

Avatar

Vol. 4, Issue 9 • March 2011
www.teenhelp.org

**MAKING
POETRY
AN ART**

**LETTERS FROM
UNIVERSITIES
HOW TO STAY
SANE**

**KNOW YOUR
WORLD:
I R A N**



EDITORS' LETTER

WELCOME TO MARCH AND ANOTHER ISSUE OF AVATAR, TEENHELP.

This month in News and Debates we have an article on Iran, explaining some of the basics of this little-understood country.

Thinking of applying to a college or university, or have you done so already? Then head over to Mind and Body, where we give you some tips on how to stay sane when you're waiting for your letter to arrive. As always, don't forget to check out Dear Avatar while you're at it.

In Lifestyle, we have a piece on how to write great poetry, so if you're a budding writer, be sure to have a look. Also, make sure you swing by Fun and Games, where you'll find recipes, trivia, and all the other fun activities you love. Also, remember to read your Horoscopes and take a look at the Self Expression section.

We hope you enjoyed the issue. We'll see you in April!
The Avatar Editors.

ACTING EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Rob

CONTENT EDITOR

Chess (Sidhe./x.Psychic
Crisis.x)

ACTING GRAPHICS EDITOR

Darwin (dystorsion)

DEPUTY CONTENT EDITOR

Vacant

DEPUTY GRAPHICS EDITOR

Haley (Halcyon)

SUB-EDITORS

NEWS AND DEBATES

Casey (Casey.)

MIND AND BODY

Robin (PSY)

DEAR AVATAR

Amy (ShimmeringFaerie)

LIFESTYLE

Vacant

FUN AND GAMES

Nat (Gymnophoria/Natsumi)

CONTENTS

NEWS & DEBATES

03 KNOW YOUR WORLD Casey (Casey.)
Think you know about the world you live in? Think again.

MIND & BODY

04 LETTERS FROM UNIVERSITIES Robin (PSY)
How to stay sane when the letters come pouring in.

05 DEAR AVATAR Robin Katrina (PSY) (Katrina/AppleTini)
Requests for advice from users like you!

LIFESTYLE

06 MAKING POETRY AN ART Holly (Algernon)
How to write with maximum effect.

FUN & GAMES

07 EXTRAS AND ENTERTAINMENT Nat (Gymnophoria/Natsumi)
Movies and stir-fry and words, oh my!

09 MOTIVATION STATION Robin Chess (PSY) (Sidhe./x.Psychic Crisis.x)
Get up and get motivated this March.

MORE

10 SELF-EXPRESSION AND PHOTOGRAPHY
Expressing life through your fingertips.

12 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS & WINDING DOWN

feature

ON 03

KNOW YOUR WORLD
BY CASEY (CASEY.)



A profile on Iran's history and current state.

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

by Chess (Sidhe./x.Psychic Crisis.x) 10

HOROSCOPES



CONTACT US!

Are you a writer? Photographer? Artist? We need your submissions! Valuable contributions from readers like you are what make Avatar so unique and successful! Please consider emailing your submission to avatar@teenhelp.org or submit content online by visiting www.teen-help.org/avatar/submit.



KNOW YOUR WORLD: IRAN

By Casey (Casey.)



like many nations, the President of Iran is not in charge of the military and must approve all appointments he makes for the Ministers of Intelligence and Defense with the Supreme Leader.

Currently the United States and parts of Europe are at peace with Iran, but that peace can change at any time. Many people are distrusting of the Islamic state, for fear that they harbour those who have attacked the United States and Great Britain. Recently, Osama bin Laden was allegedly found and apprehended in Iran, damaging relations between Iran and other nations. But Iran is not a nation run by terrorists. Iran is primarily Islamic, with over 90% of citizens following the Twelver Shi'a branch of Islam, and about 8% belong to the Sunni branch. Christianity, Judaism, and Zoroastrians are protected minority religions in Iran, with about five other minority religions that are not recognized by the government, and some of which, like the Bahá'í, are persecuted.

Most of us learn about our own nations in school, but usually there is little time or energy placed into knowing the world around us. The world is a magnificent place, with almost two hundred nations. We hear about some of these nations on the news every day, especially right now with the turmoil in the Middle East, but what do we actually know about these countries and the people who live there?

The Islamic Republic of Iran, or simply Iran, is a nation in Central Eurasia, known to most of us as part of the Middle East.

