

Navigating Professional Storms: A CASE STUDY IN CAREER HORARIES

by Wade Caves

Horary astrologers often deal with the same big four issues that are asked about in natal astrology: relationships, money, health, and career. Career horary charts may seem to present a “soulless” theme, but can be particularly revealing when they are analyzed in their proper depth, moving away from the expectation of simple yes/no answers to allow the chart to show both the immediate and deeper roots of the problem being probed. As the symbolism plays out over time, the theme of one horary chart may be picked up by another in a way that mirrors the development of the situation. This article demonstrates a typical example of this, and shows how horary can be the ideal vehicle for astrological guidance at times of career confusion.

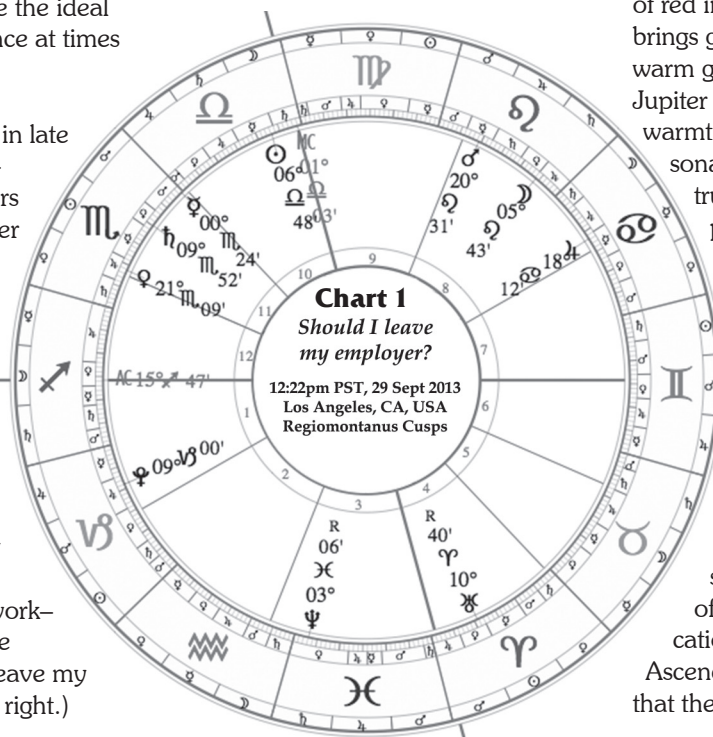
The querent came to me in late 2013 when she faced a crossroads in her career. In 17 years of happy employment with her current company, she rarely had a complaint. Things changed with the hiring of a new supervisor, with whom she had developed a fairly turbulent relationship. Almost a year of failing to work things out led her to question whether it was time to look for a new opportunity that would provide increased job satisfaction and a better work-life balance. The question she posed to me was, “Should I leave my employer?” (See **Chart 1**, at right.)

In all horary questions, we use the 1st house and its ruler to signify the person who asks the question (the querent) and use the Moon as a general co-significator of the question.¹ Historical texts propose assessing Ascendant/hour-ruler agreement to test radicality — that is, to confirm, through the chart, that the question has firm roots within the soul and is not of a trivial nature. While William Lilly explained this technique in *Christian Astrology*, his preferred and most demonstrated method of establishing radicality was to determine whether the querent was physically described by his or her primary significator. If the chart described what Lilly could see with

his eyes, he knew that it would be able to guide him into a reliable judgment.

In this chart, the question of radicality was resolved for me by noting that, with 15° Sagittarius ascending, Jupiter acts as the querent’s significator and is descriptive of her, both in form and behavior. Jupiter in Cancer appropriately describes the querent as short in stature,² but there was also a strong influence from Mercury and Mars, since both Jupiter and the ascending degree are in the terms of Mercury, while Mercury is itself in the sign and term of Mars. Accordingly, the querent had a (Mercurial) slender frame, with a narrow face and thin lips,³ piercing eyes, sparks of red in her hair (the influence of Mars brings glints of redness), and a natural warm glow to the cheeks (the heat of Jupiter and Mars brings a red or ruddy warmth to the face and skin). In personality, she was kind, honest, and trustworthy, characterized by the positive Jupiterian outlook that, although things were difficult now, everything would work itself out in the end.

I hold the view that significators are not random in their selection, but carry deeply relevant symbolic meaning that ought to be at the heart of the judgment. Very often, an astrologer can spot the trouble straightaway based on the nature of the planets involved in signification. When we see Mars ruling the Ascendant, for example, we may find that the querent is acting from a place



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of impatience or is adopting a combative approach. If the significator is Mercury, there may be too much attention to detail and not enough “big picture” (or a fretting mind that won’t quiet down for much-needed reflection). Saturn can show that denial, envy, and obstinacy plague the querent, and so on with the remainder of the planets.

