

**ASTROBARRY'S 2012:  
YEAR-AHEAD FORECAST  
and HOROSCOPES**

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## First Things First: A Personal (But Astrologically Relevant) Introduction

That, right now, you are reading this—my first-ever self-published e-book—has *everything* to do with the astrology of 2012 and beyond.

This is no fluke in timing, but my personal gesture of respect for the existence of *synchronicity* between the present astronomical positions of the planets and our human behavior here on Earth, the root premise upon which astrology is based. This is not an accidental synchronicity, of course, since I *chose* to sit down and write a year-ahead outlook and sell it to you. It didn't just miraculously emerge fully formed, like Athena busting forth from Zeus's forehead or something. (I wish.) But after having wanted to create a project like this for several years, I decided *now* was the right time to make good on this desire... due in large part to the current astrological transits (which I'll be describing at length in this volume) *telling* me, in their resonant archetypal language, this is indeed the right time.

That's how astrology works best: We watch as the planetary clock-hands tell us what time it is, and then we consciously choose to *use* that time in the most archetypally appropriate fashion, co-creating our destiny in partnership with the larger cosmic forces.

Allow me to let you in on a little personal secret. My biggest professional ambition in life is to be a paid writer. More specifically, I want to earn decent money for creating written work that I am proud of. (It's important to be specific since I aspire neither to be thrown paltry scraps for my passionate efforts, nor to make a nice living off writing that doesn't genuinely express my unique voice.) Though in the last decade I have built successful careers for myself as an astrologer *and* a metaphysical shop owner [insert shameless promotion here: <http://www.sacredwell.com>], I've yet to directly pursue *this*, what I consider to be my 'holy grail' of career goals... that thing which, on my deathbed, I'd be deeply regretful about if I hadn't at least given it a damn good try.

But I guess I've *changed* all that now, haven't I? You *are* reading this, right? That must mean I wrote it... and that, presumably, you *paid* for it. (You *did* pay, didn't you?) I've chased down the dream. I am *doing* it. Dude.



I must confess, this manifestation of a long-held ambition doesn't look *anything* like I imagined it would. I always pictured being serendipitously discovered by a prescient literary agent, in my version of the epic Hollywood myth, spotted at the drugstore counter and 'made into a star!' Some talent-incubating genius would stumble upon the vast amounts of writing I've posted for free on the Web (and isn't that why so many of

us writers are expected to produce free 'content': for the *exposure?*), contact me with a heartfelt pledge of their belief in, and commitment to, me and my literary 'It Factor', and score me a lucrative book deal in two seconds flat. The requisite publishers and editors and press people (who would all become 'friends' too) would marvel at what a talent I was to work with, while the readers (a savvy, supportive bunch) would gobble up my every word, ensuring me a long and illustrious career as a prolific writer with a loyal fan base. I tried not to push my imagination too far, into the fantasyland of *New York Times* best-sellers or Pulitzer Prizes or recognized-on-the-street levels of fame. One mustn't get greedy.

My, how that familiar daydream seems so quaintly 20th-century now. Forget about how the corporate-owned publishing industry devotes increasing chunks of its budgets to easily categorizable (and thus *marketable*) genre-works... and to proven commodities such as Hollywood tell-alls, celebrity weight-loss guides, and novels (supposedly) penned by Lauren Conrad or Snooki. An even more pressing question is: *Will books cease to exist?*

Everyone and their brother now produces a blog, a Tumblr, a series of clever 140-character tweets, and/or some other witty reality-show/art fusion of sparkling self-promotion... and with all that free 'content' (god I hate that term) floating out in cybereverywhereness, could I expect anyone to single *me* out as someone whose writing is worth the money and time?

This isn't just an extended navel-gazing meditation on the evolution of my personal career trajectory, just so you know. I'm sharing this back-story with you for a very specific purpose. Have you never entertained similar scenarios for yourself, quietly wishing for *your* lucky break,

or for life-circumstances to shift and align in *just* such a way, allowing you to more directly pursue that much-yearned-for goal... that thing which, on your deathbed, you'd be deeply regretful about if you hadn't at least given it a damn good try?

If so, I'd also be willing to bet your reasons (or shall we be snide and call them 'excuses') for thus far not having chased the dream largely boil down to your not having yet captured the proper credentials, the influential contacts, the requisite start-up capital, or some other institutional flag you believe you need *first*. If only that powerful key-holding individual—the agent, the loan officer, the admissions director, the head of the company—would single out *you* and *your* special qualities for recognition, you may tell yourself, everything would be so different. You might actually get your chance.

I am here to report, at just the right astrological time: You mustn't *wait* for your chance any longer. It's probably not going to arrive at your door one fine day, special-delivery-style, like those giant checks lottery-winners receive. Except for a very very select few individuals who manage to score a personalized invitation from the key-holders (as likely by chance or nepotism as for standout deservedness) to follow their ambitions into reality, most of us will *not* enter the chamber of manifested-dreams through the official front-door.

We must *push* our way in, through side-entrances and back-windows... or else we'll have to *blast a new door* into being, with sheer moxie and strength. Otherwise, we'll be sitting patiently outside the gates, growing ever chillier and more resentful, in hopes the phantom savior will someday arrive, granting us permission to soar.

Since 2008, Pluto, harbinger of slow-death-and-decay-followed-by-rebirth, has been in Capricorn, the sign of (among other things) the governing structures of authority which dole out our collective resources by long-term strategy. By the time Pluto leaves Capricorn in 2024, he will have forced many of the inequities and corruptions-of-power in these structures into the light, where they can be contended with, if not righted. Along the way, those more-or-less-corrupt members of the ruling-class—the key-holders, the bearers of institutional flags—will feel their tenuous grip on the reins weaken, maybe falter outright. And chances are, when faced with this potential loss in position, they'll double-down with ever more brazenly desperate efforts to preserve and consolidate their control. The golden-tickets they might provide to anyone

*outside* their inner circle will grow increasingly fewer and harder to clinch. They simply have too much to lose to take such charitable risks.

At the same time, radical rabble-rousing revolutionary Uranus is now (as of this past year) in the pioneering first-sign-of-the-zodiac-cycle Aries, where he goads individuals into leaping boldly toward a more liberating future for themselves... and believe me, he's *not* the type who waits for invitations. Uranus insists on doing things *his* unique way, both for the sake of one's own independence *and* just to keep things fresh. In Aries (where he remains into 2019), he's only that much more emboldened to act impulsively, unashamedly, on behalf of our *own* interests, in creating something that's never before existed—and to hell with those who doesn't like it! This is a boon for us innovators and D.I.Y. (do it yourself) types, anyone brave enough to try a new endeavor or enterprise, born of their own initiative.

Uranus and Pluto have been moving into a *square* (or tense 90-degree aspect) with one another for a couple years now, first entering the critical 5-degree orb of influence (that is, moving within 5 degree of the exact 90-degree angle) in mid-2009. This square pits two heavy-duty influences against one another, in a clash of planetary titans: a decaying, but no less formidable, power-structure seeking to reinforce its dominance (Pluto) versus a fierce and untamed current of action-oriented unorthodoxy, ready to create chaos, whether productive or destructive, in the name of liberating change (Uranus).

This is no average astrological event, mind you... more like a 'big papa' of outer-planet transits, a flashing-neon-sign headline that'll impact the global zeitgeist throughout this entire decade. No one will emerge from the 2010s untouched by the evolutionary pressures imposed by the Uranus-Pluto square.

We must dive into *doing it differently*—whether the 'it' involves our career or financial life; our personal relationships with spouses and lovers, family and friends; the level of responsibility we take in our community and society at large—or we're handing over an implicit endorsement for



others (namely, those in power) to deepen their authority over our lives, for their selfish gain, while we just grow angrier or more bitterly defeated.

Maintenance of status-quo is simply *not* an option, under these pressures exerted incessantly by Uranus and Pluto over the course of their *seven* exact squares... the first of which occurs in June 2012, and the last in March 2015, with an orb of influence extending into 2017. The time is now: Innovate, or suffer the crunch.

And so, even with the fear and the self-doubt rattling around in my bones, I sat myself down and just began *writing*. With no preordained structure to follow or artificial timeline imposed by a clockwatching editor, I had to make up my own rules... to discipline myself each time I tried to cut out early, reminding myself how important this goal is to my very being... to push through the discomfort, which often manifested in manic questions about how I would ever manage the logistical miracles required to complete, and distribute, and earn income, from this vast project... and to *keep on going*, fueled by courage and faith in myself.

Former imaginings of how 'professional writing' was supposed to happen, be damned!  
Unanswered logistical questions, addressed on the spot!

You are now reading my testament, my living devotional, to the wacky transformative astrology of 2012. This is me, embodying the change I want to see in the world.

Your purchase of this work, too, is a financial symbol of support for this change. How else do we register our advocacy, in a capitalist culture like ours, than by spending our coins on something we believe in? Your willingness to buy writing directly from me (though it may not appear in a glossy corporately-sponsored hardcover edition, might contain a few typos, and could probably have benefited from a diligent editor) tells me—and the Universe, or however you refer to that divine unifying-energy concept—you're on board with this oncoming upheaval.

You'd better be on board; it's coming, regardless.

While we're on the subject, perhaps there's a living devotional *you* would like offer our world-in-transition...? Before you launch into the thoughts and the plans and the strategies, let me

remind you there isn't time for all that. (Anyhow, the actual manifestation probably won't look much like you thought it would.)

Just dive in, and start *doing* it.





## The Uranus-Pluto Square: Our 'Epoch of Revolution'

If you walk away understanding just *one* important piece of the current planetary picture, please let it be this: There is now forming a square between Uranus and Pluto. And this Uranus-Pluto square is *huge*.

Astrological forecasting, describing macro-level trends that show up both in collective developments *and* in our personal lives, rests largely on the aspects (or angles) formed between the slower-moving outer planets. Going outward from Jupiter, the planets move increasingly slowly... with most distant Pluto sometimes taking up to *20 years* or more to pass through a single sign. Thus, when outer planets form key aspects to one another by transit, they are significant and enduring; and the resultant relationship between the archetypes they represent parallels the cultural spirit of that time.

Our world has witnessed rapid and accelerating changes since the 18th century, a discontinuity in history due to countless perspective-shattering technological advances, mirrored by the introduction of the outermost-planets' influence into our collective consciousness. This began, fittingly, with the 1781 discovery of Uranus, the first planet not to become known to humanity that's not visible to the naked eye... and astrological symbol of technology and radical liberation, made possible only through the invention of the telescope and occurring, with beautiful synchronicity, in roughly the same period as the American and French Revolutions, a pivotal moment in the collective evolution toward greater individual human freedom.

Pluto was first spotted in 1930, alongside a marked rise in fascism and the advent of the atomic bombs... telling historical correspondences for the introduction of an astrological symbol associated with the psychological 'shadow', the underlying will-to-power that unconsciously drives humans toward dark or violent behaviors, and the painful transformations involved in integrating these drives into conscious awareness.

As a pair, Uranus and Pluto have proven themselves to be one of the most reliable astrological timing-markers for social unrest ... so reliable, in fact, that academic Richard Tarnas used the Uranus-Pluto cycle as a primary example in his landmark *Cosmos and Psyche* (2006), described on its inside flap as 'the first book by a widely respected scholar to demonstrate the

existence of a direct connection between planetary movements and the archetypal patterns of human experience.’ This book is considered the first contemporary academic study to make a convincing case for astrology’s efficacy within the context of mainstream intellectual thought—and it does so, at least in its initial arguments, largely on evidence provided by the remarkably consistent repetition of certain types of historical developments unfolding during Uranus-Pluto aspects.



Tarnas examined the relationship between (1) the periodic ‘hard’ aspects (i.e., conjunctions, oppositions, and squares) formed by Uranus and Pluto and (2) similarities in the extraordinarily intense and seminal qualities which erupted during the eras of these aspects. He spends several chapters of *Cosmos and Psyche* detailing specific archetypal commonalities between these historical periods, including pronounced developments in civil rights, advancement of progressive and radical social thought and political movements, and the unleashing of potentially violent or destructive forces... concluding with the observation that hard aspects between Uranus and Pluto correlate with recurring ‘epochs of revolution’, during which we experience widespread unrest linked with a collective awakening of emancipatory urges.

Uranus and Pluto last conjoined in the 1960s (exact during 1965 and 1966; within 5-degree orb between 1963 and 1968), imprinting that decade with a revolutionary fervor so powerful that, to this day, the phrase ‘The Sixties’ remains synonymous for civil-rights progress, protesters in the streets, and free love. The advances in racial and sexual equality made during that period persist as a standard upon which all subsequent conversations about identity are based. The broader awareness that national governments wage wars for ‘strategic’ purposes not aligned with the majority of their citizens’ interests, spotlighted by the loud anti-Vietnam movement, is still at the center of foreign-policy debates. Freedoms fought for in the ‘60s have become an integral part of our social consciousness.

In succeeding years, however, the 'Sixties spirit' itself seemed to dissipate or disappear altogether... as if, obscured by the appearance of increased material comfort for all (keyword: 'appearance'), the notion of large groups of everyday folks coming together to foment social change was perhaps one for the history books, at least in places like the United States. We have an increasingly short attention-span for history, after all. We too easily forget how, despite its mythic reputation, the 1960s were incredibly *uncomfortable* for so many people, nervous from the obvious instability, fearful of what the future would bring, as they watched the traditional culture of their youth unraveling before their eyes. What ultimately brings societal evolution we retrospectively take pride in may *also*, to many contemporaries of the time, feel as if the world as everyone knows it is ending.

This shared feeling of discomfort, instability and fear is now becoming familiar once again, as we head straight into the eye of another 'epoch of revolution'. During 2012, Uranus and Pluto will move into their first of seven exact squares, the first hard aspect between these two powerhouses since the mid-1960s.

If the Uranus-Pluto conjunction of the '60s is seen as the 'New Moon' of these planets' inter-orbital cycle, then the waxing Uranus-Pluto square of the 2010s is the 'First Quarter Moon'—a moment of *crisis* in which what was born nearly fifty years ago requires a course-correction in action, a reinvigorating expression of the liberatory drives that yielded those great social and political advances of that period. The 'Sixties spirit' *is* alive and well, only just now waking from its long hibernation.

We have already begun to spy outbreaks of the Uranus-Pluto square's revolutionary stirrings. (Though the aspect won't form to perfection until June 2012, we've been within its observable 5-degree orb of influence since mid-2009.) The first months of 2011 were dominated by headlines of civil uprisings in countries throughout the Middle East... a transnational surge of democratic yearning dubbed 'the Arab Spring', a term that beautifully matches the symbolism of Aries, Uranus's current sign. Riots lit up the UK, while the European Union continued its struggle to hold itself together under increasing tensions due to marked economic disparity and cultural diversity. In the US, Tea Party populism from the anti-government angle gave way to parallel (though ideologically divergent) pro-social-benefits protests in Wisconsin and elsewhere... and now emerges Occupy Wall Street, a stream of citizen discontentment with the governing

corporate plutocracy, which continues to grow as a nationwide current, developments emerging daily at the time of this writing.

These revolutionary energies will continue to impact us for years to come, with no signs of slowing down or returning to a calmer tone any time soon. As I mentioned in my introduction, the Uranus-Pluto square remains in effect into 2017. That means we must radically dismiss our nostalgic hopes for the restoration of 'how things have been'... and embrace the turbulent atmosphere we'll be stuck with for a while longer.

There's no question we must contend with the painful emotional consequences of bidding farewell to a previous way of life, though we make it far harder on ourselves by clutching unimaginatively to circumstances that *must* come to pass, to make room for what's next. Death is an inextricable part of any life-cycle, whether of an individual or a culture. Refusing to accept this truth will only cause lasting problems.

But while we're in the midst of massive reorientations, such as this one that'll persist for the next several years, we face countless opportunities to recreate our life-circumstances in much-desired ways—due to the simple fact that *something* has to be done, and we might as well do something *innovative, epic and/or self-empowering* once the time for action has arrived.

When some facet of our existence falls apart, it's not such a bad idea to look at *what else* isn't functioning to our satisfaction... to go ahead and *rip that apart too*, while our life is already a disheveled work-zone. Make the really *big* move. Opt for the *full* restructuring.



Chaos is messy, sure, but it also provides the best chances for us to exercise wild creativity: This is the calling-card of the Uranus-Pluto square, and it plays out both collectively *and* individually, based upon how it hits our personal astrological charts. (Find more specifics on the Uranus-Pluto square

in the ‘Your Personal Revolution’ section of each sign’s horoscope.)

That the clash between Uranus and Pluto occurs in *cardinal* signs—Aries and Capricorn, respectively—only further emphasizes the initiatory, forward-moving quality of this revolutionary period. The tension between these two signs can be interpreted as a pull between the instinctive spark of immediate, self-possessed action (Aries) and a more strategic long-view conservatism that resists such impulsivity (Capricorn).

Uranus in Aries spurs an on-the-spot ‘taking it into your own hands’, a no-rules fight for the freedom to directly serve ourselves, rather than defer blindly to impersonal bullshit. Pluto in Capricorn dredges up the injustices and inequalities at the root of *who* controls the strategic long-view, and *how* they go about enforcing this control, making it that much easier for a lot more of us to glimpse these dynamics at work. Freedom’s inspiring call must challenge this ever-more-consolidated hard-line power structure, if it wants to stake its claim.

Often, on the personal level, we serve as our own tyrannical enforcers, holding down our true liberation out of respect for ‘How Things Are Supposed to Be’; that internal tyrant is who we must overthrow, to liberate our true being.

On the socioeconomic level, this astrological symbolism speaks of the burgeoning sense of ‘class warfare’, a befitting term to describe the largest disparity in wealth between the haves and the have-nots since the Great Depression. It should come as no shock, then, to learn the *last* Uranus-Pluto square (1930-1936) occurred at the height of the Depression, the worst financial moment in US history. (Until, perhaps, *now*.)

The course-correction that happened *then*—which encompassed all of FDR’s ‘New Deal’ initiatives, including the establishment of a welfare safety-net (Social Security) and mass infrastructure investments—is a timely parallel to the type of vision required of us now. Interestingly, the 1965 expansion of Social Security (which created Medicare and Medicaid under LBJ’s ‘Great Society’) also transpired during a Uranus-Pluto peak. No wonder the question of government’s role in providing benefits to its people, both as social-contract moral imperative *and* economic anti-depressant response, is once again on the tip of our political tongue.

The challenge to address the massive disparities, and its corresponding exposure of the abuses our institutions perpetrate... the loss of familiar comforts in the face of chaos and instability, and the opportunities for creative innovation it begets... the clash between individual empowerment and repressive authority... these are the themes of the square between Uranus and Pluto, *the* astrological headline of 2012 and beyond, an era so ripe with revolutionary unrest, its timeliness itself serves as a vivid example that astrology indeed works.

We're now more directly in touch with the rhythms of deep change, those which profoundly alter the shape of history, than we have been in decades. Will we triumphantly channel the energy into brave new visions for our futures (collective and personal), or will we hide our heads in the sand, muttering anxiously about the end of the world?



## The End Of The World... *and* The Mayan Calendar

But wait, I thought the world was *supposed* to end in 2012.

Isn't that what the Mayans said?

What about that end-of-days disaster movie... and all those people who think we're about to collectively ascend into a new energetic vibration, an effect which will magically unite us as one people under Love (with all the psychic-phenomena bells and whistles that come with it) and ensure we practice war no more?

Depends on who you talk to, I guess.

There *is* a lot of talk drifting through the cultural ethers attributing a special significance to 2012, principally focused around an observation that the Mayan calendar comes to an end this year. The 'New Age' movement (or the loose affiliation of non-denominational spiritual seekers and thinkers who engage with the unseen energetic dynamics that may or may not connect all living beings) has gotten great mileage from running free with this observation.

I've seen many extravagant descriptions of what 'shifts' we might expect in association with 2012's arrival, as fulfillment of this supposed prophecy, such as: a rebalancing of the Divine Feminine and Masculine; a quantum-leap in the functioning of the human mind; a pronounced acceleration of 'Earth changes' through a series of mammoth natural-disasters; the return of a messianic figure (whether it be Jesus, Quetzalcoatl, or a longlost extraterrestrial ancestor-cousin); and/or some variety of profound spiritual transformation that will usher us into a new phase of global peace and understanding.

I try my best to strip any mocking tone from my skepticism—though I see much of this 2012 hoopla as a fairly standard expression of grandiose eschatological yearning—because I am neither an expert on the Mayan worldview nor someone who can definitively predict that none of these described shifts will occur. (Self-implication: I *did* buy a bunch of canned food and a camping stove shortly before Y2K, in case all the computers actually malfunctioned all at once



and rations became scarce.) As with all futures, which by my estimation are *never* set in stone, we can't ever be sure what'll happen.

That said, I am typically a critic of any belief-system that stirs either hysterical anxiety *or* overly idealistic bliss about some specific time in the future. Both are potentially delusional extremes in perspective that too

neatly rescue us from personal responsibility for the present moment (which, as long as mortality continues its eternal looming, is all we're guaranteed).

While end-of-world/second-coming beliefs can indeed inspire admirable behavior in their followers, the held-breath expectation the future will bring a dramatic, instantaneous break from our agreed-upon normalcy—a culmination; an endorsement of our good acts by some infinitely wise judge on high—ultimately leaves a lot of folks twiddling their thumbs, waiting for Godot.

Good acts ought to be their own reward. And besides, plain old life offers enough of its own consciousness-shockers (chance meetings, tragic accidents, firings and misfirings, floods, earthquakes, horrible deaths and other such surprises), do we really need Ascension or Apocalypse to inspire our best selves?

The Mayan calendar that ends in 2012 is actually one among a few interrelated timekeeping systems used by that Mesoamerican culture: The Long Count, a relatively linear measure (due to the much-longer duration of time it references) that complements the shorter-length, more cyclically-focused calendars with which it exists alongside. The Long Count (presumed to date back to at least the 1st century B.C., when it began to appear in monuments since deciphered by archeologists) marks a period of roughly 5,125 years, split into 13 *baktuns* that each last about 394 years. The general (but not unanimous) opinion of Mayan experts situates the starting date of this Long Count in the year 3114 B.C.... and the ending date as December 21, 2012, or the winter solstice of our present-day year ahead.



But what exactly does this end-date signify?

In my understanding, there is no archeological evidence to substantiate the notion that the Mayans believed the world was going to end in 2012. In fact, one can find references in Mayan inscriptions to dates *beyond* 2012, recorded by adding an additional number to the standard Long Count date-format... and whoever wrote *those* dates obviously assumed the world would still be around.

Yet, there *is* a rather compelling astronomical quality about this Dec 21, 2012 end-date, which has been discovered to be the moment when the solstice Sun rises in conjunction with the Galactic Center, the bright-spot at the rotational center of our Milky Way galaxy. This alignment is a rather rare occurrence, due to the long cycle of movement in which the apparent location of the Sun at seasonal fixed-points (i.e., the equinoxes and solstices) gradually changes against the backdrop of the stars. This phenomenon is known as *precession of the equinoxes*, and is a result of the slight wobble produced as the Earth spins on its axis. (This axial precession both explains why the zodiac-signs we use in Western astrology are not currently aligned with the constellations that share their name *and* serves as the foundation for the astrological concept of 'The Great Ages' such as the Age of Aquarius.)

What helps to make this correlation so interesting is the fact that axial precession unfolds over the course of approximately 25,800 years... which is close to exactly five times the length of one Long Count, that calendric measurement ending on a 2012 date with obvious relevance to precession. It seems no accident that the Mayans, with their fairly sophisticated astronomical knowledge, would have oriented their long-history timekeeping system to a time when their winter solstice Sun rose in alignment with the center of the Milky Way. The winter solstice Sun is a resonant cross-cultural symbol of rebirth, as it marks the return of increasing light at the darkest moment (which is, of course, why we celebrate Christmas, or 'the birth of the Lord', at this time of year).

And it's easy to see how the Galactic Center, that brightest band of light arching across our night sky, would surely have captured the imagination of the Mayans as much as it would anyone humbled by the majestic magnitude of all that's out there in the universe besides us...

though what, if any, specific spiritual or evolutionary qualities they might've associated with that energy-center remains beyond the grasp of our current understanding.

Even if the Long Count's ending this year is indeed linked with the present alignment of the solstice Sun with the Galactic Center, we still don't know precisely what contemporary significance we should pull out of this seeming 'message from the past'... the mystery that makes this whole 2012 business such a ripe target for our eschatological projections.

Let me, then, share with you the three common-sense insights I've personally drawn from this floating 2012/Mayan Calendar question-mark, to take or leave as you see fit:

**1. We are at a noteworthy ending, which is also a beginning.**

Sure, I'm stating the obvious here, but our very awareness that the Mayan Calendar is now ending is itself of some medium-as-the-message significance. Though it may not be 'The End' in any ultimate sense, it's still *an end*. And though the Mayan Calendar is a human construct (as opposed to a natural fact), its existence still makes an indelible impact on our consciousness all these centuries later... helping contribute to our collective project of interpreting this particular point in history as peculiarly transformational.

Our own Gregorian calendar ends every 365 days or so, but no December 31 has yet brought the world to a close, at least not as long as I've been alive (though certain New Year's Day hangovers sometimes make me wish it had). We are all perfectly aware of a relative arbitrariness to which day we refer to as 'December 31'.

Still, because we *do* mark the end of each year on this date, and the beginning of the next one on January 1, we have molded our behaviors accordingly: We party our asses off in celebration of something coming to an end on Dec 31, and then we set resolutions for ourselves on Jan 1, to imprint the beginning of something new with a



commitment to improvements we'd like to see.

Extending this way of thinking to the 2012 question, I say we engage in a two-part commemoration:

- (1) Before launching into the automatic litany of all the examples of how the march of human progress has destroyed the planet and wrought so much wretched harm, might it not behoove us to *also* consider everything positive we have collectively accomplished? Surely, modern life isn't *all* bad. Can we raise our end-of-the-calendar glasses of bubbly, in a toast to how much beauty and wisdom, compassion and love that human beings have created over these past 5,125 years?
- (2) Following the celebratory moment of appreciation, we can *then* commit to doing a much better job during the next cycle, building upon our existing strengths, while fixing what we've now come to realize as the errors of our ways. We have proven our capacity to generate tremendous riches from the resources we found. Now, we must tweak our methods so they don't take as destructive a toll on our natural habitat... and in order to demonstrate the pointlessness of *anybody* doing without, since we have more than enough to go around and global poverty is an entirely a *political* problem, not one of actual lack.

***2. There's some critical quality to how the world's changing right now that was monumental enough to hit the radar of people living two thousand years ago.***

This is perhaps a good moment to interject with the observation that, yes, when we combine what we already know about this period's heightened turbulence, courtesy of the Uranus-Pluto square, with the rampant 2012 consciousness, it *does* add up to a rather interesting synchronicity. Admittedly, the recurrence of hard Uranus-Pluto aspects *is* so much more common than the end of a 5,125-year cycle—and a standard astrological analysis of the 2012 landscape doesn't reveal any other phenomena that might be considered an earth-shattering standout among millennia of astro-events. Yet, for all we know, maybe it *is* that big.