Iran has a Supreme Leader, currently Ali Khamenei, who is the commander-in-chief of the armed forces, controls military intelligence, and is the only person in Iran allowed to declare war or peace. Iran also has a President, elected by the general public, who holds a term of four years and exercises executive power. The President, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, has a total of eight vice presidents and twenty-two ministers serving under him. The eight vice presidents are similar to a check and balance system with each other, each used for different parts of executive and legislative purpose. Un-

While there is a lot of unrest in the Middle East currently, Iran is peaceful at the moment. Learning about other nations helps to expand our understanding of our world and ourselves. Understanding and knowledge stops ignorance and assumptions, and generally helps to make our world a much better place. Learning about other countries helps stop ignorance and hate, so I encourage you to keep learning. ■

MIND AND BODY



GETTING INTO COLLEGE | DEAR AVATAR

LETTERS FROM UNIVERSITIES: HOW TO STAY SANE!

By Robin (PSY)

You have been a student for most of your life. There has never been a time when you haven't had to stress over homework assignments and final exams. Looking ahead, you see yourself going on to undergraduate or graduate school... if you have what it takes. That's right - it's March, and letters from universities will be arriving soon! Whether you're about to earn your high school diploma or your bachelors degree, take a look at these tips for staying sane throughout the entire process!

Place a limit on how often you check your e-mail every day. Ten years ago, all letters of acceptance or rejection arrived via "snail mail". As a result, students only had one opportunity per day to check for these letters. Nowadays, universities may send acceptance or rejection notices via e-mail instead, at any given time on any given day. While this may seem great at first (who wants to wait 3-5 days for a letter to arrive?), it

can also lead to more stress over when e-mails will arrive and what they will say. If you have a "smart phone", you may end up checking your e-mail throughout the day - sometimes even during class or while hanging out with friends! Don't let your impatience affect your grades or social life. Pick a few specific times to check your e-mail (ex. When you wake up, during lunch, before going to sleep), then carry on with your life as usual.

Keep yourself busy while waiting for the good (or bad) news. Uncertainty about the future may cause you to fall behind on class work or other commitments. While it certainly doesn't hurt to plan ahead, simply sitting around all day and waiting to hear back from universities won't allow you to be productive. If you've been putting off a homework assignment for a few days, take the opportunity to complete it now! If you find yourself staring at a computer screen for hours on end, refreshing the "check for new mail" button, consider joining a club or organization to pass the time. Not only will this help take your mind off of universities, but it will allow you to have fun (and possibly learn something new about yourself!).

Plan ahead, regardless of what the outcome may be. If you expect to receive an acceptance letter, start thinking about how you're going to pay for four more years of schooling. Apply for grants and scholarships. Look into student loan programs. Some of these financial ap-

plications are due before you even hear back from the university - so don't wait until April or May to get started! If you're going to need a little more financial support, start applying for summer jobs in your hometown (or look for job opportunities at or near your prospective university). Determine whether you would want to live at home and commute, or move on-campus and walk to classes. If you feel your chances of getting into college this time around are slim to none, start planning for the following year and what you can do to make yourself a more attractive candidate. You may want to enroll in community college and find a job that is relevant to your future career. Consider talking to your school guidance counselor, or even an academic advisor at your prospective university, and discussing how you can improve your chances of being accepted the following year.

Talk to your family members and friends. When dealing with situations that are beyond your control, you may be tempted to say, "No one can help me." That's simply not true! You can still count on your loved ones for a quick hug or words of encouragement during this stressful time. Your parents or older siblings may have gone to college, so they can relate to what you're going through. Your friends may also be stressing out over acceptance and rejection letters, so talking to people who are currently dealing with the same problem may prove comforting for you. ■



DEAR AVATAR

By Robin (PSY) and Katrina (Katrina/AppleTini)



I need help controlling my anger. There are times when I get so angry that I feel like punching a hole in the wall. I have tried deep breathing, counting backwards, reading, and listening to music, but nothing seems to work. I don't know what else to do!

It seems as though you have a very good knowledge of different anger management techniques, which is actually the first direction I was going to go with this reply. If you would like to look into a few different ones, though, I've always found this website to be quite resourceful and creative in some of the techniques offered to readers: <http://bit.ly/oxMGR2>. Hopefully, the sooner you are able to find something that works for you, the sooner this problem will start to dissolve. In the meantime, go into this whole process of trying to find a technique that works for you with the mindset that you ARE going to find something, if that makes sense. If, when you start checking into different things, you feel as though you've already exhausted every technique in the book, you're going to have a much more difficult time finding something because you already have that preconceived notion. So, just try to stay positive that you're going to find something that works for you.



