

The Sky Within

Johnny Depp
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08:44:00 AM CST +06:00
Owensboro, KY
087W06'48" 37N46'27"

Planet	Sign	Position	House	House Cusps
Sun	Gemini	18°Ge03'	11th	01 12°Le26'
Moon	Capricorn	13°Cp48'	06th	02 04°Vi26'
Mercury	Taurus	25°Ta17'	10th	03 01°Li07'
Venus	Taurus	26°Ta06'	10th	04 03°Sc22'
Mars	Virgo	03°Vi13'	02nd	05 08°Sg52'
Jupiter	Aries	13°Ar59'	09th	06 12°Cp44'
Saturn	Aquarius	23°Aq05' R	07th	07 12°Aq26'
Uranus	Virgo	01°Vi35'	01st	08 04°Pi26'
Neptune	Scorpio	13°Sc25' R	04th	09 01°Ar07'
Pluto	Virgo	09°Vi38'	02nd	10 03°Ta22'
Midheaven	Taurus	03°Ta22'		11 08°Ge52'
Ascendant	Leo 1	2°Le26'		12 12°Ca44'

Planets within orb of 1.5 degrees of the following house cusp are displayed and interpreted as being in that house, except the Ascendant which uses 3 degrees.

*Orb Conjunctions with Sun or Moon are 8 degrees.
All orbs are set according to Steven Forrest's methods.*

THE SKY WITHIN

by Steven Forrest

Using Your Birthchart as a Spiritual Guide

A woman has a baby and is blissful about it. Another one does the same, and spends the rest of her life dreaming about how she might have been a ballerina. The same choice: having a kid. But only one smiling woman.

Nobody has a generic formula for happiness, at least not one that does the trick for everyone. That's where astrology comes in.

The birthchart, stripped to bare bones, is simply a description of the happiest, most fulfilling life that's available to you... personally. It spells out a set of strategies you can use to avoid boring routines, bad choices, and dead ends. It lists your resources. And it talks about how your life looks when you're misusing the resources and distorting the strategies -- shooting yourself in the foot, in other words.

All from a map of the sky?

Hard to believe. But think for a minute...

"How can the planets possibly affect us? They're millions of miles away." Astrology's critics are fond of rolling out that argument. But it doesn't hold water. Go out and gaze at the moon. What's really happening? Incomprehensible energies are plunging across a quarter million miles of void, crashing through your eyeballs and creating electrochemical changes in your brain. We call the process "seeing the moon." Certainly the planets affect us. The question is where do we draw the boundaries around those effects?

Let's go a step further.

Open your eyes on a starry night. What do you see? A vast, luminous space, full of shadows and light. Now close your eyes so tight they ache. Where are you now? What do you see? Again, a vast, luminous space, full of shadows and light. Consciousness and cosmos are structured around the same laws, follow the same patterns, and even feel pretty much the same to our senses.

"As above, so below." Just as the starry night awes us with its vastness, there's something infinitely deep inside you, a place you go when you close your eyes, a place that's beyond being an Aries or a Gemini or even a specific gender. At the most profound level, a birthchart is a map back to that magical center. It describes a series of earthly experiences which, if you're brave and open enough, will trigger certain states of consciousness in you -- states that operate like powerful spiritual catalysts, vaulting you into higher levels of being.

In the pages that follow, you'll tour your personal birthchart. But don't expect the usual "Scorpios are sexy" stuff. You are a mysterious being in a mysterious cosmos. You're here for just a little while, a blink of God's eye. You face a monumental task: figuring out what's going on! In that spiritual work, astrology is your ally. How will it help?

Certainly not by pigeon-holing you as a certain "type."

Astrology works by reminding you who you are, by warning you about the comforting lies we all tell ourselves, and by illuminating the experiences that trigger your most explosive leaps in awareness.

After that, the rest is up to you.

YOUR TEN TEACHERS

Freud divided the human mind into three compartments: ego, id, and superego. Astrologers do the same thing, except that our model of the mind differs from Freud's in two fundamental ways. First, it's a lot more elaborate. Instead of three compartments, we have ten: Sun, Moon, and the eight planets we see from Earth. As we'll discover, each planet represents more than a "circuit" in your psyche. It also serves as a kind of "Teacher," guiding you into certain consciousness-triggering kinds of experience.

