

THE SKY WITHIN

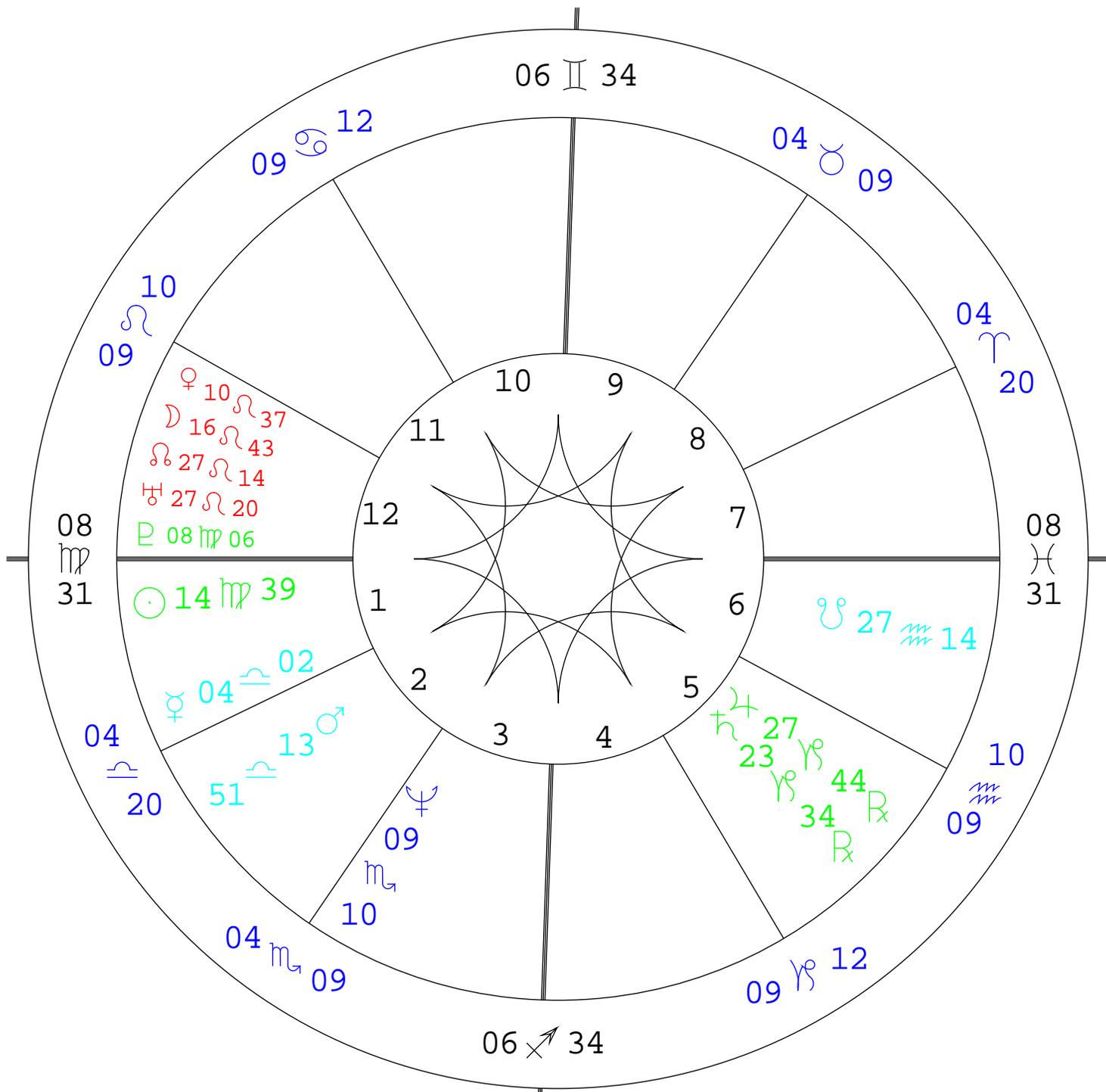
Text by Steven Forrest

Planets within 1.5 degrees of the following house cusp are considered in the next house; those in the 3 degrees before the Ascendant are considered in the first house.

Orbs for Sun and Moon conjunctions are 8 degrees.

