ASTRO

Stellar

November/December 2026

RIVALS Returns!

How "Queen of the Bonkbuster" Jilly Cooper Created Characters From Her Birth Chart

ASTRO Stellar
November/December 2026

05. **Jilly Cooper. "Queen of the Bonkbuster".**
Jilly's Rivals is back! Boardroom backstabbing and bedroom bonks, it's the TV streaming series that has wowed the public. And series 3 is already in the planning. Victor Olliver recalls his interviews with her, analyses her birth chart and sees that her fictional characters are expressions of her watery horoscope.

09. **Roland Orzabal Interview**
The Tears for Fears star is a fan of astrology, and his memoirs record how he has lived his life by the stars. Not that his publishers were always that keen on that angle. But here he is talking about the zodiac. It maybe a Mad World, but this star is sane enough. Interview by Saby Reyes-Kulkarni.

10. **Your Lucky Lunar Guide**
No eclipses this season so the astro-weather is bit calmer than usual. On the other hand there are Supermoons to look out for – your unique life guide.

12. **Madame Arcati's (Slightly) Rude Horoscope: Nov-Dec 2026**
The Sun signs guide like no other, from the (slightly) brutal astrologer extraordinaire.

14. **From Ants to Mystic Veg: The World's Most Bizarre Ways to Predict the Future**
An ants nest is one unusual way of telling the future or getting an answer to a question by divination. There's also smoke reading, bibliomancy (mystically reading a situation through random book selections) and finding an answer via eggs. Prepared to be amazed.

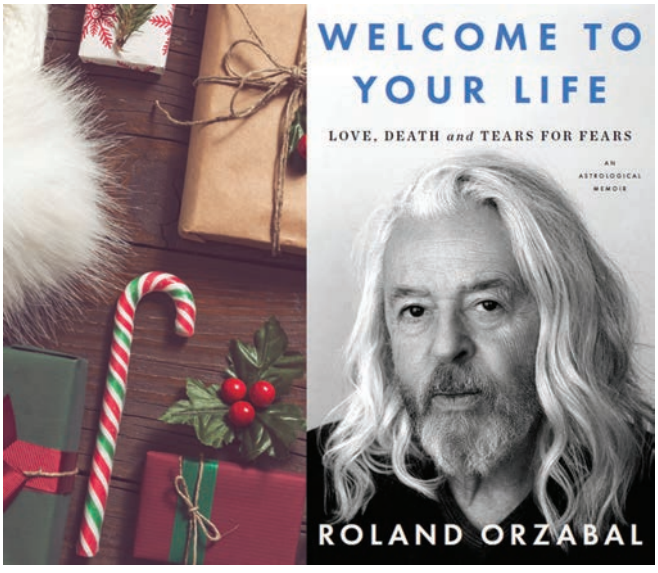
16. **Astrological Association Conference 2026**
Report on our annual get-together, this year in Nottingham. Join us in 2027 for days of stimulating astrology talks, socials and our legendary banquet. By Astrological Association president Wendy Stacey and Chair Rod Chang.

18. **The Astrology of Department and Food Stores**
Tesco, Asda, Waitrose, Lidl, and other major shops each has a star sign. The zodiac reveals so much about them.

20. **The Ultimate Cosmic Gift Guide: What to Buy Every Star Sign This Christmas**
What to buy the Aries in your life. Or the tricky Gemini or Virgo. How do you please a Capricorn? Your festive gifts challenges are solved with some zodiac sense.

22. **Astro-X-Ray: Jonathan Hugh Jones**
Formerly an international commercial lawyer, Jonathan talks about how "economic cosmology" brings the worlds of astrology and business together though planetary cycles.

24. **Latest Videos and Podcasts from the Astrological Association**



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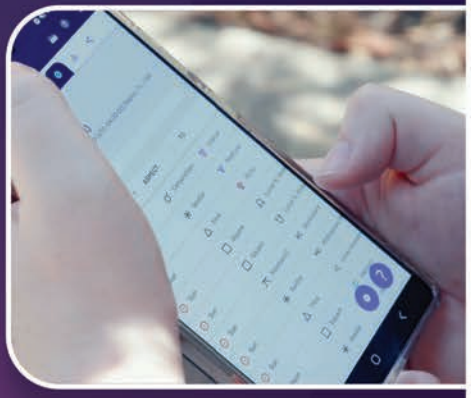

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JILLY COOPER:

"QUEEN OF THE BONKBUSTER"

Victor Olliver

One thing guaranteed in Jilly Cooper's *Rivals* is…loads of sex.

Season 2, Part 2 (episodes 7 to 12, starting 11 November 2026 on Disney) is as raunchy as Cooper's other books such as *Riders*, *Polo*, *The Man Who Made Husbands Jealous* and other fiction. *Rivals* is a direct TV adaptation of her famously bawdy "bonking bestseller", and the series relies heavily on frequent, high-energy, and often outrageous sex scenes.

The plot of *Rivals* revolves around a ruthless corporate and personal feud set against the glamorous, cutthroat backdrop of 1980s independent British television in the fictional county of Rutshire. There are bedroom betrayals, boardroom back-stabbings and an unlikely love story between a womanising Tory MP and a sweet innocent daughter of an Irish talk show star. It's total madness all done in the worst possible taste…and the public lapped it up.

Critics absolutely fell in love with *Rivals*' unashamedly campy energy. Season 1 secured a 95% score on Rotten Tomatoes, while the first half of Season 2 scored a perfect 100% critical approval rating. On IMDb, the series maintains a highly positive 7.7 out of 10.

Sadly, Jilly – a close friend of Queen Camilla – died on 5 October 2025 at age 88 after suffering a significant head injury during a suspected fall at her home in Gloucestershire.

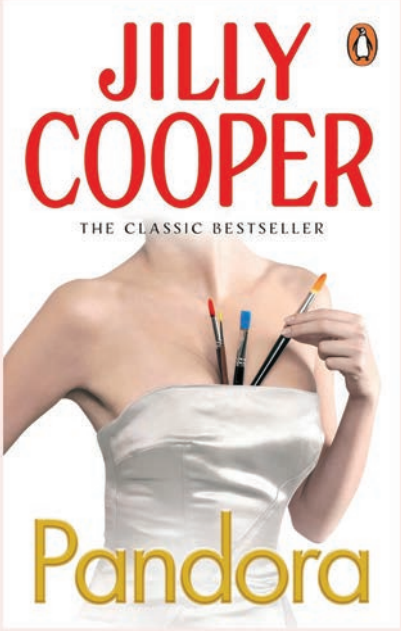
What was Jilly like in person?

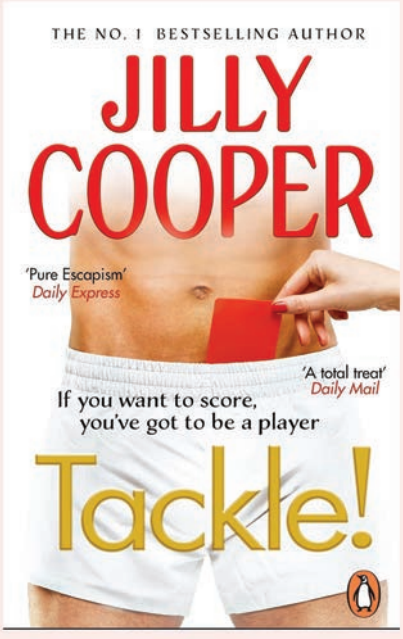
I had the pleasure of interviewing Jilly three times for glossy fashion magazines. She was my first-ever celebrity interview as I started out my freelance career around 1981. She then lived in Putney in south-west London, in a classic Victorian terraced house which she shared with her publisher husband Leo and their two adopted children – and their dogs.

She greeted me at the door, and promptly one of her hounds, a mongrel I think, bit me on the knee. Jilly gave the dog a good scolding. Though alarmed I saw this as an opportunity not to be missed. "You'll have to give me a very good interview or I'll sue," I said. And we both laughed. Fortunately my skin was not broken.

