

THE SKY WITHIN

Report for Julia Roberts
An Interpretation of Your Birth Chart
by
Steven Forrest



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Your Chart Data

Julia Roberts
 Oct 28, 1967
 00:16:00 AM EDT
 Atlanta, GA
 084W23'17", 33N44'56"

Planet	Sign	Position	House	House Cusps
Sun	Scorpio	04°Sc03'	04th	01 27°Ca53'
Moon	Leo	24°Le47'	02nd	02 19°Le50'
Mercury	Scorpio	13°Sc53' R	04th	03 15°Vi34'
Venus	Virgo	18°Vi04'	03rd	04 16°Li45'
Mars	Capricorn	03°Cp45'	06th	05 22°Sc07'
Jupiter	Virgo	01°Vi22'	02nd	06 26°Sg55'
Saturn	Aries	07°Ar09' R	09th	07 27°Cp53'
Uranus	Virgo	27°Vi12'	03rd	08 19°Aq50'
Neptune	Scorpio	23°Sc21'	05th	09 15°Pi34'
Pluto	Virgo	21°Vi57'	03rd	10 16°Ar45'
Midheaven	Aries	16°Ar45'		11 22°Ta07'
Ascendant	Cancer	27°Ca53'		12 26°Ge55'

Planets within orb of 1.5 degrees of the following house cusp are displayed and interpreted as being in that house, except the angles which use 2.5 degrees. Orb Conjunctions with Sun or Moon are 8 degrees. All orbs are set according to Steven Forrest's methods.

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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 Scorpio.

The Scorpion! A spooky image for a spooky sign. There's a scary side to life. People get terrible diseases. Kids get damaged. Old people are forgotten. Everybody dies. Socially we're conditioned to avoid mentioning those things, or to mention them only in ritual contexts -- like jokes or political speeches. For Scorpio, the evolutionary aim is to face those shadowy places. To make the unconscious conscious. To break taboos.

The Scorpio part of you is deep and penetrating. It has little patience with phoniness or hypocrisy. Trouble is, a little phoniness or hypocrisy often make life a lot easier for everyone! Be careful of becoming so "deep" that you lose perspective. In the Scorpion part of your life, you could slip into brooding and heaviness. So laugh a little! And find a few friends you can talk to. Do that, and you'll keep you balance well enough to find wisdom.

With the Sun in Scorpio, Spirit's question to you is not "Can you be deep?" You're deep! That's how Spirit made you, and there's not much you can do to alter it. The question is, "Now that you have this depth, can you handle it?" That is, can you avoid being hypnotized by your own depths, slipping into a heavy, tragic feeling in which all the sparkle is drained from life. In avoiding that pitfall, you need to cultivate two allies: a sense of humor and two or three truly intimate friends -- people with whom you can discuss anything, however dark or taboo. Make friends with those allies and you'll add the one ingredient that makes it safe to work with this penetrating zodiacal power: a sense of perspective.

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

Peel away the layers of the psychological onion, get down to the core of your being, the realm of your heros and nightmares -- you've entered the Fourth House. This is psychic bedrock. Traditionally, it's the House of the Home. That's a valid notion in lots of ways. First, with any astrological factor in this part of the birthchart, you're at least "minoring in psychology" and that process requires a safe haven; hence, you feel an elevated need for the privacy and security of the "nest." Second, much of your psychic bedrock was profoundly influenced -- or scarred -- by your childhood experiences. Many of your most fundamental challenges spin off the effects of a powerful parent upon your present character. Third, "Home" is "where you're coming from" -- and this House answers that question in the deepest way: it's the core of your being.

With your Sun in the Fourth House, the roots of your being lie squarely in the realm of the heroic. That is to say, your innermost identity crystallizes around the image of an individual facing a challenge and a quest: finding the psychological Holy Grail, the Self. You're probing the depths of your psyche, exploring the labyrinths of the mind. On that journey, you bump into much that pertains to the effects upon you of your family, of your culture, perhaps of your karma. In the school of life, you're majoring in psychology.

You are in touch with a lot of material that's usually repressed. As a result, you've probably never had a truly simple feeling! Always, you sense the subtle undercurrents of need and fear, wisdom and bias, that flow beneath the seemingly confident veneer of ego that people wear for the world.

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 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 Second house of your chart.

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 Moon in the Second House, feeling confidence in yourself does not come automatically; you've had to work at it. How? A lot depends on what we just learned a few seconds ago -- the activities connected with the sign your Moon occupies play a terrific role in helping you feel worthy of the good things in life. Add to that formula the classic lunar strategy: nurturing. If you find something -- a person, an animal, an institution -- that's wounded in some way and you manage to bring it back from the brink of disaster, you're feeding your Moon and thereby deepening your elemental dignity. The pitfall, of course, lies in not letting go of the thing you're healing even after it's well. Avoid that, and you'll be fine.

