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LIVING BY STARLIGHT **an Astrological Newsletter**

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AUTHOR'S NOTES:

It was the winter of our discontent.

This isn't the first time I've used this quote from Richard III. It's even more profound since the discovery of Richard's body buried beneath a parking lot in Leicester England in 2013. A poignantly prosaic end to such a controversial existence. It was the title of John Steinbeck's last novel, published in 1961, and it is a recurring theme in our society. How can you be a feeling, thinking person and not be somewhat disillusioned? The world we knew is changing rapidly. New inventions instantly replacing old values without a thought to what is lost, such is progress. Soon there will be no elephants, tigers, polar bears, or many other extraordinary endangered species. The greed and selfishness of members of our species deciding a small personal pleasure is more important than an entire genus of life. The ruling class continues to expand its presence into the furthest corners of the globe to create more profits. And at what cost? There will be no glaciers, little snow, and much less fresh water. How far will your money go if there's no place to purchase what used to be free? How much will those gold coins really be worth when the basic needs become so extravagant only the lucky will have a share?

If you go to a baseball game with your family today it'll cost you a small fortune and you must arrive hours early so you can be put through a metal detector. International travel has become a nightmare of trepidation and panic. Will a militant bring down the plane? A depressed pilot with untreated symptoms? And once you're safely registered in your hotel could you be rounded up by terrorists simply because you're from another country, color, or religion? I read the newspapers, as many as I can each day. But I clearly understand why many of my friends don't. Yes, this is a time of great changes and a reinvention of our international culture. And with so much to fret about what does the future hold?

I've received a large number of requests from my readers to address certain issues that rest heavily on our minds. So here are my thoughts on some central themes currently in our collective consciousness.

As we know, the Middle East is a terrible mess. The so-called Arab Spring, which began in Egypt, was born under extremely violent aspects that have taken the concept in a completely different direction than was assumed. As we see, rather than leading to the democratizing of that part of the world, it's led to the creation of ISIS, the Syrian civil war, the collapse of several countries, and what looks like the beginnings of a new cold war. Will ISIS succeed in bringing down civilization? No. When the world finally realizes that it is a real threat they will come together and destroy it. That is the way in history. It took until Hitler overran Poland and

began his assault on the rest of Western Europe before a counter-attack was staged. It took until the attack on Pearl Harbor happened for the mostly pacifistic American population to recognize the threat encircling us. And so it goes. With the last pass of Uranus square Pluto we will see a shift in public opinion and international intent that will lead to a coalition bent on the destruction of this cancerous growth on humanity. But the cost in human suffering and political fallout will be huge. Already there is a refugee crisis that is the worst the world has seen since the end of the Vietnam War.

The real problem is that for 2,000 years our society has embraced the belief that the biblical battle of Armageddon is inevitable. The 3 western religions believe in it and teach it in schools, religious sermons, and in our popular culture. We have even pinpointed the place where it is to take place. ISIS is very aware of the mythology and plays right into the collective fears. Until we as a communal society get past this conviction and start truly believing in an ongoing future without a predestined end, we sit on a psychological precipice of disaster. ISIS will not end the world. But the fear might. Maybe they will force a coalition that can finally change that belief. Perhaps only after a faux Armageddon battle has occurred will the point finally be made.

There is an inconjunct (150 degree) angle activated now between Jupiter and Pluto and the transiting Sun will set this off this month. That inconjunct has much to do with some strange political issues that have come up lately, including the cozying up of Greece and Russia, as well as Russia's decision to sell state-of-the-art weapons to Iran. The inconjunct is a distracting aspect that is difficult to bring into focus. It's off to one side of the opposition, and as such is often out of our direct view. It represents issues that aren't directly presented to you allowing you to respond in kind. They are often hidden or misrepresented energy that can not be dealt with in an open and honest fashion. This is why it is such an insidious aspect and difficult to appease. With Jupiter's need for honesty and directness, and Pluto's tendency to hide a great deal, this inconjunct can result in some very unpleasant actions being implemented out of the light of public reaction. Putin is playing a very dangerous game with the West. As I've said for many months in this newsletter, as the planets involved in Grand Cross of April 2014 (primarily Uranus and Pluto) begin to afflict Putin's Saturn at 17 degrees Libra I believe he will see that many of his policies have backfired and he will be pushed against a wall financially and in public opinion. His time in office is reaching its limits. I don't think he will last more than 2 more years. Of course since he is a rash little boy with a big stick he could cause a lot of pain and damage before he finally is gone.

