

The Sky Within

George Clooney
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Lexington, KY
084W30'01" 38N02'57"

Sun in **Taurus**, at 15° 33', in the second house.
Moon in **Capricorn**, at 27° 58', in the eleventh house.
Mercury in **Taurus**, at 20° 45', in the second house.
Venus in **Aries**, at 13° 04', in the first house.
Mars in **Leo**, at 00° 09', in the fifth house.
Jupiter in **Aquarius**, at 06° 34', in the twelfth house.
Saturn in **Capricorn**, at 29° 51', in the eleventh house.
Uranus in **Leo**, at 21° 41', in the sixth house.
Neptune in **Scorpio**, at 09° 48', in the eighth house.
Pluto in **Virgo**, at 05° 34', in the sixth house.
Midheaven in **Sagittarius**, at 19° 50'.
Ascendant in **Pisces**, at 11° 57'.

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

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

THE SKY WITHIN

by Steven Forrest

Using Your Birthchart as a Spiritual Guide

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

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

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

All from a map of the sky?

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

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

Let's go a step further.

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

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

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

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

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

After that, the rest is up to you.

YOUR TEN TEACHERS

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

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

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

How do we learn this teacher's lessons?

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

Ease, calm, naturalness -- those are the spiritual goals of the Bull. Silence too. But not just the kind that comes from keeping your mouth closed. The Bull's silence is deeper: it's a quiet heart. Feel the wind in your hair. Feel the efficiency of your body, the rightness of its rhythms, the easy intelligence of your cells and muscles. That's Taurus. The part of you that's learning the lessons of the Bull is getting more grounded, more present, more receptive to immediate reality. As a result, it has a physical orientation and a practical feeling. It's not so interested in abstract flights of speculation. It avoids the metaphysical Disneyland that seem to fascinate so many people. It specializes in the wordless mysticism of ordinary life.

Feed your Taurean side with hands-on work: gardening, crafting wood or cloth, communing with animals. Soothe it with music. Restore and renew it with time spent close to nature -- in the forest, in the mountain valley, by the ocean. Dress it in blue jeans and flannel. And never, ever, ask it to go to a cocktail party!

With your Sun in Taurus, you renew your basic vitality in simple ways. Take a walk in the woods. Paddle a canoe. Build something of oak or maple. Your deepest nature is quiet, stable, solid. You benefit from having a strong tone of continuity in your life -- especially in relationships. Keep in touch with old friends. Stay close to people who aren't too quick to get off on "trips," be they guru-scenes, make-a-million schemes, or a new kind of bean sprout that will change your life. At the deepest level, you are learning about calm and naturalness. So keep things simple.

Your practical skills are enormous: you understand the world of raw materials, of money, of daily life. Be careful those skills don't run away with you! A pitfall for you lies in getting so busy keeping all your responsibilities magnificently fulfilled that you starve yourself for quiet time. Then the Sun grows dimmer in you, and every other aspect of your character has less light to reflect.

We can take our analysis of your natal Sun a step further. When you were born, that solar light illuminated the Second 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.

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

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

With the Sun in the Second House, your fate pivots on two imponderables: Will you define some vast project for your life through which you can gain a sense of solid accomplishment in your own eyes? And will you accumulate the resources, whatever they may be, to actually pull it off? Although there's no way to predict wealth or poverty from this House placement, money will almost certainly be an unstable area in your life, one you'll have to pay attention to. But don't let that mask the deeper theme: proving yourself. Gaining self-respect. Dignity. When Second House Sun people are failing to live up to their potentials, they nearly always try to whitewash that failure by pointing out practical limitations "beyond their control."

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

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

When you were born, the Moon was in Capricorn.

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

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

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

With your Moon in Capricorn, you have vivid emotions and ravenous hungers... but often you find yourself in situations where expressing them is dangerous, inappropriate, or ethically questionable. The effect is a bit like dynamite exploding in a steel room. From an evolutionary perspective, you are taking a master class in self-

discipline. The plain fact is that, spiritually, you've come to a place in the journey where you need to toughen up.

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

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

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

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

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

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

With the Moon in the Eleventh House, you have uncanny "political" instincts -- and whenever more than two or three people get together to try to accomplish something, we have "politics!" Your destiny lies with processes that spill over the boundaries of your own life and your own powers and interact with the destinies of other people; you are a team player by fate, if not by taste. As you mature, you will become more and more lunar -- that is, more emotionally expressive and probably more creative. In you, there is a softening that comes with time. If you get six out of every ten existential questions right, that's good news. Do worse, and you'll do a slow drift in the direction of moodiness, prickliness, and maudlin self-indulgence.

