

FREE WILL ASTROLOGY

BY ROB BREZSNY

ARIES (March 21-April 19): "The prettier the garden, the dirtier the hands of the gardener," writes aphorist B. E. Barnes. That'll be especially applicable to you in the coming weeks. You'll have extra potential to create and foster beauty, and any beauty you produce will generate practical benefits for you and those you care about. But for best results, you'll have to expend more effort than maybe you thought you should. It might feel more like work than play -- even though it will ultimately enhance your ability to play.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Author and theologian Thomas Merton thought that the most debilitating human temptation is to settle for too little; to live a comfortable life rather than an interesting one. I wouldn't say that's always true about you, Taurus. But I do suspect that in the coming weeks, a tendency to settle for less could be the single most devitalizing temptation you'll be susceptible to. That's why I encourage you to resist the appeal to accept a smaller blessing or punier adventure than you deserve. Hold out for the best and brightest.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): "I've learned quite a lot, over the years, by avoiding what I was supposed to be learning." So says the wise and well-educated novelist Margaret Atwood. Judging by your current astrological omens, I think this is an excellent clue for you to contemplate right now. What do you think? Have you been half-avoiding any teaching that you or someone else thinks you're "supposed" to be learning? If so, I suggest you avoid it even stronger. Avoid it with cheerful rebelliousness. Doing so may lead you to what you really need to learn about next.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Sometimes you make it difficult for me to reach you. You act like you're listening but you're not really listening. You semi-consciously decide that you don't want to be influenced by anyone except yourself. When you lock me out like that, I become a bit dumb. My advice isn't as good or helpful. The magic between us languishes. Please don't do that to me now. And don't do it to anyone who cares about you. I realize that you may need to protect yourself from people who aren't sufficiently careful with you. But your true allies have important influences to offer, and I think you'll be wise to open yourself to them.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): "Whoever does not visit Paris regularly will never really be elegant," wrote French author Honoré de Balzac. I think that's an exaggeration, but it does trigger a worthwhile meditation. According to my analysis of the astrological omens, you're in a phase of your cycle when you have maximum power to raise your appreciation of elegance, understand how it could beautify your soul, and add more of it to your repertoire. So here are your homework meditations: What does elegance mean to you? Why might it be valuable to cultivate elegance, not just to enhance your self-presentation, but also to upgrade your relationship with your deep self? (P.S.: Fashion designer Christian Dior said, "Elegance must be the right combination of distinction, naturalness, care and simplicity.")

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Many of us imagine medieval Europe to have been drab and dreary. But historian Jacques Le Goff tells us that the people of that age adored luminous hues: "big jewels inserted into book-bindings, glowing gold objects, brightly painted sculpture, paintings covering the walls of churches, and the colored magic of stained glass." Maybe you'll be inspired by this revelation, Virgo. I hope so. According to my reading of the astrological omens, you can activate sleeping wisdom and awaken dormant energy by treating your eyes to lots of vivid reds, greens, yellows, blues, browns, oranges, purples, golds, blacks, coppers and pinks.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): An astrologer on Tumblr named Sebastian says this about your sign: "Libras can be boring people when they don't trust you enough to fully reveal themselves. But they can be just as exciting as any fire sign and just as weird as any Aquarius and just as talkative as a Gemini and just as empathetic as a Pisces. Really, Librans are some of the most eccentric people you'll ever meet, but you might not know it unless they trust you enough to take their masks off around you." Spurred by Sebastian's analysis, here's my advice to you: I hope you'll spend a lot of time with people you trust in the coming weeks, because for the sake of your mental and physical and spiritual health, you'll need to express your full eccentricity. (Sebastian's at venusapi.tumblr.com.)

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): A blogger who calls herself Wistful Giselle has named the phenomena that make her "believe in magic." They include the following: "illuminated dust in the air; the moments when a seedling sprouts; the intelligence gazing back at me from a crow's eyes; being awakened by the early morning sun; the energy of storms; old buildings overgrown with plants; the ever-changing grey green blue moods of the sea; the shimmering moon on a cool, clear night." "Sesame Street neighborhood realized that Snuffy was indeed real, not just a figment of Big Bird's imagination. I'm foreseeing a comparable event in your life sometime soon, Sagittarius. You'll finally be able to share a secret truth or private pleasure or unappreciated asset.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Activist and author Simone de Beauvoir was one of those Capricorns whose lust for life was both lush and intricate. "I am awfully greedy," she wrote. "I want to be a woman and to be a man, to have many friends and to have loneliness, to work much and write good books, to travel and enjoy myself, to be selfish and to be unselfish." Even if your longings are not always as lavish and ravenous as hers, Capricorn, you now have license to explore the mysterious state she described. I dare you to find out how voracious you can be if you grant yourself permission.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): According to my reading of the astrological omens, the coming weeks will be prime time to vividly express your appreciation for and understanding of the people you care about most. I urge you to show them why you love them. Reveal the depths of your insights about their true beauty. Make it clear how their presence in your life has had a beneficent or healing influence on you. And if you really want to get dramatic, you could take them to an inspiring outdoor spot and sing them a tender song or two.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): In her book *Yarn: Remembering the Way Home*, Piscean knitter Kyoko Mori writes, "The folklore among knitters is that everything handmade should have at least one mistake so an evil spirit will not become trapped in the maze of perfect stitches." The idea is that the mistake "is a crack left open to let in the light." Mori goes on to testify about the evil spirit she wants to be free of. "It's that little voice in my head that says, 'I won't even try this because it doesn't come naturally to me and I won't be very good at it.'" I've quoted Mori at length, Pisces, because I think her insights are the exact tonic you need right now.

HOMEWORK Make a boast about how you'll pull off a feat you've previously lacked the chutzpah to attempt. Testify at Freewillastrology.com.

RED MEAT

glistening spleen in the soup tureen

from the secret files of
Max Cannon

Last summer I went on a camping trip down to Mexico and I got this bad fever. I prob'ly would'a died, but this nice lady came and took care of me at my campsite.



She fed me fruit and sang me these weird songs the whole time. I thought she must be an angel, except she kept stabbin' me whenever I tried to get up for some water.



The more I think about it now...I'm pretty sure that lady was a cactus.



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