

in seventeenth-century Japan. Written by James Clavell, it's over 1,100 pages long. Clavell testified that the idea for the story sprang up in him when he read one line in his daughter's school book: "In 1600 an Englishman went to Japan and became a samurai." I suspect it's highly likely you will soon encounter a seed like that, Virgo: a bare inspiration that will eventually bloom into a Big Thing.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22):

Libran athlete Mickey Mantle is in Major League Baseball's Hall of Fame. He had a spectacular 18-year career, winning the Most Valuable Player Award three times, playing in 12 World Series, and being selected to the All-Star team 16 times. So it's astounding that he played with a torn ligament in his knee for 17 years, according to his biographer Jane Leavy. She quoted an orthopedic surgeon who said that Mantle compensated for his injury with "neuromuscular genius." I'm thinking that in the next few weeks you're in a position to accomplish an equivalent of Mantle's heroic adjustment.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21):

Most people who belong to the Church of Satan neither believe in nor worship Satan. (They're atheists, and don't believe in the supernatural.) I think a comparable principle is true for many rightwing fundamentalist Christians. Their actions and words are replete with bigotry, hard-heartedness, materialism, and selfishness: so contrary to what the real Jesus Christ taught that they in effect don't believe in or worship Jesus Christ. I mention this, Scorpio, in hope of inspiring you to take inventory of whether your stated ideals are reflected in the practical details of how you live your life. That's always an interesting and important task, of course, but it's especially so for you right now. The coming weeks will be an excellent time to purge any hypocrisy from your system and get your actual behavior in close alignment with your deepest values.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21):

It's the right time for you to create a fresh mission statement and promotional campaign. For inspiration, read mine: "My column 'Free Will Astrology' offers you a wide selection of realities to choose from. With 4,212 years of dedication to customer service (over the course of my last 13 incarnations), I'm a reliable ally supporting your efforts to escape your oppressive conditioning and other people's hells. My horoscopes come with an ironclad guarantee: If the advice you read is wrong, you're under no obligation to believe it. And remember: a panel of 531 experts has determined that 'Free Will Astrology' is an effective therapy for your chronic wounds and primordial pain. It is also dramatic proof that there is no good reason to be afraid of life."

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19):

Here are good questions for you to meditate on during the next four weeks. 1. How can you attract resources that will expand your mind and your world? 2. Are you bold enough to reach out to wise sources and provocative influences that could connect you with useful tricks and practical treasures? 3. What interesting lessons can you stir up as you explore the mercurial edges, skirt the changeable boundaries, journey to catalytic frontiers, and make pilgrimages to holy hubbubs? 4. How best can you encourage lyrical emotion over polished sentimentality? Joyous idealism over astringent zealotry? Exuberant integrity over formulaic kindness?

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18):

"It is the beginning of wisdom when you recognize that the best you can do is choose which rules you want to live by," wrote author Wallace Stegner, "and it's persistent and aggravated imbecility to pretend you can live without any." That will be an excellent meditation for you during the coming weeks. I trust you are long past the time of fantasizing you can live without any rules. Your challenge now is to adjust some of the rules you have been living by, or even dare to align yourself with some new rules—and then completely commit yourself to being loyal to them and enjoying them.

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"Your expanded audio horoscopes are the next best thing to actually having you here next to me to remind me who I really am." - Alyssa R., Des Moines, Iowa

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PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20):

Given the astrological omens that will symbolize your personal story in the coming weeks and months, I think Piscean author Nikos Kazantzakis articulated the perfect prescription for you. I invite you to interpret his thoughts to fit your circumstances. "We're going to start with small, easy things," he wrote. "Then, little by little we shall try our hand at the big things. And after that, after we finish the big things, we shall undertake the impossible." Here's an additional prod from Kazantzakis: "Reach what you cannot."

ARIES (March 21-April 19):

Here are examples of activities I recommend you try in the coming days. 1. Build a campfire on the beach with friends and regale each other with stories of your most interesting successes. 2. Buy eccentric treasures at a flea market and ever thereafter refer to them as your holy icons. 3. Climb a hill and sit on the grass as you sing your favorite songs and watch the moon slowly rise over the eastern horizon. 4. Take naps when you're "not supposed to." 5. Sneak into an orchard at night and eat fruit plucked just moments before. 6. Tell a beloved person a fairy tale in which he or she is the hero.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20):

The hardiest creature on the planet may be the bacterium known as *Deinococcus radiodurans*. It can endure exposure to radiation, intense cold, dehydration, acid, and vacuum. I propose we make it your power creature for the coming weeks. Why? Not because I expect you'll have to deal with a lot of extreme conditions, but rather because I think you'll be exceptionally robust, both physically and psychologically. If you've been waiting for the right time to succeed at demanding challenges that require you to be in top form, now is a good time to do it. P.S. *Deinococcus radiodurans* is colloquially referred to as Conan the Bacterium, borrowing from the spirit of the fictional character Conan the Barbarian, who is renowned for his strength and agility.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20):

In the yearly cycle of many Geminis, retreating into a state akin to hibernation makes sense during the end of August and the first three weeks of September. But since many of you are high-energy sophisticates, you often override your body's signals. And then nature pushes back by compelling you to slow down. The result may be a rhythm that feels like constantly taking three steps forward and two steps backward. May I suggest a different approach this year? Would you consider surrendering, even slightly, to the invitation to relax and recharge?

CANCER (June 21-July 22):

If you decide to travel to a particular place via hot air balloon, you must be prepared for the possibility that your route will be indirect. At different altitudes, the wind may be blowing in different directions: toward the east at a hundred feet high, but toward the southwest at two hundred feet. The trick for the pilot is to jockey up and down until finding a layer that's headed toward the desired destination. I see your life right now as having a metaphorical resemblance to this riddle. You have not yet discovered the layer that will take you where you want to go. But I bet you will soon.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22):

Considering how bright you have been burning since the Flame Angels designated you as the Hottest Cool Person of the Month, I hesitate to urge you to simmer down. But I must. Before there's a meltdown in your vicinity, please lower your thermostat. Not a lot. Just a little. If you do that, everyone will continue to see your gleaming charisma in the best possible light. But don't you dare extinguish your blaze. Don't apologize for your brilliant shimmer. The rest of us need your magical radiance.

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HOMEWORK:

What do you want most for the person or animal you love best? FreeWillAstrology.com

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