

IX

SAGITTARIUS *the Archer*



*Who loves the dim, religious light?
Who always keeps a star in sight?
An optimist, both gay and bright
It is the Sagittarius!*

Sagittarians are known for their broad vision, tolerant attitude, freedom-loving philosophical air, and generally jovial spirits. These recognisable traits all stem from the influence of their planetary ruler, the expansive and magnanimous Jupiter, source of hope, optimism, confidence and generosity. Jupiter tends to appreciate abundance; the dictum 'less is more' doesn't make much sense in this realm – better to have plenty and let a little go to waste. Sagittarians have a gift for enlarging all they embrace and throw their energies into. No sign creates a better publicist; few can so easily take a minor matter and, through enthusiasm, make it seem so all-important. Sagittarian hearts and spirits are big; their outlook is liberal and forgiving; their style is colourful and noisy; their passion for life contagious.

The upwards-shooting centaur aims for the higher picture and keeps its eyes fixed on the distant horizon. Sagittarians are always planning for the

future, thinking about a bigger tomorrow, so they tend not to worry about the here and now. They are blessed with fine intuition but can suffer through dismissing valid critical analysis as being nothing more than someone else's negative outlook, sanguine in their own conviction that everything will work out in the end. Sagittarians don't work well with details, and whilst known for being intrinsically candid, they cannot help distorting everything towards a slightly brighter light, especially if it embroiders in a bit more colour and interest. Such buoyancy of spirit is enlivening, but – like all the fire signs – Sagittarians are prone to ignoring the voice of caution. The pitfalls of this sign arise from taking on too much, becoming so enraptured in their gusto that they act without prudence, and pursuing a vision that exceeds the limits of reality. But even in suffering the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, the Sagittarian copes better than most. Being a mutable sign, all change is viewed as an opportunity for challenge and stimulation.

This sign rarely recognises restrictions and disapproves of limitations, adopting a 'live and let live' philosophy that recoils from narrow-mindedness. Sagittarians naturally dislike all things 'prim and proper' and will laugh in the face of lofty morality. There's a 'rough and ready' element to this sign, and one of its most noticeable features is a forthright attitude and a 'take me as you find me' approach. Pomposity and civil niceties fail to impress, as does anything that smacks of being superficially correct but inherently insincere. Sagittarian Mark Twain typifies the penchant for undermining anything ostentatious with humour, frank observation and unnerving candour – just when everyone seems willing to take flight into collective self-congratulation and pretentiousness, the Sagittarian is there, ready to burst the hollow bubble with a painfully incisive reminder of the truth. This is honest Sagittarian style: frank, blunt, and disquietingly valid.

Sagittarians prize themselves on their reputation for sincerity and lenience. There is, however, another side to the sign, a belligerent foundation that is rarely acknowledged but ever-present. Sagittarians are driven by a Mars-like quality, and they have a tendency to rush out with their energies, aggressively pursuing their own ends. It is widely reported how Sagittarians tend to exaggerate stories to their advantage, and they've certainly managed to do this with their mythological emblem, the centaur. Many believe the gentle, healing, self-sacrificing centaur Chiron was placed in the stars to symbolise all that the Sagittarian represents. Honoured for his altruism – he had no equal when performing acts of kindness – Sagittarians unashamedly claim this motif of exceptional goodness and wisdom as their own. But Sagittarians can never be trusted with the details.

Centaurus, the 'Southern Centaur', is the constellation figure that pays tribute to Chiron. The fierce and competitive constellation centaur, *Sagittarius*, faces him from the other side of the constellation Scorpio, marked out by the

Babylonians long before the Greeks traced their nobler hero in the sky. Chiron was remarkable, not because he symbolised typical centaur-like qualities, but because he alone distanced himself from their wild and savage, lustful drunken ways. The reality is that the centaur race is marked in myth as being particularly war-like and fierce. The Mesopotamians, who introduced the constellation Sagittarius and defined it as a centaur, represented it as twin-headed, with a human head facing forward and an animal head facing back – a pictorial detail which later adapted into the presence of a cloak flying behind the head of the constellation figure.



The symbolism connected to Sagittarius is very ancient, and the twin-headed Babylonian centaur – *Pa.Bil.Sag* – is based upon a form of even greater antiquity, that of a scorpion-tailed man drawing a bow, revealing an early association with the neighbouring constellation of Scorpio.