She did indeed give me a great interview, but then she always did. She was frank, funny, sometimes slightly mischievous and saucy. Her voice was surprisingly deep and raspy, as rural posh as Camilla's even. She could speak passionately about horses, dogs, sex, novels, what-have-you. Her house looked very lived in, it was an upper-class shambles as dogs rushed past groaning bookshelves and furniture bore scars.

I later interviewed her again at her stunning, sprawling 14th-century manor house in the picturesque village of Bisley, Gloucestershire. The house was called The Chantry. "Oh you've filled out a bit," she said as she gazed at me in the doorway, remembering my youthful skeletal version a few years earlier. I was impressed she remembered.





The vast grounds of the house featured an animal pet cemetery, where she

Jilly Cooper 1974. cc © Allan warren

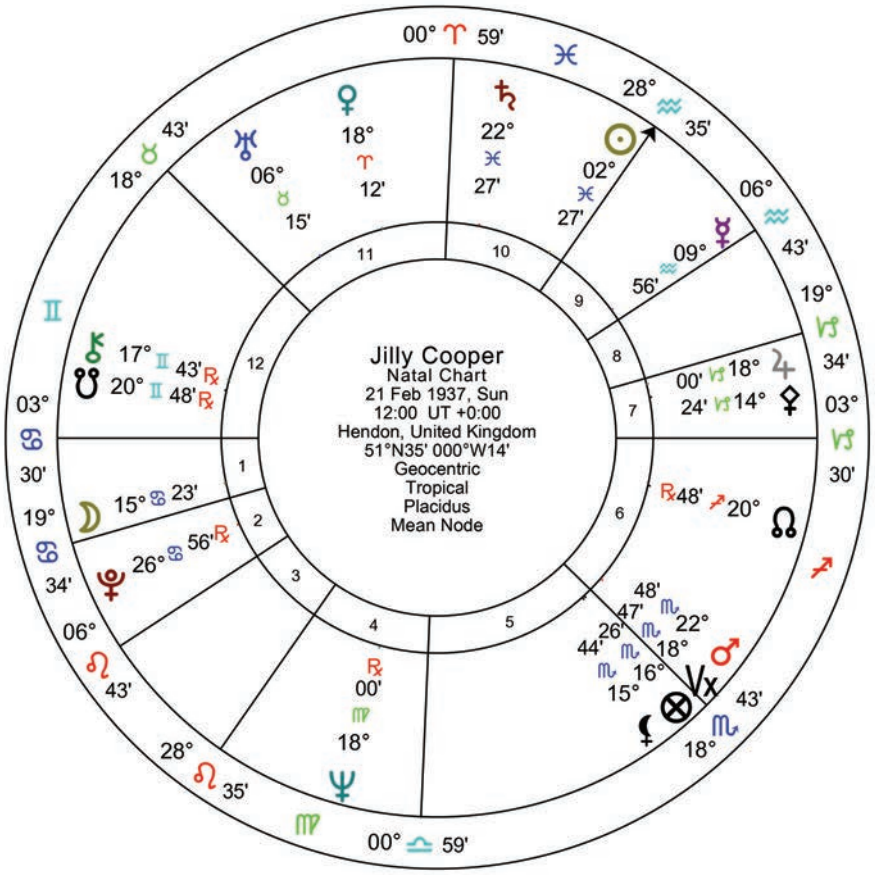
carefully buried her beloved cats and dogs.

Though famously gracious and ever-cheerful, often using the word 'super' – she was nicknamed 'Jolly Sooper' by *Private Eye* – she had a short fuse behind the scenes. When tired of a line of questioning she would indicate a wish to move on, showing slight signs of irritation. And on one spectacular occasion, at a literary London party, I watched her explode at a mutual friend – a peripheral member of the British royal family – who was rudely trying to get her attention while Jilly was in conversation. Such was Jilly's fast, spitting rage, I was shocked. Then in a flash, she changed mood and picked up the conversation as if nothing had happened.

Jilly's horoscope

Her chart belies the frothy, 'Sooper' image she cultivated. Jilly's Pisces Sun sits close to her career point (the Midheaven) in Aquarius, scoping a highly determined and independent career – she rapidly became a star on *The Sunday Times* as a comic social observer while writing light comedy novels.

Cancer rises with Moon in her own sign in the 1st house, reflected in Jilly's gentle and nurturing image. The chart is watery, empathetic: she sensed things below the surface which gave depth to characterisations in fiction even though she dealt in stereotypes. But her Mars



is effective in Scorpio, bestowing a ruthless drive to get beneath the skin of her subjects and of social situations.

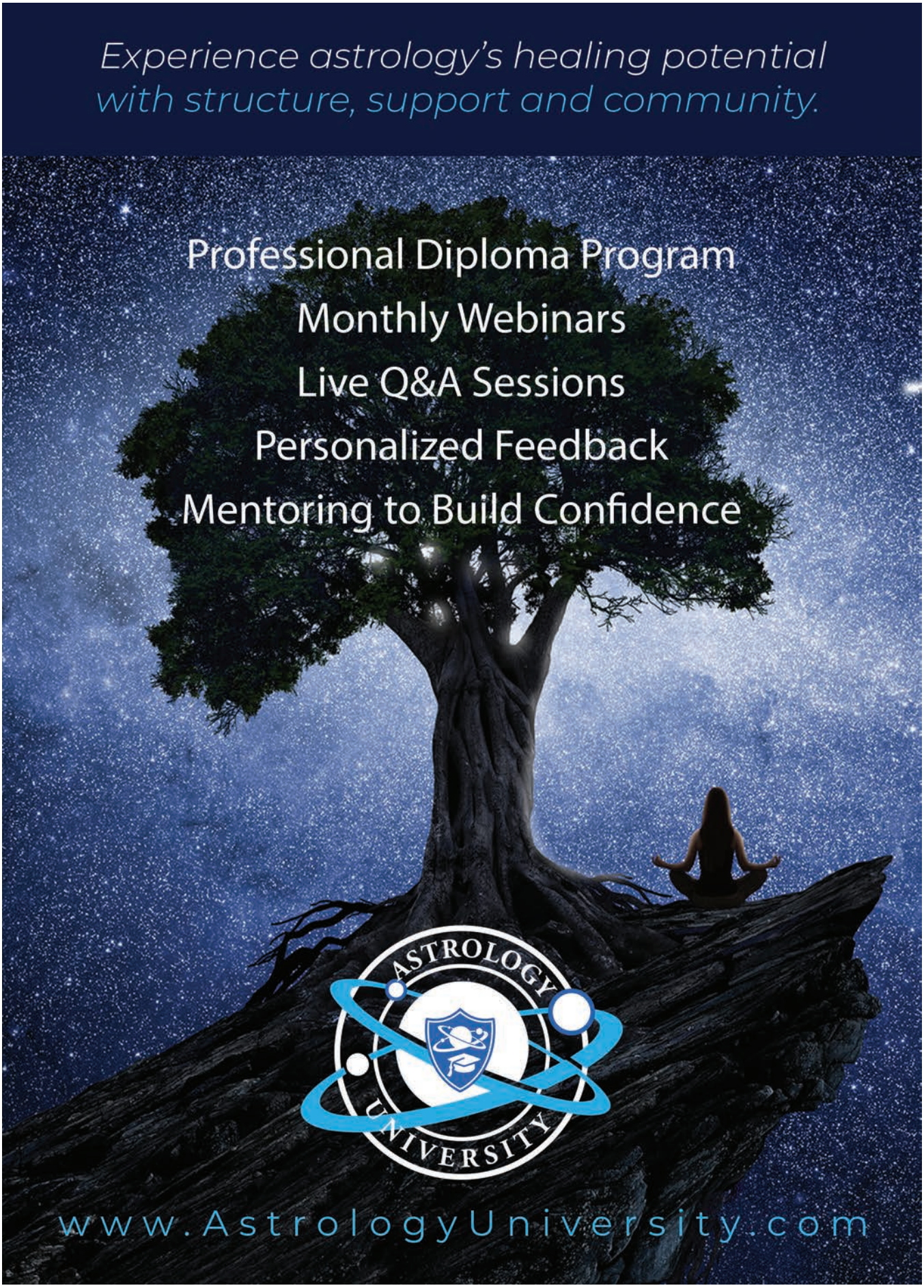
Her Venus up in the 10th in Aries brings us back to her need for personal space within relationship – and ruled by Mars, we see a chart clue as to her irritability and outbursts. She contained immense energy that might erupt temperamentally under pressure.

