obscured by needless complexity. You'll extract the shining truths trapped inside messy confusions.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): "The thornbush is the old obstacle in the road," wrote Franz Kafka. "It must catch fire if you want to go further." Let's analyze this thought, Taurus. If it's to be of maximum use for you in 2017, we will have to develop it further. So here are my questions. Did Kafka mean that you're supposed to wait around passively, hoping the thornbush will somehow catch fire, either through a lucky lightning strike or an act of random vandalism? Or should you, instead, take matters into your own hands — douse the thornbush with gasoline and throw a match into it? Here's another pertinent query: Is the thornbush really so broad and hardy that it blocks the whole road? If not, maybe you could just go around it.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): The fictional character Scott Pilgrim is the hero of Bryan Lee O'Malley's series of graphic novels. He becomes infatuated with a "ninja delivery girl" named Ramona Flowers, but there's a complication. Before he can win her heart, he must defeat all seven of her evil ex-lovers. I'm sure your romantic history has compelled you to deal with equally challenging dilemmas, Gemini. But I suspect you'll get a reprieve from that kind of dark melodrama in 2017. The coming months should be a bright and expansive chapter in your Book of Love.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): The creature known as the short-eared elephant shrew is typically four inches long and weighs a little more than one ounce. And yet it's more genetically similar to elephants than to true shrews. In its home habitat of southern Africa, it's known as the sengi. I propose we regard it as one of your spirit animals in 2017. Its playful place in your life will symbolize the fact that you, too, will have secret connections to big, strong influences; you, too, will have natural links with powerhouses that outwardly don't resemble you.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): "When I look back, I see my former selves, numerous as the trees," writes Leo poet Chase Twhichell. I'm sure that's an experience you've had yourself. Do you find it comforting? Does it feel like being surrounded by old friends who cushion you with nurturing familiarity? Or is it oppressive and claustrophobic? Does it muffle your spontaneity and keep you tethered to the past? I think these are important questions for you to meditate on in 2017. It's time to be very conscious and creative about shaping your relationships with all the people you used to be.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): "Life experience' does not amount to very much and could be learned from novels alone ... without any help from life." So said Nobel Prize-winning author Elias Canetti, who was born in Bulgaria, had British citizenship and wrote in German. Although his idea contradicts conventional wisdom, I am presenting it for your consideration in 2017. You're ready for a massive upgrade in your understanding about the nature of reality — and firsthand "life experience" alone won't be enough to ensure that.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): I am rooting for you to be flagrantly unique in 2017. I vehemently want you to be uninhibited about expressing your deepest, rawest, hottest inclinations. In this spirit, I offer the following four rallying cries: 1. "Don't be addicted to looking cool, baby!" — my friend Luther. 2. Creative power arises when you conquer your tendency to stay detached. — paraphrased from poet Marianne Moore. 3. If you want to be original, have the courage to be an amateur. — paraphrased from poet Wallace Stevens. 4. "In the beginner's mind there are many possibilities, in the expert's mind there are few." — Zen teacher Shunryu Suzuki.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): "There is a desperation for unknown things," wrote poet Charles Wright, "a thirst for endlessness that snakes through our bones." Every one of us has that desperation and thirst from time to time, but no one feels the pull toward perplexing enchantments and eternal riddles more often and more intensely than you Scorpios. And according to my astrological meditations on your life in 2017, you will experience this pull even more often and with greater intensity than ever before. Is that a problem? I don't see why it should be. In fact, it could make you sexier and smarter than ever — especially if you regard it as a golden opportunity to become sexier and smarter than ever.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): I hope you will seek out a wide range of intoxicating experiences in 2017. The omens predict it. Fate sanctifies it. I hope you will gracefully barrel your way through the daily whirl with a constant expectation of sly epiphanies, amusing ecstasies and practical miracles. There has rarely been a time in your life when you've had so much potential to heal old wounds through immersions in uncanny bliss. But please note: The best of these highs will NOT be induced by drugs or alcohol, but rather by natural means like sex, art, dancing, meditation, dreamwork, singing, yoga, lucid perceptions and vivid conversations.

