

# Her Garden of Earthly Delights



You were born. And celestial suitcase in hand, Venus quickly made her way to a favorite spot—her garden—located in the house of your horoscope where she resides. There are 12 houses in an astrology chart, each representing a particular area of life—like relationships, career, creativity or health. Your Venus house suggests a realm where you're instinctively drawn for pleasure and fulfillment, where you have the fine tastes of a connoisseur. Venus in her house reminds me of the heroine of *Chocolat*<sup>1</sup>, Vianne Rocher, an attractive single mother who, blown by a changing wind, arrives in a drab town run by a grim priest. There she opens a magical chocolate shop—during Lent!—forcing the townspeople to choose sides in what is essentially a man-made dilemma: Should one serve Pleasure or serve God? The priest tries to expel her. The widows dressed in black are indignant. But one by one, the townspeople sneak into her shop, to be transformed by her recipes. Venus can have a similarly transformative effect on your life, by sweetening the house where she resides. What you enjoy, you tend to excel in, so you can be most attractive—and quite seductive—in matters of this house. How goes it in your chart? Is your Venusian chocolate shop busy with visitors? Or does a grim priest keep trying to shut it down?

<sup>1</sup> If you aren't familiar with the book (by Joanne Harris) or its film adaptation (with Juliette Binoche and Johnny Depp), I recommend this treat!

**Venus is in the 5<sup>th</sup> house of creative expression; romance, children, amusements.**

Classical astrologers used a lot more rules than contemporary astrologers do. But one ancient rule I still very much like is that each planet has one or two houses that it governs and another house where it has a good time—or “joys.” Roman poet and astrologer Manilius said that a planet in its house of joy is in its temple. And that's what it means to have Venus in the 5<sup>th</sup>. She's in her temple. The house of romance, fertility, creativity, and fun is where she joys. She may, as some astrology books suggest count her abundance in lovers and children. However, the abundance most often celebrated by my 5<sup>th</sup> house Venus research participants was unstructured time—to do exactly what they wanted to do, whether that meant gossiping with friends,

## *A Venus Lexicon*

Venus is a planet, an archetype, and a multitude of energetic sensations. The following are a few portals into her presence.

**Love:** An ocean of energy that pours through the heart chakra whenever you open to life (or another) without judgment or resistance. Your essential nature, it can be obscured by fear.

**Joy:** A tremoring vibration charging every atom in the universe—it's in the sun, the moon, a blade of grass, a drop of dew. You can tune into this excitement anytime, without needing a reason.

**Pleasure:** The natural state when you surrender to and savor present moment sensations. Flows more abundantly if your 2<sup>nd</sup> chakra (sexuality, creativity, and self esteem) is healthy and balanced.

**Happiness:** A positive attitude about your circumstances. Just as Abraham Lincoln once said, "Most folks are about as happy as they make up their minds to be."

**Desire:** This longing to possess is more accurately associated with Mars (and testosterone levels in both women and men). But Venus, by being receptive, allows it to build.

**Passion:** Intense engagement with life. A willingness to feel your highs and lows.

eating a sumptuous meal, decorating a room, roaming through nature, reading, writing, drawing, or what some would call "doing nothing," like relaxing in a hammock on a lazy afternoon. When Venus is in the house of pleasure, she has a gift for finding pleasure almost anywhere.

What puts me in a Venusian mood? Shopping for gorgeous clothes! Being pampered! Dancing! Dressing up to go out to dinner! Preparing a meal at home! Breastfeeding! To be honest, it is rare that I don't feel feminine and I am innately creatively inspired. I express it in a hundred ways every day.

Happiness for me is having an extremely flexible schedule so I can indulge my moods by doing what I want when I want.

Many of my happiest times are quite ordinary—I just feel happy. I might be alone or with others, doing some activity or doing nothing. The events that are supposed to make you happy—like getting recognition for a good performance, meeting someone interesting, or because it's a beautiful day—these often heighten my awareness of how transitory happiness is, so I like the ordinary happy times the best.

