In Gregory Benford's novel, *In the Ocean of Night*, one of the characters asks her husband for the daily horoscope. The husband, apparently bored with the daily horoscope routine, offers to "nip out for a small goat, put him to the knife and give ... a prognosis". Such, he believes, is a more gutsy form of fortune-telling. Indeed.

Benford's passage is noteworthy because it illustrates two points: first, fortune-telling in one form or another appeals to most everyone, and second, there are alternatives to the daily horoscope. More than one hundred of these alternatives are listed below, each a compound word ending in "-mancy" (from the Greek "-mantia", meaning "divination").

All of the "-mancy" words presented here can be found in either Webster's 2nd or the Oxford English Dictionary. A dozen or so additional "-mancy" words were discovered while researching this article, but they have not been included because they do not appear in either the W2 or OED.

The vast majority of "-mancy" words actually end in "-omancy", hence the title of this article. Only seven words listed below delete the "m": onimancy, onymancy, scapulimancy, spatulamancy, spatulamancy, arithmancy and tephramancy.

Group I (for the literate): readers of Word Ways will probably appreciate the forms of divination presented below.

- **BIBLIOMANCY** - divination by books or by verses of the Bible
- **GRAPTO-MANCY** - by handwriting
- **LOGOMANCY** - by words
- **ONOMOMANCY, NOMANCY, ONOMANCY** - from names or the letters of a name (number of vowels, etc.)
- **RHAPSODOMANCY** - by picking a passage of poetry at random
- **STICHOMANCY** - by lines of verse in books taken at random

Group II (for the gourmet): the foods listed below may not be haute cuisine, but they can be used to tell your fortune.

- **ALEUROMANCY** - divination by means of meal or flour
- **ALPHITOMANCY** - by means of barley-meal
- **HALOMANCY, ALOMANCY** - by means of salt
OENOMANCY, OINOMANCY - by means of wine
OOMANCY - by means of eggs
TYROMANCY - by means of cheese

Group III (for the anatomically inclined): the following forms of fortune-telling are based on observations of the human anatomy. Note, however, that gastromancy has a second, totally unrelated definition.

CHEIROMANCY - divination by means of the hand
CHIROMANCY, CHYROMANCY - by the hand (palmistry)
GASTROMANCY - by the belly; also, by crystal-gazing
ICHNOMANCY - by traces of posture, position, and footsteps
METOPOMANCY - by the forehead or face
OMPHALOMANCY - predicting the number of children a mother will have by counting the knots in the umbilical cord of her first born
ONYCHOMANCY, ONIMANCY, ONYMANCY - from the finger-nails
PODOMANCY, PEDOMANCY - from signs derived by inspection of the feet
SCHЕMATOMANCY - personal history inferred from an individual’s form and appearance
SPASMATOMANCY - diagnosing the disease by which a person is about to be attacked by observing the convulsive twitches of the limbs
STERNOMANCY - by the breast-bone

Group IV (for the naturalist): the list below is the largest category of "-mancy" words. They are all based on observations of either plants, animals, or the spoor of animals.

ALECTOROMANCY, ALECTRYOMANCY - by means of a cock with grains of corn
ANNIOMANCY - by means of the embryonic sac
ARMOMANCY - by shoulders of animals
BOTANOMANCY - by plants
CEPHALOMANCY - by means of a head (boiling an ass's head on burning coals)
CRITHOMANCY - by meal strewn over sacrificed animals
HEMATOMANCY, HAEMATOMANCY - by blood
HIPPOMANCY - from the neighing of horses
ICHTHYOMANCY - by means of heads or entrails of fishes
MYOMANCY - by the movements of mice
OPIOMANCY - by means of serpents
ORNITHOMANCY - by means of the flight and cries of birds
OSTEOMANCY - from bones
PHYLLOMANCY - by leaves
SCAPULIMANCY - by studying a charred or cracked shoulder blade
SCATOMANCY - by the examination of feces
SPATIOMANCY, SPATALAMANCY - by observing animal droppings
SPATULAMANCY - by an animal's shoulder blade
STIGINOMANCY, STIGNOMANCY - by writing on tree bark
SYCOMANCY - by figs or fig leaves
THERIOMANCY - from the movements of animals
XYLOMANCY - with pieces of wood

Group V (more specialized category are sideromancy)

AEROMANCY
ANTHRACOMANCY
ASTROMANCY
AUSTROMANCY
CAPNOMANCY
CERAUNOMANCY
EMPYROMANCY
HYDROMANCY - from water
LITHOMANCY
MARGARITOMANCY
METEOROMANCY
PEGOMANCY
PYROMANCY
SELENOMANCY
SIDEROMANCY - from straw
SPODOMANCY

Group VI (forms which involve the use of

ASPIDOMANCY
ASTRAGALOMANCY
AXINOMANCY
BELOMANCY
CARTOMANCY
CATOPTROMANCY
CHALCOMANCY
CLEIDOMANCY
COSCINOMANCY
CRYPTOMANCY
CUBOMANCY
DACTYLOMANCY
ENOPTROMANCY
IDOLOMANCY
LAMPADOIOMANCY
LYCHNOMANCY
PSEPHOMANCY
RHABDOMANCY
SCYPHOMANCY