I know a girl who started cutting herself after she lost her best friend. She seems to think it was my fault, because they had a falling out after she invited him to my party. She keeps updating her status to say how much her cuts hurt, and she also shows me her scars, but she never wants to talk about it. What can I do for her?

First of all, I think it's great that you want to help your friend! Some people might not know what to do when confronted with a serious issue like this. As a result, they could ignore the situation or even avoid their friend during a time of need. Kudos to you for facing the problem instead of running away from it.

Secondly, I want you to realize that your friend's desire to self-harm is NOT your fault. Whatever happened that night was between your friend and her friend. It was probably just a coincidence that the falling out took place after your party. Even if your name came up during the

Now, going down a different route, what exactly is it that you're getting so upset and angry over? Often, one of the most effective ways to solve a problem is to first get to the core of what's causing the problem, and try to address that. So, is there someone that just knows how to press your buttons, perhaps? Is there a certain trigger in your life that continues to set you off every time you run into it? Realizing and acknowledging the cause of your anger is, I believe, going to be very beneficial to you. Once you do that, perhaps it would be helpful to you to start thinking about the situation in a new light. Rather than blaming the external cause for this anger, lift the blame completely. Begin to look at the situation, as I mentioned, differently, in ways that won't make you upset.

I hope that everything works out for you and that you get this situation sorted out soon! ■

argument, it is ultimately your friend's decision to self-harm. You should never feel like you're responsible for your friend's decisions.

Nevertheless, it seems like your friend wants to place some of the blame on your shoulders. She may be showing you her scars, then refusing to talk about it, because she wants you to feel bad and doesn't want to give you the opportunity to redeem yourself. Maybe she DOES want to talk, but can't quite bring herself to do it in person or via the internet. This is an obvious cry for help, so I encourage you to tell a trusted adult about your friend's self-harm. A school counselor would probably be your best bet, as they have experience in dealing with situations like this.

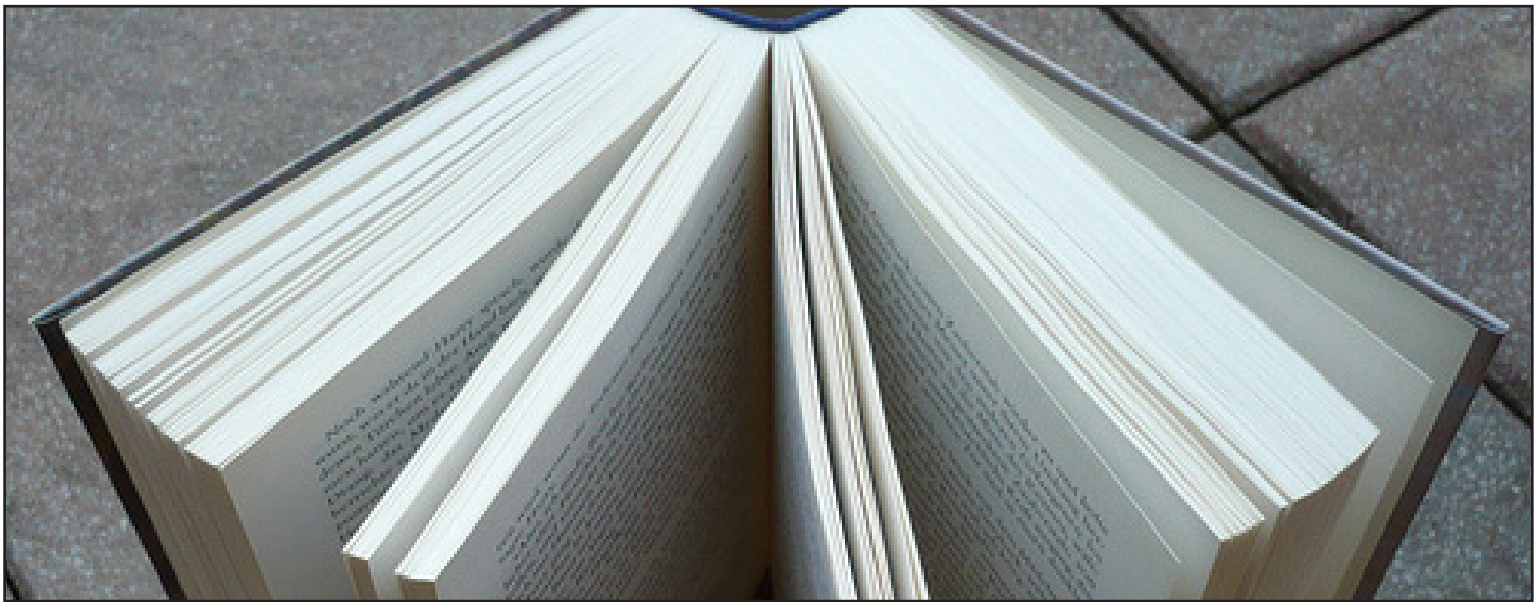
I wish you and your friend all the best, and hope she can work toward recovery soon! ■

