

southwestern U.S. Most of the time it's scraggly and brittle-looking. But one night of the year, in June or July, it blooms with a fragrant, trumpet-shaped flower. By dawn the creamy white petals close and start to wither. During that brief celebration, the plant's main pollinator, the sphinx moth, has to discover the marvelous event and come to gather the cactus flower's pollen. I suspect this scenario has metaphorical resemblances to a task you could benefit from carrying out in the days ahead. Be alert for a sudden, spectacular, and rare eruption of beauty that you can feed from and propagate.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): If I had more room here, I would offer an inspirational Powerpoint presentation designed just for you. In the beginning, I would seize your attention with an evocative image that my marketing department had determined would give you a visceral thrill. (Like maybe a photoshopped image of you wearing a crown and holding a scepter.) In the next part, I would describe various wonderful and beautiful things about you. Then I'd tactfully describe an aspect of your life that's underdeveloped and could use some work. I'd say, "I'd love for you to be more strategic in promoting your good ideas. I'd love for you to have a well-crafted master plan that will attract the contacts and resources necessary to lift your dream to the next level."

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): I advise you against snorting cocaine, MDMA, heroin, or bath salts. But if you do, don't lay out your lines of powder on a kitchen table or a baby's diaper-changing counter in a public restroom. Places like those are not exactly sparkly clean, and you could end up propelling contaminants close to your brain. Please observe similar care with any other activity that involves altering your consciousness or changing the way you see the world. Do it in a nurturing location that ensures healthy results. P.S. The coming weeks will be a great time to expand your mind if you do it in all-natural ways such as through conversations with interesting people, travel to places that excite your awe, and encounters with provocative teachings.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): In late 1811 and early 1812, parts of the mighty Mississippi River flowed backwards several times. Earthquakes were the cause. Now, more than two centuries later, you Sagittarians have a chance -- maybe even a mandate -- to accomplish a more modest rendition of what nature did way back then. Do you dare to shift the course of a great, flowing, vital force? I think you should at least consider it. In my opinion, that great, flowing, vital force could benefit from an adjustment that you have the wisdom and luck to understand and accomplish.

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CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): You're entering into the Uncanny Zone, Capricorn. During your brief journey through this alternate reality, the wind and the dew will be your teachers. Animals will provide special favors. You may experience true fantasies, like being able to sense people's thoughts and hear the sound of leaves converting sunlight into nourishment. It's possible you'll feel the moon tugging at the waters of your body and glimpse visions of the best possible future. Will any of this be of practical use? Yes! More than you can imagine. And not in ways you can imagine yet.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): This is one of those rare grace periods when you can slip into a smooth groove without worrying that it will degenerate into a repetitive rut. You'll feel natural and comfortable as you attend to your duties, not blank or numb. You'll be entertained and educated by exacting details, not bored by them. I conclude, therefore, that this will be an excellent time to lay the gritty foundation for expansive and productive adventures later this year. If you've been hoping to get an advantage over your competitors and diminish the negative influences of people who don't empathize with you, now is the time.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): "There is a direct correlation between playfulness and intelligence, since the most intelligent animals engage in the greatest amount of playful activities." So reports the *National Geographic.* "The reason is simple: Intelligence is the capacity for learning, and to play is to learn." I suggest you make these thoughts the centerpiece of your life in the coming weeks. You're in a phase when you have an enhanced capacity to master new tricks. That's fortunate, because you're also in a phase when it's especially crucial for you to learn new tricks. The best way to ensure it all unfolds with maximum grace is to play as much as possible.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): It's not your birthday, but I feel like you need to get presents. The astrological omens agree with me. In fact, they suggest you should show people this horoscope to motivate them to do the right thing and shower you with practical blessings. And why exactly do you need these rewards? Here's one reason: Now is a pivotal moment in the development of your own ability to give the unique gifts you have to give. If you receive tangible demonstrations that your contributions are appreciated, you'll be better able to rise to the next level of your generosity.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Other astrologers and fortune-tellers may enjoy scaring the hell out of you, but not me. My job is to keep you apprised of the ways that life aims to help you, educate you, and lead you out of your suffering. The truth is, Taurus, that if you look hard enough, there are always seemingly legitimate reasons to be afraid of pretty much everything. But that's a stupid way to live, especially since there are also always legitimate reasons to be excited about pretty much everything. The coming weeks will be a favorable time to work on retraining yourself to make the latter approach your default tendency. I have rarely seen a better phase than now to replace chronic anxiety with shrewd hope.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): At least for the short-range future, benign neglect can be an effective game plan for you. In other words, Gemini, allow inaction to do the job that can't be accomplished through strenuous action. Stay put. Be patient and cagey and observant. Seek strength in silence and restraint. Let problems heal through the passage of time. Give yourself permission to watch and wait, to reserve judgment and withhold criticism. Why do I suggest this approach? Here's a secret: Forces that are currently working in the dark and behind the scenes will generate the best possible outcome.

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Homework: Do you let your imagination indulge in fantasies that are wasteful, damaging, or dumb? Stop it! Testify at Freewillastrology.com.

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