Group VII (forms which involve the use of

ANTHROPOMANCY
ZOOMANCY - by observing the actions of animals

Group V (more for the naturalist): the fortune-telling words in this category are based on observations of natural phenomena. Note that sideromancy has a second unrelated definition.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ZODIACALMANCEY</th>
<th>AEROMANCY - by air, including augury (flight of birds)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ANTHRACOMANCY - by inspection of burning coals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ASTROMANCY - by the stars (astrology)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AUSTROMANCY - from observation of the wind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CAPNOMANCY - by smoke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CERAMOMANCY - by thunderbolts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EMPYROMANCY - by fire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HYDROMANCY, HIDROMANCY, YDROMANCY - by signs derived</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>from water, its tides and ebbs, or spirits therein</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LITHOMANCY - by signs derived from stones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MARGARITOMANCY - by pearls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>METEOROMANCY - by observations of meteors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PEGOMANCY - by springs or fountains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PYROMANCY - by fire, or by signs derived from fire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SELENOMANCY - by observation of the moon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SIDEROMANCY - by means of the stars; also, by watching burning straw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SPOMANCY - by means of ashes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Group VI (for the technocrat): the methods of divination presented here involve the use of man-made objects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASPIDOMANCY</th>
<th>by means of a shield</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ASTRAGALOMANCY</td>
<td>by means of dice or huckle-bones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AXINOMANCY</td>
<td>by means of an axe-head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BELOMANCY</td>
<td>by means of arrows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CARTOMANCY</td>
<td>by playing cards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CATOPTROMANCY, CATOPROMANCY</td>
<td>by means of a mirror</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHALCOMANCY</td>
<td>by means of vessels of brass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLEIDOMANCY, CLIDOMANCY</td>
<td>by means of a key</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COSCINOMANCY</td>
<td>by the turning of a sieve held on a pair of shears</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRYSTALLOMANCY</td>
<td>by means of crystal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CUBOMANCY</td>
<td>by the throwing of dice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DACTYLIOMANCY</td>
<td>by means of a finger-ring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENOPTROMANCY</td>
<td>by means of a mirror</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDOLOMANCY</td>
<td>by idols</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAMPADOMANCY</td>
<td>by the flames of a torch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LYCHNOMANCY</td>
<td>by lamps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSEPOMANCY</td>
<td>by drawing marked stones from a vessel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RHABDOMANCY</td>
<td>by means of a rod (divining rod)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCYPHOMANCY</td>
<td>by means of a cup</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Group VII (for the necromancer): these forms of divination delve deep into the occult, much more so than all the others listed.

| ANTHROPOMANCY | divination by the raising of dead men, or by the |
entails of men

DEMONOMANCY - by demons

PSYCHOMANCY - through communication with spirits of the dead

NECROMANCY - by means of communication with the dead; magic in general

NECYOMANCY - by summoning Lucifer

SCIOMANCY - by communication with the shades of the dead

Group VIII (miscellaneous): the following "-mancy" words defy categorization, but they are by no means less intriguing. There are some delightful entries here -- note, for example, the word gyromancy.

AMBULOMANCY - by walking

ARITHMOMANCY, ARITHOMANCY - by numbers

CEROMANCY - from the figures produced by dropping melted wax into water

CHRONOMANCY - divination to determine the favorable time for action

CLEROMANCY - by lots, or with dice

GEOMANCY - by means of figures or lines

GYROMANCY - by walking in a circle until felled by dizziness -- the divination is based on the point of falling

HIEROMANCY - from sacred things; from observation of objects offered in religious sacrifices

JUDAEMANCY - by means of Jews

LECANOMANCY - by inspection of water in a basin

LOGARITHMOMANCY - by means of logarithms

MOLYBDOMANCY - by noting motions and figures in molten lead

PSEUDOMANCY - consciously false or pretended divination

ONEIROMANCY - by dreams

TEPHRAMANCY, TEPHROMANCY - with ashes from an altar

THEOMANCY - by oracles or others supposed to be immediately inspired by some divinity

URINOMANCY, UROMANCY - diagnosis of diseases by examination of the urine

Group IX (for the skeptic): if none of the above divinations sound plausible, and if you're not particularly fascinated by your daily horoscope, then you might be inclined to classify all fortune-telling as

MOROMANCY - foolish divination

But if you believe it's all moromancy, you might well be in the minority. A lot of people have had to be interested in fortune-telling to come up with all these variations.

Interestingly, Webster's 2nd lists a total of eight "-mancy" words which do not refer to a form of divination. Of these eight, four are technical terms (adiathermancy, athermancy, diathermancy and electrothermancy), and two more are rather obscure (aldermancy, the position of aldermen; labiomancy, lip-reading). The final two are more common, and they are not long or difficult. Can you guess them? If baffled, see Answers and Solutions at the end of this issue.