The second difference between astrology and psychology is that astrology's mind-map, unlike Freud's, is rooted in nature itself, just as we are.

The primary celestial teacher is the Sun. What does it teach? Selfhood. Vitality. How to keep the life-force strong in yourself. If the Sun grew dimmer, so would all the planets -- they shine by reflecting solar light. Similarly, if you fail to stoke the furnaces of your own inner Sun, then you'll simply be "out of gas." All your other planetary functions will suffer too.

How do we learn this teacher's lessons?

Start by realizing that when you were born the Sun was in Gemini.

Wonder, amazement, astonishment, a sense of the miraculous -- those states of consciousness are the best of what Gemini symbolizes. Although this is an Air sign and therefore rather mental in its orientation, the Twins represent something more primal than thinking. They represent perception itself: all the raw, undigested stuff that pours in through our senses. Thinking too much about that material removes us from its immediate, moment-to-moment reality. We start to inhabit theories instead of the actual world of perception. "Authority" creeps in. So does "rightness." And "mental clarity." And the Twins wither. Nourish your Geminian energies with an endless diet of newness and change. They're hungry for anything they've not seen or felt before. Feed them! Give them conversation, books, travel, education... anything but boredom.

With your Sun in Gemini, you're blessed with high levels of physical and mental energy. Use them! There's a quickness about you, an aliveness to the moment. People probably imagine you to be younger than you really are. Your deepest nature is driven by one force above all others: curiosity. You're happiest when faced with surprises. You thrive on the unexpected. And you wither in the face of rigid predictability.

Spiritually, you're learning to keep your mind wide open, to view life as a crash course in amazement. Feed your vitality with new relationships -- or old relationships with people who themselves are always new. Stimulate yourself with books and travel. When in doubt, look through a telescope! Take a course in Etruscan history! Do anything you've never done before.

We can take our analysis of your natal Sun a step further. When you were born, that solar light illuminated the Eleventh house. What does that signify?

Start by realizing that Houses represent twelve basic arenas of life. There's a House of Marriage, for example, and a House of Career. Always, we find an element of "fate" in our House structures; the "Hand of God" continually presents us with existential and moral questions connected with our emphasized Houses. How we react and what we learn -- or fail to learn -- is our own business.

One brief technical note: Sometimes the Sun, the Moon, or a planet lies near the end of the House. We then say it's "conjunct the cusp" of the subsequent House, and interpret it as though it were a little further along... in the next House, in other words.

What do you want out of life? What are your priorities? What kind of old person are you in the process of becoming? Those are core Eleventh House issues. The challenge here is to accomplish something many people talk about but few actually do--lead a life; that is, create your future according to your deepest interests and values.

The planetary forces focused in this segment of your birthchart are Teachers dedicated to helping you find the threads of your destiny. They describe what you were born to become -- and warn you of how you look when you're off course.

"House of Friends" is the old name for this part of the birthchart, although "House of Acquaintances" is perhaps more accurate. Intimacy isn't the issue here; teamwork and networking are. But clear priorities must come first, or all those talking faces serve no purpose. They just tie you up in pointless social interactions.

With the Sun in the Eleventh House, you're majoring in a couple of closely related subjects: group dynamics and the formation of life-strategies. Increasingly, you'll find yourself in positions of leadership... but not dictatorship. That is, you'll be working to hold together often contentious crowds of individuals, and you'll be needing to do that with diplomacy rather than brute force. For those team-projects to be ultimately successful, it's critically important that you know exactly what you stand for personally. Every year or so, try to get off by yourself for a couple of days and think about what you've accomplished, what you're doing next, and how you've evolved since last year. One more point: The second half of your life will tend to be more dynamic and colorful than the first half; it takes you a while to get up to full steam, but when you do, there's no stopping you.

The next step in our journey through your birthchart carries us to the Moon.

As you might expect, Luna resonates with the magical, emotional sides of your psyche. It represents your mood, averaged over a lifetime. As the heart's teacher, it tells you how to feel comfortable, how to meet your deepest needs. While the Sun lets you know what kinds of experiences and relationships help you feel sane, the Moon is concerned with another piece of the puzzle: feeling happy.