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, Cancer was lifting over the eastern horizon of Atlanta, GA. Let's begin our analysis by considering the meaning and spiritual message of the sign of "The Healer".

Opening the inner eye, mapping the topography of consciousness, learning to express compassion -- these are Cancer's evolutionary aims. To assist in that work, Cosmic Intelligence has cranked up the volume on the Crab's ability to feel. No other sign is so sensitive -- nor so vulnerable. A certain amount of self-defense is appropriate here; after all, this world isn't exactly the Garden of Eden. Trouble is, legitimate self-defense can degenerate into shyness or a fear of making changes. You really do care about the hurts that other beings suffer. That's good news. You also have an instinctive ability to soothe those hurts, homing in on the source of the pain. More good news. The bad news is that you could choose to remain forever protected within the safe (and invisible!) role of the Healer, the Counselor, or the Wise One.

With Cancer rising, you face some unique challenges. Basically, Cancer doesn't like to be rising! The ascendant is our outward self; the Crab's nature is inward -- and it protects its inwardness with a shell, perhaps of shyness, perhaps of comfort-giving. One point is sure: getting to know you isn't easy, although it's probably rewarding. You watch people carefully before you open up to them. For you, uninhibited self-expression is a gift you may choose to give, but people need to earn it first.

That's half the picture. The other half is that, paradoxically, people feel an almost compulsive urge to open up to you, to tell you about the parts of their lives that hurt. If you had a penny for every stranger who has unburdened himself or herself on you, you could retire to Monaco and live off the change.

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 Scorpio with the Moon in Leo and Cancer 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 Detective", or "The Sorcerer", or "The Hypnotist". Those are just different ways of saying you have the Sun in Scorpio.

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 Healer", or "The Wise One", or "The Invisible One". Those images capture the spirit of your Ascendant, which is Cancer.

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.

The lunar dimensions of your astrological signature are deepened by planetary overtones. At the instant your independent physical life began, the planet Jupiter 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 Jupiter, as though that ancient "god" lived inside you.

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

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 Virgo. 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 Craftsperson. Basically, what that means is doing something you're good at! For you, a sense of competence and skill is a spirit-healer... especially if that competence and skill helps someone else out of a jam.

In your chart, the "King of the Gods" reigns in the Second House -- traditionally the "House of Money." In the old days, that meant you'd be rich. Even now, it generally correlates with at least a subjective experience of abundance. Spiritually, though, the meaning is far deeper. You have many lessons to learn about appropriate self-love: how to care for yourself, to celebrate yourself, to invest generously in yourself, and then how to reward yourself for your victories.

Sometimes a planet gains prominence in a birthchart simply by sharing a House with the

Sun. That's the case with you. Mercury is bathing in solar light, occupying the Fourth House along with our central star.

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 seething in Scorpio. That combination links your mental functions to the penetrating, soul-searching logic of the Detective archetype. Unerringly, your intelligence seeks out hidden truths and lies agreed upon, always drawn into the realm of the taboo. Spiritually you are learning a lot about intellectual courage, especially when it comes to unraveling painful human situations.

With the traditional "Messenger of the Gods" occupying your Fourth House, your intelligence works most effectively when unraveling the riddles of human psychology. You're good at keeping secrets... but be careful you don't rob the world of your insights by hiding them. Deep down inside, we find your self-image organized around the archetype of the Storyteller.

Your birthchart displays another area of heightened activity: the Third House. The reason for that is simple -- there's a lot of planetary activity. With Venus, 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.

Learning to see what's before your eyes -- that's Third House territory. Traditionally, this is the House of Communication. Perception might be a better word. The words on this page are "communicating" with you. But so does the blueness of the sky and the warmth of a friend's touch. Through your perceptions, the universe floods you with a continuous storm of raw information. Trouble is, we tend to miss most of it. How? By filtering it through the thick mesh of our preconceived notions and pet theories, often symbolized astrologically by whatever planets lie in this part of the birthchart.

The evolutionary question you're facing in this House is simple... to say. Can you keep a radically open mind? Can you really see what is before your eyes? Can you bleach your senses as clean as buffalo bones in the desert?

Spirit has given you intelligence and a capacity to communicate. It's given you curiosity. The discipline here is talking -- and listening. Experiencing -- and digesting. Understanding -- and endlessly questioning your understanding.

