DO: Finish things you've already started. Halfway through a DIY

project at home? Use the next three

weeks to complete it. Or if there's a course you never finished, use the

time to study and pass the test. Just don't start anything new - you'll only

DO: Keep your mobile charged and

or get a computer virus during these

back up your digital data. Beware you're more likely to lose your phone

DO: Get together with old friends

acquaintances. Double-check and

DO: Read every document twice

confirm all dates, plans, meetings,

before signing, make sure you read

the small print and keep the option

DO: Expect and allow extra time

for delays and cancellations when

travelling and make sure you have

your time and compare prices for

something you plan to buy later.

DON'T: Begin a new job without

being prepared for false starts.

DON'T: Make major purchases - bide

Remember, if you do buy something,

DON'T: Make life-altering decisions you

expect to be absolutely set in stone

agreements you aren't happy with.

likely to be an on/off romance that will be forever under the influence of

DON'T: Waste time on gossip and

avoid jumping to conclusions. Pause

before speaking and repeat yourself

DON'T: Start a new relationship - it is

(because they won't be). Instead,

focus on renegotiating existing

and expect to bump into old

appointments in advance.

of changing your mind.

a back-up plan.

keep your receipt

the cycle.

have to redo it later.

three weeks.

MERCURY IN RETROGRADE **DCT 31-NOV 20**

by Louise Atkinson

F IN the next few weeks you find everything going a bit haywire you keep losing your keys, messing up at work or arguing with your loved ones - don't blame the fast-approaching winter, economic instability or errant hormones. The real reason could lie in the heavens – in a strange alignment of the planets that millions around the world view with real foreboding.

The phenomenon is known as Mercury retrograde and, according to astrology fans, it's when all planetary hell will be let loose - a black spot in the astrological calendar during which it is essential to lie low and avoid making any big decisions. Experts advise us to watch out for flight delays and missing luggage, unsigned contracts and broken gadgets and to beware a heightened risk of accidentally hitting 'reply all' on sensitive emails.

And, unfortunately, the next Mercury retrograde is just around the corner. From October 31 (Brexit day, the day the UK is scheduled to leave the EU, by the way) to November 20, mischievous Mercury – a planet with the power to disrupt all our communications - is set to wreak havoc.

But before you despair, top British astrologer Yasmin Boland says there are easy ways to navigate the coming weeks and not only avoid disasters but actually harness the curious power of Mercury to change your life for the better ...

ASTROLOGERS and their vast army of believers say we are hugely influenced by the movement of the planets across

the sky, with their positioning affecting every detail of everyday life. So when Mercury, a planet that governs communication, transport and technology, appears to travel backwards through the heavens, this is a very serious business.

In fact, it is an optical illusion. Mercury is the closest planet to the Sun and its orbit is shorter than Earth's – a mere 88 days compared to our 365 days, which means that Mercury experiences four years in the time it takes us to complete one orbit of the Sun. And this produces an unusual visual effect through the telescope as Mercury appears to speed past Earth, slow down and then move in a backwards loop over a period of roughly three weeks the phenomenon of Mercury retrograde (or Mercury in Retrograde, as it is often known).

An illusion or not, it's hugely significant to astrology fans, who say that as Mercury appears to recede, the energy of the planet actually intensifies - with dire-sounding effects. Communication systems start to slow down. Gadgets malfunction, computers crash, emails fail to arrive or go unanswered.

Mercury also rules buying and selling, and contracts and agreements, so if you buy an expensive item now you're more likely to find it's worth half as much later, or you'll end up regretting not reading the small print because trouble is likely to ensue.

While Mercury is retrograde, you can easily end up feeling as if the world has gone mad: best-laid plans

There's more bad news - this next phase looks set to be more intense than usual as the forthcoming period of retrograde falls in Scorpio – a particularly intense sign. So brace yourselves!

off mid-sentence.

Normally, retrograde might merely trigger lost documents or missed trains, but when it occurs in a water sign, we should expect an extra bumpy emotional ride.

Astrologers say that, more than

go nowhere and conversations drift any other sign, Scorpio is a star sign that likes to dig under the surface of things to see what's being

> your life, Mercury retrograde will be busy shining a light on them.

Decumy 11

Retrograde

is onits way

And that means 3 weeks of chaos

and even email disasters. Scariest

from lost keys to family fallouts

of all? It begins on Brexit Day...

glossed over or whitewashed. From October 31, expect dishonesty of any kind to come back to bite you. If there are secrets in

And with our communications awry, it makes sense to avoid contentious subjects. Be warned, this is not a great time to be having a and chatting about Mercury and its such as pop star Katy Perry and

IF YOU think it all sounds a bit bonkers, you're not alone - how much can the planets really determine our luck and fortune?