When you were born, the Moon was in Capricorn.

Tell the truth about Capricorn and you start sounding like a voice out of the Boy Scout Handbook. Here are the key concepts: integrity, character, morality, a sense of personal honor. Those are the Sea-Goat's evolutionary themes. They all boil down to the capacity of will to dominate every other aspect of our natures, including emotion.

The Capricornian part of you needs to begin by asking itself one critical question: In the part of my life touched by the Sea-Goat, what is the highest truth I know? The rest is simple... at least simple to understand. Just live it. Keep a stiff upper lip, and do what's right.

But be careful. There's nothing wrong with expressing feelings as long as they're not doing your decision-making for you. If you're tempted to do something wicked, don't be afraid to mention it. Otherwise, half the world will think you're a saint while the other half thinks you're a pompous ass. And neither half will get within a light-year of your human heart.

With your Moon in Capricorn, you have vivid emotions and ravenous hungers... but often you find yourself in situations where expressing them is dangerous, inappropriate, or ethically questionable. The effect is a bit like dynamite exploding in a steel room. From an evolutionary perspective, you are taking a master class in self-discipline. The plain fact is that, spiritually, you've come to a place in the journey where you need to toughen up.

To feel comfortable, you need to feel that you have embarked upon Great Works -- long-term projects that require concentration, commitment, and excellence. Paradoxically, you relax by working. Inactivity, at least more than a few hours of it, tends to make you nervous and tense.

Be wary of holding too much inside you; sometimes that's necessary, but many times it's not. The Moon is emotion and Capricorn means self-discipline: one translation is that you are learning the discipline of appropriate emotional self-expression.

Going farther, we see that your Moon lies in the Sixth house of your chart.

Craft, responsibility, the joy of competence -- that's Sixth House territory. Traditionally, it's the House of Servants. The label still works -- provided you recognize that it's not your butlers and chambermaids we're discussing here! You're the servant, and that's not nearly as bad as it sounds.

There's a myth in our culture that encourages us to believe everyone is automatically depressed on Monday morning, happy on Friday afternoon, ecstatic 'til Sunday around dinner time, then crashes down into the pits again come Monday. Don't believe it! With a Teacher in the Sixth House, you've got a good shot at shattering the myth, at least for yourself. A big part of you likes to work, enjoys being good at something, prefers to be useful.

The trick lies in finding the right crafts, skills, and responsibilities. Let's let the Teacher speak.

With the moon in the Sixth House, you have an instinctive need to acquire concrete skills and talents, especially ones that support other people. What skills and talents? Back up a couple of paragraphs-- much depends on your Moon sign. Here's the general principle: You're happiest and most comfortable when you're busy doing something you're good at. But be careful of "workaholism." You're vulnerable to it -- extra-vulnerable when the people around you express a lot of neediness or confusion.

There's a third critical piece in your astrological puzzle -- the Ascendant, or rising sign. Along with the Sun and Moon, it completes the "primal triad." What is it? What does it mean? Simple -- the Ascendant is the sign that was coming up over the eastern horizon at the instant of your birth. It's where the sun is at dawn, in other words. In exactly the same way, the Ascendant represents how you "dawn" on people -- that is, how you present yourself. It's your "style," or your "mask."

The ascendant means more than that. It symbolizes a way you can help yourself feel centered, at ease, comfortable with who you are. If you get its message, then something wonderful happens: your style hooks you into the world of experience in a way that feeds your spirit exactly the kinds of events and relationships you need. Your soul is charged with more enthusiasm for the life you're living -- and you feel vibrant, confident, and full of animal grace.

When you took your first breath, Leo was lifting over the eastern horizon of Owensboro, KY. Let's begin our analysis by considering the meaning and spiritual message of the sign of "The Performer".

When we hear "Lion," we think "fierce." But that's misleading. Go to the zoo and have a look at the "King of the Beasts." He's lying there, one eye open, looking regal. He knows he's the king. He doesn't need to make a fuss about it. The lion, like Leo at its best, radiates quiet confidence. A happy, creative, comfortable participation in the human family -- that's what Leo the Lion is all about.