Her commercial literary gifts are indicated by the conjunction of Jupiter and asteroid Pallas Athena in Capricorn in the 7th house of social activity and observation – Pallas is associated with the plot construction of fiction: Jupiter acts as the ultimate amplifier that turns a small concept into an epic, larger-than-life narrative. Capricorn turned imagination into bestsellers.

Saturn rules Jupiter and Pallas, and Jilly's Saturn is in Pisces in the 10th house of public show: Pisces brings creative imagination to the hard observer (which she could be), enabling the 'dreams' of the mind to come to life in imagined stories. Informally, Neptune rules her Saturn and her Neptune is in Virgo, a literary sign that's exacting and sharp on detail. Literary academics and fellow authors have long argued that her 'bonkbusters' are, at their core, sophisticated social comedies. Her work features several structural literary pillars inspired by Charles Dickens, Anthony Trollope and Jane Austen.

How her chart reflected successes

Jilly hit the big time when her first commercial blockbuster (or 'bonkbuster') *Riders* was published on 1 May 1985. On that day, transiting (tr) Uranus (the breakout planet) was conjunct her destiny point, the North Node, in Sagittarius in the 6th house of work – Sagittarius is the sign of publishing. Additionally, tr Jupiter was in the 9th house (zone of publishing) separating from her Mercury, the two communication planets.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Her first huge TV success was with *Riders* on 2 May 1993 on ITV, drawing an astounding 15 million viewers. On that day, tr Sun was in her 11th house (zone of TV), and tr Uranus (associated with the 11th) conjunct Neptune in the 7th house in Capricorn: it was foreseen that she would enjoy a great hit on TV with her fiction.

Jilly's characters step out of her horoscope

Jilly's Sun in Pisces is the engine of *Rivals*. Pisces lives in fantasy, sex, scandal and emotional melodrama, and gives her that famously immersive, all-knowing, forgiving insight into human weakness. Her world is never moralistic – it's romantic, escapist, and fluid – classic Pisces.

With Cancer rising and a Cancer Moon, that Piscean fantasy is housed in Cancerian concerns: home, family, territory, class and belonging. Cancer rising is the 'hostess', the observer in the drawing room, and Moon in its own sign doubles that emotional memory for domestic detail. It is why Rutshire and her heroines' kitchens, children, and affairs matter so much. Lizzie Vereker and Maud O'Hara are pure Cancer Moon – maternal, wounded, loyal, holding families together while men philander.

Venus in Aries in the 10th house is Cameron Cook and Taggie O'Hara in opposition. Venus in Aries wants a bold, competitive woman who fights for love and status in a man's world. In the 10th – career, ambition, public reputation – it becomes Cooper herself and Cameron: careerist, sexually frank, using love as a battlefield for power.

Jupiter in Capricorn in the 7th is Rupert Campbell-Black and the institution of marriage itself. Jupiter expands where it sits, but in Capricorn in the house of partnership it is status-obsessed, cynical and bound by duty and long contracts. *Rivals* is obsessed with marriage as alliance, divorce as business, and love finally maturing into commitment: Jupiter in the 7th seeking growth through a serious, enduring partner.

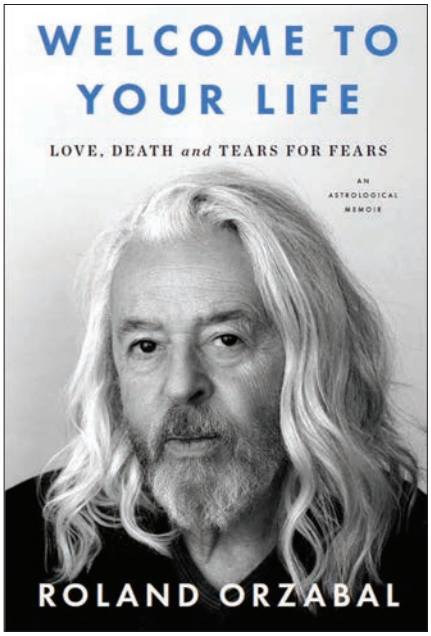
Jilly Cooper's posthumous future

Fans of Jilly can only be delighted by the great success she enjoyed with new generations of fans as she approached 90. We won't be seeing the last of *Rivals* on Disney. The 12-episode season 3 is already in development and will likely be broadcast in late 2027 (earliest) or late 2028.

If late 2027, tr Pluto will be conjunct her Mercury in the 9th, a dramatic boost to her estate's fortunes. If in late 2028, tr North Node will be close to her Jupiter – another sign of a hit.

Roland Orzabal

The Tears for Fears star talks about his passion for astrology with SABY REYES-KULKARNI



Welcome To Your Life: Love, Death and Tears for Fears, the new autobiography from the English pop-rock band Tears For Fears co-founder Roland Orzabal, begins with a preface titled Warning: This Book Contains Astrology. "There's a reason", Orzabal writes, "[that] you don't trust astrology. It's because you don't understand its complexities".

Reading your memoir, I was reminded of getting my first astrological chart at age 35 and having this light-bulb moment where, all of a sudden, my whole life made sense. That's different from your experience. You write that you were initially resistant to astrology, and that it flew in the face of your whole belief system. How do you think your younger, sceptical self would have responded to the importance you ascribe to the planets now?

RO: I wouldn't have believed it. Even when I was open to astrology, I read The Astrology of Fate by Liz Greene, and still I couldn't see how it was working. I think my younger self would probably feel the same about my book. But when I read Liz Greene's book again 30 years later, it made complete sense to me. So I'm hoping that there are going to be younger people that are going to be very open to this, and they'll read it and it'll make sense. Because part of what I'm trying to do is provide a little bit of an education. People tend to know a bit about star signs. Some people will know about Saturn return or Mercury retrograde. These are like astrological clichés that are easy to understand. But most people won't know about what we're made of in terms of the energies involved. They won't understand that what we call 'transits' are phases of life. Those aspects are huge.

The way you present it, astrology is like the score of your story.

RO: Yeah, I mean, this is the way I understand things. And what I'm trying to do is enable other people to understand them through my circumstances: these principles, these qualities, these energies, these...whatever you want to call them...these planetary archetypes at work through someone's life. And it's my life because it's more well known than, you know, your average astrologer, but an astrologer could do the same thing.

You present a view of the cosmos where every life – every moment in every life – every mundane interaction, every tick of the clock is a choreographed dance between these archetypal gods, or forces that were once recognised as gods. Even in the most humdrum moments, you argue, these forces are in a kind of celestial dance.

RO: Yes. Well, put it this way: the solar system doesn't care whether you have coffee or tea, as long as you have a hot drink. There's this ongoing philosophical debate – even scientific debate – between freewill and fate. I have a little section in the book about freewill and fate. I think that freewill is a kind of small part of the brain. I think that the larger part of our lives is not so much decided, but...we have a character, which we're born with. You might even say we have it before birth. And that is fate. Character is fate. Dharma. I would say that, largely, we don't have a choice. I'm not sure if I had a choice. [Take, for example, the question:] "What would you become if you weren't a popstar?" [Laughs.] I don't know! I couldn't have been anything else. It was set up for me. But one thing I'm hoping to do, one thing I learned from writing this book, is that your life is a story. It has a narrative arc. I'm hoping [laughs] that we have something within us that's not in that story.