In hypothesizing about the completion of this great Mayan cycle in his introduction to *2012: The Return of Quetzalcoatl*, Daniel Pinchbeck explains that, if his theory is correct, 'the

transformation of our consciousness will lead to the rapid creation, development, and dissemination of new institutions and social structures, corresponding to our new level of mind.’ This sounds a whole heck of a lot like the descriptions I wrote earlier about what to expect under the Uranus-Pluto square. Whether this is a result of our attaining some ‘new level of mind’—or if that’s just another way of saying the worldwide explosion of personal media devices has provided each of us an unprecedented tool for creating, developing and disseminating our own new institutions and structures—it does seem to be happening like that.

If any quality to our current times is enough of a game-changer to distinguish the self-evidently turbulent 2012 from other periodic Uranus-Pluto turbulences, it may be the profound manner in which our latest technological leaps have so abruptly advanced both the speed at which information is disseminated *and* the breadth of its reach, into the hands of otherwise isolated individuals in disparate parts of the globe. Where we used to marvel at how quickly news could spread—first through the printing press, then TV, and later the wired Internet—it now travels in the split-second one person might take to snap and post the photographic evidence, to tweet a happening, or to rally the troops for another flash-mob protest.

This experience that ‘time is speeding up’ as we move further ahead into the future (which, as a tangible description, is sort of hard to wrap one’s head around) is dramatically helped along by the dazzling gadgets we can’t seem to put down. Uncannily, this *acceleration of time* theme also plays a key role (as I understand it, on the most cursory level) in the Mayan worldview that’s encoded in the calendric structure of the Long Count. While I think most spiritual purists who vibe with this notion of a 2012-related acceleration-of-time had in mind this would happen through some explicitly *spiritual* expansion, bringing us into conscious union with our soul-selves that ultimately transcend time—as opposed to by text message, status update and ping—we can’t be sure the Mayans *didn’t* foresee this march of technology as the eventual cause of our psychic-unity tipping-point, apparently due sometime very soon.

***3. We actually know much less about the earlier days of human existence than our collective arrogance often leads us to believe.***

Even with archeologists continually reaping more hard data from their research, it’s hard to envision exactly *what* the Mayans were thinking when they constructed a far-reaching calendar



ending right when the solstice Sun conjoined the Galactic Center. For all we know, they just went for the most noticeable spot in the sky, that strip of concentrated light, and chose it as an arbitrary marker—with no special philosophic or prophetic statement intended—much like we decided to label the top of the clock with a ‘12’ instead of a ‘1’. (And if *that* was the case, the ghosts of those Mayan-timekeepers are sure getting a

good laugh at our expense.)

But is it possible the Mayans pointed their calendar at the Galactic Center for more than just *visually* supported reasons... that somehow they knew it was also the rotational center of their galaxy, reflecting a more knowledgeable perspective on their place in the cosmos than our idea of them suggests? Would they have been aware that a supermassive black hole is likely located at the Galactic Center, though, more than two thousand years later, our technological tools still aren’t advanced enough to provide us a thorough understanding of exactly *what* is happening there?

For that matter, how exactly did they gain their understanding of axial precession? It’s not inconceivable, I suppose, that the Mayans could have figured this out—after all, precession is said to have been discovered by Greek astronomers in the 2nd century B.C., essentially contemporaries to the Mesoamerican inventors of the Long Count. It’s probably just my 21st-century brain having trouble imagining such technological sophistication during a time so very long ago, especially since we didn’t even realize the Earth orbited the Sun (rather than the other way around) until the 1500s.

Here’s where I allow myself to entertain speculative notions that, to admittedly better-informed scholarly ears, could sound as kooky as expectations of a mass heavenly ascension sometime in the year ahead. I confess to often doubting the official archeological explanations for scraps of physical evidence that, when interpreted differently, spur my imagination to sing...

... like this simultaneous attainment of advanced astronomical knowledge by different cultures around the world, including, for instance, the Dogon people of Mali who apparently lacked the sort of instruments that could've yielded *very detailed* information about the Sirius star-system, which has long been central to their cosmology, but which modern astronomers have only very recently been able to confirm...

... or the erection of vast stone monuments, monoliths and pyramids all over the globe, at points in history when construction methods were thought to be quite crude, often symbolically positioned in poignant alignments that track celestial phenomena, including the pyramids at Giza in Egypt, which may or may not have been located to correlate with the layout of the constellation Orion, and the nearby Sphinx, which poses a controversial mystery about whether it might be much older than we originally thought by thousands of years, so that its construction coincided with the phase in the precession cycle known as 'the Age of Leo'...

... or the carving-out of lines on the surface-earth like those in Peru's Nazca desert, which create huge geometric patterns and zoomorphic pictures (again, sometimes theorized to correlate with stellar configurations) that can only be observed from the sky, though the Nazca people appeared to lack any flying technologies that would've afforded them access to the aerial perspective...

... or the appearance of images, in the archeological record of different cultures, that look a lot like depictions of flying machines, ancient astronauts and extraterrestrials, and possibly dovetail with those cultures' mythologies of deities or divine visitors who arrived from the sky (and are due to return) to share their wisdom with us as evolutionary assistance...

... and I will readily acknowledge these as unproven possibilities, and myself as a wide-eyed novice in these matters, one who strives to be humble enough to admit *not* to know.

Yet, I'll unashamedly tell you I *do* believe in the likelihood of intelligent life elsewhere in the universe. I cannot imagine otherwise, in fact; to do so strikes me as the height of geocentric arrogance, as if *we* are so special as to be The Only Ones. I am not claiming certainty that these 'little green men' (who, regardless of their size, are probably neither 'green' nor 'men') have actually visited us or helped us progress in our intelligence... though I won't rule it out

either. Nor will I dismiss the possibility the Mayans (or any other 'ancient' culture, for that matter) might've pondered these same questions, perhaps due to some key piece of *their* history and/or mythology we aren't aware of.

I have no problem with being thought crazy for merely holding my mind open in this way. Frankly, had you told me back when I was a young lad I'd be running a self-started business as an astrologer with global reach using laptop computers and pocket-sized media-devices that publish text and photos and videos without wires connecting them to anything, I would've found *that* notion pretty damn crazy, too.

Whatever our frame of reference, it always seems so gosh-darn *reasonable*... until we're confronted with a missing piece which quickly reveals how many of our prior assumptions were naïve, short-sighted or just plain wrong. When we're *in* the fishbowl, how could we know it's a fishbowl?

*For more information (and speculation) about the Mayan calendar, I encourage you to explore the work of John Major Jenkins, Carl Johan Calleman, Barbara Hand Clow, and Daniel Pinchbeck. To learn more about other theories about the mysteries surrounding human 'pre-history', the work of Graham Hancock is a good place to start.*



## Neptune-in-Pisces's Spirit Whispers

*Suspend your need to understand, and merge into these impressions, this experiential welcoming of Neptune into Pisces...*

She arrives at her designated appointment time and, within minutes, our conversation has meandered off the earthly plane. She is open to it, maybe even more than I who led us there. With her naturally easy connection to the benevolent energy-guides of divine flow, she's already felt their blessings wrap around her many times throughout her life. But both of us are afraid to talk so plainly of luck, good fortune or fate; they leave a presumptuous taste in our mouths. We have mere glimpses of, fragmented access to, the Big Book, and mustn't grasp at some authority we as humans lack. If we speak of these mists, we speak *through* them, never confidently knowing what we speak.

Neptune has only been in Pisces once since it entered our consciousness during a fateful conjunction with Saturn in 1846 that brought its archetype to us, 'real' as it ever could be... and shortly thereafter, from 1847 into 1862, came its age of mirages and utopias, romantics in the arts, séances in the parlors, the hysteria of gold-dust on the miners' fingers ('and more where that came from!'), all that spectral glamour, tasting of transcendence, though here we all still sit, untranscended, calling after God or what's-its-name to save us from this wreckage.

Inspiration; interwoven with delusion? Idealism: a better world, but if commandeered by the wrong ideal, a saboteur's self-sacrifice of here-and-now. I sense spirits in the air. I drain spirits from the bottle.

She prays for herself from the future, fixing drifts of wish-stuff with intention into blessings. Having lived this both before *and* simultaneous to now, she's grasped the gist of these unwritten rules: Paint it into being, and it happens... likelier even still when the motives match the ocean's tides. She braves the flight of faith, to drift *with* mixed-together wishings, because she's already acquainted herself with her escort from timelessness—that 'her' who's really *her*—who's already flown this course and lain the breadcrumb spirit-whispers she may follow back to source. The circuit is complete. They are whole, together, as this single human in my house, enlightening me as I read her words back to her.



Neptune in Pisces has asked me not to freeze its fog to icicles with descriptive tyranny. Nothing will be forced to happen, nor stuff 'done' to you. Having barely just kissed at our present being, this Neptune still holds many many years up its gossamer sleeves, hinting at eternity, its copious clues slipping through our fingers whenever we grab at them. Neptune, in Pisces through 2024, wants me to give it the space to emerge, to blow in, in time.



But get excited! Neptune in Pisces makes *caring* cool again!

I switch screens, and now watch a man from overseas confess his heart in a video. Feeling tender myself, open, connected viscerally with the many sorrows great and small that circle through existence, I am caught in a mist of poetic gravitas. I take my breath, hold it within, in communion. Your cries are coming over loud and clear, man, wireless and cloudlike, seeping in from the vents near the ceiling. I am not clearly me as I convey this to you. I am swimming in the stream of one giant soul, each teardrop cried another tiny formless fragment of the greater whole, just as wet and wonderful. Also tragic, though, because each loses form, dissolves and disappears, meaningless as a single-unit past this melting-point. I would kiss you, make love to you, sink into you until our skins ceased to contain our own liquids, the plasma keeping every empty space between the particles oiled in emptiness. We slide into and out of each other this easily.

There is universal love in this human condition, whenever we agree to share the common emotion, in painful realization of the horrors and, maybe even worse, the disappointments. By falling short, and we all do, we earn ourselves the mercy... and if we're *really* merciful, we earn some on behalf of *others*, too, and cut them breaks of fair consideration. Hell, we just fuckin' *feel* for them, because we *all* got a bad shake and some of us got a *real* bad shake (even though every last one of us got *something good*, too, for that is the way of the universe). We

channel it, direct, uncontaminated by the judgments that come from a mind who wants the rule the show, with no consideration for the far wiser heart.

Lovers make art and artists make love for the splendor of transcending the pain of this emotion, all the while drenching themselves in it like intoxicating bathwater, luxuriating in the wet. It is all there is that matters. You need no certain credit-rating to enjoy its wealth in prodigious amounts. You will never hit a limit or receive a harsh rejection, if you're brokering in the real deal. Unpeel your rationale, that cerebral separating technique which turns you alternatively 'better' or 'worse' than anyone else, based on mood or day of week or how bad a trip your family laid on you. Beam of light, meet beam of light. Raindrop, meet ocean. Taste the moisture in the air.

None of this makes any sense... at least not to those who must *make* something out of nothing (or, should I say, out of *everything*)? The message is diffuse by divine design. You'll only get *your* taste of it, and some slices come with more frosting or a pink iced rose. The atmosphere has once again transmitted a signal, direct download to my device. I assume it's for me, but there's always the possibility of crossed signals, even more so as the number of signals increases, and the number of those programmed to receive goes up with it.

I share these evocations with you because I know you'll understand me when I say I'm just letting the enlightened amorphousness form its own words. I'm the devoted, dotty pigeon, bringing them through for you. I talk in different metaphor than many others who do what I do, yet tap into the one vast reservoir we all drink from. Maybe aspiring to art through love and love



through art will touch other speakers of my language. When times get tough, the inspirations thicken like nourishing soup: inexpensive ingredients, great value. With their nostalgic flavors, rhythmic verse, coquettish colors or sharp taste, they seduce your machines to come to life. The coinciding of sharp revolution-style grinding and a softest cashmere-cushion of communal compassion ('give what you

have, take what you need...') is another of the cosmos' beautiful synchronicities. Don't overlook the gorgeous mood-lighting—but more than that, the exquisite perfection of neighborly, brotherly, sisterly, judgment-free *LOVE*—which casts a lovely human delicacy over everything, even when the upcoming scenes call for (gasp)...

BREAK. The transmission cuts off as we veer dangerously close to indulging hopes for an apocalypse, or at least a movie-scene resembling this glamour. We sing our lamentations; they come true. We weep our tears; they drown us. We swallow the water; our breathing ceases. Then awake again, baby bird chirps, a song with an eerie ring of familiar.

I knew I would be writing this. We knew we would be living this together, and sent our emissaries from another end of this multi-sided game-piece to suss out the playing-field. They did us one better, in fact, and began to invest a timeless litany of these single-spaced prayer-words toward our present-day. In one wave that swept over the entire sphere of my infinitesimally large/small being, they hooked into my Now, sending jolts of warming inspiration as an antidote to those inherited earthly poisons.

I remember these nameless beings, connecting with my personal fragment-self of the vast consciousness, once I hooked my higher heart into their switchboard. Like in a dentist's chair, I lay all the way back, opened wide, and, while their blinding-hot white beam of light obscured my ability to directly observe any distinguishing details of their faces or bodies, invited them to suck out the sticky muck that had been clogging up my source-vessels. I watched the black blob depart my chest. I felt its tacky tar detach, get vacuumed out, soar away into whatever dimension they store such materials in. The whoosh as we disconnected the login and their spirit-forms returned to deep space-time was so distinct, the flesh-and-blood friend who sat alongside me throughout this procedure was knocked back in her seat.

These beings are nearly us—well, really and truly, they *are* us, if we'd just embrace who we *are*—except for their lightweight trait that can only be described as *emotionlessness*. We humans, with all that water flooding our cells and floating our salts, are made for emotion; it's part of our purpose here. Contrary to popular models for corporate excellence, our true measure for success comes from going *further into* our emotions, not turning them off. To say we will triumphantly live through our emotions, however, we do not endorse sacrificing our

rational will to blindly indulge in feeling feelings. Emotions are not the end in themselves, a high to chase which never allows itself to be caught, as no transitory essence should. They are merely wordless blips of important information, a guiding beacon toward rightful action, directing our will away from a crash on the rocks. If it brings happiness, go forward. If it brings anger, turn left. If it brings sadness, stay where you are and cry. To inform us, so we act, so we be, and so on.

But once the buzz starts kicking in, we can never get enough. Our human instinct to *cling* perpetuates one excess after the next... the 'feeling good' a case of mistaken identity, with the real happiness held captive in the corner, gagged into silence and forced to watch. I can predict *exactly* how dreamy and carefree I will feel every time the consumption is complete and the chemical reactions begin to spread. I'll have no trouble manhandling this divine love, stroking it gently for my own purposes, enlightened 'til the fix wears off. It is *because* I love God, and love you, that I obediently take my medications and smile and gloss over, recede into the couch cushions or jitter my teeth out, bloat up or black out, beg you to spend just one more eternity at my side completing me, extending our contracts.

She, meanwhile, keeps praying for release from the recycling. The once-and-final dissolution is a gift that keeps on giving. We never *get* what Neptune gives us. Each distinct surrender sends an automatic shuffle to the cards. Next time around, I hope I'll do more of what she taught me, dance on the mist in betrayal of all the natural laws, propped up by webs of prayer-words once-and-final me has spent millennia perfecting. We've got each other when we *feel* we've got each other.



## Retrogrades & Eclipses & Sign-Shifts, Oh My!

In this section, I've provided informational briefs on some of the other noteworthy astrological happenings of 2012, so you'll know when to expect 'em—and what they might mean for you.

When a planet goes *retrograde*, it appears to move backwards in the sky, due to the differences in the orbital speed of that planet and ours. Though retrogrades are basically optical illusions based on our subjective position here on Earth—since no planets actually change direction during their travels around the Sun—astrologers have observed that planets seem to express their archetypal energies in a different way during retrograde periods. When a planet is retrograde, it behaves in some 'reversed' fashion... inspiring us to revisit, reconsider or revise an item or issue associated with that planet... diverting its manifesting actions to contexts *other* than where we usually direct it... and/or forcing us to temporarily engage with it according to an alternative rhythm or logic.

*Eclipses* are essentially supercharged new moons and full moons that result from the alignment of the Sun and the Moon with the lunar nodes (the points of intersection between the ecliptic and the Moon's orbital plane). Eclipses typically occur twice a year, in sets of two or three... and during the few-weeks' period surrounding these events, we often witness an acceleration of significant developments in our life-narratives. That's why I refer to eclipses as 'chapter-markers', or climactic points at which the story markedly flips from one scene to the next, setting a thematic tone for the next several months. Eclipses produce the most dramatic personal effects when they closely aspect a prominent placement in an individual's birthchart.

The more slowly a planet travels, the less frequently it changes from one zodiac sign to the next. So whenever any of the further-out planets (say, from Jupiter outward) makes a move into a new sign, the effects of that sign-shift will create a noticeable imprint on the general feel of that time-period. Astrologers use the sign-positions of these slower-moving planets to describe what archetypal challenges, opportunities and transformations are likeliest to manifest, both in the collective *and* in our own lives. Based on a person's individual zodiac-sign makeup, an outer-planet's passing placement can prove either supportive or obstructive in their pursuit of goals... though, whatever the specific case, a planet *a/ways* has something to teach us.

### ***Mars Retrograde in Virgo, January 23-April 13***

Every two years or so, Mars spends about 2½ months in retrograde mode... during which time our physical energies, initiative and/or assertiveness will often flow in ways that run counter to our usual beat. I find Mars-retrogrades to be peculiarly unpredictable, in terms of whether they *increase* or *decrease* our bodily vitality and/or grant us *more* or *less* get-up-and-go. (I've seen it work in both directions.) What I *do* know is that, when Mars goes retrograde, wherever and however we *had* been focusing our assertive steam prior is interrupted by an unanticipated need to *redirect* that focus elsewhere. Where we *thought* we'd be making progress, we may now appear stalled... though a more subtle type of 'progress' could be happening on the internal level. Instead, we might find ourselves attending to some other effort we hadn't planned on grappling with.

As ruler of our physical selves, Mars can sometimes mess with our bodily patterns when he's retrograde, with sleep or dietary irregularities, energy surges or lacks, or some change in the flow of our daily routine. It's important to listen to what your body tells you during a Mars retrograde—or risk easily avoidable illnesses or injuries as outward manifestations of the need to alter your behaviors. Your capabilities may temporarily vary from their usual, and disrespectfully pushing beyond them may only tempt Mars's ire into lashing back. Good habits are *essential* to functioning as smoothly as possible at this time.

Mars also symbolizes how we handle conflict, so his retrograde phase sometimes raises unvoiced tensions to the surface or brings an unfinished fight back for another round. If the contentious issue has returned to life, it's obviously because it wasn't handled properly the first time. Mars retrograde presents the opportunity to clarify and reassert, or to embolden yourself if you previously wielded your will too meekly.

Because this Mars retrograde falls in Virgo, the most analytic and detail-oriented of the signs, it's likely to force us into close contact with specific logistical items or practicalities that require more attention than we've been giving 'em. Consider this to be an excellent invitation for any *cleanup* work you've been putting off... especially organizational tasks that, once completed, will give you clearer access to helpful data you've been underutilizing. Calmly sticking close to the facts, rather than indulging irritable emotions, is the smartest path to emerging triumphant from

any battles. Sloppiness or impatience, in all contexts (and particularly *physical* ones), would be a big mistake during this retrograde.

During the midst of his retrograde, on March 12-14, Mars will form an exact *grand earth trine* (a synergistic triangle of three planets in earth signs all flowing together) with Jupiter in Taurus and Pluto in Capricorn, making these few days an exceptional window of opportunity for tackling a 'big fix' that powerfully readjusts a fundamental issue. Because Mercury stations to retrograde at the same time (see next section for more info), the opportunity that presents itself may not have been a *planned* one. Rather than merely patching something ragged back together so it just barely functions again, this is your chance to take the whole damn thing apart and *really* do it right. You're likely to see witness a clear indicator of its far-improved functionality a couple months later, when the once-again-direct Mars forms another grand earth trine, this time with Mercury in Taurus as well as Pluto in Capricorn, on May 13-16.

### ***Mercury Retrograde in Aries/Pisces, March 12-April 4***

The thrice-annual Mercury-retrograde phenomenon gets a lot of popular hype, due to its reputation for causing technological hassles and communicative snafus during its 3½-week phase. While there's certainly plenty of evidence to support such claims—since Mercury *does* rule all types of communications and transmissions—we often create far worse headaches for ourselves by overcorrecting or full-on freaking out the second we sight a hiccup or apparent malfunction.

Mercury retrograde simply asks us to slow down at the first hint of a glitch or detour, to breathe for a moment or two, and to use any delays as an excuse for additional forethought. In our interactions, we need to consider our words before just blurting them out, lest we're about to recklessly offend someone or reveal a sensitive bit of info. With important paperwork or other official dealings, we ought to examine the fine-print twice as carefully, ensure all our questions are thoroughly answered, back up the data, and, should any doubts or funny feelings emerge, postpone the final agreement until Mercury's direct again.

This first retrograde of '12 happens in instinct-driven me-first Aries, and is most noteworthy for causing Mercury to conjoin Uranus three times (including the pre- and post-retrograde 'shadow'

periods) between early March and late April. A Mercury-Uranus conjunction spurs spontaneous—and often shocking—decisions and disclosures, which can seem to come out of the blue and demand an on-the-spot response. The self-focused quality of Aries hints at the likelihood that we might easily blind-side one another, thoughtlessly springing our self-centered impulses on someone who consequently feels angrily imposed upon. Mercury's period of slipping back into Pisces (Mar 23-Apr 16) present us the chance to reconsider our split-second epiphanies, based on greater sympathetic understanding of the other person's emotional reactions.

### ***Venus Retrograde in Gemini, May 15-June 27***

Venus's retrogrades possess an uncanny knack for bringing back unfinished business in the realms she oversees... namely, *love* and *money*. During her month-and-a-half retrograde period every 1½ years, Venus enjoys toying with our affections, tempting us to ogle the fancy leather jacket we probably shouldn't try to afford or that lusted-for hottie who represents everything our stable (or is it dull?) partnership isn't offering us. But do we *really* want it, or is this merely a mirage? When Venus is retrograde, we can never be sure. However, the very posing of this question helps us to reconsider, reaffirm or revoke our investment of interest in that preference. Above all else, Venus retrograde asks us to reexamine what we personally find most *value* in.

In the love department, Venus retrograde is notoriously a time when exes, old flings, and/or 'the one(s) who got away' reappear in our world... to test whether or not we've moved on... to offer a second chance to make it work... to present us with an opportunity to finally make peace and close the book. Another likely expression: Our eye is caught by someone refreshingly different, opening us up to viewing our romantic potential in an alternative light. In either case, if we're already involved with someone, these *other* possibilities obviously create complications in figuring out our *truest* desires.

The trick to making smart romantic decisions under this influence? Viewing this as a crossroads in the general direction you want your love-life to go, instead of assuming any specific individual will stick around forever. Many times, the revived old-flame or the stunning new lover we



encounter during Venus retrograde proves to be fleeting—maybe they only showed up as an agent of change, reorienting us to our heart’s wisdom.

The Gemini signature on this Venus retrograde serves to further accentuate this theme of *multiple possibilities*. Geminis are renowned for being able to appreciate a variety of diverse types of individuals, each with its own certain appeal... though is sometimes challenged to choose between them. The archetypal Gemini behavior of revealing different sides of one’s personality to different people in different settings could easily express itself here, inspiring us to play out more than one romantic scenario at the same time, waiting to see how each option develops. This only poses a problem if we’re being deceitful or shadily omitting certain details that all participants ought to be aware of, so everyone can make informed choices about what’s right for them. And if we discover no one person is able to fulfill *all* our relationship needs, we must then prioritize which are our highest-priority non-negotiables.

In the money sector, Venus retrograde is a time when the accurate *worth* of something isn’t always clear. That’s why astrologers often recommend postponing large purchases during Venus retrograde, since we can’t be sure whether we’ve overpaid for it... or even if we’ll actually still *want* it later, once Venus goes direct. Beware of buyer’s remorse. It begs pointing out, however, that *all parties* in a financial dealing are under the same effect—which means that sellers could possibly *undervalue* what they’re selling, presenting the educated consumer a rather excellent deal.

### ***Solar Eclipse in Gemini, May 20***

### ***Lunar Eclipse in Sagittarius, June 4***

The first eclipse period of the year, stretching through the second part of May and into early June, is predicated around a solar eclipse in the very first degree of Gemini. When we factor in the fact that (1) Venus will be retrograde in Gemini during that time *and* (2) Jupiter moves into Gemini only three weeks later, we can’t avoid noticing the blatant reiteration of focus on the sign of ‘the twins’. This is clearly a moment in which we’ll all be exposed to an increase of ‘variations on a theme’... a sudden proliferation of alternative options, opportunities and involvements which leave us much to choose from. The eclipse’s South Node imprint indicates that one of our choices may be a result of previously shut doors reopening themselves—though it doesn’t

mean *that's* the 'right' one. In fact, with the eclipse's square to Neptune, this multiplication of possibilities is likelier to immediately *confuse* rather than enlighten us. Because of the key *social* element to Gemini, perhaps the least complicating take-away from this eclipse energy is a simple upswing in the variety and stimulation provided by our social interactions.

The full-moon lunar eclipse in Sagittarius, which both squares the newly-direct Mars in Virgo *and* opposes the still-retrograde Venus in Gemini, is a probable instigator of the emotional itch to 'move things along already'. Gemini and Virgo are both Mercury-ruled signs, which means their heightened influence in this period will have a lot of us stuck in our heads, pondering the different hypotheticals or perfecting the shrewd analysis. The eclipsed Moon in Sagittarius will likely express its impatience with any protracted decision-making process... and, for better or for worse, inspire a few bold advances made on faith and optimism.

### ***Jupiter enters Gemini, June 11***

After having been in Taurus since last June, expansive opportunity-bringer Jupiter enters Gemini... for a year in which we may be moved to try on different social faces or aspects of ourselves we've downplayed, in order to experiment with the myriad of experiences each personality-side buys us entry into. Jupiter is considered to be in his *detriment* (or in a sign opposite to one he rules) in Gemini, where he struggles to attain his trademark 'big-picture perspective' because *more than one* such overview seems to tell as equally a compelling tale about what's most important. While Jupiter in Gemini fosters additional possibility, he simultaneously increases the difficulty in decidedly determining one direction is any better than the next. This lack of clarity is only exacerbated when Jupiter squares Neptune later in June.

In Gemini, Jupiter is a blessed boon for all the air signs—Libra and Aquarius, too, in addition to Gemini—as it enhances the serendipitous potential available through the interpersonal interactivity with which these zodiac-signs thrive best. As the element of a creative mental ingenuity that comes from being able to get distance from an issue and conceptualize new understandings of it, air signs should expect a lot of fresh new ideas to develop under this transit. Jupiter-in-Gemini's likeliest to cause trouble for Virgos and Pisces who, respectively, struggle to fairly consider the different choices (because there must be *one* that's 'right', right?) or become overwhelmed when there are too many divergent influences in simultaneous effect.