L I F E



MAKING POETRY AN ART

By Holly (Algernon)



1. **Write as though you are appealing to the five senses.** Taste, touch, smell, sight, and hearing. This is a great way to convey to the reader the very essence of your poetry. People understand when you are directing your words to their "vulnerable" zones. When you are speaking to your lover, you try and use words to describe how they taste and how they look. It's alluring. The same goes for poetry. If you can seduce someone with your words, they will want more, and enjoy your writing.

2. **Try and bring words together by using adjectives, less facts, and contractions.** Example: "You have hurt me a lot because now I see that you really

do not love me." Rephrased: "You've pained me due to the hollow absence of your promise of love." Do you see? Description is key. Less facts. Poetry is about expression. Before you shape your poem at the end, type/write it out in a paragraph form. If the paragraph works, your poetry is just a paragraph broken up. There are no rules to poetry, It doesn't have to be formed just right. Break it up, have fun.

3. **Put your soul inside your written words.** I'm not a fan of angst poetry. It's okay to have some sad, teenage tragedies in your poetry, but the best poems are written from the soul. For example, "Swing Low Sweet Chariot" was a song

sung by slaves, when they would work all day, and sing from the bottom of their soul. Similarly, Edgar Allen Poe's poetry is sad, but he still has part of his soul in his written works. Know what I'm saying? This is the most important part of poetry; pour your soul into your poems.

4. **Shape your poem.** Give your poem a unique shape. For example, if you are writing about a rose, organise your lines in the shape of a rose, to give your poem a more professional look. Then, write your poem out on some nice paper, frame it, and hang it up. Your words are valuable, and keeping them is worth it. Honour your work. ■



FUN AND GAMES

By Nat (Gymnophoria/Natsumi)

WORD OF THE MONTH

Tangible: (adjective) Real or actual, rather than imaginary or visionary: the tangible benefits of sunshine (dictionary.com)

CAN YOU SAY... LION?

- English - Lion
- Swahili - Simba
- Turkish - Aslan
- Danish - Løve
- Hungarian - Oroszlán
- Indonesian - Singa

MARCH MOVIES

- Rango
- Mars Needs Moms
- Red Riding Hood
- Paul
- Sucker Punch
- Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Rodick Rules

(<http://www.the-numbers.com/movies/release.php>)

TEENHELP TRIVIA

What are the names of the sub forums within Lifestyle?

Hint: There are 4 sub forums.
Challenge: Name them in alphabetical order.

- Travel and Moving
 - Sports
 - Finances
 - Art
- Answers:**

JOKES

Q: What does the zero say to the the eight?
A: Nice belt!

Patient: Doc, I can't stop singing 'The Green, Green Grass of Home.'
Doctor: That sounds like Tom Jones Syndrome.
Patient: Is it common?
Doctor: Well, It's Not Unusual.

One morning a mother was trying to wake up her son. "Wake up now! It's time to go to school." "I don't want to go to school," the son replied. His mother said, "Give me two reasons why you don't want to go to school." "Okay. One, all the children hate me. Two, all the teachers hate me." "Not good enough," the mother replied. "Fine," the son said. "Then you give me two good reasons why I SHOULD go to school." "One, you're 50 years old. Two, you're the principal of the school."

NAME THAT TUNE!