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 Virgo. Thus, both your aesthetic sensitivity and your taste in partners is shaped by the keen-eyed discrimination of the Virgin. In the realm of beauty, whether natural or wrought by human hands, you have a taste for quality, for precise execution, for technical virtuosity. The same goes for friends and sexual partners -- you appreciate people with a no-nonsense air of competence and realism, people who assess themselves with searing honesty, then get on with the business of working on themselves.

With Venus in the Third House, your speech is graceful and gentle. You could read the phone book to a person in pain, and he or she would be soothed by it. Cultivate the poet in yourself, the weaver of metaphors. You have an uncanny sense of the rhythm of language and of how to find the right words to make difficult truths bearable.

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

House of Communication -- that's the old name for the Third House, where your Uranus lies. The issues are broader; not just language, but the whole web of undigested impressions which forms the matrix of your world view. Uranus is your Teacher here, and the lesson can be summarized this way: Trust your eyes! You have been given the ability to see what others miss, to sense the subtle "lies agreed upon" that underlie the version of the world they taught you in grammar school. Explore that data energetically or you'll dissipate this energy in argumentativeness and "foot-in-mouth" disease.

"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.

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 Third House... the part of the birthchart that addresses questions of perception. Spirit has blessed you with the sharp, penetrating eye of the truth-seer. To create a sense of meaning in your life, you need to accept your role as Teacher... and that doesn't mean Preacher! Your task is not so much to answer questions as to raise them. Where there are lies agreed upon, such as racial or gender prejudices, you have the skills -- and bear the burden -- of the truth-sayer.

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 is lurking patiently in Capricorn, content to take the long view. You have a solid instinct for strategy, for determining the practical, efficient course that wins in the end. You're at your best in the face of adversity, resistance, shortage, even "impossibility." Spiritually it's important that you learn to enjoy the battle -- and the lulls in the battle -- rather than slipping into a deadening focus on the ever-receding future. In other words, life's more than a crossword puzzle.

With the War-God occupying your Sixth House, a piece of your destiny-pattern is that you draw to yourself kinds of work that are inherently competitive, even if you yourself aren't really that way. (In all your responsibilities, the basic paradigm is that there are three dogs and only two bones.) Spiritually, you are learning a lot about assertiveness and personal power in the work environment -- and that may mean in your job, or in whatever nonprofessional responsibilities life thrusts upon you.

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 Fifth House of your birthchart, where its mystical feelings are linked to your creativity and playfulness. A basic "yoga" you need to practice in this lifetime lies in experiencing the "creative trance" -- that curious state all artists know in which the conscious mind simply gets out of the way and allows the unconscious to speak. By allowing yourself to receive creative inspiration, you establish rapport with the secret realms of your own soul... and more than artistic imagery will flow up that road. Spiritual illumination will too.

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 fiery terrain of Aries 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 Ram's shadow side: fear and self-victimization. Will yourself toward courage! And support that bravery 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 Ninth! The arena of life where we break up routines, stretching our mental horizons with travel, education, and dizzy new perspectives. With Saturn here, plan your escape as though you were a prisoner plotting a jailbreak. What are you escaping? Yourself, basically. Or at least the unnatural limits you've placed on yourself. Overcome resistance and "practicality." There's an expedition in your destiny pattern, a pilgrimage. Accept it.

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 Libra, the sign of the Diplomat. Anyone looking into your eyes as you took your first breath would have observed the result of lifetimes spent learning the virtues of true courtesy: sensitivity towards the feelings and values of others, an ability to adjust your behavior to fit another's needs and fears. In previous incarnations you've had experiences which bring to mind that old joke about how one properly addresses a five-hundred-pound gorilla -- Call him "sir!" Now, like an obsequious houseslave who's just been freed, you must learn a new lesson: how to claim your own rights, experiences, and nature.

That nascent ability to claim what's yours is symbolized by your North Node of the Moon, which lies in Aries -- the sign of the Warrior. 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 Arian spiritual work? The "yoga" is easy to say, harder to do: you must overcome your peaceful instincts and consciously seek stress... that is, you need to intentionally place yourself in situations where forcefulness, energy, and inner fire are methods of survival -- perhaps the only methods.

There's another piece to the puzzle: The Moon's South Node falls in the Fourth House of your chart. This implies that previous to this lifetime you were often born into "Great Houses" -- that is, families with powerful traditions... and clear expectations regarding the destinies of their progeny. You tended to remain safely ensconced within those established patterns, learning much about love, devotion, and respect for tradition, but little about creating your own independent future.

In this lifetime, with your North Node of the Moon in the Tenth House, you must act to counterbalance those old conservative tendencies... not so much because they're "bad" as because you've already learned everything you can from them. The time has come for you to express who you are, vigorously and publicly, probably through the medium of a colorful career.

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.