Do we have to choose? Does one or the other have to be true? Can it be non-resolvable? Can the answer be that there's this messy slush between freewill and this grand orchestration? If we do in fact have this illusion, can we just accept that we're living in the driver's seat of an illusion of agency?

RO: I'm not sure if we're living in the driver's seat. [Laughs.] I don't mean to be pessimistic. Carl Jung said "Freewill is doing gladly and freely that which we must do".

I think we've all experienced this strange sensation where you surrender to this... current and, oddly, you get further.

RO: Yes. I was going to say that, exactly. We call that "the flow". And I would say that, when you're living your right life, then you don't question things. It's only when there's dissonance that you start to question everything. [If you] change your path, you therefore get back to that point where things seem inevitable and nice and good.

In the part of the book where you cover the Tears For Fears album Raoul and the Kings of Spain, you write in the book that "it's an essential part of the atheist myth to quietly remove the father". And you mention Richard Dawkins, and how you enjoyed his book The Selfish Gene.

RO: I did at the time—I was 14. [Laughs.]

This is an extract from a much longer interview with Roland Orzabal in the Nov-Dec 2026 issue of The Astrological Journal which can be bought from the Astrological Association website.

Your Lucky Lunar Guide:
November & December 2026

Overview — A Quiet Close to Eclipse Season. There are no eclipses in November or December 2026, making these final two months unusually stable for setting intentions and collecting results. With the shadow period over, the late-autumn and early-winter lunations turn decisively fortunate: four supermoons in a row, with November and December each delivering a New and a Full Supermoon. This amplifies both attraction (New Moon) and culmination (Full Moon) luck. All times below are UT, which is identical to London GMT in these months — no BST adjustment required.

Date	Time UT	Phase	Sign / Name	Lucky Portent (Expanded)
Nov 9	02:02	New Moon	**Scorpio • Super New Moon** *Deep Purse & Power Luck*	The closest New Moon of the year lands at 17° Scorpio, a Super New Moon whose extra pull favours hidden resources and financial regeneration. This is not windfall luck but reclaimed wealth — insurance payouts, dormant accounts, tax rebates, commissions, inheritance paperwork, or a debt finally cleared. Scorpio rules joint finances, investments, and secrets, so audit shared money now. Lucky ritual: write one unspoken money fear and one concrete power move on paper, then burn the fear at 02:02 UT and act on the power move before sunrise. Excellent for refinancing, negotiating fees, therapy that unlocks earning blocks, and launching research-heavy projects. Wear deep garnet or black for focus. Avoid lending. Affirmation: "What was buried returns to me with interest."
Nov 24	09:53	Full Moon	**Gemini • Beaver Supermoon-** *Word-is-Wealth & Network Luck*	The Full Beaver Supermoon at 2° Gemini illuminates communication, contracts, and community. As the second supermoon this month, it pays out on the seeds planted 15 days earlier — particularly through words. Expect news via email, DMs, or a short trip; a pitch, manuscript, interview, or application may land. Gemini rewards curiosity and speed: ask, pitch twice, follow up, introduce two friends who need each other. Beaver Moon folklore links industriousness to stored plenty, so this is luck through networking and prepared stock. Check transport and devices — Mercury will be retrograde from 24 Nov — save drafts, back up files, and read fine print before signing. Lucky actions: publish, launch a newsletter, attend a workshop, repurpose old content. A sibling, neighbour, or local shop brings the tip.
Dec 8	19:52	New Moon	**Sagittarius • Super New Moon** *Leap-of-Faith & Adventure Luck*	The last New Moon of 2026 at 17° Sagittarius is also a Super New Moon, ruled by Jupiter in its own sign-adjacent optimism. This is expansion luck: visas, courses, publishing, long-distance travel, and foreign currency. If you have been playing small, this asks for a bigger map. Book the flight, apply for the qualification, pitch the international client. The luck mechanism is belief-backed action — you must commit before proof appears. Legal matters, higher education, and ethical brands are favoured. Ritual: at 19:52 UT, mark three places you want to be in 2027 on a physical map and place a coin on each. Leave space in December for a mentor from abroad or a different belief system to redirect you. Caution: avoid overpromising. Sagittarius luck grows when you tell the truth loudly and keep your luggage light.
Dec 23	20:28	Full Moon	**Cancer • Cold Supermoon** *Hearth, Home & Emotional Fortune Luck*	The year closes with a profound Full Cold Supermoon at 2° Cancer, just two days after the Winter Solstice — the fourth and final supermoon in sequence and the most emotionally potent. Cancer rules home, family, property, and belonging; what culminates now concerns where and with whom you feel safe. Expect a property decision, family reunion, mortgage approval, or a heartfelt apology that restores security. The Cold Moon traditional name reminds us that winter stores what matters — luck arrives as emotional fortune rather than cash: a home-cooked meal that heals a rift, a house that finally feels like yours, a chosen-family bond formalised. Water the roots. Clear clutter, fix a leak, light a hearth fire at 20:28 UT and name what you are keeping for 2027. This Full Moon is exquisitely fertile for artists and carers — protection is prosperity.

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Madame Arcati's (Slightly) Rude Horoscope: Nov-Dec 2026

Aries

MARCH 21-APRIL 20

Mid-November onwards is a great time to break with the past and launch a project that means so much to you. You like to take the lead, so now here's your chance to boss. In December, both Saturn and Neptune end their retrograde in your sign, signalling yet another green light to get cracking after a time of putting-off, especially with reinventing personal style. Dowdy is not you. Aries Emma Watson will agree.

Gemini

MAY 22-JUNE 21

Uranus in your sign is highlighting your eccentricities and independence, and you'll be reflecting on the people you've chucked this year while finding more interesting replacements. Get used to this life pattern. Uranus stays in Gemini for years yet. Your best planet is Jupiter in Leo, helping to raise your volume and influence through words – and the more personal and revelatory you are the better. If this involves causing people to cry, invest in Kleenex to dab tears. Gemini Dame Joan Collins knows all about this.

Leo

JULY 24-AUGUST 23

A time of exceptional opportunity to improve life under Jupiter's expansive energy. You could be moving, travelling or embarking of any kind of adventure, such as study. Mid-December, Jupiter goes retrograde granting yet more time to get on top of details or review plans. Saturn's house placement works to strengthen Jupiter's work, giving you greater self-discipline and focus. Try to apply yourself to practicalities and limit the boasting or bluffing. There's a real chance to excel. Just as Leo Sir Mick Jagger does.

Taurus

APRIL 21-MAY 21

If you've put off the decision to throw out the old carpets and replace them with the latest voguish laminate flooring – or any domestic project, for that matter – make the most of your stars as we approach year's end. Normally you're a crazed festive shopper but this time around you prefer to spend more time attending to private matters like meditation or sticking pins in voodoo dolls. Taurus Melania Trump has one doll in particular for attention.

Cancer

JUNE 22-JULY 23

Finance has been a big 2026 theme for you, especially over borrowings and mortgages, and there's still a need to find new ways to boost income or cut back on spending. Do you really need to dine out at The Ivy? OK, there's a good case for that. Just have one course. What will help is sticking to a career direction, or a new public responsibility, to keep the show on the road. A few obstacles is no reason to give up; just make the most of Neptune to think outside the box. Tap your inner Cancerian Elon Musk.

Virgo

AUGUST 24- SEPTEMBER 23

A change in career direction is possible, and it will be sudden and probably welcome. It's just that Virgo usually dislikes surprises so try to be flexible or adaptable. In general, be open to transformative energies: these may seem frightening at times, but really, it's for the best. You can't stay in the same place all your life. Virgo can be adaptable so long as they find the positive. Find quiet places where you can think straight and not be deflected by people's endless need to 'advise'. OK, I am offering you advice, but I am right and the rest are wrong. Are you listening Virgo Prince Harry?

Libra

SEPTEMBER 24- OCTOBER 23

They say, keep your friends close and your enemies closer: good advice at this time of year. It could be you're not entirely sure who to trust right now. Such matters become clearer from mid-November onwards when Venus ends its retrograde in Libra and then enters Scorpio in early December, enabling you to see beyond the smiles and spot the sharp fangs of those no longer trustworthy. This new greater insight will also help protect you financially. Libra Kim Kardashian will be pleased.