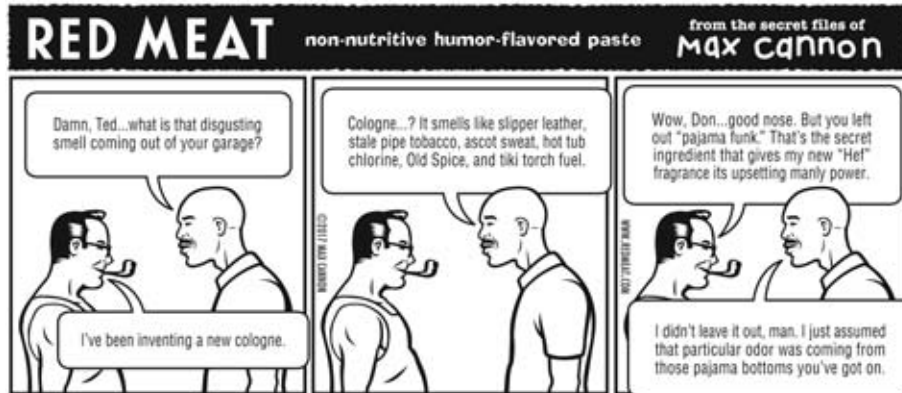
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): I thought of you when I read a tweet by a person who calls himself Vexing Voidsquid. "I feel imbued with a mysterious positive energy," he wrote, "as if thousands of supplicants are worshipping golden statues of me somewhere." Given the astrological omens, I think it's quite possible you will have similar feelings on regular occasions in 2017. I'm not necessarily saying there will literally be golden statues of you in town squares and religious shrines, nor am I guaranteeing that thousands of supplicants will telepathically bathe you in adoration. But who cares how you're imbued with mysterious positive energy as long as you are?

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): When it's summer in the Northern Hemisphere, the birds known as arctic terns hang out in Greenland and Iceland. Before the chill sets in, they embark on an epic migration to Antarctica, arriving in time for another summer. But when the weather begins to turn too cold there, they head to the far north again. This is their yearly routine. In the course of a lifetime, a single bird may travel as far as 1.25 million miles — the equivalent of three roundtrips to the moon. I propose that you make this creature your spirit animal in 2017, Aquarius. May the arctic tern inspire you to journey as far as necessary to fulfill your personal equivalent of a quest for endless summer.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): In June 1962, three prisoners sneaked out of the Alcatraz Federal Penitentiary, located on an island in San Francisco Bay. Did they succeed in escaping? Did they swim to safety through the frigid water and start new lives abroad? No one knows. Law enforcement officials never found them. Even today, though, the U.S. Marshals Service keeps the case open and still investigates new evidence when it comes in. Are there comparable enigmas in your own life, Pisces? Events in your past that raised questions you've never been able to solve? In 2017, I bet you will finally get to the bottom of them.

HOMEWORK: Send me a list of your top five New Year's resolutions. Go to RealAstrology.com and click on "Email Rob."

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I SAW YOU

I GOTTA ADMIT, I KINDA STILL WISH...

I could be one of your "friends"! I don't care about any of that other stuff anymore. I just miss your brownies and especially your little pup!

J, HAPPY NEW YEAR.

Hope all is well for you. Miss you more than you can imagine. I will always be here for you. Call me if you need your headlights replaced. ;)

RED HEADED BARTENDER

You work at Docs Pad, if you were in a cover band it would be Johan Cougar Meloncamp. Call me.

S-

You are the single most beautiful girl I've ever met. If I've felt this effect after having only a single term with you, I can only imagine how the rest of this world feels. I'm sure you hear it consistently enough for it to have lost mostly any meaning whatsoever, but I just needed to get it out anyway.

TRES AMIGO

I saw you and no one else can take ur place nor erase ur face. love U, G

WE MET AT THE BIJOU

So, we met at the cinema, and a week later we met up for drinks and food. I don't have a way to get in touch with you, but I wish you well.

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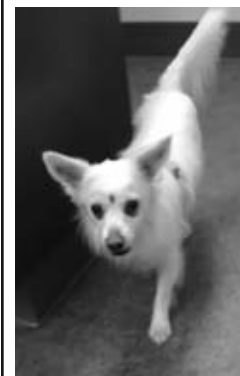
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