**THE SKY WITHIN
PREPARED FOR
Chloe Armand**

Born on Sep 7, 1961 at 6:02 am PDT
Zone 8.00 Daylight time
San Diego, CA 32N42 55 117W09 23
Placidus cusps Tropical zodiac
Prepared on 1/16/1 15 35



NATAL CHART

Chloe Armand
 7 Sep 1961 6h 2m 0s PDT
 San Diego, CA
 Placidus 32N42 117W 9

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Using Your Birthchart as a Spiritual Guide

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

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

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

All from a map of the sky?

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

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

Let's go a step further.

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

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

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you into higher levels of being.

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

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

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

After that, the rest is up to you.

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YOUR TEN TEACHERS

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

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

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

How do we learn this teacher's lessons?

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

Virginity isn't the point. That's just a kind of inexperience, and in the long run no one learns much from avoiding experience. Virgo means purity. Perfection. Getting everything exactly right. That's a tall order. Perfection is a harsh master. It drives the Virgoan part of you, haunting you with a sense of what could be, a sense of the ideal. It also holds a flawless mirror before you, revealing all the imperfections and shortfalls in your character. The combination is powerful. It fills your spirit with hunger and divine discontent, imbuing you with restlessness, as though you'd taken out an insurance policy against complacency. Be careful, though: Virgo energies can self-destruct, slipping into a crippling hyper-awareness regarding all the flaws and shortfalls inherent in people, oneself, our possessions, our prospects--everything. And nothing kills our climb toward perfection faster than that.

With your Sun in Virgo, sitting around feeling good about yourself doesn't stoke the existential furnace. What drives you, vitalizes you, makes you feel alive, is effort. You were born hungry to accomplish things. You're hungry now. You'll die hungry too. That sounds like a baleful prophecy, but it's not as dark as it seems. Another way of describing your innate restlessness is that you're eager to evolve, to learn, to grow, and are

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never content to rest on your laurels.

Your soul took a risk working with this energy. You sense what you could be, how you'd look if you were wiser, purer, clearer. Just as vividly, you see what you really are, with all your flaws and shortcomings. Ideally, that contrast should inspire you. But if it gets twisted, then you plummet into self-criticism, guilt, and crippling, self-imposed limitations. And that pathology gets expressed outwardly as a critical, nit-picking personality.

On the deepest level, you're learning about self-acceptance. But you're doing it in the toughest of all psychological environments: an honest mind.

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

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

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

Stories always have two dimensions: plot and character. But on a deeper level the concepts merge. "Janie is shy." How do we know? "She walked into the room and didn't speak to anyone." Character is defined through action; action implies character--that is, needs, desires, and values. In the First House, the territory you face is the plotting of your life--and therefore the definition of your character.

First House energies "act out" a lot. They're a visible, dramatic, well-developed part of your nature. For that reason, this is a part of your life where people think you have a real gift for leadership. They're right--but it doesn't always feel that way to you. How to get it right? Easy--trust your instincts. Be yourself. A good plot proceeds from a sound, coherent character.

With your Sun in the First House, there's a lot of punch to your style. People tend to be impressed by you, to remember you. In fact, you sometimes have to make an effort to avoid overwhelming them. That

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charisma and apparent self-assurance masks the evolutionary issue you face: creating a destiny. Because, unlike most people, you were born without one! The "hand of fate" plays a minimal role in your life. There's a frightening freedom built into this solar position. It all boils down to the words of St. Augustine, "Love God, and do what you will."

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

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

When you were born, the Moon was in Leo.

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

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

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

With your Moon in Leo, you have the instincts of a performer. To feel comfortable, you need to feel appreciated. That is to say, you need to feel as though people are enjoying you, taking pleasure and inspiration from what you have to offer them. This combination is a little odd: the Moon, unlike Leo, is inherently timid. You must nurture the performer in

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yourself, making sure it's not too easily rebuffed. Some of that work revolves around cultivating your own creative talents, polishing them, making them all that they can possibly be. Another piece of the puzzle lies in learning to select the right audiences... and if you're giving your best and everybody's yawning, then for sure you'd better pack your bags and go somewhere else.

If you don't feed your Leo Moon the applause it needs, then you'll slip into the "occupational hazards" associated with this combination: getting haughty, self-centered, or demanding. You'll be the "performer" who offers nothing, and still expects everyone's rapt attention.