The stock markets maintain their sideways motion as Saturn continues its journey through Sagittarius. I've noted many times that this transit is a bearish sign for the equities. This is not a crash, but a sideways and downward drift. **As we approach the Saturn-Neptune square that completes for the first time this autumn the markets will begin a serious downward trend.** But again, this is not a crash. You need a perfect storm for the markets to collapse, and we don't have that. What we do have is an overextension of optimism in America and China. Any bad news will shake these markets severely. Europe has become more realistic and has fewer expectations. But they also have internal problems that weigh heavily on their growth. Greece, Italy and Spain are all caught in a murky sludge created by the inflexibility of the Euro. Each of those economies is teetering on the edge of insolvency. This is why Putin's recent

invitation to the Greeks is being reviewed seriously. While Russia is basically broke as a result of oil prices and sanctions, they have enough cash to dangle in front of this extremely poor and relatively small nation to distract Greece from its looming debt deadlines. Putin is like a drunken sailor with no bank account or retirement funds, but a pocket full of cash representing his entire worth. How long will the Russian oligarchy and middle-upper class support his policies that are ruining many of them? Saturn square Neptune may tell us, as the reality check (Saturn) of the world's fantasies (Neptune) becomes clearer.

One question that continues to come up is: **Is this the end of the American Empire?** No. And here's why: First of all, there is no American Empire in the model of the British Empire. England is a tiny island nation that built its power on colonization and overextended itself to untenable proportions. It was never a very stable situation, and as the New World became more self-dependant it lost much of its power and income. Still, it took two World Wars to collapse. America isn't a power of colonization (with a few exceptions). We are an incredibly rich, large, and powerful self-contained country. The members of the Japanese high command who had been educated in the United States spoke frequently against that nation's decision to attack Pearl Harbor and draw us into the Second World War. They recognized the size and industrial power of this country and knew that eventually they would lose. The problem today has more to do with our internal dysfunctional government than whether China continues its political and financial growth. If capitalism as we know it continues, we will see spheres of influence divide the world into sections that will trade and interact on many levels. China will have great influence in Asia. The U.S. should be building its strength in the Americas. Europe is, well, Europe. But if our government continues to fight itself we will see a waning of our influence and not take advantage of the opportunities that exist.

The biggest problem facing humanity is climate change and pollution. How can we dictate to China or any other nation how they should act on environmental issues when we continue to pollute our own nation in a horrific and outdated fashion? There is little common ground between the two political parties here, and the internal battles prevent us from securing our own future. The only reason that we are now almost energy self-sufficient is because the Democrats under Obama agreed to increase drilling, fracking, and other dangerous and polluting practices, which the Republicans have always championed. But the time of oil is running out. Fossil fuels are a hangover from the 20th century and as I said in last month's newsletter, they are on the way out. It will take another generation or so to fully see the results, but we are heading towards renewable energy. The question is: Are we too late? Ask Brazil and California what it's like to live with limited fresh water.

Jupiter recently went direct. This is often an indicator of a reversal in the markets. But with Saturn transiting the sign of Jupiter's rulership I don't think it's going to be the boost that often occurs on this turnaround. The markets continue to show weakness, and the closer we get to that Saturn-Neptune square the less stable they will become. This autumn is the next window of opportunity for any serious collapse in housing, banking, and equities. Will it happen, and if so how bad will it be? A lot has to do with the steps taken between now and then. I believe in proactive, free-will astrology and we can safeguard out financial markets if our dysfunctional government can somehow work towards a common goal. If not, we may see the

cracks open up once again.