In Jupiter, we have a liberal, trusting, relaxed planet, which may show someone who has taken on too much, or has overextended commitments, or failed to take account of what is realistic. A few months prior to the question, the querent had volunteered to mentor several employees who were underperforming in their job roles. Since she had always been known for her strengths in training, she did not consider her own limits. Having taken on too many struggling employees at once, she soon realized that she had no one left whom she could fully rely on. This led to a degradation of the team’s overall performance and was a source of recurring tension between the querent and her supervisor.

Exploring Jupiter further, we find it in Cancer, the sign of its exaltation. The 12th-century astrologer Ibn Ezra compared a planet in exaltation to “a person at his greatest rank,”⁴ expecting status and respect; yet, the querent shared that she was not experiencing the respect she felt she deserved, being made instead to feel quite small and troublesome in her job.

Both the Moon and Jupiter are placed in the 8th house, accurately reflecting the client’s worry and anxiety.⁵ Jupiter is also disposed by the Moon, and it is worth noting that a planet in Cancer cannot make a Ptolemaic aspect⁶ to the Ascendant degree in Sagittarius. This placement in Cancer makes Jupiter averse to its own sign. Planets in aversion lack control of their own situation, so despite Jupiter’s exalted station, it is unable to manage its own affairs as it would like. The querent’s significator, therefore, shows her to be a well-intentioned person in a bad place.

There has been some dispute about which house to refer to in career queries,

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the 6th or 10th. The 6th house is where we are made to feel small and are diminished. This house has a dark signification, since it does not make a Ptolemaic aspect to the Ascendant and has rulership over illness, servitude, toil, and small beasts of burden. It is because of this house’s connection to labor, exertion, and slavery that it has been erroneously tied to jobs and careers, despite a number of historical texts and examples informing us otherwise.⁷

Contrast this with the 10th house, which *does* enjoy an aspectual relationship with the Ascendant. Although most classical texts name the Ascendant as the most auspicious and powerful place in the chart, some traditional authorities attribute that title to the 10th house.⁸ Planets culminate at the Midheaven (MC) and reach their highest declination; this is why the 10th shows areas of life where we are lifted up, where we find our honor and reputation, and where we experience glory, dignity, or advancement. The Western concepts of work, career, and profession — as we understand them today — are much more closely tied to the traditional symbolism of the 10th house than the 6th. In our example chart, with 1° Libra on the MC, I take Venus to offer signification of the current career.

In a question centered on dissatisfaction with the present work situation, it comes as no surprise to find a battered 10th-house ruler. Venus is in detriment in Scorpio, on the cusp of the 12th house, and separating from a tight square to the naturally malefic planet,

Mars. In his *Choice Astrological Aphorisms*, Lilly explains that a planet “in his detriment is like a person cast out of all his Estate without hopes of Recovery,”⁹ and from this we can see that the job has now lost all the appeal it once held for the querent. She explained that the company was unsuccessfully fumbling through a number of internal changes (structurally and operationally), and it appeared to be rudderless as it went through a period of discomfort and decline. Venus on the cusp of the 12th house also suggests the conspiring of unknown enemies and an active force working against the querent. It is not in Venus’s essential nature to scheme and thwart, but when damaged in Mars’ sign and suffering from its square aspect, the Venusian principle is perverted and takes on unsavory qualities. These debilitating 10th-ruler conditions validate the querent’s sense of genuine difficulty and nastiness in her workplace.

The Moon is currently at 5° Leo, and its future movement gives insight into how events are likely to unfold. It is 1° from the perfection of a harmonious sextile to the Sun, a planet that naturally signifies those in authority¹⁰ — especially when placed, as it is here, in the culminating 10th house. From this, I expected some kind of contact between the querent and her supervisor within one unit of time. Since the Moon moves so swiftly, it made sense to suggest that this would happen the next day.