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

Slipping the bonds of ego, letting consciousness expand beyond the narrow framework of personality--that's the terrain of the Twelfth House. A planet here stands between you and higher states of consciousness, not as an obstacle but as a bridge. For that reason, it's helpful to view such a planet as your "Guru" or "Master Teacher."

The very existence of a planet in this part of your chart tells us that in this lifetime you're ready for a quantum leap in awareness. But to accomplish that, you must practice a very specific "yoga." What yoga? That depends on the planets involved.

Before we identify that spiritual discipline, there's one more point--your planetary "guru" is rather insistent. If you avoid the methods the Teacher suggests, your poor ego will take some hard knocks. To the old astrologers, this was the "House of Troubles." That's a fair description of what's in store for us if we choose to maintain our usual attachments, ignoring the call of the inner worlds.

With the Moon in the Twelfth House, Luna becomes your Master Teacher. Ever since you were a kid, you've felt an enormous, instinctive pull toward experiencing higher, or at least altered, states of consciousness. The inner Teacher is working directly on your heart, on your subjective, emotional responses. Understanding doesn't matter much here; only experiencing, only witnessing, feeling, accepting. Take care that you provide yourself with time for that quiet, meditative work. Otherwise something dangerous happens: your emotions begin to erode your self-image. How? Two ways. You may be drawn impulsively and repeatedly into ego-shattering interpersonal dramas. Or you may find yourself overwhelmed with an urge to experience oblivion--the shadow of transcendence. Down that road, we meet alcoholics, not to mention dru-

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gaholics, workaholics, TV-aholics....

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

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

When you took your first breath, Virgo was lifting over the eastern horizon of San Diego, CA. Let's begin our analysis by considering the meaning and spiritual message of the sign of "The Perfectionist".

As we saw earlier, Virgo is the Perfectionist. Superficially, it represents analysis and refinement. More deeply, it symbolizes a set of self-aware--and usually somewhat self-critical--evolutionary steps leading to radical purification.

With Virgo rising, your style is precise and analytical. You radiate intelligence, sometimes rather intimidatingly. Something in your aura seems to be studying everything--and everyone!--searching for errors and weaknesses. And of course, you usually find them. That's fine, but you may need to cultivate a little diplomacy in the way you express what you've discovered.

To feel centered, you need to feel as though you're good at something. Technical skill bolsters your confidence and your general feeling of well-being immeasurably. That skill can be in any category, from figure-skating to neurosurgery. Similarly, you'll feel best when you're working and when the work you're doing is clearly helping someone in a practical way.

What have we learned so far? Quite a lot. Astrologers use the primal triad of Sun, Moon, and Ascendant in much the same way people who know just a little astrology use Sun signs. The difference is that while there are only twelve Sun signs, there are 1728 different combinations of

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all three factors. So when we say that you are a Virgo with the Moon in Leo and Virgo rising, that's a very specific statement.

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

We can say you are "The Perfectionist", or "The Analyst", or "The Servant". Those are just different ways of saying you have the Sun in Virgo. We can say you have the soul of "The Performer", or "The Aristocrat", or "The Clown"... your Moon lies in Leo, in other words. We can add that you wear the mask of "The Perfectionist", or "The Analyst", or "The Servant". Those images capture the spirit of your Ascendant, which is Virgo.

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

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

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

What can that mean? Start by understanding the significance of the planet.

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

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

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

At the moment of your birth, Pluto stood in the First House just below the eastern horizon--about to "dawn." In exactly the same way, you "dawn" on people in a Plutonian way: intensely. It's pivotally important that you find some larger framework of purpose for your life... or else all that intensity with which you were born will dissipate itself first in pointless drama, then in bitterness.

While a fairly large number of people have Pluto in that sign and house,

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the fact that it lies conjunct your Sun gives it special emphasis. By pushing the strengths it suggests toward their limits, you charge your solar vitality, approach your destiny, and set the stage for fulfilling your spiritual purpose.

The lunar dimensions of your astrological signature are deepened by planetary overtones. At the instant your independent physical life began, the planet Venus was conjunct the Moon--aligned with it, in other words. As a result, we cannot discuss your emotions and instincts without including the notion that your Soul is charged with the spirit of Venus, as though that ancient "god" lived inside you.