Sagittarius

NOVEMBER 23-DECEMBER 21

You're desperately seeking a getaway – may be a cruise, a festive break, après-ski in a mountain de-luxe refuge. At the best of times Sagittarius seeks adventure, more so now as your ruling planet Jupiter occupies chart house of mould-breaking experiences. Jupiter stays here till late July 2027 so there's plenty of time to refresh life. This is a time to take your hobbies and pleasures more seriously; one of them may yet prove to be a useful revenue stream – to pay for all those breaks you're planning! Let Sagittarian Taylor Swift be your example.

Aquarius

JANUARY 21-FEBRUARY 19

With Pluto still early in your sign, you're bound to be feeling slightly alien as you adapt slowly to a whole new way of looking at life. This is affecting how you talk about yourself and think. With internal changes taking place, you shouldn't be surprised by the need to find new friends more on your page. Jupiter is helping to open new social doors, perhaps even to someone who could be a partner. This being Jupiter, you are allowed to 'sample'. The likelihood of finding The One just like that is unlikely, so keep your mind open as to possibilities and enjoy the ride. Aquarian Harry Styles has a great sense of fun.

Scorpio

OCTOBER 24-NOVEMBER 22

December is definitely your hottest month as Venus dives into your sign and stays there into early January 2027. If you're wise, spend time and money on maintaining wellbeing – if you can afford a long weekend spa break of pampering and poolside gossip, perfect. Career is under a bountiful Jupiter, but the proximity of the South Node in November suggests that it could become time to break away from a situation that is no longer working to your advantage. A clue to the future lies in finding greater personal freedom. Scorpio Anne Hathaway is flying high right now.

Capricorn

DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 20

Private life and home are where you feel safest. So, it's only natural that you're giving a lot of thought to the structure of your abode. This could require repairs or refurbishments. Winter can be a time when property defects come to life. While shared resources are looking healthier, there's still a need to move towards more independent living and earning – best seen as a long-term project. December and January open up social doors involving group and campaigns. Capricorn Timothée Chalamet always keeps smiling.

Pisces

FEBRUARY 20-MARCH 20

OK, so you feel a bit restricted or insecure about your worth, pushing you to work harder to prove your value. Neptune asks you to look beyond material wealth and find spiritual or intrinsic self-worth. Together, they help you dismantle old, artificial ego-structures regarding wealth and rebuild a grounded, authentic sense of self-esteem that doesn't rely solely on your bank balance. Which is all very well if the bills are piling up. Fortunately, work is under industrious Jupiter, so worry not. Just keep getting up in the morning. Just like Pisces Rihanna does.

From Ants to Mystic Veg:
The World's Most Bizarre Ways to Predict the Future

Most of us want to know what the future holds. You may consult an astrologer or a tarot reader, or a reader of the I Ching. But there are other forms of divination that may seem bizarre yet have their practitioners. In fact, the anthropological record documents hundreds of specialised techniques whose logic rests on interpreting ordinary phenomena as signs. Here are eight examples.

Myrmomancy – Divination by Ants

Myrmomancy derives from Greek myrmex (ant) and manteia (prophecy).

Method: A question is asked and then the practitioner observes the appearance and behaviour of ants. Quick, erratic or frantic movements are often interpreted as warnings of danger, chaos or impending bad weather. Food offerings may be placed and the speed of approach, choice between offerings, direction of transport, and clustering are noted. Because ants act collectively, an entire colony may become the sign rather than a single individual. Other variations treat sudden appearance, disappearance, or mass movement of ants as omens. The direction a column of ants moves (e.g., towards or away from a home) is read as a sign of incoming luck, visitors, or impending loss.

Capnomancy – Divination by Smoke

This is a very old technique and involves the reading of the shapes that smoke form, usually from an incense holder or thurible.

Method: After a fire is made (or candle lit under a burner with incense), the movement of smoke is observed. A thin, straight plume rising directly is favourable, while thick, low-hanging smoke or smoke that sinks to touch the ground is unfavourable. Modern variants involve burning cedar sticks, incense, or candles with ribbons, sometimes manipulating the smoke with hands to form shapes. Personally, I take photos of smoke to discern patterns. The atmosphere should be calm and as free of draughts as possible.

Tyromancy – Divination by Cheese

This technique goes back to Ancient Greece. I would say Swiss-style cheeses (e.g., Emmental, Gruyère) are preferred: the number and shape of the 'holes' or 'eyes' can be a guide to an answer.

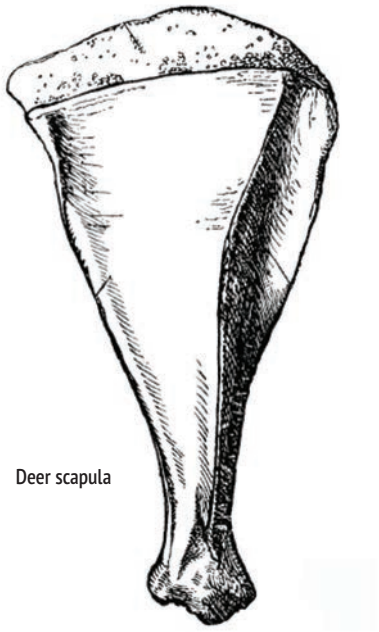
Method: Several procedures exist. One involves cutting farmer's cheese into pieces, inscribing each with the name of an intended partner or a possible answer, and observing which piece moulds first. The first to mould indicates the future partner or correct answer. Another method reads the pattern of mould veins, ridges, crystallisation and mottling on the rind.

Oomancy or Ovomancy – Divination by Eggs

This is still a popular divinatory technique in some cultures.

Method: Separate egg white from yolk and drop the white into hot water. The cooked forms are then interpreted: a bell shape indicates a wedding, a snake shape is a warning of danger. In Caribbean and Latin American practice on Good Friday, whites are dropped into warm water in a glass to predict marriage, travel or death from shapes such as a ship or coffin. Another method

rubs a raw egg on a pregnant woman's abdomen then cracks it to count yolks as an indication of number of children.



Deer scapula

Scapulimancy – Divination by Shoulder Blades

An ancient form of divination that predicts the future or uncovers hidden truths by interpreting the cracks, burn marks or features on a shoulder blade bone (the scapula), usually from a sheep, ox or deer.

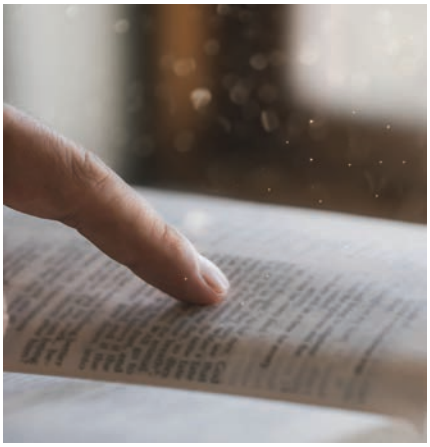
Method: It's a bit gruesome for modern tastes. Practitioners either press a hot iron rod against the bone to create heat cracks or inspect its natural ridges and transparency. Diviners then read these resulting patterns to uncover hidden insights.

Cromniomancy – Divination by Onions

Cromniomancy derives from Greek krommyon, onion. You need patience for this one.

Method: Practitioners write names of absent persons, suitors or possible outcomes on onions, then place them on an altar or a table, often on Christmas

Eve, and later plant them. The onion that sprouts first provides the answer: the person named on it is in vigorous health or will become the husband/wife. Interpretation may also consider smell, colour, shape and direction of sprout growth.



Bibliomancy – Divination by Books

A way of predicting the future or getting an answer to a question by the random selection of a sentence or passage in a book.