The Sun–Moon sextile is an interesting aspect that was explored further with the client in consultation. The Moon in Leo applies to the Sun, and since the Sun rules Leo, the Sun offers the Moon a reception. This creates a host–guest dynamic whereby the Sun attends to the Moon and its needs. Looking at this from the context of the question, I advised the querent that her supervisor would be keen to hear about her concerns. I suggested that she use this opportunity to share her perspective and provide relevant feedback, but to exercise caution in delivery. The Sun is in its sign of fall at 6° Libra and in opposition to volatile Uranus. Because of the Sun’s angularity on the 10th-house cusp, the Sun boasts a position of power and authority over the querent, but the fact remains that the Sun is essentially

debilitated in Libra and so likely to signify someone who lacks true strength of character. Lilly provides this useful insight into people who are signified by an ill-dignified Sun in horary:

When ill dignified, the Solar man is arrogant and proud, disdainful all men, cracking of his pedigree, he is [impaired] in sight and judgment, restless, troublesome, domineering; a mere vapor, expensive, foolish, endowed with no gravity in words or soberness in actions.¹¹

This is not descriptive of the type of person who would help the querent to identify a mutually beneficial course of action, despite statements or protestations otherwise. The Sun (which never retrogrades) signifies someone who is deliberate in everything they do, even in their belligerence. While reception promises a diplomatic encounter, a sextile from an 8th-house Moon to a fallen Sun is not enough to indicate a healthy recovery of their relationship in the long term. It was my judgment, after reviewing the dynamics in the chart, that an exit from the querent's current employer was not only appropriate, but the best course of action.

There did appear to be some short-term financial constraint that the querent would run into following the decision. After the Moon completes its sextile to the Sun, it moves to square Saturn, ruler of the querent's 2nd house of finances. The Moon is in the sign of Saturn's detriment (Leo), while Saturn is in the Moon's sign of fall (Scorpio) — an example of a hostile aspect where planets join each other from signs of enemy territory. This contact warns of a negative impact on the querent's finances from the decision she is about to make; however, because the querent is ultimately signified by a well-dignified and naturally benefic planet (Jupiter), she is shown to be strong enough to endure and overcome, so I encouraged her to forge ahead and consider external opportunities.

One day after our consultation, the querent had a visit from her supervisor during which the querent spelled out her frustrations and grievances. The conversation went better than the querent had anticipated, and while the supervisor

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held firm on some disagreeable items, the querent received an open-minded response overall. Regrettably, the peace between the querent and her supervisor did not last long, prompting the querent to begin a job search.

The aspect between the Sun and the Moon proved interesting on another level, although the events described in the next paragraph were not predicted at the time of our consultation. To share these details, I need to reveal a bit of a spoiler: As a result of what was seen in a subsequent chart, the querent did ultimately give notice and leave her long-held position with her employer.

As previously explained, the Sun (significator of the supervisor) receives the Moon, which is positioned in, and rules, the 8th house. The querent's eventual resignation was shocking to the company and galvanized a number of complaints formally lodged against the supervisor, which resulted in forced suspension for him just two months later. This ended in the supervisor's dismissal from the organization at the close of the suspension period. Approached from another angle, this can be seen in the Sun-Moon sextile, where the Sun's next aspect is an opposition to Uranus. When a planet receives the ruler of the 8th house, as the Sun does here, it invites the destructive intent of that planet into its home and allows the 8th-house signification of death and decay to anchor. This is compounded when the received planet (Moon) is also positioned within the 8th house. The "death" shown can be a literal death or a symbol for loss of position and status (as was the case here). While these layers of the chart were only seen in hindsight, it is always interesting to reflect on how different levels of horary symbolism play out in



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the resolution of the problem, even for something as supposedly straightforward as a career horary.

Some weeks later, the querent found herself midway through an extensive interviewing process and was concerned about the prospects of gaining employment with a new company. She returned for another horary consultation, her exact question this time being: “Will I get the job?” (See **Chart 2**, below.) With a question like this, we need to navigate beyond the limitations of the exact wording to get to the crux of what is stirring in someone’s heart. Seventeen years with the same employer had left the querent understandably wary of transition and change, so although the question was rather direct in its delivery, I felt that it was critical to explore with the client whether or not the opportunity was a suitable fit for her, personally and professionally.

The 1st house and its ruler, Mars at 4° Virgo, signify the querent, and here we see the same mixture of influence between Mercury and Mars that accounted for the querent’s appearance and complexion in the first chart (Mars as 1st-ruler in the term and sign of Mercury, and Mars dispositing Mercury by sign). The 10th house and its ruler, the Sun at 29° Libra, signify the job, while the Moon is again placed in the 8th house, this time in Gemini, traditionally held to be an unfavorable sign for the Moon because it is the 12th from the Moon’s own sign of rulership.¹² Many details of this chart recall the anxiety of mind and spirit that could be glimpsed from the first one.

Thankfully, the chart showed that anxiety to be groundless. Any way we approach this chart, we see the promise of perfection: The signifiers come together harmoniously, allowing us to judge a more positive outcome. First, we have the two primary signifiers in direct aspectual application without any form of interference: The signifier for the job (Sun) applies to the querent’s

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significator (Mars) by a harmonious sextile aspect.