Our first step, of course, is to get acquainted with this new element in the puzzle.

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

Venus was passing through Leo. Thus, both your aesthetic sensitivity and your taste in partners is shaped by the dramatic, playful, self-expressive spirit of the Lion. In the realm of beauty, whether natural or wrought by human hands, you have a taste for the monumental, for the lofty goal fully realized. The same goes for friends and sexual partners--you appreciate people who express themselves with magnanimity and style, people who are unafraid of their own power--and unafraid of yours too.

With Venus in your Twelfth House, your Inner Teacher is the Goddess of Beauty. Translated, that means that you benefit spiritually from immersing yourself in inspiring lovely surroundings. Ultimately, in this House we are learning the hard lesson of letting go--and therefore at least one of the most critical spiritual turning points for you revolves around the loss of someone upon whom you've allowed yourself to depend a little too much.

A planet can gain authority by sharing a House with the Moon. We find that situation in your chart. Uranus is bathing in moonlight, occupying the Twelfth House along with Luna.

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

With Uranus in Leo, the process of individuation for you is tied up with the Path of the Performer. That is to say, you strengthen and clarify your own Uranian identity through cultivating and polishing your innate capacity for creative self-expression--and without that outlet, you're likely to clog up your life with unnecessary bombast and drama. Consciously chosen forays into the realm of performance, such as theater, music, or even the pursuit of athletic excellence, purify your sense of self, purging out the spurious "inner voices" you've swallowed sitting in front of the great wraparound television set of late twentieth century Industrial Culture.

House of Troubles--that's the old name for the Twelfth House, where your Uranus lies. Fortunately, the issues are broader; this part of the natal chart is the House of Spirituality... unless we resist it--then we see the "Troubles." Uranus is your Teacher here, and the lessons can be summarized this way: your inner guru doesn't believe in gurus! You have reached a place on the path where there is much emphasis upon learning to think for yourself, independently of any collective spiritual position papers. In a nutshell, to be true to your spirit, you must assert your individuality, choosing an inner path that involves some outward social costs.

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

Traditionally, the Second House is the House of Money. That's true, but the issues here are much broader. This is the House of Resources, and resources aren't always financial. If you're lost in Dubrovnik, Yugoslavia, at two in the morning, you'll probably feel pretty insecure. If you have a thousand dollars in your pocket, that'll help; you'll feel more legitimate.

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The money is a resource, and it produces the classic Second House effect: helping you feel more confident. But speaking fluent Serbo-Croatian would do the same; knowing the language is a terrific resource, even though no one will give you a nickel for it.

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

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

Mercury is balanced in Libra. That combination links your mental functions to the evenhanded, aesthetic logic of the Scales. Reflexively, your intelligence seeks out both sides of every question, drawn always to the idea that paradox is woven into the fabric of reality. Your mind works like a poet's, sensing that without beauty, words lose some of their truth. Spiritually you are learning about diplomacy in speech--and perhaps about the pitfall of letting kindness blur the truth.

With the traditional "Messenger of the Gods" occupying your Second House, you prove yourself to yourself most effectively by constantly making an effort to stretch your intelligence--and your capacity to communicate it--to its limits. You may collect books... but make sure you read them too!

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

Mars lies in civil Libra. It's as though the Warrior has gone to charm school! Libra is peaceful, diplomatic, consensus-seeking. Reflexively, your Mars pursues reconciliation, mutual understanding. But there's one offense that fires your rage: that's willful injustice. Spiritually you are

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learning a lot about building bridges of respect and fairness--without slipping into the trap of hollow forgiveness and whitewashed grudges.

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

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

Pleasure--that's Fifth House territory. It's as though God marched you off the end of the cosmic diving board with the words, "Go down there and try to have a good time!" That sounds pretty lightweight, but think about it: feeling good in this world isn't so easy! We've got global pollution, schizophrenics with AK-47s, ego-maniacs with nuclear warheads... not to mention disease, taxes, mosquitoes, cars that won't start...

How do we feel real pleasure here on planet Earth? Alone, the "pleasures of the flesh" can't cut the mustard; money, alcohol, orgasms--they help, but they're not enough... just look at the usual life-expectancy of a "purely physical relationship." Where to turn? To the pleasures of the mind, the heart, the soul! The joy of learning. The spiritual high of athletic excellence. The bliss of meditation. And, perhaps above all, the sheer pleasure of creative self-expression.