NEW MOON:

The New Moon falls on Friday April 18th at 2:57 P.M. EDT at 28 degrees Aries 25 minutes. The Aries New Moon is the most initiative of all. This is the first moon of the New Year, and a time when we should be starting new projects and looking towards the future. But because of the late degree of the New Moons, this is another in a series of Void of Course New Moons. When the New Moon immediately goes Void it's more difficult to begin new projects with the force needed to bring them to completion. There's a sense of frustration and futility surrounding many ideas and issues, both personally and collectively. But we can't just sit around waiting for better aspects. That's not the way to use astrology. We must recognize the energy around us and use it to our best advantage. If we work with the difficult ones, then when more supportive transits come along they will allow us more leverage to move our agendas forward in a productive way.

At the end of each month's newsletter I list the Void of Course Moons throughout the month because I feel they are extremely important and we should pay attention to them. Whenever the Moon is void it's a time of disconnection when our emotions are unattached and seem to move helter-skelter without direction. It's a bad time to make any important decision or to begin a new project. I won't buy a pair of sneakers, let alone have an important phone call, medical test, open a new business, or any other activity that can go askew. When the New Moon is void it's showing an extended underlying theme to that lunar cycle. It doesn't mean that we shouldn't move forward and advance our agendas. Just that an extra amount of care and attention must be paid to everything we do. Don't assume things are as they seem. Take the time to double check everything and solidify the foundation. So use the Aries energy to initiate your new ideas, but examine things closely and understand the potential to your actions.

MERCURY SEXTILES NEPTUNE & VENUS SQUARES NEPTUNE:

On Sunday April 19th at 3:13 A.M. & 6:30 A.M. EDT these two aspects will complete. With so much Neptunian energy in the air a certain amount of confusion and misdirection is to be expected, especially in personal relationships. This will be a creative day, and any artistic endeavor will have a lot of spunk behind it. It favors poets, musicians, and painters, and if you can tap into it you may discover a solution to an artistic problem. But use caution when dealing with emotional issues. You won't be as clear as you think you are. Also be careful in financial matters. Values are out of whack and you could make a serious mistake.

THE SUN ENTERS TAURUS:

On Monday April 20th at 5:42 A.M. EDT we enter the fixed earth sign. Many people will be more stubborn and unyielding for the next month. It's difficult to get a Taurus to change its mind, and sometimes they can get stuck in the status quo when very small and simple alterations can lead to a better solution. Try not to cling too tightly to what is. Allow for change and fight the urge towards inaction common with this sign. Taurus is all about possessions and values. Because of the recent eclipses these issues will be more pronounced and will take on a serious tone. Individually we must pay attention to what is most important. Is that new job you're being offered worth the extra aggravation you know it will create just because the salary

is higher? Or is your peace of mind worth more than the financial increase? The collective will also have to face these same questions regarding our approach to worldly events. What's more valuable to us as a species and a culture?

MERCURY SQUARES JUPITER:

On Tuesday April 21st at 12:16 A.M. EDT communications and thoughts will move rapidly and many of us will seek new ways of viewing things. Because Mercury is also transiting stubborn Taurus at the moment it will be difficult to stay open-minded. But that's exactly what this square demands. Take those blinders off and see that there is a whole world out there that has been ignored in favor of stability and limitations. Because this square occurs right after midnight on the East Coast many of us will not experience it as interaction with others (unless you're a night owl). But its effects will be felt leading up to this transit, and in the days to come. This is not a good day for important negotiations or for signing contracts. Mistakes and malapropisms (misuse of words – from Mrs. Malaprop in the 1775 Richard Sheridan comedy *The Rivals*) are common, and misunderstandings may result. You should double check things carefully. But it would be better to just wait a day until this passes and then negotiate the deal, or have that serious talk about your relationship, business, or other important issues.

MARS TRINES PLUTO:

Also on Tuesday April 21st at 5:31 P.M. EDT this positive trine will allow us to work well with others towards a common goal without the usual ego conflicts. We can direct energy into a productive path and get a lot done. But trines must be used proactively or they will just be felt as an easy day or so. If used properly you can accomplish much under this transit. With Mercury about to aspect both of these planets (see below) the more actively you project your thoughts, ideas, and force into projects and plans the more you will gain from this.