The evolutionary method is deceptively simple: creative self-expression. As we offer evidence of our internal processes to the world, we feel more at home, more accepted, more spontaneous -- provided the world claps its hands for us! That's the catch. Leo needs an appreciative audience. That audience can be a thousand people cheering or one person saying "I love you." Either way, it's applause, and for the Lion, that's evolutionary rocket fuel.

Toughing it out, not letting oneself be affected by a lack of support or understanding, may well be an important spiritual lesson -- but not for Leo. Here the evolutionary problem comes down to lack of real, ultimate trust in other people. The cure isn't toughness; it's building a pattern of joyful give-and-take. So perform! And if no one claps, go somewhere else and perform again.

With Leo on the ascendant, you radiate calm assurance into the world. Your outer self seems to announce, "I'm doing perfectly well, thank you." That's true, even if you've just stepped into a bear trap, contracted a social disease, and annoyed Muammar Gaddafi! The Leo mask is tough to penetrate; even when you bend over backwards to be self-revealing, people still imagine you to be a thousand times more in control than you feel.

To maintain a sense of well-being, it's pivotally important that you have some kind of creative outlet. It may be an art form. Or it may be something less formal, like telling stories or jokes or putting some flair into an organization. Whatever the pattern, throw yourself into it wholeheartedly, and make sure there are some people to appreciate it.

What have we learned so far? Quite a lot. Astrologers use the primal triad of Sun, Moon, and Ascendant in much the same way people who know just a little astrology use Sun signs. The difference is that while there are only twelve Sun signs, there are 1728 different combinations of all three factors. So when we say that you are a Gemini with the Moon in Capricorn and Leo rising, that's a very specific statement.

Here's a way to make those words come even more alive. Traditionally, signs are connected with Bulls and Sea-Goats and Scorpions -- creatures we don't see every day. But we can translate those images into more modern archetypes.

We can say you are "The Storyteller", or "The Journalist", or "The Witness". Those are just different ways of saying you have the Sun in Gemini.

We can say you have the soul of "The Authority", or "The Prime Minister", or "The Boss"... your Moon lies in Capricorn, in other words.

We can add that you wear the mask of "The Performer", or "The Aristocrat", or "The Clown". Those images capture the spirit of your Ascendant, which is Leo.

You can combine those archetypes any way you want. And you can go further: Once you have a feel for the three basic signs in your primal triad, you can make up your own images to go with them. Whatever words you choose, those simple statements are your fundamental astrological signature. It's your skeleton. Our next step is to begin adding flesh and hair to that skeleton by considering the planets.

Unsurprisingly, planets can gain prominence in a birthchart through association with the Sun, Moon, or Ascendant. These three are power brokers, and any linkage with them boosts a planet's influence.

We find exactly that situation in your case. Uranus lies in your First House, a part of the chart which is really just an extension of the Ascendant. Thus, Uranus adds yet another tone to your "mask," modifying and deepening some of what we've already seen.

If Uranus were the only planet in the sky, we'd all be so independent we'd still be Neanderthals throwing rocks at each other. There would be no language, no culture, no law. On the other hand, if Uranus did not exist, we'd all still be hauling rocks for Pharaoh. All individuality would be suppressed. This is the planet of individuation... the process whereby we separate out who we are from what everybody else wants us to be. Always it indicates an area of our lives in which, to be true to ourselves, we must "break the rules" -- that is, overcome the forces of socialization and peer pressure. In that part of our ex-

perience, what feeds our souls tends to annoy mom and dad... and all the "moms" and "dads" who lay down the law of the tribe.

With Uranus in Virgo, the process of individuation for you is tied up with the Path of the Artisan. That is to say, you strengthen and clarify your own Uranian identity through cultivating and polishing your innate hunger for the attainment of consummate skill. At what? Almost anything, so long as it requires effort, self-discipline, and practice. Without such a craft, you're likely to befuddle yourself with a love-hate, approach-avoidance attitude toward your daily responsibilities.