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, Pisces was lifting over the eastern horizon of Lexington, KY. Let's begin our analysis by considering the meaning and spiritual message of the sign of "The Mystic".

Transcendence. Mysticism. Spirituality. That's Pisces at its best. In this part of your life, you've been given an instinctive sense of mystery and vastness. Something there seems automatically to think in terms of centuries, of high purposes, of divine interventions. Reflexively, when faced with life's vicissitudes, it asks, "What will this matter in five hundred years?"

That's the soul of spirituality. It's also dangerous. Transcendence can run amuck, leaving Pisces in an uncaring, drifting mode, "transcending" while its life descends into entropy. Along that road there are some sad waystations: forgetfulness, spaciness, then escapism -- perhaps into alcohol or drugs, perhaps into food, maybe into the television set.

Avoid those sorry journeys by feeding your Piscean circuitry exactly what it needs: meditative time, silence, a few minutes each day to sit in the infinite cathedral.

With Pisces rising, we find a paradox. Of all signs, the Fishes are the least concerned with style and appearance; their nature is transcendent, mystical. And yet the ascendant represents the very material Pisces is seeking to transcend: the outer self. Style and appearance. What happens as these two symbols come together in your life is that you develop an outer personality that's terrifically flexible. Like a fine actor, you can play any role.

The role that helps you feel most centered and clear about yourself draws on the deepest Piscean interests and orientations. We might call it the role of the Mystic. Or the Poet. Or the Dreamer. When you place yourself in situations where you can

express those aspects of your character, you feed your soul. Other roles may win you Oscars, but they'll quickly turn as dry as dust. Then you'll seek ways to numb the pain of that emptiness, sometimes very hurtful ways.

What have we learned so far? Quite a lot. Astrologers use the primal triad of Sun, Moon, and Ascendant in much the same way people who know just a little astrology use Sun signs. The difference is that while there are only twelve Sun signs, there are 1728 different combinations of all three factors. So when we say that you are a Taurus with the Moon in Capricorn and Pisces 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 Naturalist", or "The Elf", or "The Silent One". Those are just different ways of saying you have the Sun in Taurus.

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

We can add that you wear the mask of "The Mystic", or "The Poet", or "The Dreamer". Those images capture the spirit of your Ascendant, which is Pisces.

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

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

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

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 Aries. Thus, both your aesthetic sensitivity and your taste in partners is shaped by the direct, primal spirit of the Warrior. In the realm of beauty, whether natural or wrought by human hands, you have a taste for the elemental and primitive... no frilly fru-fru need apply. The same goes for friends and sexual partners -- you appreciate honesty, a willingness to roar, and a simple dedication to basics, such as loyalty and plain speech.

With Venus in the First House, you are blessed with a kind of animal magnetism. People seem instantly to trust you, to feel as though there's rapport between you. You are instinctively courteous -- that is, you mold your behavior in such a way that others are put at ease. From an evolutionary perspective, you center yourself most effectively when you identify yourself as a peacemaker or an artist.

Your own birthchart is complicated by the fact that, at your birth, Mercury was aligned with the Sun... or "conjunct" the Sun, to use the proper astrological term. Thus, the energy and spirit of that planet is fused with your solar identity. In a sense, you are an "incarnation" of Mercury."

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

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

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

With the traditional "Messenger of the Gods" occupying your 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!

While a fairly large number of people have Mercury in that sign and house, 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 Saturn 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 Saturn, as though that ancient "god" lived inside you.

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

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 Eleventh! The arena of life where we establish the framework of priorities that governs the shape of our futures... and where we link up with the network of allies who help us attain our goals. With Saturn here, you were born to accomplish some Great Work... but not until the second half of your life. Until then, you are becoming the kind of person who can fill those shoes -- developing clear moral or aesthetic values, learning self-discipline and concentration... and seeking out a sober, supportive community of friends.

Your birthchart displays another area of heightened activity: the Sixth House. The reason for that is simple -- there's a lot of planetary activity. With Uranus and Pluto

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.