Not so long ago astrology was the domain of the decidedly eccentric but now it's got lots of people talking. All types are cursing, joking

'Mercury retrograde' into photothe topic.

says another. Even celebrities are jumping on

sharing app Instagram and you'll find more than 20,000 posts on 'Is Mercury retrograde again or

am I just emotional?' asks one exasperated Twitter user. 'Thank God I got my new job before Mercury is in Retrograde!'

the bandwagon with big names mischievous movements. Type Taylor Swift tweeting about the



HOW TO FIGHT BACK

NOT that those three weeks have to bring torment and misery. In fact, it's possible to learn the 'tricks' of Mercury retrograde and start working to turn them to your longterm advantage.

In part, it's a question of learning

launch something new, for example. Focus instead on improving what you already have or completing unfinished projects.

Be warned: you might find it hard get decisions from others – and any decisions that are made are likely to cope. This is not a good time to be subject to change. Anything

Mercury is retrograde may need to be revisited and revised. But it's also a question of developing solid habits that will help at any point in the calendar.

If you take an extra second to hang up your keys by the door when you arrive home, read importo nail down a plan and struggle to tant documents several times and try to be a bit more forgiving when too, especially the impulse to lash a friend says something daft, you out at someone before they can could sail through unscathed. Per- attack you. Talk face-to-face or on

started or haps if one gadget breaks down, its the phone instead of relying on purchased when replacement will be better; a contested agreement can be re-negotiated in your favour or a criticised project improved.

> Expressing yourself clearly might be more of a challenge than usual so focus more and listen harder. Try to be honest with yourself and others at this time.

Aim to avoid negative thinking.

texts or emails. If you don't get a reply to an email, don't assume you're being ignored. Some people put their life on hold when Mercury is retrograde – and perhaps they're right. This is an ideal time to take a break and recharge your batteries. And if things do go wrong, try not to assume the worst.

Give others the benefit of the doubt - like you, they are more likely to be careless, mistake-prone and forgetful right now too.

Make yourself open to the opportunities that present themselves and try not to rush into judgments.

You can make the best of this planetary phase – and emerge the better for it. It's a good idea to avoid new

projects - and that includes relationships - so this a great time to deal with unfinished business (whether emotional or practical) instead, to tie up loose ends and create a clear vision for the future.

If you take advantage of retrograde, you'll be all fired up and ready for what's next when Mercury (and, hopefully, life) returns to normal on November 21.

 Adapted by Louise Atkinson from The Mercury Retrograde Book by Yasmin Boland and Kim Farnell, published by Hay House on October 15, priced £12.99. Offer price £10.39 (20 per cent discount) until November 5. To pre-order, call 01603 648155 or go to mailshop.co.uk.

Whatitmeans for your sign

influence on each star sign. JEALOUSY and obsession can

THE alignment of planets during this next

Mercury in Retrograde could have a specific

become a problem and promises may be broken or delayed, so pay special attention to loans and debts. You might have to discuss sexual issues, and intimacy can be harder to achieve. This can partly be due to secrets coming to light at this time. Feeling overly emotional and pessimistic can make you see the worst in every situation.



messages are more likely.

COMMUNICATION problems are likely, so beware of misunderstandings. Remember that missed connections, confused conversations and lost emails and text

being thrown out of the window. This can trigger clashes with co-workers and

arguments could be blown out of all

GEMIN

missed deadlines. Or you could find you've got things wrong and have to redo work. Remind yourself this is a temporary phase don't dramatically walk out. CANCER

YOU might find you are lacking creative energy and experiencing less of a spark around the things you usually love. You and your partner seem to be missing the mark with each other and

YOU might experience confusion

in your routines with schedules

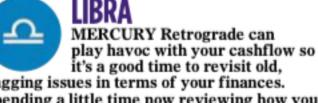
slow down a bit.

proportion. Try to be less judgmental and

EXPECT domestic confusion and family issues from the past to make a reappearance. Chances are, they aren't new - they're just brought more sharply into focus. This is a very good time to go 'back home' or revisit the past.

COMMUNICATION can be very frustrating – expect missed phone calls, lost phones, emails and texts accidentally sent to the wrong person plus botched travel plans. Make sure you have

understood the other person's point of view before you go off the deep end. And don't make promises you can't keep.



nagging issues in terms of your finances. Spending a little time now reviewing how you handle your money could save you a small fortune in the long run.



THERE could be confusion about your image, your reputation and how others see you so this is a

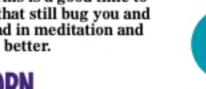
Sagittarius YOU could be more sensitive and your intuition could be thrown out

time to think about the image you present to

of whack. This is a good time to seek closure on issues that still bug you and the more time you spend in meditation and contemplation now, the better.



the world – and make changes if necessary. But don't drastically cut your hair or throw out clothes until after the Retrograde.



you could end up on wild and wacky adventures and valuables are more likely than usual to traffic hold-ups.

TAKE extra care if travelling get lost in transit. Be prepared to deal with plenty of delays, cancellations and

issues with your career at this time; but be

patient and take a cautious approach. This

isn't a good time to apply for a new job.

postponed or cancelled, and friends may

signals. Ignore gossip and rumour – you

might decide to withdraw from the social

TAKE extra care at work that

silly mistakes don't mar your

performance. There may be

be uncommunicative or give off mixed

AQUARIUS

scene for a while.