MERCURY TRINES PLUTO & CONJUNCTS MARS:

On Wednesday April 22nd at 9:25 A.M. & 7:04 P.M. EDT Mercury will set off that Mars – Pluto trine I mentioned above. The trine to Pluto will give focus and attention to your ideas and allow you to express them clearly and directly. As we approach the conjunct of Mercury to Mars later in the day there will be an increase in tension and pent up angst, especially in communications of all sorts. Expect some conflicts and arguments in the late afternoon and early evening. Try to avoid the unnecessary ones, but recognize that there will be a lot of mental force being projected. You may not be feeling it, but the guy on line next to you at Starbucks might be, and you could be the recipient of his anger. You won't be able to avoid the tension this can create, so be aware that many people will be angry or terse in some way.

VENUS SEXTILES JUPITER:

Also on Wednesday April 22nd at 2:41 P.M. EDT this easy going transit occurs. This is not as powerful an aspect as the Mercury – Mars conjunct, but it will create a more sociable atmosphere underneath that explosive conjunction. This would be a good time for a quick lunch or a walk in the park. It's a chance to clear

the air and take a short break from your responsibilities. That Mercury conjunct Mars is applying, and it will be felt. But if you can let things go for a few hours you can refresh yourself under this sextile.

VENUS SEXTILES URANUS:

On Sunday April 26th at 5:31 P.M. EDT this interesting aspect completes. For a few hours we will all be seeking some unusual and interesting things. You may choose a different style of food, clothing, or decoration that will appeal to your more adventurous side. In relationships this can create an exciting moment of interaction that can stimulate that side of both of you. Sometimes a new romantic encounter can stir up feelings that have been dormant for some time. But don't expect miracles. It may just be a flirtation. If it moves on to the next level, then pursue it.

THE SUN SEXTILE NEPTUNE:

On Wednesday April 29th at 7:11 P.M. EDT this sextile will heighten our perceptive powers and put us all in touch with the ethereal side of our consciousness. This is a good time for anything creative. Follow your intuition today more than your intellect. Instincts will serve you better. This will also stimulate feelings of charity and empathy, and allow you to reach your more sensitive side. But how deeply you encounter this will have to do with your basic nature, as with all transits. It won't make someone who is usually selfish suddenly want to give everything away.

MERCURY ENTERS GEMINI:

On Thursday April 30th at 10:00 P.M. EDT Mercury enters the sign of its rulership. Because Mercury will retrograde on May 18th it will remain in this sign until July 8th, a very long time for this usually quick moving luminary. For several months we will have this energy to contend with. Thoughts and conversations will be fast paced and quite intellectual. But just because Mercury rules Gemini doesn't mean that all communications will run smoothly. In fact often when a planet transits the sign of its rulership there is an overabundance of that force that can be difficult to handle. There will be a marked lacking of emotional input in conversations during this time, and many people will express an attitudinal redirection that may feel harsh and unyielding as the intellect takes precedent for an extended period. This time will favor writers and public speakers, but may not be so wonderful for musicians, poets, or others who rely on the emotional side to make their point.

MERCURY OPPOSES SATURN:

On Sunday May 3rd at 4:35 A.M. EDT this harsh transit will complete. There is an unyielding side to Saturn that will make it difficult to change someone's mind or offer a different perspective. Because this completes in the wee small hours of the morning its effects will be somewhat reduced. But it is coming right before the Scorpio Full Moon, and so it may be felt more intensely for a day or so. This is a good time to view your plans, budgets, and other business issues, but not so good for personal conversations. If something that has been difficult to express needs to be said, this is the time to say it. But if compassion and understanding is necessary you may be better off waiting for a day or so until this and the Full Moon pass.