(Find more specifics on Jupiter in Gemini in the 'Challenges & Opportunities' section of each sign's horoscope.)

### ***Mercury Retrograde in Leo, July 14-August 7***

The second Mercury retrograde of the year falls wholly within Leo, a sign that brings out the theatricality and spectacle in our communicative expressions. In this Mercury-retrograde-in-Leo climate, we are more susceptible to lapsing into exaggeration for dramatic effect or stretching the limits of truth to protect our image. Similar to the Merc-retro earlier in the year, this one's also linked by triple-aspect to shock-loving Uranus, this time by flowing trine. Again, we must watch out for the responses we stir by 'dropping bombs' on those whose feelings we might neglect to consider in advance of lauding our self-absorbed aspirations. The standard expected delays and misfires could become way more disruptive, should we throw any egomaniacal fits about how we're too special to waste our precious time with *this*. (*Nobody* is too important for Mercury retrograde.) Misunderstandings in important business matters can be avoided by not hesitating to admit when you're confused; don't make it worse by being afraid to look stupid.

### ***Saturn enters Scorpio, October 5***

Since he first entered Libra back in October 2009, Saturn has been doing a pretty decent job at helping to hold the most extreme expressions of the current collective chaos at bay. Saturn is in the sign of his *exaltation* in Libra, where his thoughtful restraint often leads us to justly consider both sides of an issue or argument, working to attain a structured agreement that's fairest to all concerned parties. Libra, after all, is ruled by peace-and-love-maker Venus... and her influence over Saturn in Libra (through their dispositor relationship) has certainly aided us through our tough negotiations over the past two-plus years, bringing an esteemed level-headedness to counterbalance an otherwise turbulent astrological picture. If you think recent times have seemed beyond crazy, you can't even imagine how much *less* tempered and *more* severe it could've been without Saturn-in-Libra's diligent diplomacy.

Saturn is markedly *less* mild-mannered in Scorpio, the sign he'll occupy into mid-2015. We all know not to mess with a Scorpio, the master of human psychology who can sniff out a hidden motive or a vulnerable weak-spot like no other—which bestows a potent 'get-to-the-root-cause'

investigative quality that can be used to help others heal their unconscious complexes, or to manipulate and dominate them. In Scorpio, Saturn is charged with assessing how responsibly and ably we wield our psychological knowledge of each other and ourselves... whether we unnecessarily overcomplicate interpersonal situations, profiting at someone else's expense or exploiting their timidity... whether we wuss out in acting on our passions, due to an aversion to facing the subsequent intensity... or whether we have found the appropriate middle-ground of self-empowerment, neither domineering nor submissive.

Once Saturn hits Scorpio, he'll turn over his dispositorship to Mars, a shift likely to have a significant effect on how we experience the era-dominating Uranus-Pluto square. Where a strong and reasonable Saturn in Libra had restrained some of this square's antagonism, taming Pluto as dispositor of his place in Capricorn, the Scorpio version of Saturn will now *fuel* the intense power-struggles instead. I therefore expect some of the *real* Uranus-Pluto sparks to start flying after Saturn's sign-shift. (For specific insight into how Saturn in Scorpio affects each zodiac sign, check out the 'Challenges & Opportunities' section of every horoscope.)

### ***Mercury in Sagittarius/Scorpio, November 6-26***

The final retrograde of '12 is yet another that occurs in a fire sign... this time in Sagittarius, one of the most harrying signs for Mercury, with or without a retrograde in effect. In Sagittarius, Mercury's in his *detriment*, delivering his messages with an unabridged bluntness and haste that often hits the listener's ears in an off-putting manner. Though he prides himself on being a truth-teller, Mercury in Sagittarius doesn't always think his words through before launching directly into The Truth (as he sees it, that is); nuance is *not* a specialty.

The likeliest causes for retrograde problems this time around come from rushing to a premature conclusion before all the facts are heard, doing sloppy work that later must be neatened up, and, of course, from speaking out too quickly or sharply. Considering *also* that Mercury squares befuddling Neptune three times (including the pre- and post-retrograde 'shadow' periods) between late October and early December, perpetrators of 'foot-in-mouth syndrome' might not even be aware of their lapse in judgment at first. But once the unintentionally careless or offensive remark has been ejected, there's no taking it back. Mercury's passing return to

Scorpio (Nov 13-Dec 10) is when any unpleasant interpersonal consequences from retrograde-triggered missteps are apt to come home to roost.

***Solar Eclipse in Scorpio, November 13***

***Lunar Eclipse in Gemini, November 28***

2012's second eclipse period spans throughout the month of November, anchored by a total solar eclipse in the sign of Scorpio. Scorpio eclipses can have a particularly intense quality to them, as they often serve to powerfully initiate us into a chapter in which we must integrate a newly-emerged *complication* into the life we'd already been living. After a prior eclipse-period marked by a near-overabundance of possibilities to choose from, this time frame calls for us to accept the ramifications of whichever choice we *did* end up making... or force us to confront the problems we cause by *refusing* to choose. Seeing as the eclipse is disposed by Mars in Sagittarius, while we're in the midst of a Mercury retrograde *also* in Sagittarius, it's likely our swift-and-snappy deeds and declarations will unconsciously expose our underlying stance. After months of ambivalence or ambiguity, an issue could abruptly appear rather black-and-white. Only then can we investigate the deeper consequences of our siding that one certain way.

On the heels of all *that*, the full-moon lunar eclipse in Gemini may rouse us to try resuming the either/or, one-*and*-the-other posture we just relinquished (perhaps unintentionally, but no less conspicuously). We could easily feel spooked by the more-forceful-than-expected aftermath of the prior weeks' events... and thus emotionally yearn to reclaim a little more wiggle-room for ourselves, so everything doesn't feel so serious or absolute. Yet, by a potent sextile between tightly-conjoined duos Mars/Pluto-in-Capricorn and Venus/Saturn-in-Scorpio that forms a 'finger of fate' with the eclipsed Gemini Moon, there's no place to run from the repercussions. Those who can't *face up* will feel quite uncomfortably anxious.

## ARIES

How many times have you heard Aries described as the leader, the pioneer, the courageous trailblazer of the zodiac? These traits of self-possession come like second-nature to you Aries types, whether you're aware of it or not. You just do what you're moved to do, without much need to lean on others for permission or approval. It's sometimes hard for Aries to appreciate how special this quality actually is, since you know no other way of being. You've always behaved like this... and thus can struggle to understand how the rest of us so often get snagged by worries about everyone else's expectations. That's why we need your fiery instigating momentum so badly—to light the fires under *our* butts, to be our purest uncensored selves just like you are.

More than ever before, you're being called to take risks that not only liberate you from any energy-draining shackles, but also inspire the rest of us to *become* the change we want to see. If ever there were a moment that requires brave leaps into uncharted territory, spurred strongly by impulse over forethought, we are living it right now... and increasingly so in the years ahead. With rabble-rousing Uranus clamoring from within *your* sign, Aries, you are the designated shit-stirrer for 2012 and beyond. The more courageously you carve a unique place for yourself out of the untamed jungle, the more confident others will be in *their* capacity to do the same. Whether you do so in a *constructive*—or *destructive*—fashion, alas, will help determine if this raw astro-current leads to radiant progress or distressing anarchy.

Your enviable independent streak does not, however, grant you carte-blanche privilege to do *whatever* you want, consequence-free. Where you often get yourself into trouble, Aries, is in neglecting to consider just how your actions affect others. (The last couple years have likely brought you a few wake-up calls with this issue.) Humanity as a whole cannot be trusted to spontaneously care for all its citizens without *some* governing structure of rules and regulations. While you might justifiably take issue with the many glaring examples of how the system has grown rotten, a full-scale assault on the existing social contract could do much more damage than good. One stray bolt of defiance, and the ensuing chaos would jeopardize many individuals' security and well-being.

This is not a conceptual meditation on societal dynamics: It has direct relevance for *your* life in '12, Aries, and how you choose to exercise your will in every context. You currently possess major fire-power, which you can (1) strategically utilize to clear-cut any obstacles to your fuller satisfaction or (2) recklessly lob at those who threaten your independence, igniting potential aggression. Do not downplay your strength, or underestimate the far reach of after-effect ripples from your actions. Be courageous, but discriminating. Take in others' feedback, so you become better aware of your overall impact. Your reactionary warfare against dominating forces still plays into *their* game; responding with creative alternatives, on the other hand, makes all the positive difference. You hold a crucial role in proactively reforming what's not working, both in your own life and the world at large.

### **Your Personal Revolution**

As I've already suggested, *you* are at the heart of the broader revolution now erupting into the collective consciousness. Hell, *you are* the revolution itself. *That's* how personal this energy is, with Uranus in *your* sign during this pivotal era in history. Maybe you're ready to radically alter your appearance, to demonstrate to everyone watching who you *really* intend to be. Perhaps it's a change in life-direction, out of an unrewarding career or a stifling relationship... and defiantly *into* the vast unknown. Whatever stirrings of your 'next crazy adventure' are making themselves known, please seriously consider jumping *toward* 'em. These few years ahead may well be the single most promising period for dramatic left-turns and brash you-only-live-once gambles in your entire lifetime. If a daring Aries won't take full advantage of such an influence, who will?

You're still reverberating from the expansive waves of opportunity that enveloped you during Jupiter's trip through your sign during mid-2010 and into the first months of 2011. What previously hadn't even hit your radar suddenly entered the realm of possibility, and your worldview grew considerably larger. This injection of optimistic potential hopefully remains a positive persuasive influence over how you visualize your future. Now's the time to let go of your grip on the old, outdated concepts of self... to release the safety brake, rev the engine, and really see what this puppy can do. The freedom will be exhilarating, if not a bit terrifying at the same time. If you need extra emboldening to jump-start the excitement, try taking one giant liberating step during early-to-mid February.

Of course, it's likely not *everyone* in your life will be enthusiastically 'on board' with the new you... though it's not like you haven't dealt with this sort of thing before. Based on whether a certain individual is someone you want to keep in your life for a long time more, you might consider making some minor tweaks in your behavior, in order to show you actually care about their feedback. After all, if you're still experimenting with new ways of being, you could need to do a bit of fine-tuning to get it just so. During March and April, with Mercury retrograde intertwining itself with Uranus, don't be too proud to reverse a decision or take back something you started.

The main resistance you'll face, in the process of revolutionizing how you come across in the world, comes from an increasingly complicated relationship to your professional ambitions... and/or to those important characters who may hold a key role in supporting, or interfering with, your ultimate success. Thank Pluto in your 10th for both the intensified drive to achieve your loftiest goals *and* your conflicted love/hate stance toward the ridiculous hoops you must jump through to 'prove' your deservedness. One of these 'hoops' could indeed be a willfully obstructionist boss or colleague who's wielding the authority to keep things as they are—and keep you in your place. While you might fixate on this power-struggle, you aren't likely to emerge triumphant through the out-and-out confrontation; you're competing with the demon on its home turf. When the 'official' channels fail you, it's your sign to launch out on your own... and to put the ugliness of corrupt authoritarianism behind you.

Though you're undeniably well-equipped for the 'launch out on your own' part, it's what happens *after* that which is likelier to demand more of you. See, Aries, you are *not* known for your staying-power; yet, you'll find it impossible to build the lasting success you crave unless you sustain the effort beyond those first triumphant steps. This is one possible reason for tempering your fullest hyper-individualism with a bit of 'playing by the rules'... if only so you can do some of your innovative reforming from *within* the system, and perhaps save yourself from the long hard work of re-creating the wheel. Mounting a well-organized, disciplined and politically savvy challenge to institutional problems in late November and December will assist you in securing respect and good favor as 2013 begins.

You may need to court some strange bedfellows with whom you share control, so they may help ground and stabilize your fieriness. No person is an island. Few individuals, no matter how



brilliant or gutsy, achieve huge feats all by their lonesome. If you aren't considering how others will collaboratively plug into, and play off of, whatever you're building once it develops into more, you might end up replicating the very structure you're trying to defeat... only with *you* as the self-serving tyrant who needs overthrowing.

### **Challenges & Opportunities**

Your biggest challenges continue to involve other people... and not just because you Aries are often accused of being self-centered, due to your perpetual willingness to chase whatever your instincts direct you to, no matter if you accidentally step on someone's toes in the process. Saturn has been lodged in your relationship house (the 7th) since late '09, presenting you with one scenario after another in which you must weigh your needs against another person's. Hopefully, you've learned that a few deep breaths and calm discussion can go far in ensuring all parties walk away satisfied. In fact, if you've put a lot of emphasis into this mutual consideration, I'm sure you're seeing how the right collaborative partnerships assist you in your goals (as opposed to just trapping you or boxing you in). Your refusal to work toward a middle-ground in important relationships now, meanwhile, will leave a lasting negative imprint. Interpersonal exchanges during late April and early May could require extra patience; if this individual really matters to you, you should corral your rapid-fire tongue.

Saturn transitions into your 8th in early October, signaling you're due (between now and mid-2015) to tidy up spots where your most intimate arrangements—romantic, financial, familial—have become sloppy and, therefore, somewhat dangerous. If you're operating without a contract or a distinctly articulated basis for exchange, you're risking an ugly reality of clashing expectations. You can't dodge difficult issues any longer... not if you hope to prevent a further deterioration of the dynamic, perhaps to a point of no return. Brutally honest conversations throughout October and November will clarify the *real* situation beyond the superficial niceties. Should you realize you're never going to reach common ground on a nagging non-negotiable, it's probably time to start cutting your losses. Yet, if the scary stuff is aired and you both choose to stick around, knowing all that you now know... well, the foundation of your interdependence will be firmer than ever.

Jupiter's residence in your 2nd house since last June is supposed to bring good fortune in your economic zone. Please tell me that you've been experiencing this, yes? A healthy dose of self-worth is essential, of course, to persuading anybody else that you're valuable enough to compensate accordingly. Don't assume your wonderfulness is self-evident. You may have to take the time to spell out exactly *what* you bring to the table that's deserving of the dollars, a purposeful 'selling' of yourself that'd be especially profitable in mid-March. If you've got any extra dough to spend, consider investing it in something incredibly practical and safe. Every bit of added material security strengthens your safety net, so you can be that much more audacious in the other risks you're taking.

When Jupiter lands in your 3rd in June for a year's stay, you can expect a noticeable surge in your social life: more calls, emails and texts to answers; more informal invitations; more gossip to keep up with, and to spread. This additional exposure to a variety of pals, acquaintances and local characters lends you some nice lightweight distraction from the serious business of transforming your worldly position and/or negotiating dicier relationship issues. Not *everything* has to be a personal statement of revolution; sometimes, we just fill our time with the easy company of whomever's around, to give our minds a break and our tummies a good laugh. Enjoy the casual here-and-now pleasures of socializing, with no pressure for it to 'amount to something'.

### **Work / Career / Finances**

We've already touched on Pluto's long-range pressure to die-and-be-reborn in your professional situation, which includes refusing to settle for a meager spot under an unworthy superior's thumb. Needless to say, this intense 10th-house influence augurs an ongoing sense of unsettledness careerwise, as you undergo the sometimes-painful metamorphosis into Master of Your Own Destiny. Whether you are attempting to branch out into your own endeavor or rise through the ranks of an existing organization, you should plan on periodically facing pushback from those threatened by your ascent. If *you* are so eager to invest your fresh passions into the pot, then anybody who's been lazily cruising by is going to look bad—and they'll do whatever they can to stop *that* from happening. Consider this a test of how intensely you want what you want, or if your energies would be better spent somewhere without such a stubborn power-structure. Confront the problem as a matter of *principle*, not personal issue. If you detail the

questionable circumstances as objectively as possible (and preferably in written form, proof-read by a trusted colleague) sometime in January, you'll have a concrete platform to refer back to as the year progresses.

Mars spends the first half of '12 in your 6th house, where we tackle whatever pile of tasks, chores and duties are demanding our daily attention... an indicator of you expending an exceptional amount of sheer labor simply plowing through the large volumes of work expected of you. Mars's retrograde (Jan 23-Apr 13) emphasizes the possibility that you'll have to revisit certain details that were handled incorrectly or incompletely the first go-around, and/or that your productive efforts will be diverted elsewhere than you'd originally thought. Go with it, instead of grumbling about the change in plans. Reaching the previously identified goals is less important than putting in a decent effort every day. You'll be able to effectively reorient yourself come mid-May. Beware of burning yourself out, if you don't take a measured approach to your bodily habits during this time. Because your activity levels will be high, a stubborn cold or muscle ache could hang around longer than it ought to when you overexert (or overindulge).

The earlier part of the year also brings your best money-making potential, so be sure to bank any additional income made during this time, rather than counting on the increases to continue through the year's end. March is definitely your most lucrative month, so you'll want to say yes to every single opportunity that presents itself then. By the latter end of 2012, your financial independence may feel put upon, thanks to debts coming due or other interpersonal commitments pulling on your purse-strings. This influence *does* go both ways, however: If you're owed a sizable chunk of cash, you should probably consider trying to collect in October or November. It could take you a while to get it back, but persistence is key.

### **Relationships / Romance**

If you haven't figured it out by now, through everything I've written you thus far, relationships are *not* currently the easiest sector of your life... though, if you're consistently investing your most conscious attention to brokering the best balance between 'self' and 'other', you'll surely notice that progress is being made. Taskmaster Saturn moves from one interpersonally-related house into another during '12 (from the 7th to the 8th), meaning the questions about how much to compromise (versus refusing to do so) only get deeper and more important. If you've been

using scotch tape and paper clips to keep a shaky arrangement together, I wouldn't imagine they'll hold out much longer. You've got to *really* want to be in that specific relationship to justify all the work presently involved—but if you indeed do, trust me, the work *will* pay off.

In case this point wasn't made clear, it's *totally cool* for you to purposely choose *yourself* over a primary relationship, particularly under such a potent individuating influence as Uranus-in-your-1st. Naturally, the decision to take yourself off the market will probably make you even more appealing to those who supposedly can't have you. This appealing spark of you 'not caring' draws considerable attention to you in February... and again in the first half of November, when you can't help but play to their affections even as you simultaneously hold your distance. (Mixed messages much?) If it's a taste of hot-and-heavy fun you're after, September's looking pretty damn interesting. You seem to know just what to say to spur their interest. Whether there will be 'strings attached' or not remains to be seen.

Even if you're *not* currently coupled off, romance-style, Saturn still expects you to consider your patterns of behavior with regards to others. Friends, co-workers and other collaborators are all counting on you to stick with your encounters long enough to grasp where *they're* coming from—and whenever you *don't*, they're liable to cause a stink that'll occupy even *more* of your attention. Think about *that* next time you try to rush somebody along. Mid-July presents you a rich training-ground for practicing your patient listening skills. Of course, if you're adamantly against treating your interpersonal connections with such earnest reflection, you'll love the Venus retrograde in your 3rd (May 15-Jun 27), when there'll be an excess of relational possibilities... and no need to dwell too long with any single one. But let's just hope you don't get too attached to any of *those* squirrely hotties. Their unavailability puts the shoe on the other foot. Karma can be a real bitch.

## TAURUS

As the fixed-earth sign, Taurus is known for preferring to keep both feet planted firmly on the ground. This is what makes you perhaps the most loyal and dependable (as well as stubborn) of the signs... a quality that may not always strike you as glamorous or attention-worthy, but which ultimately serves you rather well. While others may hastily dive into impractical or foolhardy situations, based purely on a whim or a convincing-sounding idea, you Taureans are almost *radical* in your need to see some *tangible* evidence of a good thing before involving yourself in it. Slow to decide, slow to commit, slow to advance: This gradual investment of your energies pays off with a steady endurance, allowing you to continue along long after the impetuous types have burned themselves out.

What to do, then, when the earth beneath your feet is in a peculiarly unstable phase? The strong currents of dramatic transformation, which are now overtaking us all thanks to the intensifying Uranus-Pluto square, don't provide much safe ground for you Tauruses to root into. At times like this, your relative conservatism and aversion to sudden change can seem almost quaint to those who'd sooner hurry you along or leave you behind. Yet, your deep connection to the earth element and the fruits of its fertile soil—e.g., food and drink, rocks and plants, physical contact with other humans—fosters an embodied simplicity that helps to anchor during periods of uncertainty. The world may be going crazy, but if we've got some morsel or libation to stimulate our taste-buds and fill our tummies with, a beautiful object to admire or meaningful possession to cherish, a hug or rub to enjoy... well, everything's okay for one more day. Reminding yourself of this will ease your discomfort; reminding others, through sharing sensate pleasures, helps bring them back down to earth.

Since last June, you have welcomed the benefic influence of Jupiter in your sign, granting you a wider perspective on what's possible for you than you've had for some time. Jupiter often brings a renewed enthusiasm for life, as new opportunities show up where previously we saw little... and certain places where we've felt stuck magically begin to loosen up. Hopefully, over the past several months, you've let this optimistic streak wash over you, allowing you to appreciate all you've reaped up until this point (rather than continuing to harp on what hasn't worked as well). Jupiter, however, doesn't *force* anything magnificent to happen—he merely creates an environment in which more *can* happen, should we invest ourselves in it, like a tail-

wind enhances the speed and power of a vehicle's motion. In fact, because of Jupiter's trine to Pluto (which began in '11 and hits its final peak in mid March), any relative ease you're experiencing could cause you to become too comfortable with how things have been ('if it ain't broke, don't fix it!')... reinforcing certain limiting beliefs that, in the longer term, actually *need* to be reexamined. Enjoy your blessings, but don't let 'em serve as an excuse to ignore the writing on the wall; Jupiter won't save your ass forever.

While the first several months of 2012 offer you a riper-than-usual harvest of personally self-gratifying upshots (if, that is, you actively take advantage of the positive potentials), you may find the latter part of your year forcing you to rebalance into greater interpersonal presence. With both Mars and Venus retrogrades having stimulated fairly self-serving spots in your chart, you could grow too accustomed to others bending to your will... and, once Saturn hits your relationship zone in early October, they'll no longer choose to do so quite as happily. Just because you're solid as a rock, that doesn't mean you shouldn't push yourself into formerly forbidden territory, demonstrating your openness to exploring prior blindspots through deepening relationships. Inflexibility is *not* a quality that brings you closer to others. You might 'win' a power-struggle, but you'll be gloating in the victory all by your lonesome.

### **Your Personal Revolution**

'That's just how it is' is a dangerously weak explanation for why you believe the things you do, Taurus. It paints over a highly complex landscape with bold black-and-white strokes which, though they may leave you feeling momentarily secure in where you stand, ignores the changing reality. Pluto's longtime visit to your 9th is urging you to do better than that, when it comes to investigating the root-sources of your guiding life-philosophies. He cautions against fundamentalism of any kind, the type of totalizing worldviews that often prevent us from reaching out into foreign encounters, due to the need to protect our moral righteousness. Especially in this momentous phase of history, *too* 'pragmatic' a stance will leave you grumbling about 'the kids these days'... all while the braver folks are busy remaking a world without your kind in it.

When you're not busying yourself with attempts to hold your grasp on reality as you've claimed it must be, you can detect seemingly *illogical* instincts rising up from within you, informing you,

in unintelligible language, how much *more* there is than you could *ever* understand... and that, if you're courageous enough to toss the map aside, heed this wholly *other* type of wisdom, and forge a new path through the wilds, you just might get a bigger bang out of life than your rationale has allowed you. Maybe such zany departures are actually your only chance at thriving in these strange circumstances. Destiny sometimes has an odd, ironic sense of humor; watch for her to crack a couple mind-altering jokes in mid February.

As Uranus shakes up your 12th (where we experience mystical oneness with the entire universe, or else resist such notions altogether by telling ourselves we're being silly), it'll take a whole lot of coercive self-talk to talk yourself *out* of lightning-fast epiphanies you intuitively know to be true but, frustratingly, can't clearly justify. Will you ignore these truths, just because you don't like the form they showed up in... or because they don't fit some hard-line philosophy you're clinging to?

If you find you're making neither heads nor tails of this funky new manner of deriving direct inspiration, perhaps you need to take these big questions more seriously. Throw yourself into a deeper relationship with your version of God, if you've got one... or if you don't, address the mystery of *where* all these hunches and instincts are coming from. Do some heady reading. Take a mind-expanding class. Go somewhere far away, to get perspective on how other people have come to make sense of what defies easy understanding. Mid January is a powerful head-opening time for setting yourself on a quest that could last all year and beyond. This is not mere navel-gazing; pushing past the concretely obvious is an essential part of your staying sane.

I'm not saying you've got to trade in your briefcase and corporate-semi-casual attire for a white robe and an unlimited pass to the ashram, by the way. Nobody else need be aware of your engagement with these hidden aspects of existence. I'm also acutely conscious of the trademark Taurus resistance to anything too airy-fairy. So, please center these explorations *in your body* through momentary retreats into yoga or other meditative practices. July is a particularly fruitful month for such work. Once you receive a firsthand-direct transcendent experience of some type, as I've been describing, you'd be a stubborn fool to outright dismiss what you may learn from it. And maybe your personal version of Meaning (capital 'M') should start *there*, instead of artificially imposing beliefs on yourself that don't adequately serve what your senses are telling you.

## Challenges & Opportunities

Saturn has made sure, over his past 2½ years lodged in your 6th house, that you *know* where your responsibilities lie. I'll bet you've had a lot of mundane b.s. to deal with since late 2009... more than your ordinary amount, and with harsher consequences for *not* dealing with it. On the upside, if you stayed on top of this work, you should be feeling stronger and more capable than ever. If you shirked your obvious duties, alas, you've left yourself in an unsustainable lurch... with a *lot* of cleanup in store, if you want to be someone who takes care of your own business. All this also applies to your physical well-being, which is often little more than the cumulative effect of the habits you've been keeping. Any unwanted bodily symptoms are a warning to discipline yourself toward better ways of living. Make corrective commitments to a healthier regimen in mid-to-late September.

In early October, Saturn moves into your 7th house, the domain of all your important one-on-one relationships... a move that should not be taken lightly, as long as you sincerely wish to experience a sense of genuine *partnership* in your life. Saturn in the 7th calls for greater consciousness both in how we treat others *and* how we expect to be treated by them; unfair dynamics, in either person's favor, will be turning ever more acute and impossible to ignore. During the 2½ years ahead, you'll witness a 'shaking-out' in your personal relationships, where those that have run their course are likely to pass away, while the ones which are most important to you should become that much more solid. Whichever scenario plays out will be a direct result of whether you've put in adequate effort with the appropriate people.

Good-luck Jupiter first entered your sign last June and, ever since, he's been cooking up a more buoyant, upbeat outlook for you. Haven't you noticed? Jupiter's presence is as if suddenly seeing your life with the blinders off, like Dorothy's transition from a black-and-white Kansas to the full-technicolor majesty of Oz. Sometimes, the influence seems subtle while we're under it; desperately searching for all that 'good luck' can heighten our expectations to ridiculous levels, when the actual effect is simply a cosmic helping-hand rather than a savior. Yet, often, when we look back at the year we spent under Jupiter's benevolent guidance, we retrospectively interpret it as one in which our worldly confidence expanded significantly. Mid-March should provide you a heartier helping of this appreciative awareness. During that time, you've got a synergy of astro-forces conspiring to deliver you something you really want.



