

Open for Interpretation: A Doctor's Journey into Astrology

Alicia Blando

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Open for Interpretation is a memoir about how a medical doctor found comfort in the ancient science of astrology.

Alicia Blando's memoir *Open for Interpretation* covers her unconventional combination of a medical career with finding personal meaning in astrology.

Overwhelmed by the demands of medical school, after which she was plunged into the center of Manhattan's AIDS epidemic, Blando felt insecure about her aptitude for her profession and the effectiveness of conventional medicine. Longing to discover "a rule book for life," she sought answers in various esoteric studies, finally settling on astrology due to its specific, unchanging rules and evidence of effectiveness over millennia. Though she was skeptical at first, she became convinced that astrology could provide both the life map that she had been seeking and information on her possible health issues. She studied with knowledgeable teachers and mentors; here, she relays the basic information on astrology that she gathered from them, treating astrology as a science that can be relied upon.

Its prose conversational, the book argues that astrology can reveal a person's inherent strengths, weaknesses, and challenges; their potential opportunities for growth and success; and their possible health issues. And Blando uses the example of her own natal chart and astrological experiences as proof, noting that a childhood accident left her unable to bear children, a fact confirmed by the placement of Saturn (the planet of lessons, obstacles, and limitations) in her birth chart. But the chart also confirmed that her choice of a career in medicine was fitting and gave indications of world travel, fulfilled when her curiosity about the practices of Indigenous healers led her to Peru, Belize, and Bolivia. And vignettes from Blando's life in New York are a further source of engagement.

The full-page black-and-white illustrations of the zodiac at the beginning of the book are striking; they set the stage for the book's respectful approach to its topic. Elsewhere, two intriguing illustrations show the relationship between astrology and the different parts of the human body, indicating areas of strength and the potential for certain disease processes and accidents to occur if care is not taken to prevent them, and a large, clear illustration of the natural horoscope chart shows the twelve signs of the zodiac and the twelve houses into which it is divided. However, the assertion that Blando is a Gemini is confused by an unexplained later claim that her sun is in Taurus.

Open for Interpretation is a moving memoir about a medical doctor's search for a guide to a life of connection, meaning, and purpose.

KRISTINE MORRIS (March 10, 2023)

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