At your birth, Uranus was about to rise -- that is, it lies in the First House of your birthchart. This is a pivotal position for any planet, and with Uranus here your whole character and destiny ultimately revolve around one question: Can you break free of your social and cultural conditioning enough to realize that deep inside you there burns the spark of something which has never before existed? To put it a bit more prosaically, do you have enough chutzpah to tolerate people thinking you're a little weird? There is an element of "genius" -- that is, radical individuality -- in you. Manifest it, or you'll simply dissipate that energy in quirkish eccentricity or irresponsibility.

Your birthchart displays another area of heightened activity: the Tenth House. The reason for that is simple -- there's a lot of planetary activity. With Mercury and Venus in that area of your life, it is charged with activity, soul lessons, and opportunities for personal development. Before we even consider the planets separately, our first step is to explore this piece of existential real estate in broad terms.

Community -- that's the key to the Tenth House. How do you fit into your local branch of civilization? What role do you play there? "He's an anesthesiologist." That's a Tenth House statement. But so is, "She's into the women's movement." Even though she doesn't make a dime being a feminist, it still says something about the hat she wears in the community.

Planetary Teachers in this House do two things for you. They outline your "cosmic job description." That is, they tip you off about the role you were born to play in your community. Unfortunately, they don't do that very well; there are a billion roles and only ten planets, so the descriptions they provide are of necessity rather vague. At best, they're rough guidelines.

Tenth House Teachers do better with their second task. They point out parts of your own character that need to be developed to a radical degree before your mission coalesces before your eyes. Accept their suggestions, act on them, and you'll leave a lasting stamp of your vision upon the myths and symbols of your community.

Mercury buzzes around the Sun in eighty-eight days, making it the fastest of the planets. It buzzes around your head in exactly the same way: frantically. It's the part of you that never rests -- the endless firing of your synapses as your intelligence struggles to organize a picture of the world. Mercury represents thinking and speaking, learning and wondering. It is the great observer, always curious. It represents your senses themselves and all the raw, undigested data that pours through them.

Mercury is shaped by the quiet, earthy reasonableness of Taurus. Your mind is not quick; instead, it's reflective and deep, with an instinctive appreciation of practicality and resourcefulness -- and for the eloquence of silence. Spiritually you are learning to use logic effectively as a convenient tool without becoming so identified with it that you become a human microchip.

With the traditional "Messenger of the Gods" occupying your Tenth House, your "cosmic job description" is Communicator or Teacher. That means that you were born with something significant to say to the human family. You may write it. You may broadcast it. You may announce it from a soapbox.

But before you can pull it off, you'll need to unravel a riddle Life has set before your spirit: How to find your true voice?

Venus is the part of your mental circuitry that's concerned with releasing tension and maintaining harmony. Its focus is always peace, inwardly and outwardly. As such, it represents your aesthetic functions -- your taste in colors, sounds, and forms. Why? Because the perception of beauty soothes the human heart. Venus is also tied to your affiliative functions -- your romantic instincts, your sense of courtesy or diplomacy, your taste in friends. Invariably, this planet has one goal: sustaining your serenity in the face of life's onslaughts.

Venus was passing through Taurus. Thus, both your aesthetic sensitivity and your taste in partners is shaped by the earthy, physical spirit of the Bull. In the realm of beauty, whether natural or wrought by human hands, you have a taste for the colors and textures of the countryside, sensual but never jolting. The same goes for friends and sexual partners -- you appreciate unpretentious people, the kind who are comfortable perched on a boulder with the wind ruffling their hair... the kind who aren't upset at the thought of sitting silently for half an hour.

With Venus in the Tenth House, your "cosmic job description" is Peacemaker, Counselor, or Artist. An old-fashioned astrologer would simply say you're lucky when it comes to work and status. That's true... in a way. But be careful: Life will dangle cushy positions before you like the worm before the trout... and they conceal the hook of emptiness. (How to avoid it? Go back half a hundred words and re-read your "cosmic job description"... those Venus-sign images describe the paths of joy for you.)

Your birthchart shows still another area where planets congregate: the Second. By combining forces, Mars and Pluto emphasize that department of your life almost as powerfully as the Sun or Moon would.