Astrological force is focused here in your birthchart. It offers joy--and warns of the addictions that can overcome you if you miss that joy, or seek it all in one place.

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

Jupiter stands in Capricorn. This is an important piece of information--maybe a pivotal one. Being human is tough sometimes. When you need to boost your elemental faith in life, your answer lies in following the Way of the Builder. Joy, for you, lies in the hard-won victory, the goal reached,

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the pinnacle attained. When you're sad, create a triumph for yourself--that's the only cure. The triumph may be huge--like getting your Ph.D.--or it may be a little, daily thing, like actually getting around to cleaning out the closet.

In your chart, the "King of the Gods" reigns in the Fifth House--traditionally the "House of Children." Your nature is playful and self-expressive, and the "inner child" is vibrant inside you. Creativity comes naturally... but, spiritually, you are learning how to use it correctly. Sincerity and risk are the keys; without them, you'll produce a technicolor personality and lots of applause, but little else. The archetype that's trying to break through you is not simply the Bard... it's the Wise Bard.

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

The savvy, ambitious terrain of Capricorn offers a region of profound spiritual challenge for you, as Saturn was passing through that sign at your birth. You must learn to steel yourself in the face of the Sea-Goat's shadow side: self-mechanization, and self-imposed emotional exile. Will yourself toward joy! Learn the discipline of spontaneity! And support that journey in practical, Saturnian terms by fortifying yourself with concrete skills and strategies--especially ones pertinent to Saturn's House in your birthchart. Which House was that?

The Fifth! The arena of life where we learn to refine our self-expression, to turn our human experience into some kind of creative product. With Saturn here, you need to focus your will on the polishing of the channels through which your imagination expresses itself. Learning to trust yourself here is the first step--you really do have talent. Hard work comes next. And finally, you must learn to transcend method and acquire one last discipline: the creatively essential, paradoxical discipline of spontaneity!

In the final analysis, all planets are important. Each one plays a unique role in your development pattern, and failure to feed any one of them results in a diminuation of your life. Just because the following aren't

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"having breakfast with the president", through association with the Sun, Moon or Ascendant doesn't mean we can ignore them.

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

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

Neptune, planet of transcendence, occupies the Third House of your birthchart, where its mystical feelings are linked to questions of communication and perception. You have the mind--and voice--of a poet. That is, you naturally think and speak in terms of symbols and innuendo. This is a strength, but our culture doesn't value it much. Be careful you don't let society trick you into thinking there's something wrong with your mind! You're a visionary, and you grow spiritually when you take steps to put that vision into a form that can be shared.



Your Lunar Nodes

The soul's journey

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

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

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

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

At your birth, the South Node of the Moon lay in Aquarius, the sign of the Exile. Anyone looking into your eyes as you took your first breath would have observed the results of lifetimes spent out of kilter with the dominant

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myths of whatever culture you were living in: independence, detachment, eccentricity--and a near defensive quickness in justifying those qualities. In previous incarnations, you've had experiences in which you were sustained by little more than a stubborn indifference to public opinion--that, or a capacity to keep strategic silence. Now, like the prodigal son, you must learn new lessons: trust, an easy bonhomie with the human family, an expectation of love.

That nascent ability to feel at ease with others is symbolized by your North Node of the Moon, which lies in Leo--the sign of the Performer. As we saw earlier, the North Node can be seen as the most significant point in the entire birthchart. Why? Because it represents your evolutionary future... the ultimate reason you're alive. How can you accomplish this Leonine spiritual work? The "yoga" is easy to say, harder to do: you must overcome the myth of the Exiled Genius inside yourself, release your attachment to the idea that no one understands you, and begin offering your gift to the world. Help yourself by cultivating polished crowd-conscious creative talents. This is the "wrapping" which will give others enthusiasm for the unexpected, sometimes shocking, wisdom you bring.

There's another piece to the puzzle: The Moon's South Node falls in the Sixth House of your chart. This implies that previous to this lifetime you learned a lot about humility. Your method was radical devotion to service and duty. Trouble is, you learned a bit about humiliation along the way, often crippling your creativity and individuality with feelings of inadequacy, shame, and guilt.

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

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And that's your birth chart.

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

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

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

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