

I have to confess - I am sick and tired of talking about the astrology and "energy" of this 6-planet retrograding fiasco we are living in. I have been talking, reading, writing and last week I even made my first Facebook Vlog (video blog) on the topic. Long story short: It is rough. People are unpredictable. Best bet for success right now is to stay in your lane, and mind your own business. And I am surprised, on a daily basis, how hard those last two dictates seem to be for many people.

Instead, I want to tell some of my magickal animal stories from the shop! The first involves our own Rachel (currently on personal leave, but she WILL be returning!). Several years ago, a very dear patron called me out of the blue on a Friday and asked "Laura, do you know any good animal psychics?" and I replied, "Yes, her name is Rachel - she is here once a month and she is great! In fact she will be here tomorrow ... " and he immediately booked the first appointment and abruptly hung up on me. Weird.

So the next day, a few minutes before noon, he came walking into the shop and said tersely "Is Rachel downstairs?" and I said "Yes she's right by -" but he cut me off with a "I'll find her!" and quickly went downstairs. He re-emerged a half hour later, wiping his eyes. He came to the front desk, and said apologetically "Laura, I am so sorry to have been short with you. I'll explain, but first let me say I just had to go into this reading clean - I needed to know there was no way you could have any information about what I needed to know, and I am really sorry because I do trust you, but I had to be sure information was not shared prior to the reading." He then pulled a picture of a magnificent, show quality doberman pinscher out of his wallet . He went on "I have had Dobies all my life - but this dog was special. He was literally my best friend. He came to work with me, in fact he went everywhere with me. And then three weeks ago, we were at the park and I was throwing the ball and he was retrieving - throwing the ball, throwing the ball - and he was running back, ten feet away suddenly he fell over, dead. I was beside myself, he was only four years old! I called the vet and they offered to do an autopsy but that isn't what I needed to know - I needed to know if I had somehow missed something, if he had been suffering. So I called you, Laura. And so here I am, and I go downstairs, show the picture to Rachel who takes one look and tells me oh, he is no longer on this earth but he died with a ball in his mouth ...". He paused for a minute, then went on to tell how much their lives together meant, that it was a congenital heart issue and there was nothing could be done, it was his time to go. It was fast. He loved sharing this lifetime, even if it didn't last very long. They would certainly see each other again.

Puck the cat came to live at the shop, and his story was so meaningful that I blogged about it after his untimely death:

<https://blog.ctnews.com/lenhard/2009/06/01/an-ode-to-puck-the-talisman-cat/>

Puck took part in classes, had his own seat at meditation, and made it a point to greet every single person who walked into the shop. Right up until I moved the shop, after his

passing people who had no idea we had even had a cat would come upstairs and ask about the big tiger cat lurking in the shadows, or the cat they felt rub against their leg and could hear purring, but couldn't see. Puck's ashes reside on the Kali Shrine, and so he is still "with" us.

Chancey's Story: The night my beloved grandmother died was horrible; after having her home with me (and under Hospice Care) she had a grave episode and needed a level of care I could not provide so she spent the last three days of her life in the hospital. My children were very young (Daisy was a baby) so I was running back and forth and exhausted. I was spending nights there with her, but that third night (at my then-husband's urging) after calling the hospital and confirming she was stable with no changes I opted to stay home, instructing the nurses to call me immediately if there was a change. I literally made the call, sat on the couch and fell asleep sitting up - and that is where I still was, at 11:10pm when the call came that my grandmother had suddenly passed away. Shocked and confused (how? HOW?) I let my little dog Dixie out the door to use the bathroom - and in walked a pure white cat, who sat down and made himself right at home in my kitchen.

Backstory: My own mother had passed away the year before - she and my grandmother had been estranged. Since I was a baby, my mother kept white cats and we always had at least one and usually a half-dozen or more. At the heart of the estrangement was my mother's beloved cat Vanilla, who disappeared mysteriously during one of my grandmother's visits to our home in California (my grandmother did not care for cats, of course Vanilla rode around on my mother's shoulders and would launch herself at my grandmother every chance she could). Nothing ever convinced my mother that my grandmother (her mother) didn't have a hand in the cat's sudden disappearance. Add to that a mountain of resentment building since childhood and that was the crux of the complete alienation.

So here I was, still reeling from the hospital call and a cat staring at me - my 5 lb dog, who had fearlessly gone after a mastiff and a rottweiler in the past, cowering and whimpering in the corner. No matter. I picked the cat up and put it outside. No time to deal with a new pet. The next morning, my British neighbor called (they had three West Highland Terriers) to say "Laura, I know you have a dreadful amount on your plate and I do hate to be a bother - but there is a white cat haunting about your back porch - I am so afraid it will wander into our yard, and the dogs will simply tear it apart. Can you do something?" I agreed, wondering what "something" should be ... opened the kitchen door, and the cat sauntered back in.

And that is the story of how Chancey the cat came to live with us (RIP sweet Chancey).

One last story: As part of my "Full Reading" which includes a tarot/palm reading, natal chart, chakra check ... prior to the reading, I sit with a folder of materials/charts related to the client, and I meditate/journey with them. Many images will come up - animal guides,

colors, messages - and I jot these down. One time while meditating in this manner, I saw a horse come through - but not just any horse. This horse was majestic, black with a white star on its nose, flowing mane and tail and a gleaming coat. And I heard "Gypsy V" which I later relayed to the woman I was reading. She laughed and said "Wait - look at this ..." and pulled up on her phone a picture of a black horse, white star, and told me "This is MY horse, he is a Gypsy Vanner, and I have always said he is my soulmate. Thank you for the validation!"

The fact is, our animal companions are an important part of our life's journey - and honestly, we are important to theirs as well (they are not here by accident, any more than we are). I highly recommend asking your furred/feathered/scaled friends to partake in meditation or ritual - see how they respond, or what they add to the experience. Don't forget that they enjoy receiving massage and Reiki, and many "give" positive energy as well as any human can. It has been proven that cats will choose to curl up on us and purr directly over a spot in our body that is experiencing pain or dis-ease, which actually helps "lift" the pain or issue. Just petting a dog or cat lowers blood pressure and eases anxiety, which is why we are seeing more "Therapy Animals" in nursing homes, hospitals, etc.

"Compassion for animals is intimately associated with goodness of character, and it may be confidently asserted that he who is cruel to animals cannot be a good man."

- Arthur Schopenhauer, *The Basis of Morality*

God(dess) Bless Us All!

Laura