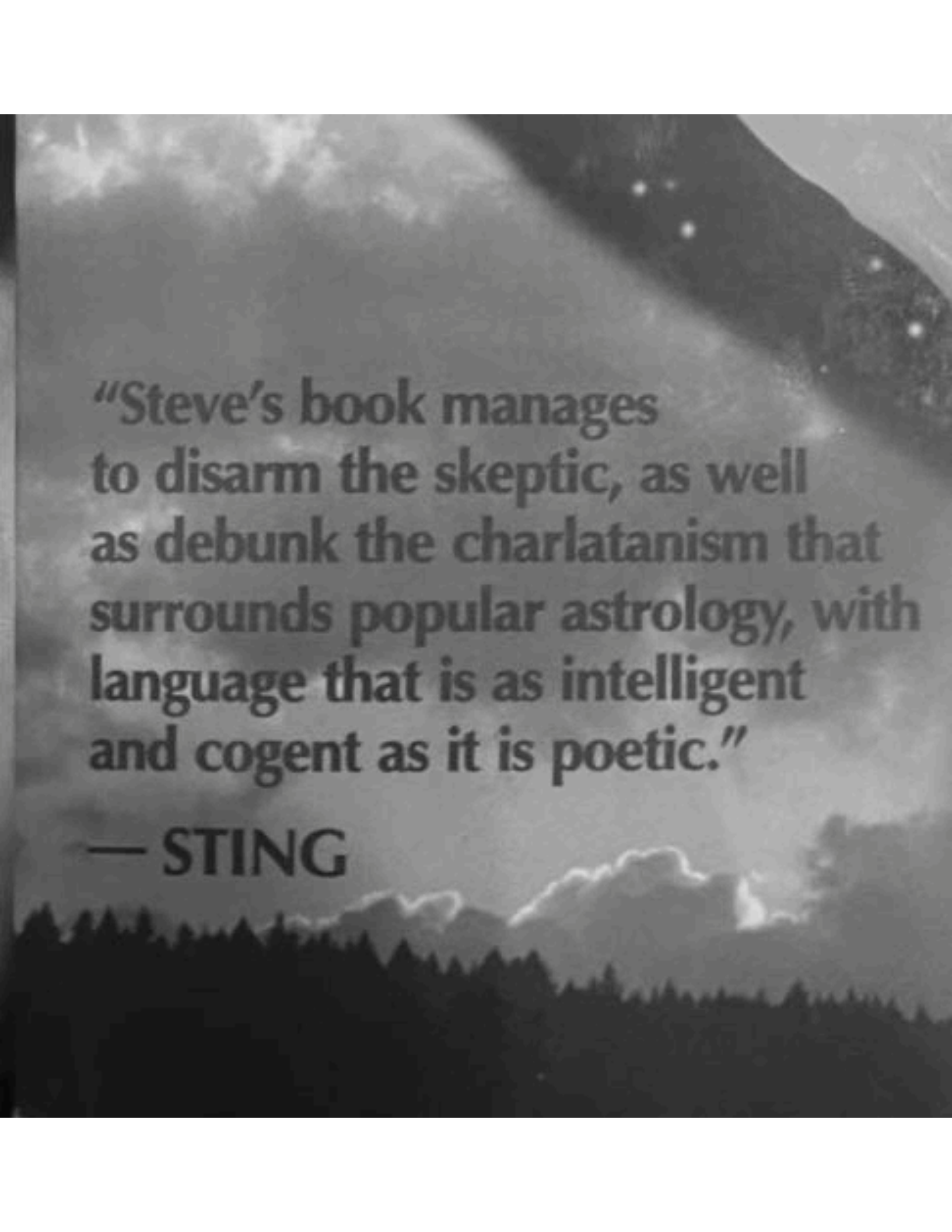


ASTROLOGY FOR BEGINNERS

The Inner Sky

HOW TO MAKE WISER CHOICES
FOR A MORE FULFILLING LIFE

Steven Forrest



**"Steve's book manages
to disarm the skeptic, as well
as debunk the charlatanism that
surrounds popular astrology, with
language that is as intelligent
and cogent as it is poetic."**

— STING

AQUARIUS THE WATER-BEARER

Element:	Air
Mode:	Fixed
Archetypes:	The Genius The Revolutionary The Truth Sayer The Scientist The Exile
Glyph:	≈

*If you meet the Buddha in the road,
kill him.
—Zen Buddhist saying*

The Symbol

The Aquarian glyph—a pair of parallel wavy lines—is often mistaken for water. That is not the case. Those lines are serpents, symbols of knowledge.