FULL MOON:

This month's lunar peak occurs on Sunday May 3rd at 11:42 P.M. EDT at 13 degrees Scorpio 23 minutes. Scorpio gets a bum rap in astrology. It can be a very difficult energy to understand, as much is hidden below the surface. Its modern ruler, Pluto controls the underworld in mythology, and that is a very astute definition of what this sign is capable of. But Scorpio and its corresponding rulership of the 8th house is also the place where we rejuvenate. Many issues, relationships, and plans are ending in part because of the eclipses we experienced last month. Anything that has outlived its usefulness is being examined and expunged. This Full Moon will continue that process. That is the role Scorpio and Pluto play in our lives and society. Pluto rules the elimination of waste in the body and the culture. As such its job is to do just that. If you find some things are no longer valid you should let them go. The tighter you hold on to outdated ideas the more difficult it will be to move on to the next phase of life. Try not to look at this energy as negative. It's very difficult for most of us to say goodbye, even to things that are holding us back. But that's exactly what must be done periodically, and this is an opportunity to release restrictive issues and move forward to the next level of consciousness. I suggest some caution for the few days surrounding this Full Moon. But open your eyes and recognize what must be let go of.

THE SUN SQUARES JUPITER:

On Monday May 4th at 5:02 A.M. EDT this generally positive square will come along. There is a tendency to overdo things and blow them out of proportion when Jupiter is activated, but this can be an optimistic and far-sighted aspect that will help move things forward. It comes on the heels of that Full Moon I mentioned above, and should help many of us release pent up tension and be more enthusiastic about what is to come. Because of Jupiter's propensity towards overdoing it's important to keep a good perspective on things. Do not over spend, over eat, or over emphasize a relationship or plan. Be realistic and this will be a positive day when we can see into the future and aim our energy where it will do the most good.

THE SUN TRINES PLUTO:

On Wednesday May 6th at 3:08 A.M. EDT this positive trine will apply. This is a day when it should be easy to find common ground and work well with others. This completes early in the morning, but it will set the atmosphere for today. Try to take advantage of this energy and look to build coalitions that can help all those involved. There is an inconjunct (150 degree) angle activated now between Jupiter and Pluto and the transiting Sun will set this off. That inconjunct has much to do with political issues that have come up lately, including the cozying up of Greece and Russia.

VENUS ENTERS CANCER:

On Thursday May 7th at 6:52 P.M. EDT the planet of love enters this overly emotional sign. Venus does quite well in Cancer on certain levels. There is an empathetic similarity as the Moon is exalted in Venus-ruled Taurus. And personal relationships will be deepened and display a strong familial sense. But this placement tends to be rather needy as well, always seeking emotional security while in this sign. Expect people to

express that insecurity. If you can reassure and act supportive this will be a loving and expressive time. But if someone's needs are too much for you to handle you may find it difficult to create a fulfilling and stable situation. This will be a time when many people redecorate their homes or make other improvements. It's a good time for any such activities. We will all be more domestic and enjoy entertaining at home rather than in public.

MERCURY SQUARES NEPTUNE:

On Saturday May 9th at 12:09 P.M. EDT this very confusing and misdirecting energy can create problems. Anything that can be misunderstood will be. This is not a good day for negotiations, signing contracts, or important conversations. We aren't thinking clearly and misconceptions will abound. Be careful while traveling. It's very easy to be misdirected and get lost. Accidents are also quite possible as a result of that misdirection. Mistakes are common and you should double check all paperwork and review your letters, emails, etc. before hitting that "send" button.

MARS ENTERS GEMINI:

On Monday May 11th at 10:40 P.M. EDT we will begin a period of intense communications and forceful self-expression. If you have a project that has been difficult to complete you may find the mental energy now to tackle it. You're better off projecting your intellect into projects and work. Personal communications may take on a rather tense atmosphere and it'll be very easy to get into arguments without realizing how harsh you are sounding. This can be a very useful and productive time as long as you avoid the pitfalls. Focus on your mental activities and use this transit for hard intellectual work. Because Mars opposes Saturn this week (see below) it will take some time to appreciate the positive mental energy this aspect brings us. But once that opposition completes we will all be better able to use this power to our advantage.

MARS OPPOSES SATURN:

On Friday May 15th at 2:03 A.M. EDT this very restrictive and limiting aspect puts us all on the defensive. It will be hard to express ourselves, and there may be an underlying terse attitude that makes it rather difficult to say what's on our minds. Mars rules the ego and when it's in conflict with Saturn it's not easy to use that part of our personality. Many people will be easily offended and not have their usual protective barrier that the ego allows. Try not to be overly aggressive or put someone on the defensive. They will be apt to react in a protective and fearful manner, which won't help the situation. This is not a good aspect for aggressive actions, and any person, military force, or nation that acts as the antagonist under this transit will lose.