Method: Any book will do but often a religious tome such as the Bible is used. Ask a question before opening the book and selecting a place on a page blindly with your finger. Do this with your eyes shut if you like. Now open your eyes and read the exact sentence, line or paragraph that your finger has landed on, interpreting its meaning as a direct message or omen regarding the situation asked about. This also makes a great party game where facetious questions are asked and comically inappropriate answers are often found.

Asparamancy – Contemporary Vegetable Divination

A modern, light-hearted form of divination. It was created by a Brit named Jemima Packington (often called 'Mystic Veg') who claims to be the world's only practising asparamancer.

Method: The practitioner hurls a handful of asparagus stalks onto a flat surface to predict the future. Patterns formed upon landing are interpreted intuitively, comparable to yarrow sticks or runes. Political or personal questions can be asked – Packington says her asparagus forecast Brexit.

THE ASTROLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

Report

The Astrological Association Conference 2026

‘Faith in the Future’

AA President: Wendy Stacey

The conference this year, once again held at Eastwood Hall in Nottingham, truly set a benchmark in both the quality of speaker presentations and delegate satisfaction. The event started with a great excursion to Chatsworth House, to which so many attendees want to return and do it all again! Thursday evening held a surprise quiz night (thanks to Dr. Will Morris who provided many questions from the UAC quiz night 10 days previously), and despite being a lot harder than most people initially thought it would be, it was a lot of fun.

The Friday workshops were top-notch, with six amazing international speakers delivering excellent classes on medical and traditional techniques, memory, research and Saturn. As with the rest of the conference talks, we received excellent feedback via our online form.

The talks were incredible. It’s a great problem to have when your biggest challenge is choosing which talk to attend. We brought together a rich variety of topics and fresh perspectives this year. Speakers came from far and wide, including China, Singapore, New Zealand, Australia, the U.S., and several European countries, Turkey and Albania.

The online sessions were well-attended and beautifully facilitated. Broadcasting these talks on a large screen throughout the venue successfully integrated the hybrid experience.

The opening plenaries on Friday evening by the insightful Lynn Bell and the scholarly Dorian Greenbaum were of great quality and thoroughly enjoyed by all, as was the closing plenary by the fabulous Steve Judd.

Luiza Azancot, Rod Chang (top), Kenan Yasin Bölükbaşı

Seline Alidina (left), Susan Nutter

Conference Opening, part of audience

Wendy Stacey, Rod Chang

The Saturday costume party (optional!) and evening entertainment were a hit, but many also chose to enjoy the terrace outside or have private conversations in the bar.

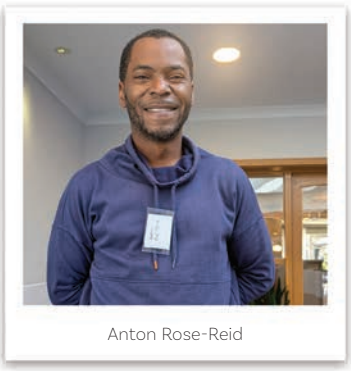
People were fully engaged. And for the first time, it was a rather quiet conference, which was mostly due to people having early nights to be fresh for the next day. People made the most of the recreation centre, and many used the steam room and swimming pool, so the weekend had quite a Zen feel to it.

The conference was humming and felt intimate. It was abuzz with smiling people who moved from one lecture room to another, sometimes enjoying coffee, cake and fruit in between. The venue, with its incredible facilities and sprawling 28 acres of meadows and woodlands, provided a peaceful learning and social space for all to enjoy.

Watching yoga on the lawn framed by majestic oaks – as viewed from meetings on the outdoor terrace – was beautiful. While the exhibition was intimate, it offered ample space for the AA bookshop, schools, publications and software distributors to showcase their material.

Kenan Yasin Bölükbaşı, Rectification Through Astrocartography

Saffron Dennis (left), Daisy Plummer, Mandi Lockley



Anton Rose-Reid

Alison Kelly (left, on Books), Mireille Crossley

Christos Archos

Wendy Stacey, Tony Howard, Lianne McCafferty at the banquet

It is important to say that the AA does not aim to make a large profit from the conference and instead puts a lot of voluntary effort into (at the very least) breaking even. Sourcing venues within our budget that deliver great food and reliable technology for our delegates can be a difficult balance to strike. Eastwood Hall has proven, with its award-winning food, to be superb. Next year we'll ensure the vegan options are more flavoursome. What is most important to us is that our delegates are well looked after and happy, and we hope we achieved this. It was a successful conference.

We are happy to announce that we will be back at Eastwood Hall next year, 2–5 September 2027, so please do keep the dates free and come and join us!

AA Chair: Rod Chang

It has been a wonderful experience to be a member of the Astrological Association Board, and I am honoured to have worked with such a dedicated team. At this challenging time, with Pluto entering Aquarius and presenting numerous challenges to the community, we are fortunate that every Board member has contributed their expertise to the fullest extent.

We continue to collaborate with partner astrology organisations, including local groups and international bodies, to create a community where everyone can feel safe and grow together by sharing their knowledge of astrology.

Our publications *The Astrological Journal*, the *Astrology & Medicine Newsletter* and *Correlation* are popular within the astrology community. However, in recent years, the operating costs of print media have increased, while changes in the environment have led more people to choose electronic media, creating further operational challenges. Our aim is to maintain the quality and quantity of these publications while managing costs. At the same time, we are creating content for online audiences on various social media platforms, such as podcasts and videos on YouTube. We are pleased to see continued growth in the readership of our online publication, *Stellar*.

Most importantly, we want to reach out to astrology enthusiasts around the world, including beginners and young astrologers, so that we can grow together.

The Astrology of Department and Food Stores

Yes, even our high street stores have a star sign. Every store has a birth time, such as the date of incorporation (when it becomes a 'legal person') or a takeover. Astrologers are not always agreed on company start dates, but the list below uses incorporation, and it's amazing how the star sign tells us something accurate about the store.

Retail Natal Charts

The fundamental alignment of each brand's zodiac signature is defined by its legal birth data:

Marks & Spencer: Incorporated on 17 June 1926. Sign: **Gemini** (Air).

Waitrose: Incorporated on 3 September 1908. Sign: **Virgo** (Earth).

Walmart: Incorporated on 31 October 1969. Sign: **Scorpio** (Water).

Primark: Incorporated on 30 April 1948. Sign: **Taurus** (Earth).

Tesco: Incorporated on 27 November 1947. Sign: **Sagittarius** (Fire).

Sainsbury's: Incorporated on 10 November 1925. Sign: **Scorpio** (Water).

Asda: Incorporated on 19 February 1949. Sign: **Aquarius** (Air).

Lidl (UK): First store opened 1994 (or Germany, 1973). Discount pivot: **Cancer** (Water).

Aldi: Re-founded/Named 1962/Split 1961. Split era: **Scorpio** or **Capricorn / Aquarius** transitions.

Iceland: Incorporated on 10 April 1973. Sign: **Aries** (Fire).

Main Astrological Shop Themes

1. The Earth Signs: Efficiency and Physicality (Taurus & Virgo)

Earth signs govern the material world, physical items, and meticulous execution.

Primark (Taurus): Ruled by Venus, Taurus rules tangible possessions, textiles, and value. Primark has a massive physical-store strategy and a commitment to low prices that reflect the steady focus of the Bull.

Waitrose (Virgo): Governed by Mercury, Virgo represents purity, health, and meticulous service. Waitrose reflects this theme perfectly through its premium food sourcing, high-quality standards and emphasis on organic goods.

2. The Water Signs: Domesticity and Power (Cancer & Scorpio)

Water signs focus on security, emotional needs and deep strategic control.

Walmart & Sainsbury's (Scorpio): Scorpio is the sign of regeneration, hidden power and massive resources. Walmart has used intense strategic control to build a multi-trillion dollar supply chain network in US high streets. Similarly, Sainsbury's protects its market share by quietly building a strong, lasting foundation.

Lidl (Cancer): Cancer rules the home, kitchen and emotional security. Lidl taps these themes by focusing directly on staple groceries, the family dinner table and basic domestic needs.

