

The Enigma of Pisces

by Genevieve Vierling

Stop a moment and think about the Pisces people you know. How would you describe them in three to five words? Can you do it? I would love to see your lists!

Pisces is not an easy sign to describe instantaneously. It's a bit of an enigma, quite frankly. Why is that? For starters, the time of the year that we say is under the influence of Pisces falls generally between February 21 and March 20. During that time period here in the northern latitudes, we are experiencing the shift from winter to spring, with some days being warm and almost balmy, while other days are wild, stormy, and freezing. Such extremes can be unsettling. Dane Rudhyar says in his book, *The Pulse of Life*, "Pisces is an era of storms and of wholesale disintegration."¹ This apt description implies the dilemma of the soul incarnated into this sign. The journey of the Piscean's life must often be one of moving through periods when everything seems to be falling apart and nothing has yet come together into a new form. The future may beckon, but the past is still unraveling.

So, think again about those Pisces people in your life. Perhaps they're not quite as dreamy, mild, and wishy-washy as the stereotype seems to suggest. Pisces is a water sign, and the kind of water associated with this sign is the ocean. Start describing the ocean, and you're getting closer to the essence of Pisces. Words like *vast*, *deep*, *powerful*, and *ever-changing* come to mind.

I've often wondered how the cliché of Pisceans being wimps originated. Perhaps it's the elusive quality of this mutable, or changeable, sign, particularly noticeable when issues of confron-

Pisceans are the great chameleons of the zodiac, since they often survive through the art of camouflage.

tation are at hand. Many Pisces people would prefer to evade head-on collisions and leave the head-butting to their Aries kinfolk. They also tend to prefer being in the background rather than center-stage like the fiery types. But never underestimate the power of Pisces natives, for, like the element of water, they can gather a formidable force of watery emotional strength when necessary, allowing them to move through, over, or under any obstacle.

I remember well an early boyfriend who certainly reflected some of the dreamier qualities of Pisces. He loved to dance in candlelight while trailing long chiffon scarves behind him, like Nijinsky in the ballet *Afternoon of a Faun*. One time, however, I got a glimpse of that

deeper power and strength. My roommate's boyfriend had been drinking and was becoming abusive and violent with her. Mr. Pisces calmly walked over, pinned the man's arms behind his back, and started twisting. Without fanfare, he told him to leave if he knew what was good for him. End of story.

The key here is how effectively Pisceans can harness the great collective force they are born with, which can, at times, overwhelm them like a tidal wave and make them feel lost and afraid. Developing their opposite polarity, Virgo, through a specific skill or technique will help to stabilize and focus their emotional body into a form that can be used in service to others. It is then that they can truly shine and feel good about themselves.

Take the famous Pisces film star, Elizabeth Taylor. She was hot stuff when I was young and considered one of the most beautiful actresses ever to light up the silver screen. She certainly did characterize the oceanic in all the variety of screen roles she played, in the endless personal dramas she got swept up in, and during the countless times she struggled with her own tidal forces of loss and suffering, often followed by amazing rebounds. However, when she fully harnessed her vast emotional body to the Virgoan task of establishing the Elizabeth Taylor AIDS Foundation, which raises funds for "direct care and prevention education," she gained the balance and gift for humanitarian service that she is now acknowledged for. Good for her!

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Elizabeth Taylor

and characteristics of their surroundings, particularly the climate zone. Imagine yourself in a boat on the water on a sunny, warm day. One minute, everything is smooth and calm, and then suddenly dark clouds loom overhead and a fierce wind whips the water into a frenzy. It's the same water, and yet the atmospheric changes have altered its qualities. A fjord in Norway is one kind of water. A blue lagoon in the South Pacific is another. Both are water — but what a difference in kind and quality!

The great mythological stories, which have evolved since ancient Babylonian times, have many versions of the myth of Aphrodite and her little boy, Eros, acting out the art of evasion and shape-shifting for which Pisces is known. One version of the story tells of a ghoulish monster, Typhon, who is wreaking havoc amongst the gods on the surface of the Earth. Aphrodite, in her love for her child, binds him to her with a cord and then magically turns them both into fish so that they can escape below the surface of the water to elude this demonic force. Of course, Zeus/Jupiter, one of the ancient rulers of Pisces, ends up both rescuing them from their watery deep darkness and rewarding them by sweeping them up into the starry sky as the constellation of Pisces.

Initially, every young Piscean learns to survive by blending and adapting to their surroundings and circumstances. As they age, however, this can become a problem, for they don't really know who they are. Many years ago, media heiress Patty Hearst was abducted by a revolutionary group, the Symbionese Liberation Army (SLA), and later emerged in a photograph taken while she was robbing a bank. She's the perfect example of how Pisceans survive as chameleons. First, she's this pampered girl from the newspaper dynasty; next,

I always encourage my Pisces clients to spend time either alone or out in nature.



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she's playing Bonnie and Clyde in full regalia with her abductors; and finally — yep — she marries her bodyguard and settles into yet another role.