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

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

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

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 Servants -- that's the old name for the Sixth House, where your Uranus lies. The issues are broader; not just work, but also the spiritual virtues that arise from work -- competence, responsibility, caring, and humility. Uranus is your Teacher here, and the lesson can be summarized this way: the kinds of work that

afford you the deepest sense of satisfaction are Uranian--that is, they are unorthodox... a conservative person might call them "weird." You are happiest in patterns of work and responsibility in which there's plenty of room for experimentation, individuality, and invention -- and saddest when the boss is breathing down your shoulder.

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

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

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

At the moment of your birth, Pluto gleamed in the Sixth House... the part of the natal chart concerned with competence, responsibility, and service to others. It is pivotally important that you find a kind of work in which you have a profound moral stake. Just making money and not hurting anyone will never be enough for you. There is pain in the world; your job is to address it... even in places where success is unlikely.

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

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 glitters in Leo, where it glows with power and charisma. Once your enthusiasm is ignited, people tend to line up behind you. They believe you, trust you. The archetype of the Warrior King (or Queen!), full of dignity and righteous authority, plays a basic role in your psychic makeup. Spiritually you are learning about the humility and sensitivity that must temper the weight of the crown.

With the War-God occupying your Fifth House, you have a strong and rather competitive streak of playfulness. One of your greatest joys lies in finding a "worthy opponent" -- on the tennis court, across the chess board, or in the dramas of any passionate human interaction. Be careful of overwhelming people; you can do it, often without knowing that's what you're doing.

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 Eighth House of your birthchart, where mystical dimensions permeate your experience of the instinctive realms of consciousness. There is a powerful "occult" element in your psychic matrix. That doesn't mean witchcraft, at least not in the evil sense. Rather, it indicates a native capacity for healing, for working with symbols, and for interpreting dreams. To trigger these skills fully, you benefit enormously from establishing a sexual

relationship with someone who understands sex as more than pleasure and affection....

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 Aquarius. 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 Genius. That is, be independent! Break some rules! Annoy a figure of authority! The underlying story here is that, nine times in ten, if you're sad it's because you've allowed yourself to buy into somebody else's picture of what ought to make you happy... and for you, that'll never work.

In your chart, the "King of the Gods" reigns in the Twelfth House -- traditionally the "House of Troubles," but actually the House of higher consciousness. Spiritually you have reached a point in the inner journey in which you need to learn lessons about radical faith. That is to say, in order to enter higher levels of being, you must first be willing to take chances in the world... such as traveling to a Sacred Site, even if you can't afford it. Again and again, Spirit will ask you one simple question: "Do you trust me?"

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 Pisces, the sign of the Mystic. Anyone looking into your eyes as you took your first breath would have observed an

eerie wisdom, as though he or she were looking into the eyes of a buddha. For centuries, you've been exploring trance states, typically in the context of spiritual traditions and institutions but occasionally in darker ways... like the "trance" induced by alcohol or opium. As a result, an intuitive grasp of altered and higher states of consciousness has arisen in you. Now, like one who has become too heavenly to be of any earthly good, you must learn new lessons: practical helpfulness toward others and a willingness to face squarely the mucky details of getting free.

That nascent ability to willingly and effectively accept the yoke of service is symbolized by your North Node of the Moon, which lies in Virgo -- the sign of the Craftsperson. As we saw earlier, the North Node can be seen as the most significant point in the entire birthchart. Why? Because it represents your evolutionary future... the ultimate reason you're alive, in other words. How can you accomplish this Virgoan spiritual work? The "yoga" is easy to say, harder to do: you must overcome the myth of "World Transcendence" inside yourself, and begin polishing a set of skills with which you can address the pain of other people, one by one.

There's another piece to the puzzle: The Moon's South Node falls in the Twelfth House of your chart. This implies that previous to this lifetime you learned a great deal about letting go of your attachments. You've probably done some of that work in the context of a spiritual discipline, but other times you've learned the hard way -- by experiencing searing, ego-crushing losses. Those losses sometimes taught you profound spiritual lessons; other times, they merely drove you into numbing addictions.

In this lifetime, with your North Node of the Moon in the Sixth House, you must act to counterbalance some of that focus on releasing and transcending... not because it's "wrong," but because you've already learned everything you can from it. The time has come for you to concentrate on making concrete commitments, humbling yourself before them and carrying them through to successful conclusions. What kinds of commitments? The only kind that will really hold your attention in this lifetime: commitments to helping other people.

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.