By June '12, Jupiter's moving into your 2nd, which is traditionally considered the house of our money and material resources, as well as the *self-worth* required to actually draw in the cash-dollars. This transition is all about building upon the wider perspective granted by Jupiter's travels through your sign, so that you can bring in *real* symbols that you've integrated the expansion of self into the physical realm. You may find your bank account growing through multiple income-streams, perhaps continuing with a less-than-ideal 'day job' while simultaneously starting with a more personally fulfilling venture. Don't blow all the money on indulgences. By the beginning of August, one of these income-generators may peter out—no need to cling to it, if you've been wise with the extra cash, since you obviously have other options.

### **Work / Career / Finances**

As we've already discussed, both Saturn and Jupiter are tied up with your professional and financial concerns at different points in '12. The first three-quarters of the year continue a recent Saturn-spawned trend of considerable day-to-day work demands, which should *finally* relax a bit come October and beyond. It helps to keep a consistent rhythm, rather than slacking off for a few days... then playing hardball catch-up for the next few. Expect fairly regular rebellious urges to totally screw off throughout March and April. As long as you only *briefly* indulge the sentiments, you won't get too far behind; trying to squelch 'em altogether, on the other hand, probably won't work too well. July and August could prove quite productive, as long as you don't get mired in conceptual debates about the 'right' and 'wrong' way to do things, when you ought to be simply *doing*. If you can hold back the tyrannical self-talk, you'll get a lot done. Pay special attention to the methodological ideas that present themselves in mid-to-late September.

Jupiter lifts your earning potential from June onward, thanks to his new place in your 2nd. However, be aware that Jupiter in the 2nd can *also* inspire excessive spending. If you have to feed yourself a sweet-sounding line, in order to justify an unnecessary purchase, you're probably just playing mind-games. Venus spends four full months in your money house, beginning in early April, which further emphasizes your heightened power of attraction in 2012. Yet, from May 15 through Jun 27, she'll be retrograde in this house, making it a bit trickier to accurately assess the worth of items. If a deal sounds too good to be true, you might not be

seeing it clearly—or the person *offering* it to you, who'll *also* be under the Venus-retrograde influence, could be undervaluing it. Will you still be happy with this purchase three months down the line? Ask lots of clarifying questions. If you're unsure, perhaps postpone the final signing until late July or August.

With more of a 6th- than a 10th-house focus during '12, you should concentrate more on continuing with your regular consistent efforts... without expecting tons of immediate recognition. Uphold your confidence, without reading too much into superficial tokens of professional import, like titles or job descriptions. Pump up the volume on the opinions you offer in late January and early February, as your voice will ring with more authority; just be ready with the supporting facts, should you face a litany of detail-oriented questions. Spend the final weeks of the year in preparation for a strongly career-oriented kickoff to 2013. You'll probably be chomping at the bit to make a bigger splash as soon as the New Year's celebrations are over.

### **Relationships / Romance**

In the love zone, the first half of your year is powerfully impacted by Mars's presence in your 5th, where he's quite insistent on claiming the specific sorts of fun-time pleasure he most wants. This is a perfect chance to inform partners or potential suitors *exactly* what it takes to win your heart, even if you must gently correct former misperceptions about your desires. Take matters into your own hands, and direct the interested/interesting parties toward the activities, venues and experiences likeliest to make you smile. Your powers of persuasion are especially keen in mid-March and mid-May. Please be conscious that this mix of a 1st-house Jupiter and a 5th-house Mars, active into June, could unconsciously bloat your ego... leaving others to see you as overbearing or self-important. There's a fine line between assertiveness and controlling behavior.

Venus retrograde in your 2nd (May 15-Jun 27) could lure back old flames or almost-weres with potentially appealing offers to give you what they previously weren't willing or able to. There's a good chance this is more 'talk' than 'action' on their part, so proceed with one foot in openness and the other in skepticism. Their reappearance may merely serve to reinforce your much-improved commitment to taking care of your own needs, instead of hoping someone else will

save the day. It *is* possible, by the way, to mend fences without reinitiating the relationship full-on. If your slate has been cleared by August, it's probably time to dip back out in the pool... not to pressure yourself with heavy-trip expectations, but just to keep yourself socially stimulated. Don't judge new acquaintances by the thoughts they espouse; let the unspoken vibe tell you what you need to know.

Saturn's appearance in your relationship house (the 7th) in early October sets you up for 2½ years of being extra-mindful about how you form lasting connections with people, in romantic contexts and elsewhere in your life. If you've allowed undercurrents of tension or dissatisfaction to linger, unattended to, you'll be forced to contend with the consequences of not having discussed them earlier. The path forward leads through the eye of the storm: scary at first, cathartic in the end. This is also your chance to deal with any difficult negotiations required to attain additional intimacy—and if you can't 'go there' with a certain individual, that should tell you something about the quality of your bond. Coming to a mutual acceptance about what each person brings (and *doesn't* bring) to the table by the end of November will only further unite you a team during December.

## GEMINI

Shift gears, turn the other cheek, explore the *other* side of the story... these are strategies the versatile Gemini typically relies upon to feed your endless stream of curiosities, and to keep life friendly and fun. No other sign has such an easy ability to quickly establish a rapport with any and every sort of person one might encounter. And with such tremendous people-skills, it's no wonder you Geminis are usually surrounded by a coterie of engaging pals and peers, each of whom connects so smoothly with a specific side of your personality. Who cares if not *everybody* gets to see *every* bit of your full self, as long as you're being as genuine as possible with what you *do* reveal to them? Those who criticize you for your intrinsic adaptability (or being 'two-faced', as they might say) are unfairly singling you out for something we all possess—the natural contradictions and inconsistencies that make us humbly *human*. What internal paradox are *they* not dealing with in themselves?

Yet, if there's an actual dark-side to your manner of being (aside from others' foolish projections), you come face-to-face with it whenever you must confront serious matters that you *can't* shake off or look away from as easily as you'd like. Many Geminis feel deeply uneasy if they can't find a relatively happy or casual face to wear, in order to maintain the social flow without making others feel unduly put-upon with less-than-breezy issues. Will they still enjoy your company, or even *like* you, if all you can talk about is that 'heavy' topic which has been so pervasively weighing on you? But if you *avoid* the topic, aren't you being somewhat inauthentic about what's *really* going on in your life... sparing them the burden perhaps, but likewise sparing them an important *truth*?

If figuring out where to strike this balance between lively sociability and bare forthrightness is of recent familiarity to you, Gemini, that's probably because you haven't been living through the most buoyant of times lately. Pluto's dredging up some of the harshest reality-checks of your life as he trudges painfully slowly through your 8th house, forcing you to look at matters of great consequence: psychological enmeshments, debts and dues, literal life-and-death circumstances. *Not* your standard cocktail-hour conversational fare. Saturn, meanwhile, is lodged in your 5th, inhibiting your usual ability to find *some* pleasurable angle in nearly every situation. Because your mood's thusly been somewhat stormier than normal, you've had to become that much more particular about *how* to spend your leisure-time... if, that is, you don't

want to plaster on an insincere smile and spew niceties. Consider it a hard-earned lesson about the value of being unabashedly *real*, regardless of audience.

Though you're not exactly 'out of the woods', you *will* welcome some promising astrological effects in 2012... which are very likely to provide you more options (where previously you couldn't, or wouldn't, see any) that could open up entirely new ways of restoring pleasure to your life. Good-luck Jupiter begins his once-every-12-years visit to your sign in June, magically removing the blinders you've been wearing, to reveal amazing potential for growth-inspiring opportunities (in any or every area) that are right in front of your face. As if that weren't enough, Venus (the *other* benefic planet) spends an atypical *four* months in Gemini (early April through early August), kissing you with many gentle blessings and an extra somethin'-somethin' that'll turn plenty of admirers' heads in your direction. This lengthy Venus transit is due to a six-week retrograde (May 15-Jun 27) which could drop some unfinished romantic and/or financial business back in your lap... along with a *new* alternative, for contrast, to get you to consider what you *really* want most. By the second half of '12, life should look much different—and *improved*—compared to the opening of the year.

### **Your Personal Revolution**

As I mentioned, Pluto in your 8th house is playing quite the stinker in his absolute refusal to offer any partial release from the all-consuming faceoff with *real life*, which isn't always full of sunshine and rainbows. His role here? To deepen your level of engagement with the trickier parts of human relations, to force you into unwavering acknowledgment of those shadowy drives (in your character and/or someone else's) that don't exactly abide by the rules of 'fair play'... and ultimately to remake you into a less-naïve, more-purposeful person, acutely aware of the unavoidable tradeoffs of investing your time, money and/or emotional energy into one situation over another. In other words, you can no longer pretend your commitments don't have consequences. 'Getting out' or 'getting through' is not always as simple as changing your mind, once you've gotten pretty far 'in'. Feigned innocence no longer functions as a valid excuse.

It's rather revolutionary, you must admit, to stare *this* level of stark intensity square in the eyes—with nowhere to run, and no lighter consideration to substitute in—and stick with the discomfort. If you're confronting it *alongside* somebody else, you may be feeling more interpersonally

vulnerable than ever before... which, awkward as it may be, is also bringing you *closer* to each other in shared difficulty. The best you can do is be wholly honest with each other, brutally so if need be. It might hurt, but you'll be the better for it; this is no time for indulging illusions. If, however, you're pitted *against* another or *losing* something you once thought was forever, the pain involved in battling through it mustn't be repressed. At some point in the future, you *will* emerge from it transformed and empowered... as long as you're exploring every crevice of this rich testing-ground. But no matter how you slice it, Pluto-in-the-8th is never a walk-in-the-park. He thrusts some of life's uglier realities at us, testing our psychological resolve to rise from the ashes of a destroyed past.

Where you can expect a *release* from this heaviness, courtesy of Uranus's liberating shakeup of your 11th house, is by jumping into a radically new community involvement... one that brings you together with fresh faces and an electrifying team-spirit, to get you out from beneath the dark cloud and remind you that *other* people often provide our best impetus to move forward. Maybe you'd benefit from joining a group of folks who've shared similar difficulties, to receive solace in your process and/or to offer others support from your own experience. Maybe you see some organization or cause that could use your assistance and, by participating, you can channel your raw emotion toward a worthy goal (as opposed to just feeling sorry for yourself). Or perhaps, due to what Pluto-in-the-8th has taken from you, you need to find a new social circle (or two) to occupy yourself with. Initiate such a leap in mid-February. Whatever the context, you'll ward off self-destructive stuckness by pushing yourself back into circulation... and the novel stimulation available from people you *haven't* known for years will work wonders for restoring the 'you' you've been missing.

As part of this revolution, then, you'll hopefully come to appreciate the tremendous social freedom in *not* playing to your imagined perceptions of *others'* perceptions of you. This is one reason why opting for new affiliations with folks who truly *understand* what you've been contending with is so advantageous an approach: You can speak very openly, off the cuff, without stressing about whether you're 'bringing them down'. Try more of this unfiltered disclosure throughout March and April, as a method to quickly assess which social settings are the best fit for the deeper, realer you. Those who egg you on to say and do more of the same—who apparently embrace you, angst fully exposed—will fan your inner fire with their supportive approval. And those who seem freaked out by the uncompromising edge in your tone? Don't

be afraid to cut 'em loose. You have no shortage of friends, with even more showing up in '12. Clear the space for people who you needn't 'reel yourself in' with.

### **Challenges & Opportunities**

Serious-dude Saturn has been in your 5th house since late 2009, raining on the fun parade and making it considerably more difficult to just revel in the up-side of whatever circumstances you find yourself in. He's insisted you're doubly sure to fill your free moments with what really *does* float your boat (instead of doing what everybody else claims is a 'good time' but which you could ambivalently give or take). That has left you to work extra-hard to include the *appropriate* forms of merriment into your days, which can seem like a strange contradiction in terms: 'working' to ensure you're playing properly. Yet, what pleases one person may be a total bore to another... and a core element of accurately portraying *who you are* is making these preferences known, even if that limits your extracurricular options. Why waste your precious leisure, though, on activities (or people) that don't adequately express your unique life-spark? By mid August, you may finally be ready to say 'no'—since you'll have ample alternatives that call for an enthusiastic 'yes'.

Your challenges become much more tangible starting in early October, once Saturn arrives in your 6th, for 2½ years worth of increased responsibility in the mundane realm of everyday chores and tasks. Here, Saturn asks you to refine your rituals, for a more efficient and reliable handle on all the building-blocks for a productive life. Ideas must be worked, day by day, into manifested results, or they weren't as 'brilliant' as they sounded on paper. Eyes must be firmly planted on the process itself, not pie-in-the-sky imaginings of what *might* happen further down the line. Physical health also takes on greater importance, as persistent overindulgences or a history of ignoring your body's needs will start to catch up with you. October's the right month for starting to root out energy-depleting habits, and for taking a hard analytic glance at which work-methods must be improved upon. By the end of November, you'll have clear evidence of how any changes you implemented are affecting you.

Jupiter's been hiding in the foggy haze of your 12th house since last June, obscuring from your immediate awareness the major growth that's been incubating on the back-burner. If the only optimism you've managed to summon is a general consciousness that 'something better than

this' will be headed down the pipeline at some indistinct future moment... well, frankly, that's good enough. Jupiter-in-the-12th responds well, albeit invisibly, to our holding out hope for a brighter future. In mid March, be incredibly *specific* in spelling out to the universe your intentions for the next chapter, as the four months of Venus in Gemini will begin in early April. An important aspect to include: You really *must* iron out any contested details that have spawned irritating discord on the home-front throughout early '12. You mustn't feign an easygoing stance when the little shit really *does* matter.

You'll already be delighting in Venus's good favor once Jupiter joins the party in your 1st house come June, kicking off your yearlong reintroduction to a more noticeably upbeat mood. Simply put, this is one of the best astrological influences a person could hope for... though we don't always recognize in the moment how much our life is changing for the better. Looking back at this period (June '12 through June '13) from the future you're now creating, however, you'll clearly grasp its benevolent significance. With that in mind, you should eagerly welcome anything that carries you beyond the confines of that 'same ol' life' you've grown weary of perpetuating—even if you're worried that it'll mean another loss. Some 'losses', especially those of our own initiating, end up being the best things that ever happen to us. Those are the sort of opportunities to look out for in July.

### **Work / Career / Finances**

Though the looming life-challenge(s) you've been tangling with are eventually leading you to a stronger sense of self, that doesn't necessarily deliver any clearer notions of where your genuine calling is leading you... certainly not with mystifying Neptune drifting into your career house (the 10th) this year, to stay through 2025. Yeah, you read that right: Neptune fogs up your professional zone for *thirteen* years, though that's not to say you'll be lost at sea the whole time. What it *does* mean, alas, is you'll need to surrender the logical straight-line perspective to understanding your overall career trajectory—and instead get accustomed to wandering around by *feel*, going wherever your sixth-sense tells you your skills can be put to good use. You'll get a good example of these divine whispers in the second half of February, when your heart tugs you in a direction your mind can't completely grasp. Learn to follow these whispers: As long as they're guiding you to places where you'll be helping make the world a better place, through support or service or inspired creative vision, that's enough to know.



With the big-picture question of worldly achievement clouded by Neptune, it becomes that much more urgent to focus on your day-to-day experience of work, and especially so once Saturn hits your 6th in early October. In preparation for the toughening-up of your daily routine that Saturn's presence warrants, you should consider pushing yourself harder than usual from late August through September, when Mars will heighten your productive capabilities. Be open to trying out different ways of getting stuff done in October and November, when your priorities might shift (and shift again) and/or you must revisit a job that wasn't taken care of properly the first time. You could actually *enjoy* resolving these issues once and for all, despite the additional work required.

Money issues continue to be more complicated than you'd like (thanks *again*, dastardly Pluto), keeping your financial fate inextricably tied to another person's and/or to an agreement not within your control to easily alter. As you begin to align to Neptune's 10th-house callings, you'll find your material needs are likelier to take care of themselves, the more energy you invest in serving the greater good. Besides, more than ever before, you're seeing through the artifice that more money yields greater satisfaction—not that money isn't important, of course, as much as it always play second-fiddle to meaningful emotional connection. Finances take on a central role during June and July, as Venus wraps up her retrograde and turns direct again. How you *spend* your cash is one area in which your rational mind mustn't surrender to your heart (who could inspire truly foolish expenditures you'll come to regret).

### **Relationships / Romance**

The changing astro-climate sure looks encouraging for Geminis on the hunt for a new romance or a rekindling of sparks, thanks to you spending a full one-third of the year under Venus's amorous spell. Even those of you mired in unresolved relationship business as 2012 rolls in can expect *some* positive developments that'll free you up to get your groove on again. And with Saturn wrapping up his transit of your 5th, you've hopefully gained some concrete insight into what you actually *prefer*. Just because you *can* form a relationship with any number of types of people doesn't mean you *should*. That lesson rings through loud and clear in August.

Venus retrograde (which, like I told you, happens in *your* sign in late May and June) is notorious for bringing back old flames, maybe-babies, and are-we-or-aren't-we situations... all examples

of multiple-possibility that are only *magnified* by the Gemini influence. Before you complain about any drought-like conditions you've recently endured, let me warn you against tempting fate because: *when it rains, it pours*. You're likelier to suffer from an excess of differently appealing options than a lack, which ought to bring a much-needed shit-eating grin of pleasurable relief to this zone of your life—though it doesn't help you to determine who's who and/or which one's best for you. This lovely foil to the weightier situation in your life could be incentive enough to jump the sinking ship. Even if the glimmering alternative doesn't last very long, perhaps it appeared simply to loosen you up.

Your one-on-one communications could go a bit haywire in late October and early November, when you might lack the patience to pay as close attention to *others'* words as you should. Yes, you're busy—and no, that doesn't excuse you from hearing the other person out, if you expect them to do the same. Even once the glitches work themselves out in December, you may still discover you two are on a different page: You see a multitude of options on the table, while they're being pretty black-and-white in their attitude (or so you think). Don't be so sure, however, the problem is *theirs*. After all, you *are* operating under Jupiter's exaggerating lens, and it would be hard for *any* non-Gemini to keep up with you at that time.

## CANCER

The world could flip upside-down and sideways (which is kind of what appears to be happening), and we could still count on you, Cancer, to care about the emotional well-being of those around you. Where others might flip their switches to survival mode and start hoarding all their goodies for themselves, you'd continue checking in to make sure everybody else was okay... maybe even give 'em half of what *you* had or cook 'em a hot meal to warm their tummies. Thank you, as always, for serving as the nurturing heart of the zodiac tribe. With a Cancerian in our lives, we know that *you* will know, intuitive as ever, when something's wrong with us... and that you will extend yourself to us, in loving-kindness, doing whatever you can to make us feel better. We know that makes *you* feel better, too.

Yet, when it's *you* who are facing an emotional struggle or otherwise crave the tender nurturance of a caring companion, your first response to your own needs often doesn't resemble this same scenario. The shadow-side to your supportive personality: You usually feel much more comfortable taking care of others than yourself, even when *you* require caretaking more than they do. And sometimes, even with the loveliest of intentions, you may go so far as to *impose* your so-called 'caring' onto those who might not want it, in a backwards projection of your own need to be needed. (Deep, huh?) You Cancers are constantly learning how to keep your own emotional cup full with self-love, so you can better tend to others... from a place of personal satisfaction, not self-imposed deprivation.

This issue of caring for others vs. caring for yourself has intensified in importance in recent years, now that Pluto is in your house of interpersonal relations (the 7th), drawing previously unexamined dynamics to the surface in your closest partnerships. Are you bowing to manipulative pressures from someone you desperately want to keep happy, at the expense of your *own* happiness? Or have you unconsciously roped them into needing you, to reserve yourself an important role in their life? Wherever unequal undercurrents of power have left one party catering to the other, the imbalance has tipped ever more precariously toward that side—with a crisis-point looming on the horizon. It cannot be avoided. Yet, on the other side of it, the relationship will have become more unwaveringly honest, and thus deeper... or it'll have devolved into something so blatantly problematic, you'll probably be ready to end it. Either extreme, however, leads you to a transformed dynamic likelier to address your *real* needs.

The first six months of 2012, with Mars loitering extra-long in your 3rd, provides you a chance to get outside the hyper-intensity of a single one-on-one relationship... and to spread your energies around in more directions, stimulating your sense of social connectedness and helping to diffuse any undue heaviness you've been carrying around. In casual friendly encounters, the expectations you place upon one another will be much lower. You can more freely give of yourself, with less likelihood of either being taken advantage of or developing under-the-surface resentments. Plus, by exposing yourself to a wider slice of different personalities, you'll reap a variety of insights and opinions from folks with less of a direct (and potentially controlling) stake in the choices you make. Use this opportunity, which is especially ripe in mid-March, to ask for outside feedback on any interpersonal situations that are giving you trouble. If you listen to them as objectively as possible, others will give you a *very* good idea of what they're hearing from you when you describe the troublesome relationship.

### **Your Personal Revolution**

Pluto's powerful place in your relationship house plays an inescapably central role in how *all* Cancers must embrace the changing world-situation. Whether we're talking about a massive metamorphosis in a key existing partnership (with a spouse or romantic mate, a best friend, a business colleague or creative collaborator) or a total overhaul in *how* you relate one-on-one in general (with obvious ramifications for future relationship potential), you *will* confront some complication during these revolutionary years, which must be examined deeply, no stone unturned and no sacred-cow indulged as 'off-limits'. I don't pretend this is an easy process (which is why I'm not holding back with the dramatic language), but it's one which is essential to your psychological growth. Increasing your awareness of what drives your relationship involvements or lack thereof, an unfolding that often forces us to own up to some previously unconscious behavior we aren't exactly proud of, ultimately brings you closer to getting exactly what *you* most want—and further from the patterns that have left you dissatisfied in the past.

Knowing this is the backdrop against which all your interpersonal dealings are presently playing out, then, you mustn't shy away from the 'thickening' of energy between you and another person who's important in your life (or who you'd *like* to become important). Poke at the undercurrent. Press the hot button. Don't be afraid of what might change, once you speak aloud that sentiment which can never be taken back. Things *will* change, regardless of whether you

embrace the head-on facing of it or push it away. But to follow the latter approach, alas, is to disown your power in helping determine what happens next, based on you asserting your desire. Playing the kind-but-fearful victim invites increasing exploitation, maybe even abuse, at the hands of someone perfectly willing to take what *they* want from the situation. To say you're not at least somewhat responsible for that would, sadly, be untrue.

A likely instigating factor in bringing your relationship issues to a head is the ongoing instability and/or chaos in your public life, courtesy of Uranus inciting radical change in your 10th. In short, you're being shaken into a fresh professional (or other outside-community) position—by your own choice, or by circumstances out of your control—that's probably as unsettling as it is potentially liberating. This is a time for taking big risky leaps of faith in what you're doing out in the world, as there's not a moment to waste... and if you aren't voluntarily making the jump, some external force is likely to push you off the edge. Struggling to figure out what such a 'jump' might entail? Be open to an epiphany on the topic during March and April, when sudden flashes of enlightening insight deliver a radical truth in fairly cut-and-dry terms.

Obviously, with such dynamic transition going down in your outer-achievement zone, you require as much confident self-focus on the matter as you can possibly muster. Surely, anyone could see that. Right? Therefore, the manner in which key individuals respond to *your* changing circumstances will tell you *a lot* about whether they have your best interests at heart—or if they're more concerned with how everything is going to affect *them*. They will step in with more meaningful support than ever before, with amazing ripples of intimacy that bring you much closer... or they'll more profoundly disappoint you, undermining your ability to evolve into a surer public figure, sabotaging your ambitions, trying to keep you under their thumb.

Simultaneously, *your* expectations of how much care you ought to receive from those you share your life with will reveal much about your stance in relationships. Will you be strong (and *specific*) in asking for the support you need? And if you aren't getting a response that pleases you, are you going to suck it up in quiet resentment... or will you initiate some interpersonal consequence, a signal that you simply *won't* settle for a dissatisfying relationship? June and August could be decisive months in navigating these issues.

Your personal revolution is admittedly tougher than that many other zodiac-signs are facing. It's an once-in-a-lifetime period of turbulence impacting both career *and* relationship, two main sectors of life. Keep the long-view in mind: This is about you aligning with an outer calling that frees you up to be your best self, and getting to share that life-experience with someone who really *wants* that for you too.

### **Challenges & Opportunities**

For the past 2½ years, Saturn's nagging presence in your 4th house, the zone of our inner emotional well-being, has demanded you confront the responsibility for giving yourself the kind of tender compassion you typically reserve for *other people*. If you've instead told yourself not to bother, that it's only *you* who suffers when you don't take the private 'me time' you badly need... well, then *suffering* has become an all-too-familiar internal experience. This Saturn *wants* you to prioritize your own feelings of comfort, even if it means drawing firm (but still loving) boundaries with family members who'd suck up every last bit of your emotional energy, if you'd let 'em. The environment where you live is a potential battle-ground for holding your own, which is a requirement for feeling genuinely safe and relaxed. Home must be seen as your rooting foundation, providing yourself a sense of security from which to transform the other areas of your life. The fight for its sanctity heats up in July.

Hopefully, by the time Saturn hits your 5th in early October, you'll have secured your inner core enough to take on the daring efforts of putting yourself out there more. Saturn's 2½-years in your 5th house raises the bar on how you keep yourself entertained and engaged with the *pleasurable* side of life. Are you consciously devoting attention to the activities and expressions that you personally enjoy, and that are genuinely *you*? If not, what are you waiting for? For creative types, this is an astrological pressure to actually *produce* what you claim as your art-form... or to find something better suited to your current personality. This influence could also push you to pay more dutiful attention to the children in your life, lest they lean toward troublesome behaviors due to a lack of guidance. It's also a reminder that romantic love is an all-important facet to any long-term couplings we concern ourselves with—this may be obvious, yet too easy for the dutiful day-to-day care-provider to forget. November's a good time to check in on whether your love tank is being kept full.

Jupiter's influence on the social spectrum you see yourself as part of, thanks to his occupying your 11th since last June, brings positive inspiration through your circle of friends and/or any groups or organizations you participate in. We've all got our personal crap to deal with, but uniting forces with other people in a shared interest or community investment helps us appreciate the camaraderie of banding together. Widening your network to include new allies or pals will increase the likelihood you'll see the world through a freshly clarifying lens; 'peer pressure', in *this* context, can work to your benefit. Sharing your still-developing thoughts about potential plans in May will both yield supportive suggestions and bond you more meaningfully with those who are 'on your team'.

Once Jupiter moves into your 12th come June, the biggest boosts to your being will be gathering momentum on the subtle metaphysical level... ultimately serving as a preparatory phase to an ultra-enthusing 2013. In fact, from April through July (when Venus is also in your 12th, for a retrograde-extended length of time), you'll witness some strange development(s) beyond your immediate control, which demand you release any grasp on trying to understand their full significance—and instead foster optimistic faith that the divine hand of fate is at play, opening up future opportunities still inaccessible to view. Praying or meditating upon 'best outcomes for all' is even more potent than usual, and can provide a place to channel any limbo feelings. Take any resonant dreams, poignant visions, or angel-like voices in your head with greater seriousness; the information they convey will point you in a certain general direction.