Hey now, hey now
You are so wonderful
And I would give anything

Hey now, hey now
I would do anything
To be in your arms
You are so wonderful, yeah
Hey now, hey now

Answer: Carl Thomas - Hey Now

FACTS

- Blueberry juice boosts memory.
- The percentage of people dreaming in black and white started decreasing after the spread of colour TV
- Approximately two-thirds of people tip their head to the right when they kiss
- Some Chinese people believe that swinging the arms cures headaches
- In South Africa it is a law that single ply toilet paper must have 500 sheets in the roll
- $111,111,111 \times 111,111,111 = 12,345,678,987,654,321$
- Hugo Boss designed some of the Nazi SS uniforms
- Dogs and cats, like humans, are either right or left handed (paw).

RECIPES

March is also known as Noodle Month, so here are some awesome recipes based on that!

CHICKEN STIR-FRY

Ingredients

- 250g chicken stir-fry pieces
- 3 leeks
- 250g mushrooms
- 1 clove fresh garlic
- fresh ginger root – approx 1 inch cube
- fresh tarragon
- 1 tsp sweet paprika
- salt to taste
- olive oil
- medium sized egg noodles

Instructions

- The noodles take about 4 minutes to cook. Put the salted water on to boil whilst you are preparing the vegetables. Drop the noodles into the boiling water as you start frying up the chicken, vegetables and seasonings - all will be ready simultaneously.
- Wash and slice the leeks and mushrooms.
- Peel and crush the garlic and chop a good handful of tarragon.
- Peel the ginger and cut into fine "julienne" strips.
- Heat a wide pan or wok over a medium high heat and add some olive oil.
- Add the chicken and stir-fry for a couple of minutes.
- Add the leeks, mushrooms, garlic,

ginger and stir-fry for another minute or two.

- Seasoning as you go with salt, paprika and most of the tarragon.
- Drain the noodles, toss into the chicken and vegetables.
- Serve immediately, with the remaining tarragon sprinkled on top. (<http://bit.ly/qR6IGR>)

Here's a really tasty one for all you TeenHelp vegetarians or those of you who just like getting your five-a-day!

SEVEN VEG STIR-FRY

Ingredients

- 250g pack Thai rice noodles
- 1-2 tbsp groundnut oil
- 1 red pepper, deseeded and cut into thumb-length strips
- 2.5cm (1in) piece fresh root ginger, peeled and cut into slivers
- 8 baby sweetcorn, halved lengthways
- 2 medium carrots, peeled and cut into batons
- 8 asparagus tips
- 100g (3½ oz) mini sugar-snap peas or mangetout, or normal-sized ones, halved lengthways
- 4tbsp sweet chilli dipping sauce or hoisin sauce

- 1 red chilli, deseeded and finely chopped, optional
- 2 heads pak choi, quartered lengthways
- 100g or 150g pack fresh beansprouts, depending on pack size available
- 4-6 spring onions, trimmed and thinly sliced
- Handful each of mint and coriander leaves, roughly chopped
- Soy sauce, to serve

Instructions

- Put the noodles in a large bowl and cover them with boiling water. Leave for 5 mins while you cook the vegetables.
- Add 1tbsp of oil to a hot wok or large frying pan and stir-fry the red pepper and ginger for half a minute. Add the sweetcorn, carrots, and asparagus

and stir-fry for a minute, then add the sugar snaps, or mangetout, and cook for another minute.

- Mix in the chilli dipping or hoisin sauce and 4tbsp water, then add the red chilli, if using, the pak choi, beansprouts and spring onions, and cook for a couple of minutes.
- Drain the noodles. Toss with mint and coriander. Serve topped with stir-fried vegetables and soy sauce for seasoning.

Leftover tip: While the vegetables suggested make it colourful, you can use up whichever vegetables you have that day. *Not suitable for freezing.* (<http://bit.ly/qsQ3ze>)

MOTIVATION STATION

By Chess (Sidhe./x.Psychic Crisis.x) and Robin (PSY)

A quote to note: This time, like all times, is a very good one, if we but know what to do with it. - Ralph Waldo Emerson

Reason for the Season: It's starting to warm up, so enjoy those cute scarves while you still can. Say good-bye to bulky winter coats and hello to lighter, more stylish clothing. Have fun with Spring cleaning this year by inviting your friends to come over and bake delicious treats with you after a hard day's work!