In Eden, the serpent tempted Eve to eat the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge. She did, and God threw her and Adam out of the garden for it, setting into motion the history of the world.

But in acquiring that knowledge Eve did something more. In that single rebellious Aquarian act, she gave birth to a quality far more precious than safety, far more precious even than wisdom.

She gave birth to human freedom.

Endpoint

Freedom—that is the Aquarian endpoint. What is it? Individuality. The ability to choose our own path. To do what we want to do. To take orders from no one, be that person, father, mother, president, priest, or any other authority figure.

Easier said than done.

Enormous forces are massed against our individuality, forces that can streamroller us if we let them, turn us into dancing monkeys. Peer pressure. Conformity. Socialization. The desire to be accepted. Let them take hold, and we serve two

masters: our own nature and the vagaries of those around us. Immediately, our freedom is compromised.

For Aquarius, that compromise is anathema. **The Water-Bearer's mortal enemy is the tribal instinct.** If she succumbs all is lost. She becomes just one more familiar character in the endless sitcom of our daily existence.

Aquarius and conformity: they mix just about as well as peace and nuclear warheads.

To conquer that tribal instinct, the Water-Bearer must cultivate an **absolute loyalty to truth.** She must say what she sees, regardless of consequences. She must stand firm when her freedom is challenged, whether by direct coercion or by insidious persuasion. And she must willingly accept her destiny: that of the exile, forever ordained to be out of synch with the values and motivations of her community.

The Aquarian endpoint? The flawless, uncompromising expression of self. Individuality perfected.

Strategy

Picture the Water-Bearer as one of those walled cities in the Old Testament. Times are violent. Each city-state is a separate culture, and the tension between neighboring cities is constant.

Should the Water-Bearer's walls collapse under the pressure of a siege, her culture is crushed. The victorious armies kill the Aquarian king and tear the temple gods from the pedestals, installing their own.

There can be no surrender. Once the enemy passes through the gates, holocaust ensues, with oblivion on its heels. For the Water-Bearer, there is only one strategy: keep those defenses intact at whatever cost. No deals. No compromises. Only the hard certainty of stone and mortar.

The city-state metaphor is apt, only now we are not speaking of the cultural integrity of a historical society. We are talking about the freedom and individuality of a single human being.

The enemy is arrayed outside the walls. They mass before the gates. They prepare the battering ram.

For Aquarius, that battering ram takes many forms, but in essence it is **the pressure brought upon us by our culture to conform to an established pattern of behavior.**

Inwardly, we have a certain unique set of predilections and

values. But our society has other plans for us. Ever since we could talk, we have been programmed with descriptions of what constitutes success, decency, and sanity. For most of us, plugging into those patterns is natural, even helpful. For Aquarius, it is a death sentence.

The Water-Bearer must resist the battering ram. **She must resist the coercions of her culture.** Her strategy is to follow the dictates of her own individuality, making her own choices regardless of the rage or hoots of disbelief those choices produce in the people around her.

"I will be sane, even if that means everyone else thinks I am crazy"—that is the Aquarian motto.

If she follows that strategy, society may threaten to take away her freedom by force: jail or the asylum. But those are the real battering rams. Usually, cultural pressures are more subtle: "Keep on acting like that, and you will never keep a job. We will starve you, make you insecure and uncomfortable." Or: "Keep that up, and we will all laugh at you. We will label you the crazy one. We will never take anything you do seriously."

As if those rams were not enough, the Water-Bearer's enemies have a second ploy. They have already established agents within the city walls, spies whose task it is to open up the gates from inside. For the Water-Bearer, those spies take the form of **people who love her**. And they do love her, deeply and sincerely. That, unfortunately, is a far cry from saying that they understand her.

These spies have already cut through the Aquarian defenses. They are inside the walls. They may be husbands or wives. They may be friends. Often they are parents. And when the Water-Bearer makes her choices, they apply enormous pressure on her, pressure aimed at forcing her to reconsider, forcing her to **conform to their expectations**.

How? Their hearts may be in the right place, but, whether they know it or not, their methods are treacherous. These spies lead the Water-Bearer to believe that **she has a responsibility to betray herself**, that if she truly loves them she would not put them through the turmoil of watching her take the heat that goes along with being a square peg in a society full of round holes.