### **Work / Career / Finances**

As I told you, Uranus's lengthy visit to your 10th house bespeaks of a relative *instability* in terms of career questions... a shake-up intended to rouse you toward whatever sudden-turns are necessary to bust the stalemate and get you *excited* again. If faced with choosing between (1) taking some reinvigorating (though possibly terrifying) risk or (2) stubbornly clinging to an existing situation that's becoming increasingly precarious, Cancer, please *don't* cling. Even if your professional life seems steady, it still behooves you to try *something* radically different, if only to vent the disruptive Uranian energy somewhere productive. February promises the possibility of a favorable advance—if, and only if, you're willing to act fast. Sure, the quick-fire progress could result in a few harrying tangles for you to unknot during March and April; continuing to think and act on your feet (instead of panicking) will get the job done.

Discussions about money are best initiated in early July, but with as unrushed and unattached an attitude as you can muster. Don't think of the first offer as your final deal. The Mercury retrograde that soon follows will give you a chance to keep the talks going (possibly in inconsistent fits and starts) through the second part of August, which may be how long it takes to finally reach a resolution. It's essential you foster the internal confidence to really *believe* you're worth what you're asking for... or else you'll unconsciously surrender the upper-hand to the other party. Any benefit you earn from the process should arrive by September.

October is a busy month for plowing through the work-pile, aware that you'll want to finish as much of what's on your proverbial desk by the end of the calendar year. Diving right into the most pressing tasks is better than trying to hatch a strategic timeline that's likely to be upended by unforeseen delays or complications in November. Don't waste energy by letting that possibility upset you. You can continue to make headway, even in the midst of seeming 'distractions' (which may not be as off-topic as you imagine), through December. Again, keeping faith in the admittedly-cryptic Divine Wisdom by which this is all going down is your best antidote to debilitating worry.

### **Relationships / Romance**

Whether or not you're content with your current relationship status, the first half of your 2012 unambiguously encourages you to expand your social horizons. All Cancers could benefit from a few new folks to shoot the shit with, to join on outings, or to participate alongside in activities of mutual interest. This is a particularly fruitful path to follow, of course, if you're looking to meet a potential love-match. For many obvious reasons, friendship provides an ideal jumping-off point from which romance can blossom... either by 'one thing leading to another' or via introductions to a pal's pal. March and May are high times to exploit this opportunity.

Pluto's impact on your relationship life, which I've already described at length, unfortunately cannot be ignored. In assessing any existing circumstances or trying to figure out how to reel in a fresh one, the concept of 'all or nothing' ought to be forefront in your mind. At this time, it's *definitely* worth upping the stakes—and upping your game—in order to attain the total connection you crave. Might as well kick the year off with bar-raising conversations that address the pink elephant in the room during the first half of January. The sooner you



determine if the other person's up for the challenge of being unabashedly *real* or not, the more wisely you can direct your relationship-transforming efforts... either into the deepening bond between you, or into facing the limiting reality. Unattended-to power struggles could hit a climax in late November.

At the end of the day, you must perpetually inform yourself, love is supposed to be *fun*. We easily get caught up with the message that relationships require a lot of *work* (which, in many ways, they do)... but it shouldn't require that much effort to find joy in the company of someone you've chosen to be with. If all you ever experience is a sense of being bogged down in the negotiations and nuisances, you desperately need a second honeymoon—or, dare I say it, a second *marriage*. But if you aren't yet ready to throw in the towel, use the last few months of '12 to intently rekindle the sparks. Plan purposefully romantic moments, in which you two engage in the sorts of pleasurable play that first drew you to each other. It's also a good time for the single-and-mingling among you to lay it on thick with your latest crush or casual honey.

## LEO

Hey, Leo... you know you're considered the *royals* of the zodiac, right? Among all the signs, you are the one who most fully and naturally expresses the light of the Sun, the star of our solar system and astrological symbol of conscious self-identity. This is where your innate warmth and generosity of spirit comes from: You were born to shine brightly, to freely share your heart with everyone you encounter, so they may be touched by the unique love-of-life only you can offer. If that's what is being implied, then, by the stereotype of all you Leos wanting to be on stage front-and-center, spotlights illuminating your brilliance beautifully... well, what's so wrong with that? You are here to be the star of your show. As long as you're not hogging all the attention from everybody else, you should be *encouraged* to make the most of this production. Look at all you've got to give! And all you really want in return is a bit of acknowledgment and affection for daring to put yourself out there. Seems totally reasonable to me.

Of course, *all of us* are lodged in these earthly bodies to share ourselves with the world... though, sadly, many of us don't find it quite so easy to discern *who* our 'real self' is, let alone to wear it so proudly for others to accept or reject as they see fit (based on their mood or whichever of their own unresolved issues they project onto you). Yes, Leo, precisely *because* you shine so brightly, you often become a favorite target for our envious projections. We tease or scorn you Leos for wanting to make everything 'all about you' (though *who else* should we be living our lives for?), when we are too confused or afraid to address the imbalance by speaking up for our *own* needs. Please take compassionate responsibility for understanding this dynamic, reaching further to draw *others* out into the open, asking them engaging questions, enthusiastically listening. With your strength of being, you can inspire the folks around you to shine brightly along with you—or, if you're not careful, you'll steamroll right over 'em with your big personality.

2012 places the onus on you, Leo, to more seriously address some of the more mundane facets of your life—your day-to-day rhythms of productivity, your bodily health, your relationship to money—in order to support your ability to take whatever perspective-shattering risks will lead you to your 'life well-lived'. To touch the soaring freedom that'll guarantee you're not 'stuck' in circumstances you find meaningless or out of integrity with your values, you first must responsibly handle some of the very items you may feel 'stuck' having to handle. It's a strange

logic, I know, to seek *release* from the everyday bullshit by battening down the hatches more securely than you recently have. Think of it as having to master the earthly details so you can move *beyond* a place where they bog you down. As long as you're continuing to worry about the stuff you're willfully avoiding, that stuff retains its hold over you and your energies... and psychically prevents you from more fully immersing yourself in the exhilarating thrills of what *really* matters to you.

During the first half of the year, you have a lot of financially-related specifics to attend to, as a result of Mars's long visit to (and 2½-month retrograde in) your 2nd house, where we manage our own material security. This is your cosmic call to balance the out-of-hand account data once and for all, to critically analyze the fine-points of your economic inflow and expenditures, to create a detailed plan for addressing any debts or shortfalls, and to carefully budget for the remainder of '12. You haven't had such a good opportunity to actually *clean* things up for a few years, so don't resist doing what you *know* needs to be done. By midyear, the social aspect of your life hits a dramatic upswing, presenting you with many fresh and/or renewed options for *who* to align with. With only so much of yourself to go around, you may feel simultaneously pulled in many different directions... an experience worth sticking with as long as you can, so you can see which friend-group, team-participation and/or organizational-affiliation is most comfortable and appealing.

### **Your Personal Revolution**

There's nothing more soul-sucking than a super-steady existence, with no exposure to the eye-popping ideas and out-of-left-field adventures we'd never glimpse by staying in the same limiting environment we've always known. At least that's what Uranus in your 9th house would have you believe, as he stirs your wanderlust toward some quest for *what else is out there*.

Periodically, we are driven to get *outside* our usual frames of reference... to take a voyage (literal or metaphoric) to far-off lands, to explore some new philosophy that provides a different way of seeing the world, to continue our schooling (formally or otherwise) into further frontiers of understanding, to jump into *anything* that might shock our system out of its everyday haze and set us up for greater absorption in life's big questions. You are definitely at that spot now, in case you haven't yet identified that stirring. A perspective-rattling experience is beckoning you, Leo. Are you ready to open your mind?

Too often, the day-to-day demands don't afford us much chance to ponder the *whys* that underscore all that we do. Are you working your ass off on behalf of something you deeply believe in, or are you going through the motions because that's just what you've always done? Do you spend your time with people who care about things you find interesting, or were those folks merely the convenient companions you ended up with? Reflecting back on your adulthood from the late-end of life, will you feel you have made the most of your opportunities to see all this great big world has to offer? February through April is your moment to address these considerations, if they've recently escaped your attention... and to begin *taking action* to remedy any troublesome spots where you've been filling your days with dull insignificance.

However, Pluto would like to simultaneously remind you the cumulative product that is your life does *not* support itself on these singular fitful leaps of adventure—but *directly* on the deeds we accomplish and habits we practice *every single day*, one after the other. Presently in your 6th house, Pluto demands more from you than a once-in-a-lifetime-changing decision... followed by a dashing-away from your existing obligations. The 'high' of the initial leap toward Greater Meaning *always* eventually comes down, to be succeeded by a reality-check re-encounter with the same piles of papers, loads of laundry, tasks to deal with and hungry mouths to feed that were left behind. (Probably *more* of the same, in fact, if they had been previously ignored.)

Your trick to pulling off a successful revolution? Integrating a reinvigorated awareness of principled purpose *into* your day-to-day work regimen, so there's less of a divide between what you deem *important* and what you're spending your time actually *doing*. That way, you're helping to build yourself a life with more *lasting* meaning... rather than merely 'playing tourist' in that arena, then having to return to a dissatisfying routine (which will only seem *more* so, once you've tasted other possibilities).

Ultimately, to pull this off right, you could be facing a major change in your daily rhythms... perhaps even a job-change, if it feels like you've been investing your efforts in an unproductive (or ethically indefensible) manner. Even if you like what you're doing, the hours may be wrong for you. Is it possible to switch shifts or work from another location? Would going part-time open up the chance of taking on another gig alongside, one with a mission you more deeply believe in? Your health habits—including what you eat and how often, your sleep patterns, your exercise regimen—are also an essential element of how you organize your days, and therefore

may also require some tweaking, if you notice your spark of vitality has dimmed. Think more thoroughly about what needs to change during September and October, so you can wholly commitment yourself to a healthier everyday routine in late November or, if need be, early in '13.

### **Challenges & Opportunities**

During his 2½-year tenure in your 3rd house, Saturn has hopefully taught you a thing or two about the need to consistently stay in communication with all the folks in your immediate sphere-of-influence. As you've probably figured out, while there may not always be a pressing message to deliver, the very act of reaching out to connect—even if only to casually shoot the shit about who-knows-what—is an important demonstration of our care for others. This lesson holds continued relevance both in early March and early May, when your unbridled eagerness about an exciting development could so monopolize your consciousness that you forget to follow through on something, leaving others to wait and wonder. Because the 3rd house also rules siblings, cousins and neighbors, please be sure that you are holding up your end of these relationships. And if there's a piece of information or vital opinion you could regret not having offered up, though you know it'll be awkward once you come out with it, please push through the discomfort to be as honest and forthright as the situation requires. If you choose the tidy hands-off approach over kind-but-firm authenticity, it may come back to bite you in August.

Saturn glides into your 4th house by early October, a place where he insists you take your internal state of relative harmony more seriously than you have in a while... or else you'll find an undesirable bitterness starts to take hold on you during the years ahead. No matter how glowingly anybody on the *outside* perceives you, you cannot escape the emotional reality that begins from within. When Saturn's in the 4th (where he'll remain into 2015), we sometimes must draw difficult boundaries with family members who unconsciously vie for control over the choices we make. It's *you* who must assume responsibility for 'parenting' yourself, even if the struggle to reclaim power is painful. If you aren't happy in your current living situation—whether it's an unappealing space, in the wrong place, and/or shared with problematic housemates—this issue is coming to a head. Try to make some proactive progress on ironing out the problem in October and November.

Let's assume that Jupiter's visit to 10th house, which began last June, has revealed at least *some* encouraging opportunities in your professional and/or outer-world life. But please remember, 'good fortune' (at times a most elusive force of blessedness) doesn't always announce itself upon arrival. If you are being pushed out of a familiar role, this is a signal that you have *outgrown* it—and, once you land back on your feet, you'll see it was actually the *best* thing that could've happened. Take inspiration from the big-picture questions that Uranus-in-your-9th has gotten you to ask, and consider *what else* is possible for you out on the public-world stage. If you are being called to do more, embrace the expansion as a path for further professional—and personal—development. Ideas that flow in the first part of January are potent hints to how the rest of 2012 could pan out.

When Jupiter lands in your 11th in June, his arrival marks a high-point in your feeling like you belong to a community of friends, allies and/or like-minded individuals. Even if you were recently wandering as a lone lost-soul, wishing you could find some other people who click well with your vibe, I expect the tides will have quite noticeably turned by midyear. July's a time to take advantage of newfound or recently rediscovered comrades who may lend you a spot of helpful advice about big changes you're considering making. If for some reason you *aren't* experiencing a social renaissance under this transit, please remember that Jupiter doesn't *make* things happen, as much as ease their development once *we* act. Put yourself out into venues, events, activities and organizations where you'll actually *meet* people, especially during the second half of September when you'll quickly create friendly rapport with folks.

### **Work / Career / Finances**

Jupiter's transit through your career house (the 10th), which spans June 2011 through June 2012, means you're under the influence of a once-every-12-years energy of worldly *expansion*... a time to transcend the limits of what you previously thought possible, with every ounce of optimism you can gather. You could certainly choose to passively cruise through it, if you lack the desire to evolve your calling, though that would be a waste of such prime astrological support. This fortuitous atmosphere reaches a climax in mid March, when a grand-trine of earth planets forms a truly magical opening for work-related advances. From the moment 2012 kicks off, you should already be thinking long and hard about how to use this

opportunity. Be mindful: Small ‘fixes’ to items you wish you’d initially handled differently could yield startlingly huge effects.

Your 2nd-house money zone is hit by a Mars retrograde from January 23 through April 13, drawing a closer-up focus to the precise methods you presently deploy to manage the everyday nuts-and-bolts of your financial standing. Do you know where *every dollar* goes? Are there inefficiencies you might weed out—recurrent billings for services you don’t care about, multiple interest-heavy debts ripe for consolidation, service charges that would be eliminated by changing plans or providers—to save yourself a surprising amount of cash? Also, you may be wasting valuable *time*, which equals money as they say, by not putting enough of your vital work-hours toward income-generating activities. Look into ways to work smarter, but not necessarily longer. Whatever logistical kinks you excise from your life during Mars’s retrograde will set you up for a reenergized engagement with what *is* functioning well once May rolls around.

Pluto’s long-term presence in your 6th means that, ultimately, the *real* transformation in your work life comes (as I told you already) on the *day-to-day* level. You have to push yourself to genuinely *show up* to your duties, with increasing *presence*, on a consistent daily basis... and to learn to derive some profound significance from the *process* of accomplishing your earthly service, whether or not you ever receive recognition for a best-selling, award-winning product. The basic equation of expending effort to effect tangible change—with or without ‘progress toward an end’ in sight—is a mundane formula for transcendent experiences, if you’re open to that level of awareness. Take this idea seriously, and you’ll understand exactly what I mean come November, when you’ll revel in being vigorously engaged by the doing.

### **Relationships / Romance**

Though there’s surely nothing standing in your way of romantic satisfaction, the arrangement of the planets in 2012 indicates that relationship isn’t necessarily a top focus. Because you’re being asked to reflect upon the overall significance and mission of your being, this pressing self-prioritization is perhaps better done with an individualistic mindset. Does that mean you *can’t* pursue the most meaningful life with a partner by your side? Of course not. But as soon as you find yourself backing away from your instincts’ call-to-leap because you fear losing someone

who 'just wouldn't get it', perhaps you should be backing away from *them* instead. Aligning to the beat of your own personal integrity, at this point, takes precedence over aligning with any one other person.

If you've been carrying more than half the weight in a primary relationship for a while now, there's the likelihood of a *further* intensification of this dynamic as Neptune crosses from your 7th into your 8th. You must remember you can't rescue anybody from themselves... and the more idealistic you are about what's possible for *them* to achieve (though they show no actual signs of *working* to do so), the burden on *you* to hold out hope for the both of you only gets heavier. Don't let romantic notions of togetherness blind you to the reality of who this other person is *right now* (as opposed to what they *could* be). Heightened career activity could pose a bit of interpersonal conflict during January, as you stumble to give everything and everyone the attention they desire. Should that cause a larger bump-in-the-road, put extra initiative into talking it all the way through during mid February. Relationship issues will become more central again at the start of 2013.

Jupiter's impact on your 11th house should provide no shortage of social settings for meeting a wider and more-varied cross-section of interesting peeps than you've seen in a long while. Be careful, midyear, if you try to show only *some* of your cards to potential dates or mates, assuming they'll never find out about your 'other' life: There's something about this astrology which compels me to warn you that you never know who might be friends with whom, and the possibility of seemingly separate social worlds suddenly colliding could threaten to trip you up. If a little bit of casual fun is more what you're looking for, you can expect *that* to heat up during the last few months of the year. When you totally immerse yourself in pursuing a purposeful existence, you'll attract folks who are pumped up by these same forward-thinking concerns... to the mutual pleasure of all parties.



## VIRGO

Are you really as anal-retentive as they say? Surely, you've heard this stereotype about yourself... that you Virgos are perfectionists and/or neat-freaks who insist that everything in your world be done in a very certain way. Or are the rest of us just jealous of your knack for attaining real-world results that are cleaner and closer-to-ideal than we could ever hope for? The Virgo predilection for careful, precise work is not merely a myth, but a benefit of your marvelous mental grasp of all the finest details. You're able to produce such impeccable outcomes by first analyzing the situation, then engineering a plan to achieve, bit by modest bit, the ends you have envisioned. Not only that, but Virgos typically *enjoy* the process of doing good work—it pleases your sharp mind's drive to 'put everything in its rightful place'. Whether or not this manifests as literal tidiness in your personal space (which it often does), there's always a fundamental thrust *somewhere* in a Virgo's nature to sort, arrange and/or organize the pieces of your life.

What serves your purposes in certain contexts, alas, doesn't necessarily do you any favors in others... which is surely true when the Virgo's discriminating eye is turned toward subtler matters of self-worth or interpersonal exchange, where there's less likely to be an objective 'right' or 'wrong' to base your judgments on. While you discerning Virgo analysts may generate great results when it comes to tangible tasks, you can unfortunately get caught striving to meet behavioral standards that are unattainable or needlessly restrictive. Virgos can be quite critical, both of other people and, usually most harshly, of themselves. Perhaps the biggest challenge you face is learning to accept the inherent imperfections, inconsistencies and irrationalities that come with being human. For instance, your emotions *do* provide you access to truths that cannot be logically explained, and which don't respond well to your attempts at 'fixing' them. Will you drive yourself crazy trying to 'reason' yourself out of feeling the way you do... or can you reserve some wiggle-room for those greyer areas of life that may never 'make sense' or reach the neat resolution you crave?

You Virgos play the central role in a whirring accumulation of initiative and verve that colors the entire first half of the year, courtesy of Mars's lengthy trip to your sign. What is usually a quick six-or-seven-week visit from Mars will last *eight full months*, providing an unusual chance to assert your will in all situations where you'd want a say in how things go. Rarely will you have such a prolonged upswing in physical energy, beginning as early as November '11, which really

ought to be put to good use... to jump-start projects that have long been waiting for you to devote some effort toward 'em, to reinvigorate your engagement with the world, to conspicuously declare *your* personal stake where you'd been previously passive (or passively-aggressive) and, along the way, to attract more attention to yourself.

Mars will be retrograde for a good chunk of his visit (Jan 23-Apr 13), an indication that you may end up focusing quite a bit of concentrated care toward areas or items you hadn't anticipated needing so much. Instead of letting the pivot in plans ruffle your feathers, think of it as an accidental opportunity to iron out some wrinkles... and thoroughly attend to something that's escaped notice for too long. Before Mars has even finished with you, Venus will then land in your public-achievement zone (the 10th) for an extra-long retrograde-kindled appearance of her own, lasting from April through early August. It's a good thing you'll have just spent months managing so many long-lingering issues—before you've even completed the cleanup, you'll have a rapid influx of new professional and/or community-related possibilities begging for your analytic consideration. Only *some* will be worth pursuing further, but you might not know which are which upon first glance.

### **Your Personal Revolution**

In the last section, I made mention of you asserting more direct agency in circumstances where you might've formerly let things slide... a pressure to express your genuine preferences more distinctly that's also a fundamental part of revolutionizing your stance in the world. Pluto's present position in your 5th house is a symbol of your personal passions rising into fuller outward view, whether or not they appear 'appropriate' or 'acceptable' by others' standards or fit into any box you've pre-designated for them. Pluto's purpose here? To kill off whatever repressive self-judgments are preventing you from shamelessly enjoying the unique pastimes, participations and pleasures you authentically desire.

The 5th house represents our relation to playful creativity... and as someone who so closely identifies with 'doing the right thing', this concept of *playing* (purely for its own sake) can actually prove more uncomfortable for you than others would imagine. But if you're not partaking in those activities *you* most want to do, what exactly are you living your life for? To fulfill a

supporting role in *someone else's* story, passively bearing any circumstances that aren't what you'd choose for yourself? It's time to do your *own* choosing, Virgo.

As Pluto pokes away at your individualizing passions, he might toss you a super-compelling affinity for something—or someone—that you can't rationalize back into a moderate place in your consciousness. You could find yourself consumed with the urge to dance or sing, paint or sculpt, write or draw, design a new showcase for your seashell collection... I don't know *what* exactly the creative instinct particular to *you* might be yearning to express. (And maybe it's better not to ask too many evaluative questions.) Perhaps it'll be a certain person, different from your usual polite love-matches, who captures a wild hold on your heart and inspires your goofy side to frolic and romp. Or maybe a newly intensifying exposure to children will reveal the 'inner child' in you is envious of their natural freedom, inspiring you to reconnect with your own. The call to more fervently seek that which most accurately pleases the true you only grows stronger, with March and May as especially ripe moments for its purposeful expression.

Yet, if you're presently enmeshed in complicating life-circumstances with someone, which impinge upon your free embrace of the merriment you'd otherwise choose... well, Uranus in your 8th house would like to remind you, despite interpersonal obligations or commitments that seem all-encompassing and altogether irrevocable, you are *never* actually as 'stuck' as you might imagine. I'm not implying that to break out of such a confining setup wouldn't bring its share of immediate chaos; having gotten yourself that far in means *of course* the exit could be messy. Shying away from the lusted-for release, however, merely increases the suppressive pressure on you—and, one day, *something's* going to blow. A total shakeup might not be necessary, if you're willing to have the difficult discussion that's likeliest to shift the dynamics. February's a good time to start the talks, though it may take several rounds over a span of months.

On the other hand, if you've been keeping yourself 'safely protected' from such intimate commingling, the Uranus-in-the-8th factor may well point to you leaping into the risky rewards of deeper engagement. The 'messes' indicated here would be the type that demand greater interpersonal sharing—and thus fuller exposure of your vulnerabilities—but promise a potentially liberating shedding of inhibitions. As long as you remain 'safe', you prevent yourself from the further evolution that occurs when getting increasingly intimate with someone else, whether

sexually, financially and/or psychologically. To get the most out of life, we welcome in these 'dangers', reveling in the totality of our connections, unafraid of contaminating our neat (though isolating) independence.

### **Challenges & Opportunities**

Saturn's had his disciplining finger in your 2nd house since late 2009, insisting you sustain a serious attitude toward the financial aspects of your life. Under this influence, every last dollar that becomes yours is undeniably hard-earned... though whatever you *do* manage to bank when Saturn's in your 2nd helps stabilize your footing. As I'm sure you already know, this has been a time of requisite *austerity*, hopefully with no foolish expenditures that, no doubt, you would've later come to regret. At the same time, investing the necessary budgetary foresight should still permit you a few strategically-planned splurges; overly rigid self-denial negatively impacts the growing need for indulging in joyful pleasures. These Saturn-in-the-2nd exercises aren't merely about accumulating money, but are ultimately a practice in building confidence in your capacity for material self-sufficiency—'what you have' as a symbol of 'what you think you're worth'. By the middle of August, you'll witness a clear indicator of your relative success in this area.

In early October, Saturn moves into your 3rd, for 2½ years of heightening your conscientiousness in everyday social communications, to ensure you're competently communicating and respectfully staying in touch. To do *this* work, you need to get out of your own head and actually *offer* your thoughts to those who'd benefit from knowing... rather than, say, quietly sitting on the sentiments and then wondering why nobody understands where you're coming from. There's a possibility you'll face added responsibility for 'cleaning up' your relationship with a sibling or someone in your local environment, by putting words to unspoken tensions that reach a breaking-point. Your duty is to be honest and direct, not to coddle anyone or bow down to their manipulations. Social efforts put forth during November (though they may take more than one earnest try) will lead to you feeling more included, when appropriate... or at least clearer about where everybody stands.

Jupiter has been helping you see past the prior limits of your thinking since last June, motivating more philosophic reflection on what *other* possibilities life could provide you if you look further

out of the box. Jupiter's 9th-house presence galvanizes your impulse to explore the great big world that's beyond your front-door, promising beneficial growth in your overall perspective through exposure to foreign experiences. Pursuing travel to far-off lands, immersion in another culture, mind-expanding studies that broaden your knowledge, and/or similar such envelope-pushing adventures will go more smoothly than at other times. This Jupiterian influence supports Mars and Pluto in their deeper '12 purpose of strengthening your resolve to outwardly express your truest unique self: Yes, this *is* an important moment for asking yourself those defining 'what's the meaning of *my* life?' questions, and seeking answers elsewhere if you initially come up short. What strikes you in mid-May, if you've made room for such reflections, could powerfully alter your trajectory.

Once Jupiter hits your 10th house in June, you'll be riding high on a year of positive opportunity in your outer-world position, whether specifically career-related or involving some other contribution you make on the public stage. Jupiter is preceded by Venus, who also spends an enduring spell in your 10th midyear, pointing to an influx of different possibilities available to you, as you consider how best to keep yourself vital and engaged in whatever you're working to achieve. Remember: This is a luckier-than-usual professional moment, intended to lure you beyond the 'safe' thing. Weigh your options with an open mind, rather than dismissing alternatives to your present situation because there are too many unknowns. It's smarter to keep the talks going through July—perhaps in more than one context at the same time—and help fill in the blanks yourself, with suggestions of how *you'd* like it to go.

### **Work / Career / Finances**

Just like I already explained, 2012 is a banner year for extending your professional reach past its familiar boundaries, in order to quench your mental thirst for new problems to solve. The arrival of both traditionally benefic planets, Venus and Jupiter, for noteworthy transits to the high-noon pinnacle of your solar chart—the 10th house, our zone of outward accomplishments—augurs *great* things in your career (and/or public-world) dealings. But to claim the potential goodies, you must be willing to hold off on your first-impulse critiques of every new offer or idea that shows up... and instead allow yourself to tip a toe into each, with sincere curiosity, and do the dance of 'interest unattached to outcomes' with the other involved players. This could stretch onward from April, with no clear indication of which is the 'right

answer' revealing itself until August. And even then, you might need to proceed on an experimental basis. (Maybe all these possibilities are just a way of getting you *moving*... and no choice you make will actually be a 'mistake'?)

