

kneepads and prostrate themselves as they bask in your glory? Isn't it enough for you to simply be the master of your own emotions, and the boss of your own time, and the lord of your own destiny? I'm not trying to stifle your ambition or cramp your enthusiasm; I just want to make sure you don't dilute your willpower by trying to wield command over too wide a swath. The most important task, after all, is to manage your own life with panache and ingenuity. But I will concede this: The coming weeks will be a time when you can also probably get away with being extra worshiped and adored.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Dear Hard Worker: Our records indicate that you have been neglecting to allot yourself sufficient time to rest and recharge. In case you had forgotten, you are expected to take regular extended breaks, during which time it is mandatory to treat yourself with meticulous care and extreme tenderness. Please grant yourself an immediate dispensation. Expose yourself to intensely relaxing encounters with play, fun, and pleasure -- or else! No excuses will be accepted.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): If extraterrestrial beings land their space ship on my street and say they want to meet the creatures who best represent our planet, I will volunteer you Libras. Right now, at least, you're nobler than the rest of us, and more sparkly, too. You're dealing smartly with your personal share of the world's suffering, and your day-to-day decisions are based more on love than fear. You're not taking things too personally or too seriously, and you seem better equipped than everyone else to laugh at the craziness that surrounds us. And even if aliens don't appear, I bet you will serve as an inspiring influence for more human beings than you realize. Does being a role model sound boring? I hope not. If you regard it as an interesting gift, it will empower you to wield more clout than you're used to.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): During the four years he worked on painting the Sistine Chapel, Michelangelo never took a bath. Was he too preoccupied with his masterpiece? Modern artist Pae White has a different relationship with obsession. To create her fabric art pieces, she has spent years collecting more than 3,500 scarves designed by her favorite scarf-maker. Then there's filmmaker James Cameron, who hired an expert in linguistics to create an entire new language from scratch for the aliens in his movie *Avatar.* In accordance with the astrological omens, Scorpio, I approve of you summoning this level of devotion -- as long as it's not in service to a transitory desire, but rather to a labor of love that has the potential to change your life for the better for a long time.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): "The purpose of art is to lay bare the questions that have been hidden by the answers," wrote author James Baldwin. Even if you're not an artist, I encourage you to make that your purpose in the coming weeks. Definitive answers will at best be irrelevant and at worst useless. Vigorous doubt and inquiry, on the other hand, will be exciting and invigorating. They will mobilize you to rebel against any status quos that have been tempting you to settle for mediocrity.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): You're in a phase of your cycle when the most useful prophecies are more lyrical than logical. So here you go: three enigmatic predictions to help stir up the creative ingenuity you'll need to excel on your upcoming tests. 1. A darling but stale old hope must shrivel and wane so that a spiky, electric new hope can be born. 2. An openness to the potential value of a metaphorical death will be one of your sweetest assets. 3. The best way to cross a border is not to sneak across bearing secrets but to stride across in full glory with nothing to hide.

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"I always feel like I know myself better after listening to your audio 'scopes."

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-Arthur T., Cleveland, OH

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AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Aquarian novelist James Joyce had a pessimistic view about intimate connection. Here's what he said: "Love (understood as the desire of good for another) is in fact so unnatural a phenomenon that it can scarcely repeat itself, the soul being unable to become virgin again and not having energy enough to cast itself out again into the ocean of another's soul." My challenge to you, Aquarius -- in accordance with the astrological omens -- is to prove Joyce wrong. Figure out how to make your soul virgin again so it can cast itself out into the ocean of another's soul. The next eight weeks will be prime time to achieve that glorious feat.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Years after he had begun his work as a poet, Rainer Maria Rilke confessed that he was still finding out what it took to do his job. "I am learning to see," he wrote. "I don't know why it is, but everything enters me more deeply and doesn't stop where it once used to." Given the current astrological omens, you have a similar opportunity, Pisces: to learn more about how to see. It won't happen like magic. You can't just sit back passively and wait for the universe to accomplish it for you. But if you decide you really would like to be more perceptive -- if you resolve to receive and register more of the raw life data that's flowing towards you -- you will expand and deepen your ability to see.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Are you feeling as daring about romance as I suspect? If so, I've composed a provocative note for you to give to anyone you have good reason to believe will be glad to receive it. Feel free to copy it word-for-word or edit it to suit your needs. Here it is: "I want to be your open-hearted explorer. Want to be mine? We can be in foolishly cool drooling devotion to each other's mighty love power. We can be in elegant solid-gold allegiance to each other's genius. Wouldn't it be fun to see how much liberation we can whip up together? We can play off our mutual respect as we banish the fearful shticks in our bags of tricks. We can inspire each other to reach unexpected heights of brazen intelligence."

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): You still have a wound that never formed a proper scar. (We're speaking metaphorically here.) It's chronically irritated. Never quite right. Always stealing bits of your attention. Would you like to do something to reduce the distracting power of that annoying affliction? The next 25 days will be a favorable time to seek such a miracle. All the forces of nature and spirit will conspire in your behalf if you formulate a clear intention to get the healing you need and deserve.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): In his poem "The Initiate," Charles Simic speaks of "someone who solved life's riddles in a voice of an ancient Sumerian queen." I hope you're not focused on seeking help and revelations from noble and grandiose sources like that, Gemini. If you are, you may miss the useful cues and clues that come your way via more modest informants. So please be alert for the blessings of the ordinary. As you work on solving your quandaries, give special attention to serendipitous interventions and accidental luck.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): For many years, the Tobe Zoological Park in China housed a "praying panther" named Ato. The large black feline periodically rose up on her hind legs and put her paws together as if petitioning a higher power for blessings. I suggest we make her your spirit ally in the coming weeks. I hope she'll inspire you to get your restless mind out of the way as you seek to quench your primal needs. With the praying panther as your muse, you should be able to summon previously untapped reserves of your animal intelligence and cultivate an instinctual

knack for knowing where to find raw, pristine satisfaction.

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Homework: Make a prediction about where you'll be and what you'll be doing on January 1, 2020. Testify at Freewillastrology.com.

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