Secondly, this aspectual connection is supported by reception. As the sextile perfects, the Sun enters Scorpio where Mars receives the Sun by sign. This reception of the Sun (job) by Mars (querent) is an indication that the querent will welcome and accept the job, and find it suitable to her needs.

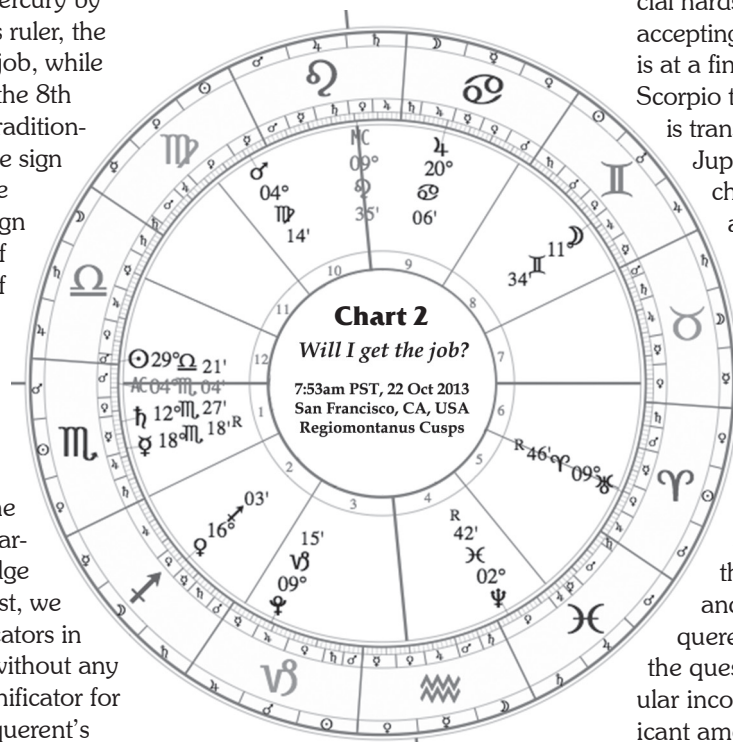
Thirdly, we have the placement of each signifier in the house of the other (termed “emplacement”). Although the Sun is technically in the 12th house, when it is positioned within 5° of the 1st-house cusp, its effects are expected to impact upon 1st-house concerns, and it becomes judged as a 1st-house planet.¹³ Here, we have a dual indication that both parties want what the other has to offer, with the 1st-ruler (querent) in the 10th house

(job), while the 10th-ruler is placed in the 1st house; this in itself is a very strong argument for perfection.

In matters of timing, for horary we can use symbolic timing (where each degree signifies a unit of time — days, weeks, months, etc.), mundane timing (where we look for a real-time connection of aspects by use of an ephemeris), or a mixture of both. Symbolically, there are 5° separating the Sun’s applying conjunction with the Ascendant and sextile to Mars, so it might be expected that a job offer would present itself within five days or five weeks from the time of the question. Often, I find real-time connections to be more reliable. The aspect between the Sun and Mars perfected on November 1, 2013 across sign boundaries,¹⁴ and I told the querent to expect that, around that date, an offer was likely to be extended.

I also advised the querent that she should expect to take a cut in pay. The 2nd-house cusp is at 29° Scorpio, and its ruler, Mars, is in the 10th house, placed in the modest sign of Virgo, and weak in essential dignities.¹⁵ However, because Mars is strengthened accidentally by placement in the 10th house, and receives a favorable aspect from the 10th-ruler (with reception), I judged the cut in pay to be an irritation but not enough to cause long-term financial hardship or deter the querent from accepting the job. The 2nd-house cusp is at a final degree, soon to change from Scorpio to Sagittarius, where rulership is transferred from Mars to benefic Jupiter. This symbolizes imminent change, and with benefic Venus also placed in the 2nd house, we can judge that, although there may be an initial loss, the situation will develop into one of benefit.

One element of this chart that I found quite striking was the Moon’s application to the opposition of Venus, which is also within 5° of perfection. Venus rules the 7th house of relationships and so offers signification for the querent’s husband. At the time of the question, he had a job with irregular income and was accruing a significant amount of student loan debt in



higher education. It is relevant here that Venus is in the 2nd house of the querent's finances, as the husband relied on the querent financially. The upcoming opposition between the Moon and Venus from the 2nd/8th-house axis highlights the husband's concerns about how this new job would impact the household budget. I advised the client that, when the job offer came, her spouse was likely to push back with questions about financial security. Due to the overall positive nature of the chart, I urged her to hear out her husband's concerns, but to ultimately trust her own instincts.