3. The Air Signs: Logistics and Communication (Gemini & Aquarius)

Air signs focus on networks, data management, and public engagement.

Marks & Spencer (Gemini): Gemini is the dual sign of the twins, ruling versatility and local trade. M&S captures this energy by managing a split retail identity, functioning both as a high-quality fashion department store and a luxury food market. It is very much back in the game through shrewd ideas.

Asda (Aquarius): Aquarius is the sign of the collective, innovation and humanitarian networks. Asda embodies this perspective by positioning itself as a community supermarket that offers affordable options to the general public.

4. The Fire Signs: Expansion and Innovation (Aries & Sagittarius)

Fire signs drive market disruption, enthusiasm and rapid expansion.

Tesco (Sagittarius): Ruled by Jupiter, Sagittarius represents global vision, adventure and massive scaling. Tesco reflects this boundless energy as a market leader, historically pioneering massive superstores and early digital retail expansions.

Iceland (Aries): Governed by Mars, Aries represents initiation, bravery and being a pioneer. Iceland entered the market as a specialist in frozen foods, boldly differentiating itself from traditional grocers through a highly focused strategy.

Conclusion

So, the next time to you enter your local superstore, think how its star sign is being reflected in what is sold, how it is presented, what its advertising looks like and how the staff behave towards you. Nothing escapes the horoscope!

The Ultimate Cosmic Gift Guide:

What to Buy Every Star Sign This Christmas

Let's be honest – Xmas shopping is a minefield. It's tempting to just go on Amazon and send a load of gift cards. Actually, restaurant gift cards are a good idea. You want to give something meaningful, but figuring out what your best friend, your eccentric godmother or your tech-obsessed, nerdy partner actually wants is exhausting, and quite boring actually. When good intentions fail, it's time to look to the zodiac.

Astrology can give a surprisingly accurate blueprint of what makes people tick to fill their stockings. Whether you're shopping for a fiery know-all or a deeply sensitive (passive-aggressive) water sign, here is the definitive, zodiac-backed guide to winning Christmas this year.

The Fire Signs: Aries, Leo, Sagittarius

High energy, bold statements and unforgettable experiences. Remember, best to find out the person's passion.

If you buy a fire sign a pair of plain grey socks, they will smile, but inside, a tiny piece of their soul dies with boredom. These signs want drama, action and items that scream premium. A pleasant surprise is your aim.

ARIES (March 21 – April 19)

Aries seeks high-octane experiences because they're competitive, impulsive, restless and always on the move. Think purchased 'experiences' like a wall-of-death gift card or diving with sharks. Also, portable action cameras, sleek wireless workout earbuds or tickets to an indoor go-karting racing track. If it boosts their adrenaline, it's a win.

LEO (July 23 – August 22)

Leos are all about: notice me. They seek the spotlight, attention, luxury and anything that feeds their ego. So, bold designer sunglasses are perfect as well as a designer fragrance or high-end silk pyjamas with gold filigree glinting in the lamplight. If it looks good in a selfie, even better. Regard Fire as a theatrical challenge.

SAGITTARIUS
(November 22 – December 21)

These are the wanderers of the zodiac so assume that they have already three holiday bookings ongoing. You could gift them scratch-off world maps, rugged passport covers, a high-quality, lightweight travel backpack or virtual helmets that offer a sit-down interactive fantasy based in an alien world.

The Earth Signs: Taurus, Virgo, Capricorn

Practical luxury, something organised, timeless quality and nothing too surprising.

Earth signs tend to be pragmatic and don't care for too much excess or extravagance. They value functionality, craftsmanship, value for money and little that is disposable. If it doesn't serve a purpose or feel incredibly well-made, it's going straight to the back of the closet. Or the bottom of the bin bag.

TAURUS (April 20 – May 20)

Taurus adores comfort. Remember, they are ruled by Venus, meaning they love sensory pleasures or things that are cosy or comforting. Your best bet here is pure indulgence: a heavy blanket, a cheese-tasting basket with a moderately priced wine suited to the food, a premium Egyptian cotton bathrobe or devices designed to make life a lot easier, such as an automated bottle opener or laminate flooring to replace a moth-eaten carpet.

VIRGO (August 23 – September 22)

Virgos are very difficult to please, so don't raise your hopes too much. What may strike you as uninspired could be the Virgo answer to a dream. So, think outside your box. Smart calendar planners, minimalist desk organisers, a high-tech smart water bottle that tracks hydration levels (perfect!) or the ultimate life signs smart watch so that they are the first to know if a heart attack in imminent.

CAPRICORN
(December 22 – January 19):
They are CEOs of the zodiac and look for status symbols as a marker of respect. Price could be the problem but do not seek a mortgage. Just think ambitiously. Elegant leather tech folios, premium espresso makers, a masterclass subscription to learn from top global industry experts or a book written by a billionaire tech bro will hit the perfect note.

The Air Signs: Gemini, Libra, Aquarius

Mental stimulation, aesthetic beauty, quirky innovation or anything that enables friendship with an AI agent. It's all forward-looking. Don't get nostalgic!

Air signs do live in their heads and love to talk, create, learn, experiment and often share. To impress them, you need a gift that sparks a conversation or looks incredibly stylish.

GEMINI (May 21 – June 20)
Geminis are so easily bored, so like Virgos, they are very difficult to please. Imagine trying to satisfy two people at once who are totally at odds with each other, Gemini being the sign of dual personalities. You could try keeping them engaged with fast-paced party games, a boxset about serial killers or a major con merchants (now serving time) or a subscription to a controversial podcast show.

LIBRA (June 21 – September 22)
Ruled by beauty, Libras have a razor-sharp eye for aesthetics. Whatever you buy it must be symmetrical, pleasing on the eye, smells good and has an ornamental quality about it even if practical. An expensive bottle of scent beautifully packaged is your best bet (but check fave smell first). Or else a state-of the-art domestic device that just looks an export from Star Trek.

AQUARIUS (January 20 – February 18)
Though these are the eccentric rebels, they still need to feel loved and noticed. An Aquarius wants something nobody else has so perhaps try transcendental meditation or a legal opiate first for inspired ideas. Niche technology is the obvious place to start. Think retro-style mechanical keyboards or steam punk clocks, smart indoor herb gardens (perhaps with heated soil that plays tunes), custom eco-friendly merchandise from an indie artist lately recommended by Vogue, or a bike that talks and offers advice.

The Water Signs: Cancer, Scorpio, Pisces

Deep nostalgia, emotional comfort, spiritual escapes, spa holiday escape vouchers or getaways to the coast.

Water signs are profoundly sensitive and will pick up on anything that seems false. They don't care how much money you spent; they care about the emotional intent behind the wrapping paper. They may even try telepathy or tarot to pick up on your intentions. Aim to be sentimental.

CANCER (June 21 – July 22)
Family means everything to the Crabs and they want to turn their home into a fortress (or asylum) of comfort. You cannot go wrong with luxury scented candles, high-end ceramic teapots with custom loose-leaf blends, personalised framed family photos or calendars with photos of family members/close friends per month. These will be displayed and wept over all year long.

SCORPIO (October 23 – November 21)
Scorpios love mystery, dark colours, intimacy, intensity and 'coded' prezzies that are only understood between you both. A randomly selected gift will next find itself at the local mini-market. Do opt for true-crime investigative board games, dark silk loungewear, deeply complex, smoky unisex (or overtly sexual) fragrances, a mystery novel beautifully ribboned, or a spade. Scorpios love digging.

PISCES (February 19 – March 20)
These the dreamers and mystics, not always over-blessed with cash but can have expensive tastes that are a mystery to everyone. Pisces loves escaping reality through art and comfort, but this is not an excuse to gift them anything suspect of the narcotic variety. Suggestions include a plush satin sleep mask, an indoor water feature, jewellery (but check ring/wrist size), anything reflective like an ornately framed mirror or anything glittery.