Traditionally, the Second House is the House of Money. That's true, but the issues here are much broader. This is the House of Resources, and resources aren't always financial. If you're lost in Dubrovnik, Yugoslavia, at two in the morning, you'll probably feel pretty insecure. If you have a thousand dollars in your pocket, that'll help; you'll feel more legitimate. The money is a resource, and it produces the classic Second House effect: helping you feel more confident. But speaking fluent Serbo-Croatian would do the same; knowing the language is a terrific resource, even though no one will give you a nickel for it.

Your Second House energies feel awkward, as if everyone is staring at them. Dignity and self-esteem are the issues here. The solution isn't some "We all God's chillin'" formula for uncritical self-love. Instead, it's a process of recognizing your deficiencies objectively and seeking to correct them: proving yourself to yourself, in other words.

Pale red Mars suggested blood to our ancestors, and they named it the War God. That's an effective metaphor -- Mars does represent violence. But today we go further. The red planet symbolizes the power of the Will. Assertiveness. Courage. Without it, there'd be no fire in life. No spark. Where your Mars lies, you are challenged to find the Spiritual Warrior inside yourself, the part of you that's brave and clear enough to claim your own path and follow it.

Mars is steaming in the searching, questioning, restless field of energy we call Virgo. The Warrior inside you is bent on one target: seeking out flaws, weaknesses, errors. Like a magnetic compass, you unerringly home in on the fracture zones in any monolith -- be it an argument, an idea, a strategy... or a person. Spiritually you're learning two lessons here. One is how to be scrupulously honest in naming problems. The other, which makes the first endurable, is forgiveness.

With the War-God occupying your Second House, you prove yourself to yourself through the rituals of adventure and assertiveness. You need to develop confidence in the legitimacy and prowess of the Warrior within you. Maybe you need a karate class. Maybe you need to start your own business. Maybe it's time to hike across Crete -- or to tell a domineering friend to back off.

"Life's a bitch. Then you die." Go to any boutique from coast to coast; you'll find those words on a coffee mug. Meaninglessness. Like most truly frightening ideas, we make a joke of it. That's Plutonian territory: the realm of all that terrifies us so badly we need to hide from it. Death. Disease. Our personal shame. Sexuality, to some extent. Initially, Pluto asks us to face our own wounds, squarely and honestly. Then, if we succeed, it offers us a way to create an unshakable sense of meaning in our lives. How? Methods vary according to the Signs and Houses involved, but always they have one point in common: the high Plutonian path invariably involves accepting some trans-personal purpose in your life.

One more point: Pluto moves so slowly that it remains in a given Sign for many years. As result, its Sign position in your birthchart refers not only to you but also to your generation. The House position, however, is much more personal in its relevance.

Pluto was journeying slowly through the sign Virgo. Thus the shadow material you are called upon to face has to do with the dark side of the Perfectionist archetype: surrendering to cynicism and defeat. In what part of your life or personal history have you chosen to take refuge in bitterness over the pain of continuing your journey? (If your answer is "Nowhere!" then congratulations... you're Enlightened... or not looking hard enough.)

At the moment of your birth, Pluto stood in the Second House... the part of the birthchart that addresses the question of resources and feeling of legitimacy that comes from having them. Spirit has given you uncanny instincts regarding weaknesses in other people's dignity -- where their shame lies. To create a sense of meaning in your life, you need to find a role to play in the world in which you address those wounds in others, helping them find a basis for deeper confidence. Maybe it's helping someone balance his checkbook. Maybe it's about encouraging another kind of resource, such as teaching a ghetto kid to read.

In the final analysis, all planets are important. Each one plays a unique role in your developmental pattern, and failure to feed any one of them results in a diminution of your life. Just because the following planets aren't "having breakfast with the President" through association with the Sun, Moon, or Ascendant doesn't mean we can ignore them.

Look at a NASA photo of Saturn. The icy elegance of the planet's rings, the pale understatement of the cloud bands... both hint at the clarity and precision which characterize Saturn's astrological spirit. Part of the human psyche must be cold and calculating, cunning enough to survive in the physical world. Part of us thrives on self-discipline, seeks excellence, pays the price of devotion. Somewhere in our lives there's a region where nothing but the best of what we are is enough to satisfy us. That's the high realm of Saturn. In its low realm, we take one glance at those challenges and our hearts turn to ice. We freeze in fear, and despair claims us.

