

witch
watch

Gundella

'Vibes' more potent than witch's charm

Dear Gundella: My neighbor has lived alone for seven years and had no men friends. Then you gave her some sort of charm to carry, and two weeks later she met a really nice guy. Now they are planning to get married. What was it you gave her, and how does it work?

Curious, Birmingham

Dear Curious: I'm not sure what it was I gave your neighbor. There are many different charms to carry that are said to attract the opposite sex. Adam or Eve root, Queen Elizabeth root, salem root, rose hips and secta balls, to name just a few.

How do they work? Well, there are differences of opinion among witches about that. Some believe these charms actually give off magnetic vibrations which draw people to you.

I believe it is a little more complicated than that, and the attraction comes from the vibes you give off and not those of the charm.

Never underestimate the power of positive and negative thought. Suppose a woman meets a man that she really would like to get to know better. If her first thought at the time is: "Oh, he wouldn't like me. He probably knows a lot of women better looking than I am," then she will be giving off negative vibrations.

He is likely to take one look at her and think to himself, "I know a lot of women more attractive than that one." And that will be the end of that.

BUT SUPPOSE this woman is carrying a love charm, and she really believes in its power. She is likely to think, "Wow! I'm glad I've got this charm. Now he will notice me."

Then she will be giving off positive vibrations. She will be smiling and radiant, and he will notice her and find her attractive no matter what her physical attributes happen to be.

The same thing is true in the case of the man. He may need a love charm to give him the self-confidence he needs to approach a lady with whom he would like to get better acquainted.

Why Merrill Lynch believes that common stocks are the investment opportunity for the 1980's —and what you should do about it now.

The stock market of the 1980's is about to begin. And many investors are wondering, "What will it bring?"

To some, the answer is simple. We're in a recession now. Inflation is up. Interest rates are higher than ever.

Yet it could be the best time to be putting money into common stocks.

For example, Merrill Lynch has analyzed many of the primary indicators of corporate profitability. Did you know that, throughout the decade, corporate profits have grown faster than the rate of inflation? That sounds healthy to us.

And did you know that major corporations have been spending billions of dollars to acquire the stock of other companies or to repurchase their own stock, often at substantial premiums to the share's market price?

And we've found other things that many investors don't seem to be aware of.

Plus, we've measured these findings against an analysis of stock market behavior during past periods of economic downturn and upturn. And everything seems to lead to the same conclusion.

We think common stocks may very well be one of the best investment alternatives in the years ahead. And not in spite of the recession, but partially because of it.

May we show you our reasoning? We've summed up our views in a special free report. Along with the report, we'll send you recommendations on 29 stocks that we feel will be most attractive in a rising market: stocks for capital growth, aggressive growth, and high current and future income.

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Was there a Star of Bethlehem?

"There came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, where is he that is born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him."

The brief mention of the Star of Bethlehem in the book of Matthew has intrigued scientists, historians and theologians for hundreds of years. Other than descriptions in the New Testament, there are no other known accounts documenting this apparently short-term celestial phenomenon.

Much speculation exists over whether there really was such a star, according to Von Del Chamberlain, an astronomer at the Smithsonian Institution's National Air and Space Museum. In lectures, Chamberlain traces the various theories advanced to explain the Star of Bethlehem.

"Most of us assume that the Christmas star was an extraordinary sight to behold," he says. "It may not have been so spectacular. Actually, it may have been an event which only professional star gazers — such as the Magi — would even have noticed."

"And perhaps what the wise men saw was not really a single star at all."

ONE THEORY holds that the Christmas star was a comet. Early records

kept by the Chinese mention a comet without a tail visible in the spring of 4 B.C., a date which fits the most recent estimates of the year in which Jesus was born.

(Scholars now believe that Jesus was born between 8 and 4 B.C. Since our present calendar system was not instituted until the 6th Century AD, more than 500 years after his birth, errors occurred in calculation.)

But comets move slowly from night to night through the starry sky. Moreover, comets were believed by the ancients to be omens of impending doom, not harbingers of glad tidings.

Another theory has it that the star might have been an unusually bright meteor, called a fireball. As fireballs flash through the atmosphere, they burn with an intense but fleeting light.

But ancient records and modern knowledge indicate that fireballs are fairly commonplace occurrences lasting only a few seconds.

A third and more tenable explanation is that the Star of Bethlehem was a "nova," which means literally "new star."

Actually, novae are not new but old stars that have reached the end of their evolution and have become unstable.

These exploding stars abruptly rise to great brilliance, then lose their luminescence slowly over a period of weeks.

"This theory has potential," Chamberlain says. "A nova could be bright enough and last long enough to lead the wise men on a long journey to Bethlehem."

"In addition," he continues, "a nova would certainly be the most dramatic explanation. What could be more exciting than to have a 'new star' appear on the night that Christ was born?"

One recent study of ancient Chinese and Korean records indicates that a nova may have appeared in 5 B.C., but there is no definitive account that such an event took place.

The theory most widely accepted by astronomers today was put forth in the 1600s by German astronomer Johannes Kepler. Kepler suggested that the Christmas star was really a "conjunction" of planets.

A CONJUNCTION occurs when two or more planets appear to pass by each other in the sky. Using ancient sky records, astronomers have verified that the planets Jupiter and Saturn appeared in conjunction not once but three times between 7 and 6 B.C. — a relatively rare phenomenon.

A conjunction would explain the lack of other records, since it most likely would have gone unnoticed except by those, like the Magi, who were trained to watch the sky.

A conjunction takes on even more significance when viewed from an astrological standpoint. The ancient astrologers would have considered conjunctions to be highly symbolic events. To them, conjunctions of Jupiter and Saturn held special significance — Jupiter, symbolic of the king of the gods, and Saturn, said to be the protector of the peoples of the eastern Mediterranean.

In 6 B.C., the planet Mars joined Jupiter and Saturn following the third conjunction, according to the records. All three planets appeared in the constellation of Pisces, the fishes, which signified to the astrologers the House of the Hebrews.

While the triple conjunction is the most widely accepted theory, it is unlikely that we will ever know for certain what produced the Christmas "star." But whether the star was supernatural or part of the natural order of things, the story of the Star of Bethlehem has endured as a symbol of Christmas.

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