Remember, Pisces is the very last sign and thus contains all of the other signs within it. No wonder it gets confusing being a Pisces! So, how do Pisces people ever figure out who they really are? I always encourage my Pisces clients to spend time either alone or out in nature. By doing so, they will gain a more authentic sense of their own separate identity apart from other people's energies. The practice of quiet contemplation can help Pisceans to know themselves better by stilling the mind and listening for the small inner voice. Once they connect with their core, they can then turn outward again and help many people.

"Serve or suffer" is another famous cliché connected to Pisces. I remember a dear, happy Leo woman once saying, "Oh, you Pisces just lo-o-o-ove to suffer!" Certainly, there was a ring of truth to what she said, yet suffering is common to us all. It seems to be part of life here on planet Earth. What Pisceans do best is to acknowledge this universal suffering and serve those who are going through it. I know so many Pisces people who are involved in the healing arts. One woman is a fine acupuncturist with a most uplifting and sunny attitude. She has a lot of Aries fire in her nature,

which brings inspiration and spunk to her "bedside manner." Another Pisces acquaintance is a homeopath who has cultivated the patience and technical knowledge to listen quietly in order to accurately assess the right remedy from the thousands available. He has planets in Aquarius that meld with and assist his Pisces Sun. I know another amazing healer who works with sound. Her business card reads "a harmonic approach to well-being."

Many Pisces people are drawn to music and the performing arts. Here, all the Dionysian qualities can often be expressed, with mystical ecstasy and madness being unleashed through sound, lights, and multimedia effects. In the music world, Jon Bon Jovi and Kurt Cobain of Nirvana (what a Piscean name!) come to mind. In the world of dance, both Nijinsky and Rudolph Nureyev expressed the fluidity and power of this sign. There are lots of very fine actors and actresses who have the Sun in Pisces — Glenn Close, Holly Hunter, Bruce Willis, Billy Crystal, Joanne Woodward, Drew Barrymore, Juliette Binoche, and Queen Latifah are just a few examples.

Michelangelo was a Pisces as well. But if you want to see a wonderful contemporary artist who totally conveys the nature of mysticism through his magical works, visit the site of Ernest Caballero.² Ernest is a Pisces through and through.

Pisces

He epitomizes the Pisces who has found a Virgoan container — his sculptures — to anchor his visionary connection with the unseen realms.

There are many myths and stories connected with this sign, but I have always especially liked the fairy tale *Cinderella*. It's such a classic Piscean tale: the humble Cinderella serving the harsh and greedy stepmother and her daughters; the enchanted visitation by her fairy godmother from the astral realm; the handsome, utterly romantic prince of her dreams; the dancing until the stroke of midnight when the enchantment ends; the dropped glass slipper; the search for the right and true foot.

Shoes, feet, slippers are all under Pisces' rulership, so let's discuss the feet. They support the rest of us. They are under us, and Pisces must learn to Understand. And, of course, this fairy tale ends with the happy-ever-after redemption theme that is such a part of the mythos of Pisces. Take a look at Ernest Caballero's *Risen Christ* on his website for a perfect image of the Ascension and Redemption that Pisces yearns for, even as the inevitable



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descent is taking place. There is a longing for absolute oneness and bliss in this most enigmatic of signs.

I would like to close by bringing your attention to possibly the highest aspiration of Pisces, Kuan Yin. She is the female Goddess of Compassion known far and wide in the East as “The One Who Hears the Cries of the World.” Introduced in *The Lotus Sutra*,³ translated by Kumarajiva (possibly a Pakistani sold into slavery in China between 397 and 415 C.E.), she evolved into the accepted role of the divine feminine by the 9th century C.E.

Kuan Yin epitomizes the qualities of Pisces, a yin sign, at its best. Her compassion knows no boundaries and emanates universal love to all, including animals and plants. Part of her appeal is that she extends her love and compassion to ordinary people. There are an abundance of myths and stories that tell of her great deeds of grace, but none are more fitting to our theme than her connections with the sea. Tales are often told of Kuan Yin's ability to calm the turbulence of typhoons as she descends from the heavens in her flowing white robes. Here is a quote from one such tale in a beautifully written book about her, *Kuan Yin: The Myths and Prophecies of the Chinese Goddess of Compassion*: “... Closing her eyes, she raised her hands before the raging waters, which immediately ceased their turbulence. Turning to face the winds, she opened her eyes and the winds died down and the storm clouds dispersed.”⁴ Then she disappeared.

Peace, love, and compassion are the highest qualities toward which Pisces aspires. To attain such a lofty goal, it

seems that these folks must often wallow through a lot of mud and face fierce storms along the way. That's why Kuan Yin is often depicted standing upon a lotus flower in full bloom. Perhaps there are no words that can further define what can only be contemplated, so I leave you, dear readers, with that beautiful image. Who or what Pisces is must perhaps ever remain a mystery, an enigma.

Editor's Note: This article first appeared on the author's blog in 2008; a slightly edited version is reprinted here, with her permission.

Chart Data of all the individuals mentioned above who have the Sun in Pisces come from various Internet sources or the author's personal records.

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