The shadowing animal face reminds us that whilst the Sagittarian might *strive* towards humane development, underlying bestial energy exists, capable of spontaneous brutality when fiery passions get out of hand. Cuneiform inscriptions refer to Sagittarius as the ‘Strong One’ or the ‘Giant King of War’ and place it under the guardianship of Nergal, the god of war that the Mesopotamians identified with the planet Mars.¹ Although later astrologers sanitised the more aggressive and blatantly phallic symbolism evident in ancient sources, we still encounter classical mentions of the sign’s “threatening aspect”² and medieval references to the “Dreadful Sagittary” such as that in Shakespeare’s *Troilus and Cressida*.³ Historically, the sign represents the invincible courage and fervent valour of Mars, tempered only by the benevolence and wisdom of Jupiter. King Steven, who usurped the English throne in 1135, carried the centaur as his heraldic symbol for that reason.

¹ Discussed in R. H. Allen’s, *Star Names: their Lore & Meaning*, (Dover, 1963), p.107ff; p.354.

² *Ibid.*, p.353.

³ Act 5, Scene 5: “the dreadful Sagittary appals our numbers: haste we, Diomed, to reinforcement, or we perish all”.

Insight into how the centaur myth originated offers an interesting reflection on its early basis. Evolutionists have reasoned that it took many thousands of years for the horse to develop into a creature large enough to be ridden by man. It is estimated that this monumental event occurred sometime around 3000-2000 BC. The first and most effective race to use the horse in battle was the Scythians, skilled archers who took full advantage of its speed and height to become a race beheld in terror and awe. It is claimed that when the Greeks first saw the Scythians they believed the horse and rider to be one, giving rise to imaginative and fear-inspired tales of the war-like centaur.⁴ To deny the fiercer aspects of the sign's symbolism is to deny its core origin. Traditional texts leave no doubt as to the integral influence of its martial roots, yet modern authors have masked it as an extremity of the effusive and sometimes vociferous influence of Jupiter.

Either way, Sagittarians are undoubtedly choleric in their temperament. Known for their exuberance and recognised as unafraid to take a risk or square up to a confrontation, given any fair excuse to go on the offensive, this is not a sign to hesitate or pause. The volatile influence of Mars can set their fiery light ablaze, and quite frankly, no one enjoys a good all-out scrap or verbal assault, no holds barred, as a Sagittarian does. Nor are many as quick to forgive and forget once the enflamed moment has passed. Sagittarius brings it all out in the open and up to the surface. No lingering malice or unexpressed resentment lurks among this sign's ulterior motives. The temptation to deal with potential confrontation, even before it can rightfully be described as a valid problem, is much too persuasive.

Here we see the basis for the complaint that Sagittarians lack tact and discretion. Their frankness and frequently ill-considered 'brutal' honesty often come across as abrasive to others, who might normally expect more restraint and delicacy before sensitive matters are subjected to the sledgehammer of public appraisal. And that calls into question this whole issue about Sagittarius being a sign you can trust. Candour, openness, and bringing matters to a level where they can be explored and resolved are key elements of the Sagittarian temperament. But whether you can trust them to keep a confidence is another matter. This is not a sign to divulge your darkest secrets; Sagittarians want to act, change things, and take full responsibility for alleviating your problems and involving themselves on your behalf. It's an admirable trait in many respects but not one you'll appreciate when all you wanted was to gain some furtive advice so you could resolve the matter discreetly in your own time.

Unsurprisingly, the brightest stars of the constellation Sagittarius are said to bestow an influence akin to Jupiter and Mars combined, and the same is true of the planetary energies that animate this zodiac sign. There is a constant need

⁴ Explored in J. Bronowski, *The Ascent of Man* (Macdonald Futura, 1981), p.50.

for challenge, stimulation and freedom of expression and movement. This can produce restlessness in relationships and a lack of continuous commitment in professions that call for mundane, steady application. Sagittarians have a well-reputed love of travel and an urge for exploration that calls for adventure and space – physically, intellectually and emotionally. They are ‘people’ people, and crowds adore them, but they make heavy demands on personal relationships. Stability is a restriction; commitment is a limitation; unless other factors dominate in the horoscope, a Sagittarian generally has difficulty closing down all the potential opportunities that exist in being loose and fancy-free.

Even so, they pride themselves on having a firm moral basis and try to act with integrity. Although naturally flirty and attention-seeking, there is little reason to suspect them of being anything other than they admit they are. Once dedicated to a long-term partnership, they will battle against the obstacles and make every endeavour to fulfil their promises. An ideal partner would be stable and quietly confident, unafraid to let them feel liberated in lifestyle and conduct. Possessiveness is abhorrent to them, jealousy dampens their spirits, and emotional confinement inevitably leads to rebellion.