Reveal the Real: I participate in a martial arts class, with people of all ages. One girl in particular, who's several years younger than me, is one of the most determined girls I've ever seen. She always comes to class with a smile on her face, gives it her all, and is polite and friendly to everyone. When I see her out in the street, she greets me by name, with a wave and a smile, unfailingly. It's just a little thing, something she probably doesn't think twice about, but every time it reminds me that there are good people in the world, and it gives me hope for future generations.

Send a Grin: It's hard to overestimate the power of an unexpected compliment, or a friendly face. So, like the little girl in my martial arts class, why not make an effort to be polite, friendly, and cheerful? Most people like it when someone knows their name, and go out of their way to be nice to them. If you do it often enough, soon it will become second nature, and you'll be spreading smiles wherever you go!

Dare to Share? Have you been inspired lately? Did you see something that just made you smile? Has a friend told you a piece of advice that really did change your life? Let us know, and get involved with the Motivation Station! ■



Spread Your wings

Like a butterfly, let her fly free,
scattered dreams on a breeze, hope
is a distant vision; but save
the last dance, for yet
she is not quite done
dreaming. It is quite the life now.

But there are things she can't face now,
she would never truly be free.
She takes a breath, but her heart is not
done
beating and she has a little bit of hope
left, but will that hope be enough? Yet
her life will not end soon, save

the last dance; she still can be... save
her heart, don't let it go to waste now;
don't let her go just yet.
One day she will be completely free,
right now there is still a little hope;
her life isn't done.

But when will she be done,
she can't keep going on like this; save
her from herself, she begs. Without hope,
she will get no where; now
something has to be done
but will anyone intervene yet?

There's something going on, yet
no one can see what's done
behind closed doors; she just wants to be free.
If you want to help her, save
the last dance, because now
that's the only hope

she has left. A little sprinkle of hope
used to go a long way, but not yet.
Something went wrong somewhere, now
she is an utter mess, she is almost done
please don't try to save her,
let her be a butterfly and fly away free.

There's no hope left, it's all done,
yet there was never a chance to save
her, now it's the end and she's finally,
truly free.

By Casey (Casey.)

SELF EXPRESSION

TH to Me

When people drop in, they are not be-
ing nosy
They are here because TH is spacious
and cozy
Room for all. We are not here to judge
Bring your concerns. Just not a grudge

We are here to lend a hand
Chances are we understand
We love for you to share your stories
We all have life experiences; so no
worries

Please share whatever you want
Even the noobies, we will not taunt
Some members have been here for years
Helped many others who came in tears

So, continue to check out a forum or a
few
We are always here to welcome you
We hope you leave better than you
came
Without you here, TH would not be
the same

By Mary (luvflamingos)



READ THE STARS

by Chess (Sidhe./x.Psychic Crisis.x)



PISCES

FEBRUARY 19 - MARCH 20



Happy Birthday, Pisces! March will be a time of experimentation for you. This could be in terms of your social life, spiritual life, or in fact any other aspect of your life. You may find yourself bouncing from one thing to another, with little rest in between, but this month is more about new experiences than commitment. Take the time to live in the moment, and enjoy what you're doing. There'll be plenty of opportunities in the future to settle down; now things are all about fun, frivolity, and experiences.

Pisces in love: Your love life this month will centre on respect, and a little bit of intuition. Trust your judgment: if something feels right, it probably is, and vice versa.

Pisces on the job: Putting in the hard work now is sure to pay off - in a very literal way - in the future. Experiment with new ways of doing your work, and do whatever you can to convince yourself that it's fun.

Pisces, the flexible: With everything going on this month, it's a good thing you're versatile. Adapting to whatever life throws at you is one of your talents, and will be put to good use this month.

AQUARIUS

JANUARY 20 - FEBRUARY 18

It might not sound like fun, but this month you'll spend a lot of time on education. This could mean working extra hard on your studies at school, learning something new on the job, or even sharing your own knowledge with others. It's a good time for learning, and for mentoring. If you've been needing encouragement to put more effort into your education, or into that of others, this month you'll find it.

ARIES

MARCH 20 - APRIL 20

Much of your time this March will be taken up by the past. While it's not good to dwell on things that have happened, it's also not good to just dismiss them, as you'll learn this month. You'll find yourself slipping back into memories of the past, and having to catch yourself each time you do. It's a good time to strike a balance between now and then: come to terms with what's happened in the past, and move on to what will happen in the future.