The iconoclastic terrain of Aquarius offers a region of profound spiritual challenge for you, as Saturn was passing through that sign at your birth. You must learn to steel yourself in the face of the Water-Bearer's shadow side: phony eccentricity. There is an element of genius -- that is, radical independence of mind -- in your character. Develop it! Push it to its edges! That's how you were born to distinguish yourself, not through mere contrariness. Support that journey in practical, Saturnian terms by fortifying yourself with concrete skills and strategies -- especially ones pertinent to Saturn's House in your birthchart. Which House was that?

The Seventh! The arena of life where we encounter our soulmates -- lovers, deep friends, and partners -- and figure out what to do with them! With Saturn here, you face some profound lessons in the intimacy department. To prepare for them, focus first on self-sufficiency, both materially and emotionally. Then seek out partners with Saturnian qualities: responsibility, sobriety, a willingness to make -- and keep -- deep vows.

You're lying in your bed, going to sleep. Suddenly a jolt runs through your body. You just "caught yourself falling asleep." Where were you two seconds before the jolt? What were you? Astrologically, the answer lies with Neptune. This is the planet of trance, of meditation, of dreams. It represents your doorway into the "Not-Self." Based on the sign the planet occupies, we identify a particularly critical spiritual catalyst for you... although we need to remember that Neptune remains in a Sign for an average of a little over thirteen years, so its Sign position actually describes not only you, but your whole generation. Its House position, however, is more uniquely your own.

Neptune was passing through Scorpio. Thus, to trigger higher states of consciousness in yourself and to stimulate your psychic development, you may choose to follow the Path of the Sorcerer... that is consciously, intentionally to seek access to the power aspects of the Great Mystery, perhaps through the mastery of healing techniques, or a study of shamanistic traditions, or the use of divinatory methods such as astrology or the tarot cards. Without exposure to the purifying, soul-bleaching effects of what we could broadly call "magic," you tend to drift away from Spirit, losing yourself in the mazes of daily life.

Neptune, planet of transcendence, occupies the Fourth House of your birthchart, where its mystical feelings are linked to questions of your innermost life and intimate personal history. Peel away the layers of your psychological onion and, deep down, dead center, we find the soul of the mystic. There is something inside you that just watches the show, watches your "personality" do its dance in the world. Careful you don't starve that spirit. Watching the world go by isn't always enough; you need a few relationships and a few outward experiences which engage, enlighten, and surprise that Wise Old Being you keep so well hidden.

Take all the planets, all the meteors, moons, asteroids, and comets. Roll them up in a big ball of cosmic mush. They still wouldn't equal the mass of the "King of the Gods" -- Jupiter. Exactly that same bigness pervades the planet's astrological spirit. Jupiter is the symbol of buoyancy and generosity, of opportunity and joy. At the deepest level, it represents faith... faith in life, that is, rather than faith in anybody's theological position papers.

Jupiter stands in Aries. This is an important piece of information -- maybe a pivotal one. Being human is tough sometimes. When you need to boost your elemental faith in life, your answer lies in following the Way of the Warrior. What this means is that in dark times you need to recharge yourself by pushing toward the limits of your courage... even if that action has nothing to do directly with the problems you're facing. Take a rock-climbing class, go trekking in Nepal--feel the "edge." Mysterious, but it will always restore you.

In your chart, the "King of the Gods" reigns in the Ninth House -- traditionally the "House of Long Journeys." To maintain your faith in life, you need travel. Developing enough self-love to justify investing in yourself in that department is a spiritual lesson for you. The same goes for education, and any other experience that expands your horizons. Trust yourself, trust life, get out your VISA card if necessary, and leap in!

Your Lunar Nodes

The soul's journey

Here's a jolly baby. Here's a serious one. An alert one. A dull one. A wise one. Those are common nursery room observations, but they raise a fascinating question: How did that person get in there?

Most of our psychological theory, either technically or in folklore, is developmental theory... abuse a child and he'll grow up to be a child-abuser, for example. But in the eyes of the newborn infant, there is already character. How can that be? One might say it's heredity, and that's certainly at least part of the answer. A large part of the world's population would call it reincarnation -- that baby, for better or worse, represents the culmination of centuries of soul-development in many different bodies. A Fundamentalist might simply announce, "That's how God made the baby." Who's to say? But all three explanations hold one point in common: They all agree that we cannot account for what we observe in a baby's eyes without acknowledging the impact of events occurring before the child's birth.