In career matters, Sagittarians come into their own in creative fields, especially where the value of open expression and life experience are fully appreciated. They are better at working with people than abstract concepts, so areas such as teaching, counselling, and entertaining are particularly well suited. A constant striving towards enlargement fuels their ambitions, and typically, Sagittarians have an instinct for recognising opportunities and a determination to make the most of them – even if this involves some risk of loss. Their robust spirit and grand-scale vision help to guarantee success, but it would be wrong to think of Sagittarius as a sign that naturally gravitates towards the top and stays there: Sagittarians are much better known for engaging in the undulating adventure of life: living to the full, taking gambles, riding the ups and downs, and dicing with the limits of possibility.

Walt Disney and Steven Spielberg are two Sagittarians who fully projected their vision, exceeding all realistic expectations. The singer Tina Turner captures another quality through exuberant and explosive performances that fill the stage with presence. Typically a lover of sport and travel, with a need to move quickly through open spaces (the modern Sagittarian may have substituted the horse for the motorbike), the real issue for the Sagittarian is the need to react spontaneously and intuitively, to project the energies outwards and upwards.

An instinct for acting first and thinking later necessarily brings inconstancy and risk. Still, the indefatigable Sagittarian is always ‘in there’, playing the game, positioning themselves at the very heart of where the action is.

SAGITTARIUS: RULERSHIPS & ASSOCIATIONS

Fiery, hot & dry, choleric, diurnal, masculine, double-bodied, mutable (common), bestial

DIGNIFIED PLANETS

Dignified in Sagittarius

Jupiter as sign and night-time triplicity ruler.

Sun as day-time triplicity ruler.

Debilitated in Sagittarius

Mercury by detriment.

TRADITIONAL RULERSHIPS

Direction: All fire signs relate to the east. Sagittarius specifically signifies east tending towards the south.

Anatomy: Sagittarius rules the buttocks, hips and thighs. Latin texts refer to it ruling the *femurum*, which is literally the thighs, although the word was also used figuratively to refer to the 'loins' and, by extension, the capacity to produce children.

Illnesses: Sagittarius is susceptible to illnesses concerning the buttocks, hips and thighs and all illnesses pertaining to those parts. Traditional texts warn of danger through falls from horses, sport-related illnesses, burns and injuries caused by the tendency to act rashly with little regard for consequences. Jupiter, the ruler of this sign, is closely associated with the blood; high blood pressure, 'heated' blood and fevers are highlighted under this sign.

Places: As a fire sign, Sagittarius governs places that are exposed to heat or fire. Through its affinity with horses, it also rules stables (in particular, military stables or stables where important commercial horses are kept); in modern terms, it may be relevant to where motorised engines are kept or maintained. Outside it represents upper areas on the landscape, open fields, hills and land that rises higher than the rest. Inside the home, it indicates the upper rooms, particularly near the hearth or fireplace, usually where there is an expansive feeling of space.

Countries & cities: Include Spain (especially Toledo), Hungary (especially Budapest), Slavonia, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Narbonne and Cologne in France.

Colours The colours of Sagittarius are bright and vivid, including red, purple and royal blue. Lilly assigns a mixture of yellow and green (turquoise), whilst sea-green, blue, and purple are particularly emphasised through the rulership of Jupiter.

Stones & metals: Stones and metals fall under the rulership of planets, not signs, but through its association with Jupiter, Sagittarius has an affinity with tin, amethysts, sapphires, emeralds, crystals, topaz and marble.

Animals Sagittarius governs all solid-hoofed animals, especially horses, mules and asses; Al-Biruni (371) notes an additional indication of it having an association with birds and reptiles.

TRADITIONAL DEFINITIONS

Bestial: Bestial signs are those traditionally symbolised by four-footed animals. Also called *quadrupedal* ('four-footed'), these signs can lack in social graces and are reputed to display an animalistic (or more instinctual) reaction to their emotions, sometimes indicating coarseness and a poor appreciation of polite manners. They can also be a little inarticulate. But Sagittarius is only partly bestial, because the first half of the sign (depicted by the human head) is considered *humane* and rational, so Sagittarius is capable of good logic and wisdom but never without a strong connection to instinctive animalistic reaction.