Please use the first few months of your year, while Mars is still in your sign but the 10th-house madness hasn't yet begun, to get all your work ducks in a row. Because you don't know what's coming up around the next curve, I advise treating your workload as if all dangling threads need to be wrapped up; that way, should you find yourself departing from your present spot, by choice or unforeseen circumstance, you will be doing so *cleanly*. (Should you lose a job during '12, the planets indicate it's ultimately for the best—you've likely outgrown it.) Right out of the gate, January provides you an ideal start to these organizational efforts. I even foresee you deriving much pleasure from the process. (But that's a Virgo for you, eh?)

Financial dilemmas ought to be addressed once and for all during July, with the goal to have any lingering loopholes closed and foggy debt-related issues clarified by the middle of August. You have other exciting adventures to get on with already, and this crap is only weighing you down. One possible solution: asking for more money. You mustn't get caught up in news reports about the bad economy, self-sacrificially convincing yourself it's not the right time to rock the boat. No matter what the headlines say, a wise employer is usually willing to pay a valued staff-member enough to keep 'em around. And don't your everyday deeds speak *volumes* about your value? If you're turned down, it may say more about the employer's short-sightedness than anything else.

### **Relationships / Romance**

Pluto would like me to reemphasize that your number-one concern in relationships ought to be whether you're *enjoying* yourself or not. If you've forsaken the giggles and the goofiness, the flirtations and the sensual pleasures, and are merely participating in the 'serious' part of your serious relationship, then you have turned one of life's loveliest experiences into one more obligatory duty to fulfill. And that, as I see it, is a heart-harming problem. With your many months of Mars-in-the-1st impacting the whole first half of '12, you're in the better position to instigate a reprise of the 'honeymoon period'... with precisely the sort of initiatives and activities *you* find most romantic. Mid-March would be an ideal time for an exotic getaway to rekindle the

sparks with your sweetie or, if you're single, to find love where you wouldn't expect to find it. ('Exotic' needn't mean *expensive*, by the way.)

It's so important to discern between (1) relationships that bring joy and (2) relationships of convenience or circumstance *now* due to Neptune's arrival in your 7th this year (to stay through 2025)... an influence that can fog one's judgment of whether another person is a worthy source of our ongoing investment. Neptune both inspires us to romantically merge with those we form partnerships with *and* to sometimes overlook the glaring differences between us, out of an idealistic hope that we can 'fix' the other person or 'save' them from their problems. In this context, open-hearted compassion and sacrificial self-delusion are two sides of the same coin. You'll get a good example of this tug on your interpersonal emotions in mid-to-late February, when you find your personal truth shifting back and forth due to someone else's impact on your thinking.

If you are fortunate enough to fall for someone new (or all over again), go ahead and let yourself fall *hard*. Taking the leap will teach you *a lot* about where you've unconsciously held back in the past... and aren't *these* sorts of lessons what life is *really* all about? Your biggest hurdle is confronting the inherent loss of control that necessarily accompanies going deeper with someone. Even if the whole thing blows up in your face—*always* a possibility in romance, which is why it gets us so worked up—you will walk away, after the tears dry, with the thrill of having embraced passion and intimacy more fully. And trust me, there's more where *that* came from.

## LIBRA

Your reputation as a graceful, easygoing charm precedes you, Libra... and even if hearing such glowing descriptions of your innate people skills has grown tiresome, you really mustn't take this ability to develop a quick friendly rapport for granted. So many of us struggle to find the right thing to say or do in a given situation, one that'll help create a dynamic where all parties feel comfortable. Yet, you make it seem so simple. You Libras have a natural interest in others, and are blessed with a conversational prowess that welcomes them to tell you more about them. Not only does this knack allow you to get into another person's head so you can learn what most pleases (and doesn't please) them, you can diplomatically *use* that knowledge to get what *you* want, too. Indeed, the smoothest Librans leave all parties satisfied—without necessarily letting on that they managed to slyly squeeze their own agenda into the mix.

While Libra's excellent people skills are indeed an enviable gift to appreciate, they can also tempt you too far down the wrong roads if keeping someone else happy becomes an end in itself. Where you Libras often trip yourselves up is in trying to balance (1) your preference for interpersonal harmony with (2) direct assertive expression of your own genuine desires. After all, sometimes what *you* want will clash with another person's wishes or expectations... and having the full-on disagreement that would inevitably follow can feel extremely unpleasant to a peace-lover like yourself. As a result, you can get caught in your head, weighing the pros and cons of different options and/or trying to devise strategies for sweet-talking your way into a resolution—all rather than just making a clear choice, communicating it, and maneuvering through the consequences. This is where the indecision that's known to plague Librans comes from.

Life hasn't been especially gentle for you Libras lately, with Saturn whipping your sign into shape since October 2009. My guess is that, during these past couple years, you've learned a thing or two about the negative side-effects of catering to others over speaking up for yourself. Saturn has been unrelenting with you in his insistence on authentic self-assertion in all cases, even when your truth is liable to upset someone or draw attention to an unbridgeable rift between you. Self-serving decisions have been called for, as a test of how much ownership you're willing to take over your life. Uranus and Pluto haven't made this challenge any easier, adding to the mix (1) dynamic instability or unforeseen developments in a key partnership



and/or (2) an intensifying confrontation with a manipulative family-member or your complicated relation to family in general. If you've faced the turbulence and complexity by taking responsible action to *protect yourself first*, you'll see the seriousness start to lift a bit by year's end.

Acknowledging the full extent of what you've recently been through, Libra, means *not* having to fake a honky-dory front and tell everyone who asks that you're 'just fine, thanks'. In fact, with Mars spending an inordinate span in your 12th house (from November '11 through July '12), you may want to take a large amount of time to yourself during the first half of the year... not to escape from reality, but as a rehabilitative retreat, giving you time to reconnect with whatever Divine energies will help put these challenges into perspective for you. Think of it as respectful grieving for a prior version of you who might've perhaps preferred to take the easier, less disruptive road—the older-and-wiser you, however, knows it just wasn't possible to do so any longer, not if you want to be true to yourself.

### **Your Personal Revolution**

As one of the signs most directly impacted by the chaos-inducing square between Uranus and Pluto, you Libras have a particularly *personal* role to serve in this collective reorientation. But whether or not you find yourself marching in the streets or volunteering for an important cause, *your* revolution is playing out in how you choose to manage your interpersonal and/or familial relationships. You *have* heard the old idiom that 'the personal is political', right? You're now being charged with *embodying* that sentiment... with full understanding that it's problematic to declare a belief in a certain way-of-life if your own private actions don't align with your declaration. If you think individuals should have the freedom to do what's right for them, then you must accept that freedom for yourself *and* your partner. If you want the underdog to stand up against the tyranny of powerful interests, then you must overthrow anything or anyone that's dominating your internal landscape and claim self-empowerment. It's as simple as that, okay?

Okay, maybe that's not so simple.

Uranus's shakedown of your 7th house, which rules our behavior in all primary one-on-one pairings, means it's decidedly *not* 'business as usual' in your relationship life. Uranus is a symbol of uncompromised *independence*, an agent of liberation who is not satisfied unless

we're unapologetically being our unique oddball selves. As a relationship influence, then, Uranus expects us to upset our traditional expectations... and to embrace whatever exceptions, innovations, and unconventional arrangements will leave both parties feeling free to do as they choose. This pressure isn't a comfortable match for your natural tendency to always already consider the other person's mindset—and thus the sanctity of the relationship itself—before advancing your self-suiting motives. Yet, Uranus doesn't care; he's determined to breathe some fresh air into your methods of interpersonal engagement.

Perhaps you have met someone who is markedly *different* than others you've partnered up with before... and though you may really like 'em, you realize that none of your typical 'tricks' will work with in this case. Maybe you're just feeling instinctively moved to *take risks* in your relationship attitudes, as part of accepting responsibility for greater self-assertion. This is Uranus's rabble-rousing at work. Another possibility: You could find yourself on the receiving end of another person's unpredictable or erratic behavior, a wild-card factor that forces you to react to unfamiliar circumstances in unfamiliar ways. Such a scenario would surely inhibit any capacity for you to 'keep 'em happy'. Please remember all this 7th-house activity needn't manifest only in romantic relationships—close friendships, business partnerships, or other significant couplings could also reflect this influence. It all boils down to how we treat each other.

We often use our relationships to unconsciously replicate the dynamics we initially learned from our family of origin, which is why Pluto's 4th-house dredging-up of inherited psychological drives is inextricably linked to your revolution as well. If you Libras like pleasing people, you'd best believe that this habit points all the way back to your parents, the first folks whose acceptance we seek. Of course, by adulthood, we've all internalized their voices... and we become the very figures whose standards we're trying to live up to, even as we may deeply wish to do something *other* than we imagine we're 'supposed to'.

Yes, this is a deep complex of conflicting emotions—which is also what many of us would say about our family relationships, to be sure. Pluto wants us down in this mud, investigating the shadowy nooks and back-corners of this rich landscape of mixed feelings... both to demystify any overly simplistic ideas we have about our family-members *and* to goad us into grabbing back these reins. It's your internal peace and emotional well-being at stake, after all. You've

got to force out any voice that obstructs you from this goal, whether it's in your head or coming from Mom or Dad. Because the 4th house also rules where we call home, this power struggle could play out in your domestic life... either through unbearable housemate situations that demand you take charge, or by pushing you to move away from anyone whose domineering personality impedes on your ability to chill out in your pad.

### **Challenges & Opportunities**

As I said, Saturn's past 2+ years in your sign has ramped up the pressure to put forth the fullest, most genuine version of you—with less regard for who might approve or disapprove than you've previously invested. Such a comprehensive challenge has meant less beating-around-the-bush, and more direct communication... firmer decisions, and fewer expressions of diplomatic ambivalence... and a decrease in catering to others, with a corresponding uptick in shamelessly self-serving actions. How have you been doing, Libra? The end-goal here is a *strengthening* of your self-identity, to dissuade you from too much wavering based on circumstance. Should you dodge this work, alas, the consequence is a hardening of the superficial façade you uphold, keeping others from seeing the real you... and yourself from ultimate satisfaction. July and August present you a peak opportunity to demonstrate your progress.

Saturn finally leaves Libra in early October, to move on to your 2nd house, where he'll test your level of financial responsibility over the next couple years. Saturn-in-the-2nd is a restrictive pull on your purse-strings, indicating that money ought to be treated with a heightened conservatism. Every buck will be hard-earned... which means that, if you're seeing good returns by the last half of November, you are obviously doing *something* right. Of course, if you're not pleased with your economic situation by year's end, you will need to take matters more intently into your own hands. But your way through the tight-spot is not merely to watch every expense closely. There's also a lesson about actively building confidence in your practical worth, as income is a reflection of what we expect others to pay us for our most valued traits and skills. Want more resources at your disposal? Proudly demonstrate your resource-full-ness.

Jupiter's residence in your 8th house, beginning last June, broadens the scope of any situations where you and another person (or entity) are intertwined in each other's financial, sexual and/or

psychological business... with the potential to yield you more obvious rewards from having dared to go so far together. Intimacy, in the right contexts, proves itself quite a lucrative risk in one aspect or another. Take full advantage of the goodwill in these deep alliances during mid-March, when knowing there's someone totally on your side can alleviate your anxieties. The excessive qualities of Jupiter, I should mention, could also magnify the complications in an interpersonal scenario... leading you, at last, to a 'no going back from here' point. If this is the case, trust that it's better to see *it all* than to turn a blind eye. Use the very helpful astrology of mid-May to lay down the law and establish boundaries that protect your own interests.

When Jupiter progresses into your 9th during this June, you should begin to experience a widening of your perspective on your life and what matters most. Throughout this yearlong visit, Jupiter invites you to think *way* outside your same-ol' everyday frame-of-reference... and toward whatever exhilarating voyage, quest, or topic of philosophic interest draws you further out on the ledge of possibilities. Venus's extra-long four-month trip to your 9th (including a six-week retrograde) from April through August only adds to the excitement of considering *what else* may be out there for you. This is an excellent time to finally act on any long-held desires to travel, pursue further education, or immerse yourself in an alternative field of knowledge. In September, start paring down the multitude of options to one you'd like to actually dive into; you could already be enjoying the strange new view by November.

### **Work / Career / Finances**

Among all the *other* stuff that's keeping you occupied throughout 2012, I'd say that career is *not* likely to be a primary focus for most of you Libras. That's not to imply there's *nothing* going, for, as long as you're lucky enough to *have* a job to go to, you've still got to show up for your scheduled shifts, week in and week out. Yet, it's presently far more urgent to address your *inner* life—to exorcise any self-defeating messages from your psyche, and to foster deeper emotional self-empowerment—and/or any personal-relationship issues, which may demand you stay on your toes, than to race yourself up any professional ladders *this* year. That said, if you *are* seeking greater recognition or visibility in your career (or other public-world participations), you should communicate these ambitions to the appropriate parties during June. Your likeliest time for reaping additional benefits would be August or early September.

Thanks to Saturn's entry into your 2nd house later in '12, however, money may become much tighter than you'd like. Like I reported earlier, financial struggles ought to be conceived of not merely in strictly material terms, but also as an outward manifestation of an internal challenge. While we can't singlehandedly change the state of the wider economy, individuals *can* commit to a more fearless, won't-take-no-for-an-answer approach to securing what they need to survive. September's your best month for strengthening your resolve in this area. Knowing in advance, then, that finances are likely to become increasingly strained toward the end of the year and beyond, please accept any opportunities to work a few extra hours or pick up some side income during January and February, when there's some helpful action in your 6th house.

Though you've (presumably) been working hard to be more of a distinct, self-possessed individual, the heightened benefic activity in your 8th *could* point to financial support or windfalls from other people, even a possible inheritance, sometime in the middle of the year. If you're going to accept, though, make sure you're *very* clear on any strings that are attached—and whether it's someone you're comfortable going to *that* level with. If you're an independent businessperson, this influence may also indicate you'd profit from taking on a partner or investor. Should you proceed down that road, please do your due diligence... and make sure all questions are accounted for, in writing, to guard your interests. Any agreements *must* include ample day-to-day independence for all parties.

### **Relationships / Romance**

I haven't been bashful in describing the unsteady, unpredictable effects of Uranus-in-the-7th on your relationship life. Whether we're talking about your involvement in a pairing you never would've expected or with someone drastically different than what you're used to, or if an existing partnership suddenly takes a sharp turn in a strange direction due to one or the other of you seeking independence or change... can't we just say 'all bets are off' and call it a day? One thing about Uranus you should know: He demands *some* dramatic liberating release, and you can proactively participate in *choosing* how that happens or wait until it's *imposed upon you* against your will. Which will it be? If you've wanted to take a relationship-related leap (either further in, totally out, or off to one side), mid February is a fantastic moment to make that first move.

Lively (and potentially provocative) conversations about the changing circumstances could last throughout March and April, in fitful stops and starts. But if there's something concrete you're hoping to get out of the whole negotiation, mindfully but inconspicuously continue returning the focus to that item each time it drifts elsewhere. Remember: All this occurs against the backdrop of Saturn in your 1st, who's been on you to consistently hold your ground on issues of authentic self-identity. If you *still* aren't getting your own needs met by July, it's time to amp up outward assertiveness. You've waited long enough to see if things can 'work themselves out'—now *you* must take full responsibility for working 'em out however best suits your desires (ideally by mid August), and quit expecting anyone else to change.

Venus's retrograde (May 15-Jun 27) draws further activity to an already-emphasized 9th house, pointing at the possibility of you breaking through romantic stalemates by looking for love outside your normal environment. Venus-in-the-9th has a reputation for delivering us dates and mates who come from a different culture than we do, who we meet while traveling elsewhere to study or grow, and/or who have something to teach us about the diversity of our wide world. Factoring in the retrograde effect, you shouldn't worry whether this is merely a fling of unusual circumstance or a lifelong love-match. Rather, this connection has shown up to open your eyes to what else may be out there, if you cut yourself loose from expectation.

## SCORPIO

Nobody who knows what's good for 'em messes with a Scorpio, not casually anyway. You Scorpios are not for the faint-of-heart because... well, because it's basically *impossible* for you to settle for superficial exchanges or halfway-answers. As the zodiac's unrivalled master of human psychology, a Scorpio doesn't accept anyone's motivations at face-value. We *all* have a convoluted mix of motives, drives and complexes that underscore our behavior, which is why, so often, we say and do things that aren't precisely in alignment with our stated intentions. (Sometimes, we even act *against* our own interests, out of unhealthy habit or subconscious self-sabotage.) But you, Scorpio, have a nose for sniffing out these forceful undercurrents, for investigating what *isn't* being talked about or dealt with, and for probing into these highly-charged issues... to pull out the full truth, and to connect with others on the deepest, most *real* levels of human interaction.

If there's a hot-button lurking somewhere, you Scorpios will push it. Watch the other person light up in passionate response, and you *know* you're onto something meaty. This is the key to your extremely potent healing power: As an agent of catharsis, you can help others integrate those parts they've felt ashamed of or uncomfortable with. It's also why certain folks are so strongly attracted to you; they crave the intense feelings you stir in them, and sometimes can't get enough.

By the same token, you also scare the living crap out of plenty of *other* folks... those who'd rather *not* engage on so intense a level, and who are threatened by how deeply you can see into them. Not everyone *wants* to be seen that way, Scorpio. And they are rightly identifying the great *power* that comes along with your psychological wisdom, which you can easily misuse to gain the upper hand over someone, if you're not being upfront. After all, your reputation for being *manipulative* isn't entirely off-base. You *can* use your knowledge of others against them, pulling the strings to get what you want... or fighting dirty, with that menacing stinger of yours, hitting where it'll hurt the most. But such malevolent acts always come with a price, of course. Situations often get much messier than they needed to be. Enemies are needlessly created. Guilt and shame can set in. Whatever you put out there, by the Universe's unbendable laws, comes right back to you.

Saturn's arrival to your sign later in '12 inaugurates a 2½-year period of accepting fuller responsibility for the power you wield... and of confronting any consequences reaped by its manipulative or malicious misuse. Between October of this year and the middle of 2015, you'll be undergoing a *refining* of self, under pressure to constrict any behavior that's more about perpetuating power-struggles than pursuing independent-minded goals. Getting down to the serious business of being *your* best self, Scorpio, could entail needing to say no to involvements or preoccupations that suck up too much of your energy (otherwise known as 'drama!'). There are appropriate—and *less* appropriate—contexts in which your trademark intensity can be allowed to shine. Sometimes, insisting on the 'full monty' in certain exchanges just makes it *harder* to get stuff done.

Throughout your year, a bustling combination of astro-factors will activate your social world, presenting you many types of individuals—friends and flames both old and new, acquaintances from around town, potential contacts and potential time-wasters—to test your interpersonal discernment. Some folks can dramatically enhance your life, while others will drain as much of your attention as you'll allow them, with little productive purpose beyond constant psychic stimulation. Figuring out who's who to you is a fundamental part of consciously defining who *you* want to be.

### **Your Personal Revolution**

As you're well aware, you can't judge a book by its cover... nor, as Pluto in your 3rd house is loudly reminding you, should you rush to assume you know what significance (or lack thereof) a casual pal, friend-of-a-friend, or near-stranger may prove to play in your life-story. Part of the evolution that Pluto is now demanding, Scorpio, is a reevaluation of how you assess whether any random individual who shows up is *worth* your time and acquaintanceship. Too hasty a judgment on someone may squander a chance for surprisingly intimate connection (which is what you're *supposed* to be into, right?), even if you'll rarely or never see the person again. Granting the chance social encounter a lengthier moment—and sharing more of yourself right off the bat than you typically might—could yield you an interesting perspective, on your life-circumstance and/or theirs, that transforms your thinking. You wouldn't know any of that, however, if you're too obsessively 'all in' with one particular relationship that monopolizes your interpersonal engagement.



Pluto-in-your-3rd also asks that you consciously accept the strength of your words to either *empower* or *injure* others, even in the most seemingly inconsequential of exchanges. Offhand remarks, gossipy commentary, customer-service dealings, texts-with-an-edge: our everyday communications matter more than you might think. What *message* are you sending via the manner in which you handle these? I promise you it's not likely neutral. Under Pluto's influence, the attitude with which you navigate the many small interactions from day to day will have a *profound* impact on your overall state-of-mind, one way or the other. Finding the meaningful value in all you come in contact with, or feeling pervasive alienation or antagonism toward your immediate environment—the choice is yours. Because the 3rd house rules siblings, cousins and neighbors, be *especially* conscientious of these 'words have power' issues in your relationships with them.

Just to be clear, engaging socially with more conscious intent *doesn't* imply you're meant to *identify* yourself, in a lasting way, with everybody you meet. Though that should be obvious, I want to emphasize this point... particularly in light of Mars spending the entire first half of '12 in your 11th house, a call to assert discrimination in who you affiliate yourself with, as friends or teammates or like-minded comrades. For part of this period, Mars will be retrograde (Jan 23-Apr 13), pointing to a mindful 'tidying-up' in this arena, eliminating the rotten apples and recommitting to those with intentions aligned with yours. There's a trick to being mercifully honest with those you determine are not 'your people', wholly respecting their humanity but opting *not* to participate in an ongoing alliance. Mid May is an ideal time for asserting such relational boundaries.

You're likelier to struggle with this call for heightened social precision and presence if you feel perpetually pressed for time, due to an unforgiving day-to-day schedule that provides you little wiggle-room (which is, after all, *necessary* if you're going to engage longer and more consciously). Here comes Uranus, to insinuate his rebelliousness into your 6th house, the zone of our everyday regimen... where we manage how to plow through our required work, and to cultivate habits that support our physical well-being. To put it bluntly, you're currently itching for a *shakeup* in this arena, to counteract any feelings of being 'stuck' in a routine you can't get out of, which, over time, could take a toll on your health.

You know the rightful flow of your physical rhythms better than anyone, Scorpio; it's on *you* to make any changes that'll give you more freedom over how to organize your days, for maximum productivity *and* wellness. Releasing yourself from such restraints could involve shifting the timing of your responsibilities around, becoming more independent in your employment relations, and/or altering your diet-and-fitness patterns. Spend March and April trying out different modifications, since it might take you a few tries to get it right. Your more-physically-supportive-and-efficient schedule will, in the end, free up more energy you can patiently invest in worthwhile social interactivity.

### **Challenges & Opportunities**

Since late 2009, Saturn has been skimming the misty, elusive back-alleys of your spiritually-minded 12th house... a place where the Saturnian 'work' to be done is on the most subtle level of psychic housecleaning, a task nobody else would be aware you're undertaking. There's a moody, in-between quality to this transit as you're pulled into relative retreat, to sweep up the bits of leftover energetic detritus that have accumulated from your experiences over many years, preparing you for the 'getting back to business' vibe that accompanies Saturn's eventual crossing into your 1st. The challenge has been to release attachments to the echoes of feelings that are long outdated or were never rightfully *yours* to begin with, clearing your aura of irrational worries or negative expectations, to prevent their actual outward manifestation. Consider taking some time to yourself in July or August to finish up this behind-the-scenes reorganization, ridding yourself of self-defeating scripts and reconnecting with your version of the benevolent Divine.

By early October, Saturn will make it to your 1st house, a major shift that indicates you're ready to unveil a leaner-and-meaner, more-serious-about-living-your-best-life version of yourself to the world. This will likely entail having to limit how much you indulge unproductive complications. Just because you're attracted to something (or someone), that doesn't mean it serves your higher life-ambitions; in fact, in some instances, mindlessly chasing a moment's passion could have a *detrimental* effect on your practical standing. On the other hand, when you consciously channel your intensity into endeavors and experiences which *do* symbolize who you want to be, you'll find yourself *becoming* that person more than ever. With Mars in your sign from late August right through early October, you can begin taking outward actions that 'speak for

themselves' in asserting your individuality. By late November, you'll already see positive results from any efforts you've put in—as well as warning-signs in any areas where you've tried to glide by on seductive charm instead of forthright purpose.

Jupiter's been warming up your interpersonal zone since last June, when he first entered your 7th house, to expand your previously limiting awareness of what's possible in your one-on-one relationships. The 7th is a lovely spot for Jupiter, as he often delivers us somebody new, who ultimately proves to be a significant positive influence in our lives, or a renewed appreciation for someone who's been there all along. Sometimes, though, Jupiter's 'good luck' will bring an existing coupling to an end, usually because it had been restricting our evolution in some fundamental fashion. Mid-March is an exceptional high-point in reaping fortunate experiences through an eye-opening encounter with a special someone. Whether this is a love-match, a kindling of deep friendship, and/or a coming-together of creative minds, you'll do yourself a favor by continuing *towards* the connection.

Once Jupiter lands in your 8th house by June, you'll be eager to 'go further' (whatever *that* might mean) with relationships that have stirred your interests during the preceding months. On the one hand, moving to share more with one another will only *increase* the intimacy between you two, even as the lines neatly dividing your independent lives are liable to become blurrier. On the other hand, the rapid speed at which these developments occur could wind up *entangling* you more deeply in each other's business than you'd intended... and then, before you know what hit you, their *other* side comes out and throws you for a loop. Venus's retrograde (May 15-Jun 27) warns against getting too far 'in bed' together—financially or sexually—based on wishful appearances that don't tell the whole story. By November or December, you may be forced to reassert your independence.

### **Work / Career / Finances**

The presence of Uranus in your 6th house points to ongoing instability and/or a pressing need for liberating change in your day-to-day work, as I mentioned earlier. If your productive energies feel thwarted or underutilized in your current position, you may want to ask for a radical switch in duties. Or perhaps a whole new job is something to consider. Take note of any spontaneous improvements in this area—or thrilling hints of what *could* be improved—during February, when

you'll welcome a swell of optimistic interest in becoming more enterprising on a daily basis. If you aren't able to harness this toward a satisfying reinvention of your routine over the few months that follow, in a way that freshens up your everyday relationship to your work, it's obvious you'll need to veer toward a more drastic fix later in the year.

Midyear, all eyes will be on you... right at the same time you may feel yourself wanting to retreat from the consistent dutiful participation expected of you, due to unrelated pulls on your psychic energy. This could pose a problem for you, especially from mid July through mid August, if you don't stretch beyond your preoccupations and behave with warm hospitable diplomacy. With a Mercury retrograde hitting your career house (the 10th) during this same period, you'll really need to watch your words: Beware of getting overly familiar or chummy with bosses or key colleagues, who shouldn't be made privy to whatever personal business is competing (against *their* interests) for your attention. Impulsive disclosures you make could come back to bite you. To distract from this possibility, it wouldn't hurt to engage in a bit of wide-grinned ego-stroking to keep 'em happy.

The last quarter of '12 refocuses your practical side, giving you a 'survivalist' boost to your income-generating capacity. October's a turning-point, heating up your drive to sell yourself for higher bids than previously settled for. You might struggle to moderate the hurried pace at which you're thrown toward a bold (and potentially profitable) proposition... a head-spinning series of developments that only intensifies into November, when a solar eclipse in your sign jolts you ahead. Get used to that 'living on the edge' feeling, since each day brings new information that'll scramble what you *thought* you understood the day before. Don't, therefore, base long-term financial plans on any single snapshot grabbed at this time. Your economic picture doesn't really start getting clearer until the middle of December.