In astrology, the South Node of the Moon refers to events occurring before your birth, helping us to see what was in your eyes ten seconds after you were born... however we imagine it got in there! The Moon's North Node, always opposite the South Node, refers to your evolutionary future. It's a subtle point, but arguably the most important symbol in astrology. The North Node represents an alien state of consciousness and an unaccustomed set of circumstances. If you open your heart and mind to them, you put maximum tension on the deadening hold of the past.

As we consider the Nodes of the Moon in your birthchart, we'll be using the language of reincarnation. Whether that notion fits your own spiritual beliefs is of course your own business. If it doesn't work for you, please translate the ideas into ancestral hereditary terms. After all, it makes little practical difference whether we speak of a certain farmer weeding his beans a thousand years before the Caesars as your great, great, mega-great grandfather... or as you yourself in a previous incarnation. Either way, he's someone who lived way back there in history who sort of is you, sort of isn't, and lives on inside you--influencing but not ultimately defining you.

At your birth, the South Node of the Moon lay in Capricorn, the sign of the Great Father. Anyone looking into your eyes as you took your first breath would have observed an uncanny maturity, as though he or she were looking into the eyes of an octogenarian. For a thousand years you've found yourself again and again in positions of authority and responsibility, often in the face of daunting circumstances. As a result, resourcefulness has arisen in you, as have toughness and what the British call "a stiff upper lip." Now, like a child who grew up in a terrible street war, you must learn new lessons: spontaneity, emotional self-expression, a willingness to feel.

That nascent ability to open the heart utterly to emotion is symbolized by your North Node of the Moon, which lies in Cancer -- the sign of the Mother. As we saw earlier, the North Node can be seen as the most significant point in the entire birthchart. Why? Because it represents your evolutionary future... the ultimate reason you're alive, in other words. How can you accomplish this Cancerian spiritual work? The "yoga" is easy to say, harder to do: you must overcome the hermit inside yourself, drop your attachment to your own self-sufficiency, and reveal yourself to someone! That is, you need to intentionally place yourself in situations which encourage emotional self-expression: stable relationships with people whom you respect, trust, and view as equals.

There's another piece to the puzzle: The Moon's South Node falls in the Sixth House of your chart. This implies that previous to this lifetime you learned a lot about humility. Your method was radical de-

votion to service and duty. Trouble is, you learned a bit about humiliation along the way, often crippling your creativity and individuality with feelings of inadequacy, shame, and guilt.

In this lifetime, with your North Node of the Moon in the Twelfth House, you must act to counterbalance those self-undermining tendencies, and the critical self-appraisal that fueled them... not because critical self-appraisal is "bad," but because you've already learned everything you can from it. The time has come for you to accept the vastness of your own spirit, to realize your birthright as an evolving being. A "spiritual" ego-inflation isn't the point; the point is claiming the state of consciousness you earned long ago through your radical devotion to service and duty!

And that's your birth chart.

Trust it; the symbols are Spirit's message to you. In the course of a lifetime, you'll make a billion choices. Any one of them could potentially hurt you terribly, sending you down a barren road. How can you steer a true course? The answer is so profound that it circles around and sounds trivial: listen to your heart, be true to your soul. Noble words and accurate ones, but tough to follow.

The Universe, in its primal intelligence, seems to understand that difficulty. It supplies us with many external supports: Inspiring religions and philosophies. Dear friends who hold the mirror of truth before us. Omens of a thousand kinds. And, above all, the sky itself, which weaves its cryptic message above each newborn infant.

In these pages, you've experienced one reading of that celestial message as it pertains to you. There are others. You may want to consider sitting with a real astrologer ... micro-chips are fine, but a human heart can still express nuances of meaning that no computer can grasp. You may want to order other reports, ones that illuminate your current astrological "weather," or that analyze important relationships. Best of all, you may choose to learn this ancient language yourself, and begin unraveling your own message in your own words.

Whatever your course, we thank you for your time and attention, and wish you grace for your journey.