ASTRO-X-RAY

Jonathan Hugh Jones

A former international commercial lawyer, Jonathan managed complex public sector projects and corporate structures in developing markets worldwide. He describes himself as an "economic cosmologist". His book *The Living Sky* blends international law and astrology by demonstrating how ancient societies structured global trade networks around celestial cycles.

Q: When did you first realise that astrology had completely taken possession of you – if indeed it has?

JHJ: I first encountered astrology when I was 18 years old just after I left school. I picked up Erica Cheetham's book on Nostradamus at Foyles bookshop by chance, read it and was hooked and have been ever since.

The more that I keep learning about the various uses of astrology the more fascinating I find it. In my work which is focused on economic and financial issues but also on personal astrology, I have used birth charts mixed with charts of countries and markets as well as astro-cartography.

Q: Where do you live and work? Which country? Briefly describe your office and the view from the principal window, if any.

JHJ: I live in London UK and my office is a room in my house with bookshelves with too many books and pictures and the computer equipment which I use for my work. I look out onto a quiet, tree-lined road where I have lived for 35 years and it is a peaceful environment in which to work.

Q: Name one feature of your birth chart that stands out as a major trait – and is known to loved ones, less so to acquaintances.

JHJ: My South Node in the 8th house and my North Node in the 2nd house describes my current life journey carrying deep esoteric beliefs and expanding them into a fascination and adventures with international commerce and trade with Sagittarius in my 2nd house. That path has taken me all over the world and enabled me to blend the two nodes into a book that reflects my own cosmology. I once read a piece by an astrologer claiming that she could find out all that she needed to know about a person from the North and South Node positions. I would not go that far but I do see them as a very useful guide to direction and destiny in a life chart.

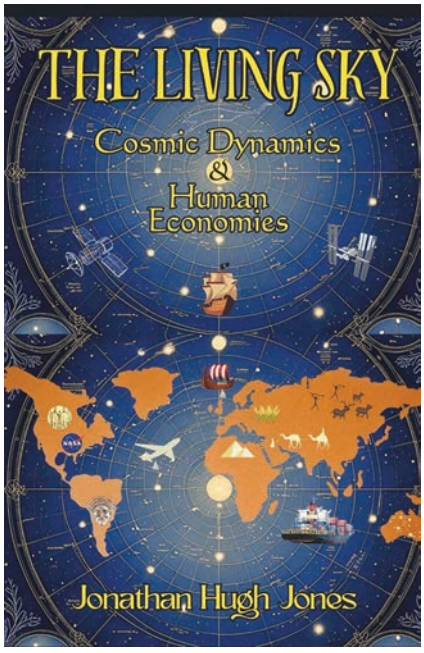
Q: How did you learn the astro art/trade? Who/what inspired your interest?

JHJ: I started my learning from books and a course on astrology and from laboriously constructing my own charts. Many years ago I met Christeen Skinner, one of the world's greatest astrologers, and she has become a great friend and mentor in financial and economic astrological development as well as general personal astrology which complements those disciplines. I have also been influenced by Graham Bates, a pioneer in economic astrology and Cambridge mathematician.

I am still learning all the time and spending a day listening to the speakers at the recent Astrological Association Annual Conference made me consider a number of new ideas. The talk by Frances Clynes on t-squares and their power in a chart and direction made me understand in greater depth how this configuration works.

Q: Tell us about your new book *The Living Sky: Cosmic Dynamics & Human Economies*, described as "A story that tells of a partnership between sky and earth, between humanity and the stars". How long was it in the writing?

JHJ: The book took me seven years to write. I did the MA under the leadership of Nick Campion and Bernadette Brady with teaching from Liz Greene amongst others and when I came to



write my dissertation I chose 'Financial Astrology in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries' as my subject. I gave a number of talks on the subject which attracted interest and explained my work to Prince (now King) Charles who was presiding over the degree ceremony. One of the people on my course who heard my talk told me that I should write a book on the subject. Kate White is a journalist and editor and between us we decided that a wider book on how humans created a partnership with the stars to survive and then thrive economically would include financial astrology but also much other fascinating historical material that supports astrology as well from across the world.

The book is 80% logical and empirical to show that there is a sound basis for economic cosmology and the 'esoteric' subject of astrology. The second person to read the book right through after it was published was an American

professor who read it in five days and said that she could see how a link could be made between the foundational material and later astrology.

I hope that not just astrologers but also students of history will gain something from the book as it does aim to show how cosmology and astrology have acted and continue to act as important forces in world affairs.

"I explained my work to Prince (now King) Charles who was presiding over the degree ceremony..."

Q: Your work as an international lawyer has brought you into contact with many different cultures and their own traditions in cosmology. Can you share in outline some details?

JHJ: My speciality as a lawyer was emerging markets and I worked in India, much of South-East Asia and China and after that much of Latin America, Russia and Eastern Europe and Turkey. Since I was doing a lot of the negotiations in these business projects I needed to understand the cultures that I was dealing with. In India I found that astrology was woven into society even at the top of the business world for making strategic decisions. Astrology was also important in South-East Asia and in China (especially Hong Kong): it is part of a wider cultural system that includes Feng Shui and Taoist traditions such as the I Ching.

Q: What is 'economic cosmology'?

JHJ: Economic cosmology I define as the connection between the dynamic cycles of Sun, Moon, planets and stars and economic and financial rhythms on Earth. It is a system of using the movements of the heavens and recording them to provide a data base that can be crossmatched against conditions on earth be they economic recessions or the price of wheat or gold or the best time to sew your crops or harvest them. The Babylonians ran an experiment that lasted 600 years along those lines as well as using the material for political and military reasons.

Q: Do you think astrology has a divinatory component? And if so, how will this work as astro-AI gets more sophisticated?

JHJ: Yes it does and prediction is core to astrology. AI can be used to process very large amounts of data to improve predictive ability with current techniques. Even the analysis of character in astrological terms can be seen as predictive to the extent that character is fate and the determination of locations in the world through astro-cartography has enabled me to understand and experience places that have worked well for me and places that have not. The capital of Indonesia, Jakarta, has drawn me to several different projects and the presence of a beneficial Pluto line in that region has explained why.

Q: Which astrological software program do you use? Ever hand-draw charts?

JHJ: I would use Solar Fire. I don't hand draw charts any longer because of time constraints.

Q: This is a standard question I ask: Have you ever seen a ghost?

No I have never seen a ghost but I have had many mystical peak experiences which link me to another reality. I have a strong belief that there is a universal intelligence beyond our daily reality and from time to time I feel in contact with that intelligence in meditation or perhaps just walking in nature. Astrology encourages me to believe in an organised universe in which we all have a role to play before and after this current life. I have spent a lot of time in Asia !

Q: Jonathan, would you say you are powerful?

JHJ: When I am very, I can be powerful. I have to make myself concentrate when my attention drifts which I think is a common problem in our digital society. I learned meditation many years ago and I find that when I practice it consistently it improves my concentration and my daily productivity.

Q: And finally, how do people get hold of you and your book?

JHJ: You can buy it online in Amazon Books under the title ***The Living Sky*** or you can buy it from Watkins or the Astrology Shop in London. I am expanding my book talks around the UK and you can buy the book at the talks and hopefully I will soon be selling overseas.

I am learning the process of marketing a book from scratch although I have written many articles on various topics over many years. I do enjoy giving talks and discussing the material to audiences and as the book spreads the feedback and the extra material that feedback generates are helpful as this field develops.

As the book spreads and there are more reviews I may set up a website which will be helpful to this field but for now you can find me on my email address at jonjones64@hotmail .com.

"Economic cosmology I define as the connection between the dynamic cycles of Sun, Moon, planets and stars and economic and financial rhythms on Earth"

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Stellar is freely available to anyone and is part of the print/online editions of The *Astrological Journal*, the magazine of the Astrological Association [AA].

Stellar will grow as an online publication and remain free. If you'd like to join the AA, see our membership options at www.astrologicalassociation.com (various levels of membership, one being free).

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