Facing those spies is the ultimate Aquarian test, far more difficult than resisting the battering rams. In defending her

freedom, the Water-Bearer must steel herself to meet a chilling, often embittering challenge: she must be prepared to break the hearts of people who love her. No matter that their disappointment and pain come only from their thwarted desire to crush her into a mold she was never meant to fit. Their hurt is real. With one compromise, Aquarius could assuage it. And yet she cannot compromise. She cannot pretend to be other than what she is.

Is the Water-Bearer coldhearted? No, but she often looks that way. Her path is an austere one, leading her into the clear, thin stratosphere of true individuality. And if her ascent there disappoints the ground dwellers, she must sometimes live with the hurt, taking what comfort she can in the knowledge that those broken hearts are the inescapable price of freedom.

Resources

"Every year before we plant the corn we sacrifice a virgin to the rain god. Every year he sends us rain in return. Yet you say that this year we must not sacrifice anyone, that the rains will come of their own accord."

Some Aquarian ten thousand years ago heard those words, and stuck to her guns anyway. If she was not killed for her convictions, then her certainty changed the course of human history.

Why? Because she **saw the truth** and no one could convince her otherwise. She looked at the obvious— and saw something that nobody else could see.

There is a word for that radical independence of mind, a word that describes the most critical Aquarian resource. That word is **genius**.

Genius— we are taught to think of it as extreme intelligence, but that is misleading. Intelligence is only a tool of genius and can exist without it. Genius is the capacity to think freshly, to view old problems in new ways. **Genius is the ability to think in ways we have not been taught to think.** The Water-Bearer has that quality in abundance.

Let's not sacrifice a virgin this year: the woman who first had that rebellious Aquarian thought was immediately placed under unrelenting pressure. Perhaps there were a thousand people in the village. If so, nine hundred ninety-nine of them thought the

idea was madness. But our Aquarian heroine knew it was the truth—and that certainty sustained her. And it sustains Aquarians today in exactly the same way. They **know** their choices are right even if nobody else agrees.

The Water-Bearer has a second resource. Without it, her genius would be of little use. Mere knowledge alone does not prepare one to resist a thousand accusing fingers. Her second resource is an implacable, unbending **stubbornness**. When she plants her feet, she makes the Matterhorn look like dust in the morning breeze. Nothing can move her.

Shadow

Such stubbornness serves the Water-Bearer's strategy. To resist the crushing weight of the tribal instinct, she must have an unflinching certainty about herself. Somewhere, deep in the core of her psyche there has to be an unshakable conviction that **her perceptions are valid**, regardless of how violently or eloquently her foes argue against them.

But that same stubbornness can destroy her.

The Water-Bearer can invent some artificial statement of her independence and defend it with all the stubbornness of Davy Crockett at the Alamo. She may refuse to wear anything but blue jeans. She may insist on her right to use four-letter words in front of the minister. She may categorically refuse to listen to anything except classical music. Those eccentricities are harmless enough in themselves. The horror is that they sidetrack the far more fundamental Aquarian process, that of individuation.

That quirky stubbornness is the Water-Bearer's shadow. Instead of defending her right to shape her own life, she acquiesces to the pressures of society. She follows a fundamentally conventional course, sidestepping legitimate developmental issues. And then all that Aquarian rebelliousness and freedom are bled away into some essentially safe arena.

The genius disappears. There is no rebellion, no revolutionary thinking. All that remains is one more nameless face in the crowd, leading a predictable life, colored only by a few exasperating but ultimately harmless peculiarities.

The Aquarian shadow is darker yet.

Conventionality is no sin. The vast majority of us are

inherently conventional people. When we fit in with society, we fit in with ourselves too. Not so with the Water-Bearer. For her, conventionality is a mask. She may choose to wear it, but if she does, she pays a terrible price: the life she leads is not her own.

An Aquarian traveling that dark pathway may have the outward appearance of success. She may be poised. She may be graceful. She may be affluent and witty. But she feels like an outsider, like a foreign agent who has flawlessly adopted a false identity.

The Water-Bearer feels **alienated**.

Then, even the people closest to her never know her. They go through the motions of relationship. But they sense that there is something aloof about her. She seems distant, perhaps cold or unfeeling. Her words are right. She fulfills her responsibilities. She laughs at the right jokes. She makes jokes of her own. But no one is fooled. Everyone knows that something essential is simply not being revealed.

Behind those eyes, as clear and penetrating as a dagger of ice, there is nothing. Only a missing person.