Feral: The sign of Leo and the last half of Sagittarius are classified as 'feral' which means wild, uncultivated, savage, or brutal. This relates to the cruel and insensitive streak they can sometimes display when they disassociate their actions from their feelings and empathetic consideration of others. It is also one of the reasons why these signs may be taken to signify uncultivated territory and places away from suburban areas where wild animals roam.

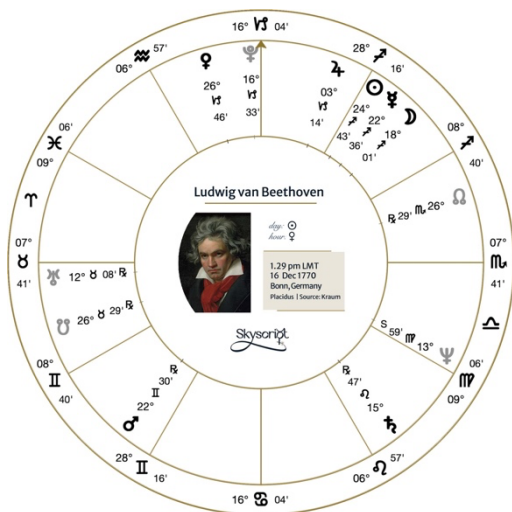
Double-bodied: Double-bodied, or *bi-corporeal* signs are those represented by two figures. All the mutable signs are double-bodied – Gemini: two twins; Virgo: maiden and bird; Sagittarius: man and horse; Pisces: two fishes. They represent the months that join the seasons and signify a dualistic nature that is easily adaptable and can be one thing or another. For this reason the mutable signs are referred to as *common* signs in traditional terminology, meaning signs that partake of shared characteristics or present elements that bridge things together.

TYPICAL FEATURES

Sagittarius typically gives a well proportioned body and face with the corporature inclining towards being tall and large. The complexion is often ruddy, dark or tanned – a flush of red in the complexion or some indication of high vitality. The hair is thick and lustrous, possibly unruly, or with some notable curl, and moderately dark in colour (historically noted as light chestnut or brown). This sign is known for having a strong and able body and a healthy constitution.

FAMOUS SAGITTARIANS

Emperor Nero	15 Dec 37 (JC); Anzio, Italy; 7:30 am LMT (RR:B)
Mary Stuart	8 Dec 1542 (JC); Linlithgow, Scotland; 1:12 pm LMT (RR:c)
William Blake	28 Nov 1757; London, England; 7:45 pm LMT (RR:A)
Ludwig Von Beethoven	16 Dec 1770; Bonn, Germany; 1:29 pm LMT (Data: Kraum)
Mark Twain	30 Nov 1835; Florida, MO, USA; 4:45 a, LMT (RR:C)
Winston Churchill	30 Nov 1874; Woodstock, England; 1:30 am GMT (RR:A)
Walt Disney	5 Dec 1901; Chicago, IL, USA; 12:35 am CST (RR:A)
Frank Sinatra	12 Dec 1915; Hoboken, NJ, USA; 3:00 am EST (RR:A)
Edith Piaf	19 Dec 1915; Paris, France; 5:00 am UT (RR:AA)
Pope Francis	17 Dec 1936; Buenos Ares, Argentina; 9:00 pm ADT (RR:AA)
Jane Fonda	21 Dec 1937; Manhattan, NY, USA; 9:14 am EST (RR:AA)
Tina Turner	26 Nov 1939; Brownsville, TN, USA; 10:10 pm CST (RR:AA)
Bruce Lee	27 Nov 1940; San Francisco, CA, USA; 7:12 am PST (RR:AA)
Jimi Hendrix	27 Nov 1942; Seattle, WA, USA; 10:15 am PWT (RR:AA)
Steven Spielberg	18 Dec 1946; Cincinnati, OH, USA; 6:16 pm EST (RR:AA)
Anna Nicole Smith	28 Nov 1967; Houston, TX, USA; 3:15 am CST (RR:C)
Jay Z	4 Dec 1969; Brooklyn, NY, USA; 12:10 am EST (RR:C)
Emmanuel Macron	21 Dec 1977; Amiens, France; 10:40 am CET (RR:AA)
Britney Spears	2 Dec 1981; McComb, MS, USA; 1:30 am CST (RR:A)



"To play a wrong note is insignificant; to play without passion is inexcusable" – Ludwig Von Beethoven

"People think my life has been tough, but I think has been a wonderful journey. The older you get, the more you realize it's not what happens, but how you deal with it." – Tina Turner

"Don't fear failure. Not failure, but low aim, is the crime. In great attempts it is glorious even to fail" – Bruce Lee