LIBRA

SEPTEMBER 21 - OCTOBER 23

March for you is a time of interaction with people. You'll find yourself bursting with enthusiasm, and eager to participate in the social scene. Bonds with existing friends will be strengthened, and new ones formed. You may become part of a new group, who will influence and inspire you, or you may make new connections within an existing group. Whatever the case, this month is a good time for fun, friends, and family.

HOROSCOPES

TAURUS

APRIL 20 - MAY 21

This month, you'll spend a lot of time on organisation. You may find yourself feeling the need to extend your social network; it's a great time to get more involved in the community, whether it's through sports, hobbies, or volunteering. Be careful that outdated belief or feelings aren't holding you back – it may be time to embrace newer and more productive notions.

GEMINI

MAY 21 - JUNE 21

Dreams will be taking up a lot of your time this month. You'll not just be dreaming them, but, if you work hard enough, achieving them too. If you have anything you've been planning to do, whether it's applying for a job or joining a club, or if there's anything you've been hesitant about doing, such as, well, applying for a job or joining a club, it's time to take a chance and give it a go.

CANCER

JUNE 21 - JULY 22

A lot of your time during March will be spent on expanding your horizons. This doesn't necessarily mean you always have to aim high, or far; the horizon goes in all directions. If one thing doesn't work, try another. The future may suddenly be looking brighter, and it definitely will be if you put your mind to it.

LEO

JULY 22 - AUGUST 23

March for you could mean time spent celebrating breakthroughs. Whether it's resolving a problem with a friend, finally getting on top of your schoolwork, or getting that balance between the aspects of your life, things this month seem to just fall into place. You may have to shoulder some responsibility, but if you do it well, the work will be worth it.

VIRGO

AUGUST 23 - SEPTEMBER 21

For you, March will be a time of compromise. Sometimes the only way to get over a disagreement is for all those involved to bend a little, and reach a conclusion you're all comfortable with. Remember that even if someone disagrees with you, it doesn't mean you can't just agree to disagree and move on with things. Misunderstandings may cause a few problems this month, but if you're sure to smooth them out quickly, they should remain manageable.

SCORPIO

OCTOBER 23 - NOVEMBER 22

This month will be a time of change. Self expression, internal conflicts, and sudden realisations are all part and parcel of this. Creativity is also important during March, and you may find yourself drawn to a particular medium – music, media, art, literature. It's a good time to get involved in something creative or social, or to spend time with people close to you.

SAGITTARIUS

NOVEMBER 22 - DECEMBER 22

Although it may not seem like a good thing, this month you'll spend a lot of time cleaning. This could mean literally – when was the last time you cleaned your room? – or in a more abstract way. You could be getting rid of negative emotions, or unwanted thoughts, or even people in your life who you'd rather part with. At the end of the month, if you put some solid work into cleaning, things will seem brighter, shinier, and simpler.

CAPRICORN

DECEMBER 22 - JANUARY 20

During March, you'll find a lot of your time is being taken up by family and friends. While it's good to spend time with people you love, just remember to schedule regular time for yourself. Take a walk every once in a while, or splurge on luxuries every now and then – you deserve it! This month may also bring some surprising news your way, which will force you to reconsider some things. In times like this, you'll be grateful for your support network.

Thanks!

THE WIND DOWN

IMAGE SOURCES

THANK YOU to the following TeenHelp users for contributing to this issue of Avatar:

Casey (Casey.)
Mary (luvflamingos)
Charli (RainbowSkies)
Holly (Algernon)
Katrina (Katrina/AppleTini)

Cover: Photograph: Darwin (dystorsion)
Page 3: Iran: defense.gov/DODCMSShare/NewsStoryPhoto/2010-02
Page 4: Cell Phone: sxc.hu/photo/1307594
Page 6: Book: arts.gov/bigreadblog/wp-content/themes/default/images
Page 9: Wisconsin River: teenhelp.org/forums/f40-self-expression/t76287-most-beautiful-place-world
Page 10: Photography: teenhelp.org/forums/f36-pictures/t26905-caseys-random-pictures

Thank you for taking the time to read this issue of Avatar! To read past issues, or for more information, visit the Avatar homepage at **www.teenhelp.org/avatar**.

All comments, questions, suggestions or criticisms should be directed towards the editorial team. Email us at **avatar@teenhelp.org**. We look forward to hearing from you, and hope you enjoy the next edition of Avatar!