VENUS TRINES NEPTUNE:

On Saturday May 16th at 2:49 P.M. EDT this charming aspect comes along. This isn't a very powerful force, but it will stimulate compassion and creative energy in the undercurrent. This is a good transit for artists of all sorts. There may be a spark of creativity that comes out now, but because of the recent Mars opposite Saturn I mentioned above, you may not be able to push the project too far. That's okay. Take the germ of the idea and set it aside. In a week or so you will be able to get back to it and push it forward. This is a good day

to take in a show, movie, concert, or other creative endeavor.

DARK OF THE MOON:

The next New Moon falls on Monday May 18th at 12:13 A.M. EST at 26 degrees Taurus 56 minutes. The day or two leading up to it will be a particularly low energy period. If you tend to be emotional this may be a very trying time each month. I have found that people with prominent moons or a Cancer Sun, Moon or ascendant respond to the cycles of the moon more intensely than others. Spend this time finishing up anything that is incomplete, don't try to initiate new projects on a waning moon, it just won't work out. Once the New Moon hits you begin new projects or attempt a new approach to an existing problem. If you have been living in a situation or involved in a relationship that is intolerable or has outlived its usefulness this would be the proper time to move on with your life. If you have been working on a project that is almost complete but you seem to lack the energy for the finality, you must push during these low energy days to end the matter once and for all. If you don't, when the New Moon arrives it will bring this "dead" energy along with it and conflict with the newer force being presented. Each month we are offered a chance to clean house, so to speak.

Note: All aspects are most powerful and effective as they apply. Once the transit has completed, its force is lessened. The further it separates the weaker it becomes.

For information regarding personal readings please contact me at: mitchastro@aol.com.

Below is a list of times this month when the Moon is Void of Course and neither important decisions nor purchases should be made during these periods. The Void of Course Moon is a time when we should try to center ourselves and deal with spiritual matters not materialistic ones. Any decisions made on the VC Moon will not turn out the way we had expected.

The Moon is Void of Course from the time it makes its last major aspect in a sign until it enters the next sign. For example, if the Moon squares Mars at 27 degrees Aries and then has no more aspects until it enters Taurus it will be Void of Course for three degrees or about 6 hours. The aspects used are the conjunction, sextile, square, trine, and opposition. All times are Eastern Standard Time:

Please note: In response to requests from a few readers I have added a few VOC Moons into the next lunar cycle for those who need to make plans before my next newsletter is released.

April 18th 2:57 P.M. – 5:31 P.M.

April 19th 7:06 P.M. – April 20th 7:28 P.M. ***Moon is void 24 hours

April 22nd 1:38 A.M. – April 23rd 12:25 A.M. ***Moon is void 24 hours

April 24th 1:04 P.M. – April 25th 9:13 A.M. ***Moon is void 12 hours

April 27th 10:12 A.M. – 9:07 P.M. ***Moon is void 12 hours

April 30th 8:23 A.M. – 10:03 A.M.

May 2nd 10:03 A.M. – 9:47 P.M. ***Moon is void 12 hours

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May 4 9:49 P.M. – May 5 7:13 A.M. ***Moon is void all night

May 7th 1:51 P.M. – 2:16 P.M.

May 9th 4:35 P.M. – 7:22 P.M.

May 11th 6:36 A.M. – 10:53 P.M. ***Moon is void all day

May 13th 12:55 P.M. – May 14th 1:13 A.M. ***Moon is void 12 hours

May 15th 8:03 A.M. – May 16th 3:02 A.M. ***Moon is void 24 hours

Due to popular request I have included below several VOC moons in the next lunar cycle:

May 18th 12:13 A.M. – 5:27 A.M.

May 19th 1:57 P.M. – May 20th 9:56 A.M. *** Moon is void 12 hours

May 21st 8:36 P.M. – May 22nd 5:42 P.M. ***Moon is void 24 hours

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