### **Relationships / Romance**

You ought to be seeing plenty of relationship action in 2012, as Jupiter spends the whole year in interpersonally dynamic sectors of your solar chart (the 7th and 8th), delivering you great self-growth potential when you share more of yourself with others. Under this influence, joining forces with a partner (in any context) will yield a much broader positive output than insisting on doing it solo. Even in situations where it appears you're headed toward some end-of-the-road

relational fallout, don't fret too deeply—the higher purpose of any current parting-of-ways is to make room for a livelier coupling, which could arrive sooner than you know it.

A sweet whiff of romance is in the air during mid January, a faint undercurrent that'll weave in and out of your consciousness for the many years ahead of Neptune in your 5th. Whatever the passing state of your romantic affairs, you must never give up on believing in love; it *always* returns, in one shape or another. Those of you who are unhappily single and/or actively on the lookout for a sweetie should get philosophical on the matter, rather than repeating cynical sound-bites about the lack of good matches. What's held you back may simply be a matter of you needing to try new approaches, in a sincere and non-jaded spirit of exploration. Take the risk of turning a casual encounter or chit-chat session in a more lasting connection later in November, when Venus helps your assertive moves come off with greater charm and likability.

Any pairings which manifest or solidify in March, under the tremendously favorable relationship conditions of that month, are likely to deepen at a fevered rate during April—so much so, in fact, that you could spend the next few months trying to catch up with all the steps you skipped in the getting-to-know-each-other phase. The Venus retrograde in late May and June will help you revisit any premature assumptions you made about each other, if you're open to a *lot* of conversation, some of which will probably circle back around to stuff you *thought* you'd already covered. New bits of previously-withheld information might lead to 'buyer's remorse'; if that's the case, don't be afraid to change your mind about 'em. These are your 'red-flag' glimpses at what might ultimately develop into the critical disagreement between you two... and they'll only get more pronounced as time goes on, rather than 'working themselves out' as your naiveté would wish.

## SAGITTARIUS

As the happy-go-lucky adventure-seekers of the zodiac, we expect you Sagittarians to keep life interesting, both for yourselves and for the rest of us. No good Sagittarius should ever submit to being roped into dull or dreary situations for too long, since your natural tendencies require you retain much freedom of motion. The vision that always pops into my head when describing Sagittarius: a wild horse galloping freely across a meadow, up and down the rolling hills, no fences trapping 'em in. You understand what I'm getting at, I'm sure—the world is far too large, with far too many people to meet and places to see and ideas to explore, to ever settle within the limits of uninteresting. It's this perspective, in fact, that helps earn you a reputation as the most optimistic of the signs. Why get too bogged in depression or dissatisfaction, when there's always something *more* to experience? Aim for the bullseye of perpetual *engagement* with life, and the little shit doesn't matter so much.

Of course, for quite some time there, you'd probably wondered whether your rosy outlook had been permanently misplaced, right? Blame *that* on Pluto's extended visit to your sign from 1995 through 2008... during which you weren't quite as able to shake off the emotional load, due to lingering complications that required you to *stick around* in the mud longer than you might've liked. (The timing and relative depth of this situation would've varied, based on your exact birthday and whether you have other Sagittarius planets in your birthchart.) You have, however, made it through the other side—a less innocent or idealistic person, perhaps, but far wiser about human nature's complexities—and may need to remind yourself how to be light-hearted and springy-stepped again. Here's a hint: Restore and/or reassert your faith in the power of taking chances. Not all risks will devolve toward the dark qualities of that one glaring headache from your past. (And if you confronted *that* one head-on, looking the demon square in the eyes without veering away, you've gained yourself some 'good karma points' or whatever you want to call 'em.)

Now, in this dynamic post-Pluto-in-Sagittarius era, you're witnessing plenty of movement and action in both the professional *and* personal realms of your life... with an invigorating jolt of fun-lovin' good times thrown in, courtesy of Uranus-in-your-5th. Considering the world looks rather upside-down in the eyes of many around you, from *your* vantage point, there ought to be *a lot* to get excited about. More than ever, your enthusiastic forward-thinking mindset is an asset to be

tapped into... as a self-protective mechanism for warding off the doom-and-gloom messages being tossed at you from every angle, *and* to inspire those who are mired in their myopic views of reality to look *beyond* the day-to-day bullshit, toward *what else is possible*.

The first half of 2012 is dominated by back-to-back retrogrades of Mars (Jan 23-Apr 13) and Venus (May 15-Jun 27), both of which affect Sagittarius more strongly than many other signs. Mars's retrograde strikes your career house (the 10th), pressing you to put a lot of diligent, detail-oriented effort into refining the practical methods with which you pursue your ambitions. Because you and I are both aware that Sagittarians aren't known for a love of the details, you could experience this period as torturously demanding (and thus frustrating), in terms of forcing your attention to stay in microscopic mode for lengthy spans. Thoroughly organizing the career-related specifics during this time, however, will save you oodles of manic rushing-around later on. Venus's retrograde, meanwhile, falls in the relationship zone (your 7th), blessing you with an extended gift of interpersonal irresistibility. You'll find you're so damned good at appealing to whatever another person wants from you—whether or not it's your 'full story'—you might end up short on time because everyone's eager for your company.

### **Your Personal Revolution**

Expressively flaunting whatever qualities make *you* a unique being, Sagittarius, is a central part of your role in the revolutionary era of 2012 and beyond. Uranus, our radical liberator, is currently shocking your 5th house into action, stirring you toward more outward displays of what you enjoy most about life. The 5th is a generally well-liked chart-sector because it's said to rule our leisure preferences, as well as any creative statements we openly and proudly share; in other words, this is where we have our fun. Thus, Uranus's rousing presence is, first and foremost, a signal to bust out the party-hats and finger-paints—not merely to entertain yourself and others (though that's an important aspect of it), but also to deliver the message that life's too short *not* to spend a significant chunk of it relishing the pleasures. Daring to embrace joy really *is* a radical act these days.

Uranus in the 5th adds an electrical spark to all those involved in artistic production of any kind, granting you an enlightening visionary quality that'll distinguish your work from 'how it's always

been done'. Now's the time, Sagittarian artists everywhere, to dive head-first into the next great phase of your creativity; the world needs exposure to your unusual perspectives.

Children also fall under the 5th-house umbrella—for what are our kids if not a most shining example of our fertile creative urges?—which means Uranus could inspire *them* to act out in strange ways, or demand of *you* sharply alternative parenting methods. Embrace their wild individuality, instead of forcing 'em into a box of 'respectability'.

And love, sweet uncomplicated romantic love (before the full-on *relationship* sets in), is one more pleasurable 5th-house concern: What better way to leap into a genuine expression of self than through the sparks of amorous chemistry? What joy could trump *love*?

Whichever of these 5th-house expressions speaks to you and/or most floats your boat, your prime time-frame for throwing yourself into it—or at least *initiating* the latest act—is February through April.

Yet, I've only so far shared the 'fun' part of this revolution with you... and surely you know there's more to it than *that*, right? Pluto must plead his case from your 2nd, a potent warning not to ignore the *material reality* of your life, merely to chase whims or kiss hotties or build sandcastles in the sky. Like it or not, for the foreseeable future at least, *money* is the agreed-upon vehicle that underscores our ability to support ourselves. If we lack food, clothing, shelter or health-care, it becomes *much harder* to enjoy the pleasures life has to offer... not *impossible*, mind you, but exceedingly difficult. And do you *really* want to struggle getting the bills paid when there's so much *else* to involve yourself with? Though many of us would rather *not* have to worry about finances, their responsible handling is an essential part of self-care. Secure your foundation first, so you have somewhere solid to land in between the soaring flights of magnificent fancy.

The more sober dutifulness with which you work to solidify your material footing, the more powerfully positive an impact your outward embrace of life's joys will create. Without responsibly obtaining the resources to support your own practical needs, you'll just come off looking childish... and your attempts at 'revolution' will seem hopelessly romantic and



unrealistic. Don't you want to prove it's possible to handle your business in the here-and-now *and* push the world ahead toward a creative vision for personal freedom *at the same time*?

### **Challenges & Opportunities**

Over these past 2½ years of Saturn in your 11th house, you've been pressured to take on a serious *tightening-up* of exactly who you consider to be 'your people'. Certain friends, communities and/or social affiliations have perhaps proven themselves incompatible with your current self-identity... and, as a result, you've had to let them go (or else experience an increasingly difficult time fitting yourself in with them). On the other hand, you hopefully came to recognize who really *does* have your back, either as a result of your similar interests-or-views or your shared history of working together toward common goals. Saturn asks you to invest your socially-minded energies wisely, consciously devoting attention and effort only into the network(s) of alliances that foster a genuine sense of belonging. If you do not receive such dividends from your participations with any collective, you're evidently making the wrong choices. In January, examine whether any comrades or colleagues are expecting you to sell out your own interests just to prove you're 'in'; these are *not* 'your people'. Take a stand alongside those who *are* legitimate allies in July... and by mid August, you'll have firmly cemented the bonds.

Come early October, Saturn heads in the misty mystical nowhereland of your 12th house, where he spends the next 2½ years orchestrating some 'psychic cleanup' work. Taskmaster Saturn feels rather out-of-sorts in the 12th, where he isn't sure exactly what to do, since refining our relationship with The-Entire-Universe-and-All-of-Existence is a fairly intangible task to oversee. Though this transit can sometimes bring shades of melancholy (not necessarily related to your current affairs) and/or a sense of 'limbo' (in preparation for Saturn's self-redefining move into Sagittarius in 2015), just remember its purpose: to essentially sweep away bits of detritus left over from Saturn's visits to your other eleven houses, reattaching stray fears or irrational emotions to their appropriate histories, and cleansing your psychic field (or whatever-you-call-it) so you can more clearly receive Divine Inspiration (or whatever-you-call-it). Needless to say, this is work best done through mindful retreat... a practice strongly favored from late October through late November, though obviously it may separate you from others.

Jupiter's visit to your 6th, which began last June, has provided you a mightier-than-usual ability to accomplish a hundred items at once... if, that is, you haven't allowed it to inspire too much bodily indulgence. While we usually focus on the positives Jupiter can offer, he can *also* tempt us to excess—and in your 6th house, that could involve pushing yourself *past* the reasonable limits of physical well-being (whether through too much productiveness *or* too much consumption). Yet, there's no doubt he also grants a more enthusiastic outlook on all the day-to-day tasks and chores that must get done, in order to fulfill our earthly duties. Don't let this influence go to waste, especially during mid-March when you'll experience near-superhuman capacity to juggle multiple projects that, in combination, add up to *major* workload progress.

In June, Jupiter moves to your 7th house, the interpersonal-relationship sector and one of his most benevolent spots, increasing the growth opportunities available to you in your closest one-on-one connections. In this context, Jupiter amps up the positive potential running through *all* key relationships—not merely your romantic couplings, but also close friendships and professional partnerships as well. Throughout the middle third of '12, be on the lookout for new possible collaborators, sidekicks and besties; you're on the right track if they possess certain personality traits *way different* than yours. Use your Jupiter-enhanced powers of persuasion to personally recruit others, one by one, to your team or cause during late September. You can probably sweet-talk 'em into doing *anything* you say, so be ethical about it.

### **Work / Career / Finances**

As the year begins, you'll already be under the effect of pressures that place career concerns in front-and-center focus. With Jupiter expanding the primacy of work in your day-to-day life *and* Mars simultaneously stirring up an extra-long period of dynamic action in your achievement-oriented 10th house, the first six months of 2012 should be one of the busier job-related phases in recent memory. Since nothing lasts forever, I strongly encourage you to work! work! work! as much as you can without wearing yourself out. (I promise you'll have ample play time to counterbalance it as the year rolls on.)

March is an outrageously great month for wholeheartedly throwing yourself into the doing... with your eyes fully open to the fact that part of this process *will* involve fixing things that were originally dealt with too sloppily or haphazardly. What you'll learn from getting elbow-deep in

the reorganization will directly lead to a *much* improved perspective on what 'best practices' ought to look like. Communicate your findings to the relevant parties in mid-May, another astrological high-point in your work life. If you have successfully weeded out glitches and inefficiencies—and aren't shy about taking credit for this hard-earned accomplishment—you should receive the recognition due to you from the appreciative powers-that-be.

Nailing down a stable financial situation for yourself remains a top-priority in '12 and beyond, with Pluto-in-the-2nd continuing to force you to confront any psychological blocks to your economic self-sufficiency. Work on purging any limiting beliefs about 'the kind of people' who concentrate on earning money. The money itself is a value-neutral vehicle, which you can either use to support your dreams or squander on materialistic nonsense; that choice is always in *your* hands. January is an excellent time for producing a mission statement to explain *why* your financial self-empowerment will make the world a better place; repeat it, mantra-style, until it sinks all the way in. In mid August, beware of your well-meaning though overly idealistic urge to give cash to somebody who's ill-equipped to maturely handle it. Can't you show you care in some other manner?

### **Relationships / Romance**

With Venus spending a full four months (early April to early August) in your house of one-on-one encounters (the 7th), I foresee you entertaining no shortage of promising options for interpersonal companionship. This bountiful circumstance is only further augmented by Jupiter's arrival to your 7th during June, right in the midst of Venus's visit. That's right, Sagittarius: *Both* 'benefic' planets will be fluffing up your relationship zone *at the same time*, a stellar astro-combo destined to leave you weighing the pros and cons of multiple likable possibilities. If this isn't reason enough to resist settling for *any* dynamic that's grown crusty or stale, I don't know what you could possibly be waiting for. Though Jupiter *is* considered 'good luck', his gifts sometimes show up first as a *loss*... the type that later ends up yielding welcome positive evolution. Bear this in mind, if you suspect you've outgrown somebody.

Venus's retrograde interval, from mid May through late June, is an especially wild time... with the likelihood of tempting you to reevaluate what exactly you're looking for in a companion (long-term or right-now), through an uncanny mix of flashes from yesteryear and glimpses of

tomorrow. Yes, at least *one* of your possibilities could be a blast from the past, looking for one last hurrah or a second chance to get it right. And then, right alongside, here comes a vision who nearly perfectly matches a long-held fantasy of yours... but is it a mirage? Quite possibly, though hard to say until you examine it further. All of this could be considered a test of your relationship values (albeit a highly pleasurable one): Evaluate each case by which side of *your* personality the individual in question brings out in you—and whether it's one you want to *nourish* or *downplay*.

An escalating independent streak from October onward, potentially related to a need for soul-regenerative solitude (see: Saturn in the 12th) but not simply defined by this purpose, bears the potential to create relational tension... especially if a certain someone has come to rely too totally on your presence, at the expense of their individuality. You might have to use your trademark bluntness to spell out the problem as you see it (perhaps even a few times), which could stir momentarily unpleasant reactions in them. So be it—as you know better than anyone, the truth is typically preferable to 'sparing their feelings'. Trust me, you'll want to be free of any burdensome interpersonal drags on your spirit during December, when you're sure to experience a general boost in your overall mood. The right love-match will be *excited* for you, not threatened by your enthusiasms.

## CAPRICORN

To hear some introductory astrology books tell it, Capricorn is a sign of high-powered, type-A businesspeople who rarely pause from their achievement-driven lifestyles to crack a smile or blow off steam... which, in my experience, is one of the *least* precise stereotypes among all the zodiac clans. Sure, there *is* a fair share of career-obsessed Capricorns among you, but the ‘ambition’ typically associated with your kind mustn’t be reduced to purely a professional context. What is really meant when applying that loaded word—*ambition*—to you is an acknowledgment of the exceedingly high standards to which you hold yourself (and, often, others too). You simply strive to be your best self, perpetually aware of all you *could* be capable of by just pushing a little harder, reaching ever higher toward that (moving-target?) peak of possibility.

Obviously, the lofty expectations you often lay on yourself can be a mixed blessing. Capricorns tend to take their responsibilities quite seriously, with one eye always perched toward the horizon, ever on the lookout for potential problems you might head off at the pass before they ever manifest. That’s why you’re such an excellent watchdog, strategist, and/or stoic manager of one sort or another. Yet, you can also be unreasonable with yourself about just what’s possible at any given time, ceaselessly cracking the whip or lodging criticisms of what *hasn’t* yet been done... sometimes to the point where you become paralyzed by the impossible burden of *ever* living up to your supposed potential. (No wonder you Capricorns are also known for your wry, self-effacing humor: It’s a good tactic for laughing away the self-criticisms.)

But, with Pluto now forcing you to confront the debilitating ‘dark side’ of your high standards, you’re being forced out of ideal-strategy mode... and into circumstances where you must give it your best shot *on the spot*, knowing you’ll always have more to learn (and to try to master) but that time pressures won’t allow you to keep waiting it out, in hopes of attaining near-perfection. Pluto’s position in Capricorn (2008-2024) exposes the ineffectualness of overly rigid frameworks—including all the status-quo ‘supposed-to’s you’ve convinced yourself you must live up to—in order to, hopefully, root out the punishing messages that stop you in your tracks *before* you have a chance to try something new (and, maybe, ‘fail’ at it). At this stage in the macro-level ‘world gone crazy’ reconstruction campaign, we flatly cannot afford to have you sitting on the sidelines, hatching a master plan that could be obsolete by the time you actualize

it. You're capable of *too much* to indulge the worries over whether it's 'enough'. Your improvised participation is badly needed. Will you heed the call?

The first half of your 2012 is marked by Mars loitering in your 9th house, agitating the impulse to align your every behavior with your overarching beliefs in what's 'right'. This duty to your personal sense of ethics goes far beyond talking a good game: It directly implicates you in the need to clean up any recent lapses in judgment, to clarify areas where some misconception of you threatens to sully your reputation, and to fight on behalf of your ideals. This longer-than-usual Mars transit promises to jump-start the awareness that all of your greatest deeds must be grounded in *purposeful meaning*, or they may not be worth the tremendous efforts you invest. And accomplishing something merely to prove (to yourself and/or others) you *can* do it ultimately falls short of this condition. The new standard by which to evaluate yourself? Will you reflect back on your life and feel that you actually achieved a tangible symbol of *your cherished principles*?

### **Your Personal Revolution**

Playing host to Pluto during these revolutionary times, Capricorn, you are in the prime spot to model an example of *conscientious leadership* for the rest of us... whether you like it or not. I hope you'll willingly rise to this honorable task, since you really have little choice about your centrality to this process. During the course of the mid-2010s, you simply won't be able to continue overseeing the important components of your life according to the same old ground-rules, not without increasingly diminishing returns. The structures upon which these rules are founded no longer function as effectively as they once did, and desperately require a major overhaul, if not an out-and-out scrapping and replacement.

You will *have* to step in and address this growing dilemma with earnest vision and earthy reliability, for your own fulfillment *and* the betterment of all—or else your refusal to depart from traditional (and thus outdated) approaches to 'success' will yield fewer and fewer rewards, making you more resentful toward the world-at-large and/or angrier with yourself. Your baseline choice is really no less dramatic than this, thanks to Pluto. Metamorphose, or suffer: which will it be?

Uranus's current passage through your 4th house, meanwhile, points to the self-liberation required on the inner emotional level, in order to victoriously assume this new marker of empowerment. Most of us hold ourselves back, at least in part, as an inherited result of should-and-shouldn't messages we were sent by parents (or parent-figures) who wanted to instill a certain respectability in us. If we're not conscious as adults, we'll continue holding our inner children captive to these now-internalized guidelines... even when they run counter to our desired goals, discredit our emotional needs, and/or trap us in reiterations of dysfunctional family dynamics.

Uranus is now shaking up your relation to the family upbringing you received, whether through shifts in your actual relationships with family members (especially your parents) or a conceptual breakthrough in your understanding of the dynamics. Essentially, you must break free from any pressures you feel to be the person *they* want you to be (or you *imagine* they want you to be), at the expense of who you actually *are*. This could even involve you making a geographic move, to somewhere you might experience a greater sense of emotional space. Even if you consider your relationships with your parents to be largely positive, you still may be unconsciously operating under subtle pressures to please *them*, and not yourself; a little distance might actually prove helpful. Consider the potential benefits in February.

Because the 4th house represents where we call home, Uranus is also drawing your attention to your current living situation... to ensure you're able to freely cater to your own selfish whims, in this one zone that's supposed to be your most nurturing environment for self-care. While I'm not suggesting you ought to trample over your housemates' desires in order to serve yourself, you really *do* need a place where you can genuinely decompress from the outside-world's demands. If you're not presently getting that home-life experience, please initiate the necessary discussions during March and April. If they go nowhere productive, you should probably think about making a radical change.

Bottom line: You're being not-so-gently nudged into claiming more power over your own fate than you've ever claimed before, for cosmic purposes beyond what your mere ego can understand. Whatever self-supportive measures you must take to mollify the inner critic and give your ambitions the chance to manifest *right now*, please don't hesitate to do so. Not everyone will like what you do; some may be quite threatened, in fact. But if you do nothing,

you're going to keep attracting additional disempowering circumstances until, exasperated, you cry out in resistance, 'Who's in charge here, anyway?!?'

### **Challenges & Opportunities**

Since Saturn first entered your 10th house in late 2009, you've been gathering a bunch of signs about your relative progress in achieving the outside-world aspirations you've set for yourself. Nothing about your professional position (or other key public-spotlight circumstances) has necessarily come easily... though whatever you *have* succeeded in securing for yourself, in reputation or responsibility-level, is a direct reflection on the discipline and perseverance you've invested. If you have indeed earned increased authority or renown, please acknowledge, 'Yes, my hard work has paid off'—and let it sink in. If, however, you notice you've hit some sort of wall in your progress, you must heed the sobering reality-check: You're either (1) 'barking up the wrong tree' in terms of direction, and may need to consider shifting gears to something more appropriate if you're stretched too tightly to feel effective in your present spot, or (2) not putting in enough of the right type of energy to produce the results you're hoping for. Midyear should deliver a particularly obvious signal, with a climax in August, as to whether you're on the right track or in need of an outer-world reorientation.

Saturn drifts into your 11th in early October, where he begins a two-and-a-half-year-long process of examining the social allegiances in your life, to determine whether you are aligned with the people likeliest to support your manner of seeing the world. Our community of friends, teammates and comrades ought to be comprised of folks who share common interests or beliefs with us, and who can be trusted to 'have our back' so that we needn't confront everything as a lone warrior. This period asks you to pour additional attention into cementing your bonds with those you consider 'my people', rather than taking their presence for granted... perhaps even reaching out for further involvement in group activities, though it may feel awkward or uncomfortable, to counteract any 'loner' instincts. November is a particularly promising month for fostering the sense that you *belong* to some broader community. If you suspect a fair-weather friend, a disloyal peer, or some other bad apple is spoiling the bunch, you mustn't let it slide—if you don't draw the potential trouble out into the open, you'll bear some responsibility for its toxifying effect.



Jupiter in your 5th, an influence since last June, has hopefully brought a more pronounced dose of pleasure, play and/or creative satisfaction into your life. Despite whatever other challenges or disruptions may be occurring simultaneously, there's no reason to focus solely on the tough stuff. Jupiter's been conspiring with Pluto to bless your intensified efforts toward self-empowerment with an expressive flair uniquely yours, giving you ample opportunity to proudly enjoy what you're working so hard to do. In both March and May, the planetary lineup encourages you to embrace your fun side, as another means of reclaiming control over your fate; *insist* on spending your leisure time in personally engaging activities, and you *know* you'll be that much happier.

Once Jupiter slides in your 6th this coming June, your productive capabilities will noticeably increase, offering you a chance to multi-task your way into an additional service or daily habit that'll further enhance your well-being. Compulsively concentrating on a single mammoth goal, at the expense of all the other smaller ones, is not so physically sustainable. You now have an opportunity to balance your work concerns with the other important building-blocks to a healthy life: good diet and sleep habits, diligent attention to household chores, some regular exercise. Don't let overemotionality or irrational head-trips pull you away from these activities in December, when you probably need their grounding influence the most. And by the way, have you considered getting a (new) pet? That's just the sort of responsibility which brings immediate self-evident gains.

### **Work / Career / Finances**

As I mentioned, the two-and-a-half-years' diligence that Saturn has demanded from your career zone reaches another crescendo in mid-2012, to test whether you are genuinely cut out for the particular benchmark you've been chasing. Extra-hard work you put in during July, especially mid-month, will notify the powers that be (whether actual VIPs or the divine 'powers' of the universe) how serious you are. Accept constructive feedback willingly, without allowing it to fuel any self-defeating scripts in your head; we all must listen and adapt, but it doesn't mean there's anything 'wrong' with us.

Speaking up in professional settings, whether to offer insightful brainstorming or to ask for something else you want, is favored in the second half of September. You might not see a

response until late October or early November, so don't be pushy. Though everyone around you might be easing away from their workload come December, it behooves you to uphold your accelerated momentum during that time... at least for *this* year's holiday season. It would be too easy to convince yourself to blow off something potentially quite profitable, just because it's 'that time of year'.

Your financial life may finally stabilize somewhat, with the at-long-last departure of Neptune from your money house (2nd) after many long years. While you might not become miraculously secure overnight, at least you'll have a much clearer notion of exactly *where* you stand—and, thus, you'll better understand how to proceed to eventually reach your desired economic position. Strategize your budgetary projections for the entire year during January and February, and you'll save yourself a lot of on-the-fly guesswork in the months to come. If, by year's end, you see you need a lot more than you've been able to bring in during '12, ramp up to seriously chase the dough come January 2013.

### **Relationships / Romance**

There's a direct connection, Capricorn, between the blossoming self-confidence you're presently nurturing and how much more strongly you'll attract the kind of folks who value you for who you are. Revel in the expansion of your outward presence in the world, courtesy of Jupiter in your 5th, and admirers will flock to the gleeful light you shine. If you've previously struggled with involving yourself in romantic situations, it may be because you're too caught up in the capital-R concept of 'Relationship'... which just seems like another arena to try to master, instead of something that's meant to bring joy into your life. Lower the expectations of what any encounter might lead to, and savor the unpressured delight of dating just for fun. Tired of waiting around to be asked out? Take the initiative in mid-March, when it'd be hard for anyone (except the most improper choices) to say no to you.

If you're already involved in a relationship (or actively working on establishing one), you must acknowledge that the intense—and necessary—commitment to transforming your place as an individual in the world *does* pull your attention away from fuller immersion in someone else's life. This doesn't have to be a deal-breaking problem... as long as both parties remain aware of, and communicative about, this reality. You can't be everything to anyone when you're in the

process of learning who *you* now need you to be. These issues come to a head in August, as a desire for more time together is complicated by other draws on your energy. If you're meant for the long haul, you'll have to broker a compromise in this temporarily conflicted situation.