The client later reported that she received a call on November 1, informing her that the job was hers, pending a background check. The pay was a 12% reduction from her current salary and offered fewer benefits, but she accepted the offer without hesitation. As expected, her husband did have reservations about the compensation offered and did not hesitate to voice them. Developments like this are always visible in the chart. If we astrologers

choose to focus only on the primary significators, without paying attention to what is happening at the periphery, we risk missing an important message that the client was always meant to hear. Armed with the foreknowledge of her husband's concerns, the querent was prepared to talk to him about the importance of this next step in her professional journey, and eventually garnered his full support.

The querent accepted her job offer on November 4. In her new position, she experienced immediate success and was very well-liked and respected. A mere five months after her start date, she was promoted with increased pay and given a high level of responsibility and visibility in the organization. In this, we now understand the symbolic testimony offered in the chart by the five degrees that separate the Sun (natural significator of honors and high office) from its union with the Ascendant and the querent's significator, Mars. The querent says she has not once regretted her decision to leave her former employer.

The charts I shared in this article were not particularly difficult charts. Anyone with a good grasp of general astrological principles and basic horary training should be able to see the symbolism at play and come to a similar judgment. The magic and complexity took shape during consultation, as client and astrologer worked together to explore the layers of symbolism and create a road map for the client's immediate and long-term professional future. When employed to its full potential, horary serves to effectively illuminate and resolve problems, not merely to predict them.

Chart Data and Sources

"Should I leave my employer?" September 29, 2013; 12:22 p.m. PST; Los Angeles, CA, USA; source: author's records.

"Will I get the job?" October 22, 2013; 7:53 a.m. PST; San Francisco, CA, USA. (**Author's Note:** In keeping with horary tradition, I cast both charts for my location, at the date and time when I understood the scope and consequences of the question being asked.)

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References and Notes

1. See William Lilly's *Christian Astrology*, 1647; Astrology Classics reprint, 2004 (hereafter CA), p. 184.
2. Lilly reports (CA, p. 95) that Cancer denotes a "small and low stature." Just as water gathers low to the ground, significators and dispositors in any of the water signs are expected to deny height.
3. In the signature of physique, Mercury's cold and dry nature is expected to bring thinness to the body and its features, though Mercury's signification changes as it comes into contact with the other planets. Lilly lists how the other celestial bodies impact Mercury's physical appearance in CA, p. 78.
4. Abraham ibn Ezra, *The Beginning of Wisdom*, ARHAT Publications, 2009 (hereafter BW), p. 135.
5. The 8th house is associated with "fear and anguish of mind" (CA, p. 54).
6. The Ptolemaic aspects are the conjunction, sextile, square, trine, and opposition.
7. See, for example, CA, p. 456, "If attain the Preferment desired?" where Lilly attributes the desired position to the 10th house and its ruler.
8. Deborah Houlding, *The Houses: Temples of the Sky*, Wessex Astrologer, 2006, pp. 14–15.

9. William Lilly, *Merlini Anglici Ephemeris*, 1676, "Choice Astrological Aphorisms," aphorism 14.
10. BW, p. 99.
11. CA, p. 70.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 200.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 151.
14. Some astrologers consider that, if a sign boundary must be crossed for perfection between significators to occur, the matter will come to nothing. Many historical authors disagree on this point, and instead see the sign boundary as a symbolic obstacle that must be overcome before the planet can begin to have hopes of perfecting the matter. Here, the Sun must push itself out of its fall in Libra and into Scorpio, where it will enjoy reception from the 1st-ruler Mars. Discussion on how these movements impact upon delineation is outside of the scope of this article and deserves its own assessment, but is sufficiently reviewed in Deborah Houlding's article, "An Introduction to Horary Astrology, Part 7: Planetary Orbs and Transfers of Light," in *The Mountain Astrologer*, Feb./March 2014, pp. 72–73.
15. Mars is only dignified by means of a participating triplicity rulership (which some, myself included, would discount entirely), and in a daytime chart, his malefic nature worsens.

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Wade Caves is an astrological consultant and speaker specializing in horary, electional, and classical astrological technique. He is particularly inspired by the philosophical origins of astrological symbolism. Wade was certified with honors from the Mayo School of Astrology in London, and received his certification as a horary practitioner from the STA (School of Traditional Astrology). Wade now teaches horary as a tutor for the STA, and details of upcoming horary courses to be held in the United States are available at www.sta.co. For information on Wade's consultations and personal events, visit <http://wadecaves.com>

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