Saturn's appearance in your 11th, starting in October, ups the impact your pals or colleagues may have on your relationship life. If you're participating in social outings or activities with folks who lift you up, you're increasing your chances of meeting a new best-friend or main-squeeze with a similar worldview. Maybe you might even invite your most trusted peeps to fix you up? A friend's friend may prove a pretty safe bet in this astro-climate, particularly in the later part of the year. However, beware of envious troublemakers in your group who could covertly act to sabotage your prospects with someone you both know. This sort of petty behavior is *exactly* what Saturn's cautioning you against allowing in your life, in his ongoing examination of who you're surrounding yourself with.

## AQUARIUS

Aquarius follows the beat of its *own* drum, without much need to behave the way everyone else does or to try to blend in... a trait that ought to come in handy for you at this moment in history, when all 'sure' bets are off and nobody should expect their familiar methods or manners-of-being to provide the usual results. Most of you visionary-thinking Aquarians are likely *not* too surprised by the recent turns of disruptive world events, of course—you've always been able to see through the veneers of apparent stability, to the latent unrest waiting to unleash itself and right the societal wrongs, and have probably been awaiting The Revolution (in one form or another) since your adolescence. Aquarius *is* typically at least one step ahead of the game, after all, in being able to envision a world much different than the one everyone else sees. That's why other people so often think you're so weird: They just haven't caught up to your advanced understanding quite yet, and are still attempting to do what they're 'supposed to' do.

But while you Aquarians hold dear to the fair-hearted, humanitarian beliefs that inform your worldview, you sometimes suffer from a particular strain of the Know-It-All syndrome, a condition generally caused by spending too much time in the bubble of your own mind, theorizing about how life *could* (or, if you're a *real* know-it-all, *should*) be... all while remaining at a nice safe distance from the other folks (messy little buggers that they are) whose participation is *also* ultimately required. The shadow side to your iconoclastic genius is the tendency to overlook the irrational motives that often drive others (and, yes, you too). The love of humankind usually attributed to Aquarius is, in practice, tempered by an emotional chilliness that keeps too many actual *humans* from getting too close. Humans can be so *self-serving*, with their grubby needs. (And you? Perhaps *your* grubby self-serving need is to preserve that air of mad-scientist aloofness?)

In the past many years, alas, it's been trickier to maintain the good boundaries you Aquarians generally prefer, due in large part to Neptune's ego-blurring presence in your sign. Since 1998, Neptune's long-term trip through Aquarius has softened you up... sensitizing you to the subtler psychic pulls on your attention... inspiring you to transcend what your mere cerebral logic was telling you, and to follow the misty mystical call of Spirit (or whatever name you refer to it by) to places you probably wouldn't have imagined yourself in prior. At some point during these 14 years (based upon when your exact birthday is), you likely felt totally confused about your

direction, as if the self you'd always identified with was dissolving into some new entity you couldn't quite recognize or understand. While this Neptune effect sometimes brings a corresponding sense of melancholy or moodiness, a side-effect of 'losing' something without being sure what you're gaining in return (though there *is* a gain), the only adequate coping mechanism is to *surrender* to the process, knowing it (like everything) is temporary. Hopefully, Aquarius, you managed to do that... and to come out the other end a more compassionate individual.

2012 is the year that Neptune finally leaves your sign once and for all (or at least until long after you're dead), which leaves you a chance to re-strengthen your self-identity as the new-and-improved Aquarius who *feels* as adeptly as you *think*. The road should start to look less foggy up ahead, though not without its obstacles to traverse (for that is how life works). The first half of 2012, with Mars spending a prolonged period in your 8th house (due to his being retrograde from Jan 23 through Apr 13), provides you a lush—and *muddy*—playing-field for reasserting your preferences for things to go a *very specific* way in the tradeoffs you've made, and/or continue to make, in key exchanges (with lovers, family members, business partners, or whomever you're intimately involved with). You may even need to *fight* for seemingly small but definitely significant victories you previously just 'let slide' in the other person's favor. Though the back-and-forth over contested details could be unpleasant (and/or leave you feeling petty for being so insistent), consider it a necessary step in clarifying a wishy-washy dynamic.

### **Your Personal Revolution**

During the Uranus-square-Pluto years ahead, you're being called to actively insert yourself into the impromptu discussions happening all around you in your local environment. Now is *not* the time to quietly chew on your ideas from behind the safety-glass, Aquarius, smugly content to observe the churning chaos from the sidelines. With Uranus in your 3rd, the onus is on you to *externalize* your thoughts as much as possible. You never know whose worldview you might dramatically alter, in a productively progressive way, simply by riffing on whatever prophetic tangent strikes you in the moment.

You must participate alongside your neighbors and pals, daring to stir them into potentially controversial conversation by speaking, off the cuff, what's on your mind. When something

excites you, talk to *everyone* about it... even if you don't possess all the data, haven't yet formed your definitive opinion on it, or can't see *why* anybody would care. You mustn't be afraid to come off enthusiastic though less-than-knowledgeable, nor to allow yourself to dabble in bits of information or explore curiosities that may end up going nowhere. Knowledge is power—and its free unfettered exchange helps spread the power all around.

Please take the risk of stepping toward, rather than away from, acquaintances who approach the world from very different angles than you... and break the ice in tense relationships with siblings or cousins, since life's too short not to. The first half of February is especially fruitful for initiating these efforts. To truly walk the humanitarian talk you Aquarians are known for, you must embrace the diversity of personalities that comprise your immediate environment. Your imagined 'opposite' could prove to be an incredibly valuable ally, once you realize that we change each other's minds through respectful *relationship*, not legislation or condescending demand.

Pushing yourself ever more *outward* is a necessary antidote to the threat of increased mistrust, paranoia and obsessive thinking that comes with Pluto's ongoing presence in your 12th. When shadowy Pluto lurks in the obscure mist of the 12th house, it often intensifies our deepest fears about everything we can't see—and everything that *could* go wrong. For you Aquarians who thrive on knowing (or *believing* you know) what to expect, the current 'unknowns' will generate greater anxiety whenever you retreat into privately trying to resolve these potential problems (which might never even come to pass)... rather than just living your life, faithful you'll work out any difficulties on the spot should they arise.

Things *do* go wrong in life, to all of us, at one point or another. Fixating on what *might* happen, as if you can outsmart the Divine Order, creates a personal burden so unpleasant that you'll end up unconsciously acting out, in an unhealthy or self-destructive manner, just to divert or silence your panicky mind. In late November, you must be particularly careful not to dig yourself into this kind of hole, nor to misuse your power by poking at other people or micromanaging what they're up to, as a projected fear of losing control. Graceful leadership relies on its relationships. The only humane approach may be simply to breathe deeply through all that's totally out of your hands, letting other people do as they will.

The biggest threat to your well-being in 2012 is a pessimistic mindset, driven by a compulsion to *appear* as if you've got it all figured out. Your personal revolution must overthrow any aversions to making it up as you go along, while instead continuing to toss your questions into the social cauldron, letting others' stray suggestions or offhand opinions magically grant you some answers. (Of course, these 'answers' may only move you one or two steps forward at a time, but that's all you require.) Making peace with the unknown is realizing we *all* confront it... and nobody needs to know more, in advance, than they do.

### **Challenges & Opportunities**

Saturn has spent the past 2½ years in your 9th, firming up your guiding life-philosophies, checking in that you haven't gotten so caught up in the day-to-day, you've accidentally veered into participations that lack significance. You care too much about social justice and personal meaning, after all, to fill your time with jobs or relationships that betray your ethics on these issues. Mid-January is an excellent moment for explicitly appreciating how you've built a life for yourself that's aligned with these values... or for accepting where you're out of alignment. The more satisfyingly you can understand what are your highest *non-negotiables*, the freer you'll be to spontaneously roll with the punches, knowing which compromises *can* (and should) be made and which are unsustainable. In mid-August, expect this understanding to be tested: hold the line, or accommodate?

Saturn moves into your 10th in early October, for 2½ years of strengthening your outer resolve, to determine just how serious you are about achieving your professional and/or public ambitions. This is a big move for Saturn, as he's essentially testing whether your present career trajectory is your best fit, or in need of redirection. It is no longer a question of mere values, but of whether you have the persistence and fighting passion to secure a real-world *testament* to them. Between now and mid-2015, you'll be receiving a cosmic progress-report on the state of these efforts: New heights of attainment will have been hard-earned and well-deserved, while dogged struggles indicate you've reach a limit in how far you can go, without either changing course and/or putting in more work. Will you be honest enough with yourself to accurately interpret these signs?

Jupiter's been warming up your domestic life since June, when he first hit your 4th, hopefully inspiring you to take greater pleasure from the sanctuary you call your home. Any increases in emotional discontent with your living situation (and especially with the *people* you live with) is your clue to *do something about it* and better prioritize your own inner-peace, even if that means looking elsewhere. This is also an occasion to celebrate the positive attributes you have gained from the family who raised you, even if you typically find it easier to complain about the negatives. When's the last time you thanked a parent-figure for their contribution to who you are? Mid-March is a good time to invest energy or money in beautifying your space, or just simply enjoying extra relaxation... and again in mid-May when, though there may be plenty of lively social activity tempting you away, your emotional center craves a balance with some down-time...

...especially since Jupiter lands in your 5th by June, for a year of enlivening your zone of fun and creative fulfillment, a much-needed lightening-up to counter increasing demands on the work front. The 5th house is a lovely place for Jupiter, who expands your capacity to enjoy the unique pastimes and pursuits that keep *your* life a blast. In fact, the entire middle of 2012 promises more variety and stimulation in your leisure than you've welcomed in a while—including possibly having *too many options* to choose from. This is a particular boon to artistic types, who may discover a rekindled spark through exposure to other art-forms and expressions. These last sentences also hold relevance in the *love* department, in case you were wondering. If you're looking for a little (or a *lot*) of romantic canoodling, this is very good news for you. But beware if you're secretly hooking up with more than one person during the last few months of the year: A loudmouthed friend could blow your cover.

### **Work / Career / Finances**

After eight years of unpredictable boom-or-bust Uranus in your money house (the 2nd), he's at last moved on... though rose-colored Neptune now arrives to stake a place there. Neptune's 2nd-house presence (which will continue for more than a *decade*) means that, to tap into your highest financial advantage, you must think beyond your personal gain—and to actively envision how your increased wealth will benefit the world at large. How will you spend your money? Who will you help? Of course, too selfless or idealistic a financial orientation can also cause you trouble, as you need to sustainably cover your own needs and wants *before* signing



everything over to the cause. Aquarius isn't a terribly materialistic sign, but Neptune can exacerbate the desire *not* to deal with money altogether... to give and give sacrificially, to resist economic practicality, to sabotage one's sense of solid footing. Please be aware.

As I mentioned, Saturn hits your career house in October, for a 2½-year stint, raising the level of responsibility you carry in making or breaking your relative success. Ready yourself for the serious challenge of showing the universe you mean business. Throughout June, you must continually redirect your energies toward the everyday duties, or you'll find yourself derailed by a million-and-one distractions; your ability to stay the course, no matter what else is happening, will speak volumes. The first half of August is wonderful for scheduling a couple weeks of nose-to-the-grindstone productivity, as you'll find you actually delight in getting stuff done. The more pleasurable potent a work vibe you instigate then, the more effective you'll be for months to come.

Career action is at its height beginning toward the end of August, when a strong Mars hits your 10th. Through all of September, you've got the verve to cause a noticeable stir in whatever you're striving for... and, at the same time, a magnetic interpersonal charm to woo those whose support will further boost your accomplishments. Maybe it's time to up the stakes? have the important conversation? come to new levels of mutual respect with a boss or important colleague? Articulate your mission statement or reaffirm your goals in early October, as a signal of your refusal to settle. After protracted talks or some other delay, you should receive a desired symbol of your worthiness near the end of November.

### **Relationships / Romance**

Jupiter's arrival in your 5th by June points to no shortage of amorous possibilities in 2012, Aquarius... a message that's further driven home because Venus *also* spends four months there (early April through early August), including a retrograde (May 15-Jun 27). The 5th house is where we bask in the uncomplicated joys of flirtation, romance, and first love—before it gets all complicated and weird. And Venus-retrogrades are notorious for bringing back unfinished relationship business from the past, and/or flashing too-good-to-be-true (or not?) alternatives that force us to ask ourselves what we *really* want. This combination, only magnified by Jupiter,

points to the likelihood you'll be considering multiple potential loves... none of whom may necessarily 'have it all', but which give you ample fodder for weighing your different desires.

This midyear explosion of romantic possibility may feel like a breath of fresh air, following or occurring alongside any drawn-out, tit-for-tat negotiations brought by Mars's many months (Nov 2011-Jul 2012) in your 8th house. True longtime intimacy *does* often demand periods of awkward tension or protracted disagreement, as we work out methods for respecting each other's different personalities and complexes. To be truly *seen* by those we share our life with, which is a presumed goal of bothering to have serious relationships, means sometimes going to the mat over the little crap. Airing the dirty laundry keeps resentments from building up—and the periodic unpleasantness is ultimately a small price to pay, in exchange for knowing each other inside and out.

The collision of (1) needing to work out certain difficult details in your deepest interpersonal bonds and (2) being tempted with *other* less-complicated options for immediate fun—which reaches a head in early April and again in late May/early June—is certainly your big relationship news of 2012. You don't want to rush into an 'easy out' from a relationship you value, just because you're losing patience with a lengthy rough-patch. Yet, at the same time, love is supposed to be *fun*... so why pass up an opportunity for more fun? If you're playing more than one side at a time, you probably owe each individual a fair degree of disclosure. By September, you ought to be happily situated where you want to be. Those on the hunt for more interpersonal stimulus should use December's amped-out social calendar to meet some new peeps.

## PISCES

You're in a class all your own, Pisces, if only because, at heart, you really belong to *all* classes. No other sign has such an intrinsic ability to *sympathetically relate* to any- and everyone, regardless of the earthly identity-trappings they may don... since, at the end of the day, we are all companion-souls on this strange cosmic journey and, thus, we're all ultimately *one*. This is the beautiful spiritual truth that underscores your basic Piscean approach to life (at least as long as you're in touch with your feelings), which bestows upon you a *compassion* for the plight of anybody who suffers that is second-to-none—even as it opens you up to absorbing more than your fair slice of the suffering yourself, vulnerable as you are to picking up others' feelings. But is that really worse than what the rest of us do, shutting down our psychic sensitivities so we can 'better function' (ahem) in a mundane, and often heartless, world? I'd argue not. What you may sacrifice in emotional even-keeledness, you *more than make up for* in heartfelt engagement with life.

The movement of Neptune (the modern ruler of your sign) into Pisces, which happens in early February 2012, inaugurates many years ahead in which your trademark qualities of compassion, idealism and pure emotional engagement will spread more widely into the collective consciousness than they have in a very long while. And *you*, dear Pisces, are hereby summoned to lead us by example, as the wide-eyed, open-hearted attitude you practice without even thinking about it begins to become (gasp!) influential and trendy. That means being more forthright and unapologetic than ever in setting the ego aside... and aligning yourself with however you'll serve the common good. Artists, activists, seers, healers, eager members of the support team among you: Get out of your own way, and follow the intensifying pull to share your loving-kindness with the world. Self-doubt is a self-indulgent time-waster we can't afford. Heed the spirit-whispers, on faith alone if that's all you've got—the currents will carry you where you're most needed.

As I'm sure you know from experience, your Piscean idealism is likeliest to cause you trouble in the realm of *personal relationship*, where your ability to see other people as their highest selves—as opposed to who they actually *are* in the here-and-now—can sometimes impair your practical judgment. The hopeless romantic in you wholeheartedly wants to believe the best of everyone... and that if a certain individual you care for isn't currently behaving in that manner,

you could potentially help them *become* that best self with enough love and support. Obviously, such thinking can be a slippery slope into sacrificial self-sabotage, since none of us (not even a Pisces) can rescue anyone else from taking responsibility for themselves, even with the purest intentions. Codependency is a tempting trap for the Piscean psyche, yet diverts your 'service' energy away from other people and projects that'd actually *appreciate* and *benefit from* it, rather than just sucking you dry.

A notably lengthy transit of Mars to your relationship house (the 7th), beginning in November '11 and lasting through the first half of 2012, is a stark indication of your need to assert *discrimination* in all your one-on-one dealings... though your insistence on certain things happening a certain way with that certain someone (which is already a sufficiently uncomfortable exercise for a Pisces) could likely stir disagreement or conflict. This is no time to let things continue to slide. You have some interpersonal cleanup work in store, if you want everything else in your life to function more smoothly and efficiently. As part of Mars going retrograde during this period (Jan 23-Apr 13), you may have to revise or altogether revoke a previous interpersonal arrangement, in order to *actually* stand up for yourself this time around. Don't give in to misguided guilt about 'going back on your word'; it's perfectly alright for human beings to change their minds.

### **Your Personal Revolution**

During the several years that Uranus spent in your sign (2003-2010), you were already facing his jolts of 'free thyself' quite potently across all areas of your life. During that period, chances are you took at least one giant self-redefining jump that, though it likely brought a healthy dose of temporary *chaos* to you, helped to detach you from a rather confining circumstance and free you up to try *other* things. If you unfortunately fought *against* that tide of radical change, alas, you probably had it forced upon you anyhow... through a major disruption to the status-quo which might've been quite upsetting, but hopefully ended up setting you on a more self-liberating course after it all calmed down.

Now that Uranus has made it to your 2nd house, the innovative stirrings are due to occur in the zone of *money* and, more generally, how you use what you've got at your disposal to secure your material needs. Flatly put, this is *not* an indicator of 'smooth sailing' on the financial front...

though that doesn't have to mean catastrophe or meltdown. Plenty of folks reap fortunes under just such an influence, but certainly *not* by conventional means or the same-ol' thinking. Uranus is an unstable 'boom or bust' energy which, when it comes to money, requires a willingness to respond to odd income-generating opportunities on the spot. Be on the lookout for such unusual openings in February. Then, should an unexpected 'boom' of cash find its way to you, please don't plan on this increase being permanent. Sock some of it away under your mattress for the next 'bust' period. And while you're at it, you'd better get comfortable with these uneven economic rhythms.

Many of you Pisceans grow too habituated to 'scarcity consciousness', barely meeting your financial obligations if at all, due in large part to not placing as much value on the material stuff than on other parts of your life. Though your heart may be in the right place, you're not actually making any effective statement through self-deprivation. A day-to-day struggle for personal survival definitely impedes your ability to more competently help save the rest of us.

(Remember what flight-attendants advise: 'You must secure *your* safety-belt *first* before assisting others.')

Uranus wants you to step radically away from whatever self-denying beliefs keep you from hustling harder for your cash... and to embrace a more defiantly self-serving approach to landing more. If you indeed would use a more stable financial foundation as a springboard for supporting your altruistic efforts out in the world, then who deserves the bigger bucks more than you? To get 'em, though, you have to actively sell yourself. March and April are good months for continuing to ask for what you're worth. Be brave and brazen; the first response you get may not be the *final* one.

Along the way, taking a stand for your *own* material security—and whatever other social values go hand-in-hand with that—could force you to become less acquiescent to what everybody else is doing and, consequently, more explicitly *opinionated* about what's good for the whole team. As a result, certain of your sincerest alliances are bound to strengthen, while the more tenuous might breakdown altogether. This is the hand of Pluto in your 11th house, deeply transforming your relation to larger groups of people, circles of friends, social networks and communities, and/or society at large. You may no longer be able to blend into any crowd quite so easily... at

least not without confronting some unpleasant consequences, should you align yourself with the *wrong* crowd.

Pluto serves as a polarizing influence here: In rousing you to more intensely or passionately commit to certain ideals and the folks who share your vision, you can't help but *put off* those who disagree. While you may feel a greater sense of specific 'belonging' than in the past, you must simultaneously face the shadow of *not belonging* as a logical extension of daring to identify one way or the other. You might even draw the outrage or ire of those on 'the other side of the fence'. Even though you can ultimately see through the 'us-and-them' thinking, you can't avoid the immediate necessity of taking a stand. This comes to a head in mid November and into December, when you could become more 'political' than you ever imagined you would. Trying to play the middle, however, will both threaten bonds you hold dear *and* potentially implicate you in group actions you don't agree with.

### **Challenges & Opportunities**

Saturn's presence in your 8th house over the past couple years has offered a constant warning against entangling yourself too far in joint interpersonal business, something you Pisceans have a special tendency to do. If anything, this time's been more about *limiting* these involvements and/or totally *cutting* such ties than getting further in. This is Saturn's way of trying to help you simplify your life, by eliminating any needlessly mind-scrambling complications and supporting the ongoing trend of increased self-sufficiency. He'd like you to be 100% certain of the reliability and trustworthiness of anyone you'd get that intertwined with, whether through financial or sexual union or other types of intimacy. Otherwise, the costs are likely to far outweigh the benefits... and yes, this is *exactly* the manner in which you ought to be thinking about it. If, by mid August, you realize a fair balance has not yet been struck, it's probably time to lower the boom.

Early in October, Saturn moves on into your 9th house, provoking you to condense and refine your overarching life-philosophies into a coherent platform by which you can discern your personal 'rights' from the 'wrongs'. Questions of *integrity* come into fuller prominence between now and mid-2015, as you are thrown instance after instance where you must clearly articulate your principles—or risk being seen as wishy-washy or, worse, lacking ethics. October and

November present you a good chance to stand up for 'the right thing', though certain subtleties in the issue could make this a controversial stand. The heightened seriousness with which you must contend, in order to be a voice for justice, may even inspire you to further your studies or explore other cultures' alternative views on the matter.

Jupiter has occupied your 3rd house since June '11, opening new positive possibilities in your immediate social environment, through hopefully motivating you to stay increasingly in touch with pals, siblings, and/or acquaintances. It's in your very best interests, then, to communicate more of what's going on with you, both to larger numbers of people and in greater detail, than you previously had been. Consider these friendly (re)connections as one of the basic pleasures in life—and a very easy way to perk up any sagging mood, requiring only a quick phone-call, Facebook ping, or neighborly visit to remind you that you're never alone. Don't underestimate how *grounding* a seemingly casual chat can be... especially in mid-May, when so much 'up-for-grabs' energy will be swirling around. Welcome a supportive chum's advice, to help you keep your head screwed on straight.

By June of this year, Jupiter lands in your 4th house, the ultra-personal domain where we allow our most private feelings room to breathe... and ourselves to relax. Usually, this links the 4th to the place we call home, which means that Jupiter's arrival puts more emphasis on enjoying the comforts of your domestic sphere. Considering Venus spends an extended span there as well (early April through early August), 2012 looks to be a stellar year for investing lots of good energy in your living situation—as well as productively remedying any home-front problems. You owe it yourself to feel safe and relaxed where you live. Because the 4th also rules relationships with our family of origin, these transits open an opportunity to renew our appreciation for the folks we come from. Venus's retrograde (May 15-Jun 27) could be your long-awaited chance to resolve unsettled family business. You don't have to agree on every point in order to mend fences; in fact, a *new-and-improved* relationship ('now with better boundaries!') could emerge during this time.

### **Work / Career / Finances**

The biggest factor in your work life during '12, as I mentioned earlier, is the 2nd-house pressure from Uranus to more proactively grab financial matters into your own hands... trying any and all

possible means, including those that may seem off-the-wall, in order to boost your confidence in your money-making abilities. We're firmly in a 'Do It Yourself' era, when computers and personal media-devices empower individuals to create their own ventures with very little starting-capital—and endless potential for growth. Maybe it's time for you to finally start *charging* (or charging *more*) for the special talent you've been freely giving away for too long. Try on this new way of proudly valuing your natural resources from February through April, when you shouldn't be shy about telling everyone what you've got to offer.

Your day-to-day responsibilities demand more of you throughout July and August, when you may be charged with managing an important project (or lots of little ones at the same time). Plan on it taking more time than you might think, once you factor in the high likelihood that one or more pieces will need to be fixed or replaced along the way. There's no escaping the annoying logistical snafus when Mercury retrograde messes with your 6th house. Once you bound back to a steadier rhythm in September, don't forget to remind the person in charge how adeptly you maneuvered through the madness—riding high on such a productive output, you're in an ideal spot to ask for a raise.

Your work efforts are likelier to attract attention from a wider audience and/or a certain V.I.P. you're hoping to impress from October onward. Be sure to behave as if all eyes on you, to avoid making sloppy errors in judgment that impact how 'professional' you appear. Yet, this is no time to be meek: Others will be more impressed that you took *some* decisive action, even if it requires a later course-correction, than if you stood by and refused to take responsibility. Try to watch your mouth with sensitive information during November, when a slip-of-the-tongue could leave you disclosing more than you ought to. Should that happen, face the music like an adult rather than issuing hollow denials. It may take you until the final weeks of December to *finally* get noticed for what you worked toward all year. Better late than never, right?

### **Relationships / Romance**

Thanks to Mars, your first six months of 2012 are dominated by a continuing need to clearly assert, in an expressly *specific* tone, what you expect from the other person in any key one-on-one relationships (romantic or otherwise)... and, if these desires are not pretty meticulously honored, to indeed *fight* for their rightful respect. Don't back off just because you fear you're



somehow petty for being so 'particular'. If you're going to bother sharing your time and energy with someone, you're entitled to express the *exact* dimensions of your likes and dislikes. Saturn in your 8th is continually reminding you not to sell out your own interests, just to preserve a 'togetherness' vibe that keeps you dependent on someone else.

Mid-March is a pivotal moment for correcting misperceptions and/or closing leaky loopholes in any tense interpersonal arrangement. You'll argue your case more strongly if you first step back from the immediate emotion, then review the facts with calm analytic rationality. Don't be afraid to talk it through with other people before bringing it to the main event. Those who haven't been following the play-by-play all along will have the most objective perspective. At the end of the day, you really ought to position this as a matter of *principle* rather than mere preference. You have to live according to what you claim to believe, or your words will ring hollow.

Romance is definitely in the air during August, when you're craving a bit more easy fun after those long months of Mars-in-your-7th. If you're single and looking to mingle, this is your best month for putting yourself out there. If there's still any residual drama lingering from your last coupling, do everyone a favor and *leave it at home*: Nothing spoils a light-hearted evening of flirtatious fun more quickly than a tortured story about your ex. The same truth flows the *other* direction, too, so please be very wary of anyone who wants to bare their soul (and all the complications that come with it) within the first few dates. The minute you decide you can help them work through their past heartbreaks is the moment you officially enter the dreaded Pisces-martyr zone. The most suitable love-matches will arrive needing no 'fixing' or 'saving'.

## Acknowledgments, Etc.

I can't believe I did, and it's done. Turns out, writing 45,000 words takes a lot longer than I thought it would... and at the same time, is, in certain ways, easier than I'd imagined. The key to my success at this venture was to *not* think about what a massive project this was, but simply to put in a good effort each day doing the actual *writing* (not the endless conceptualizing that usually trips one up, though we falsely assume it's helping us). I now feel ready to write more books, some perhaps *not* specifically about astrology. We'll see what this 'epoch of revolution' brings next, won't we?

Thank you, Cisco, for assisting me with layout and other brainstorming on the logistics. You are a fantastic and productively challenging creative collaborator, like only a Scorpio could be to an Aquarius. I only wish I could hire you as my full-time taskmaster and whip-cracker.

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