Many astrology books claim that a 5<sup>th</sup> house Venus promises you plenty of wonderful romances. One of your Venus sisters called this "A load of crap." I tend to agree. Reading the questionnaires of my research participants, I began to think the 5<sup>th</sup> house romance diva was a mythical creature living only in astrology books. Yet at least one woman volunteered that she'd been blessed with hundreds of affairs. She wrote, "I'm currently single and loving it. I have a different man for different occasions, one to go fine dining with, one to watch dvds with, one to play sports with, another to have drinks with. There are always lovely men floating around me." Passion-increasing aspects to her Venus from Mars and Jupiter are no doubt helpful, for house position alone rarely guarantees a particular fate. Important too is acknowledging the difference between romance and relationships. One summer a Vedic astrologer noted a 5<sup>th</sup> house transit and predicted I would have an affair. "An affair?" I said glumly. I wanted a relationship! But he was right. I had a four-month affair that was perfectly delicious until the day it ended and then vanished, swift as a summer rain.

Romance is a state of intoxication that's quite Venusian—but having a lover isn't the only way your Venus enjoys the thrill of falling in love. Reading my 5<sup>th</sup> house Venus questionnaires, I noticed this is a Venus who uses the word "love" a lot.

I love fine jewelry. I love my free time and being creative. I love romance—flowers, candles, incense. I love sex. I love helping others. I love to take baths with salts and oils. I love my bed, especially with lots of pillows around me, and I love to wrap myself in soft fluffy blankets. I love being massaged. I love to meet friends for lunch and hang out. I love watching movies and going shopping.

Quite simply, yours is a Venus who loves life! Children are particularly special to her because they're such a beautiful expression of life force—and because they offer Venus her greatest gift—an opportunity to be someone loving. It's said that the 11<sup>th</sup> house is where you receive love and the 5<sup>th</sup> is where you give it. Your Venus can love so many things—children, creative projects ("children" of the mind), or even, as in the third quote below, a delightful puppy.

When my daughter was born, I fell in love with her immediately and could not take my eyes off her for 24 hours until I finally fell asleep.

During the past year my daughter and I have taken up an evening drive. She makes different music CD's for us to sing along to, introducing me to music from around the world—Russian, Japanese, and Latin American. We always stop to swing at this one playground where the swings face the water and she usually talks to me about herself at this time. Then we go get a cup of cocoa and chat up our friendly neighborhood organic grocer. No matter my mood when we set out, I feel better by the time we get home.

One of the happiest times was when I brought home my Labrador retriever puppy, Emma. I had just moved out of a live-in relationship, was house-sitting without a home of my own, and studying for the bar exam. I was feeling lonely and vulnerable, like the world was a big scary place and I wasn't sure where I fit into it. It was perfect to have my sweet little Emma to lavish with uncomplicated affection and care, and to watch her being completely present at every moment—splashing in her little pool, smelling the grass and chasing grasshoppers. It reminded me that joy is everywhere, no matter what the external circumstances.

## *Natural Aphrodisiacs*

Eroticism is so much more than getting naked. Sexuality is the charged state when energetic opposites meet—active and receptive, yang and yin, electric and magnetic—creating a third state of union or divine bliss. Because these polarities already exist within, you can bring yourself into a delighted state with or without a partner. Following are some natural ways to bring a sparkle to your eyes and new bounce to your step.

**Curiosity:** Nothing awakens Venus more rapidly than wondering ("I wonder what will happen next?") Allows you to see things afresh, as though for the very first time.

**Contentment:** Do you fully appreciate the life you now have? Metaphysicians often recommend gratitude lists as a quick way to summon Venus.

**Compassion:** Judgment blocks connection. Feeling empathy for another opens your heart and lets you expand into a more peaceful, unified state.

**Community:** Venus knows how electricity builds with likeminded others. Joining and sharing alters your energetic field.

If your libido is dead, try turning yourself on first. Don't wait for a lover to seduce you. Stress, isolation, and self-pity can destroy sexuality long before you reach the bedroom. Cleansing your thoughts can charge your body with new vitality and desire.

## Jealousy



When I asked participants in my Venus survey to tell me about their dark side, a majority confessed to feelings of jealousy. No surprise there. Jealousy is a natural Aphroditic trait, so if consumed by it, take heart. You're in touch with the goddess. She's so tuned into beauty, sociability, harmony and discord, that measuring and comparing what others have is an inevitable liability.

Aphrodite was incensed to discover humans worshipped Psyche for her beauty. When the goddess' own son lay with this mortal girl, Aphrodite conspired to split them up. A jealous queen threatened by a young girl's beauty is a common fairy tale motif. Jealousy moves the plot along. It performs the same function in your life too.

When jealousy flares, take notice. It's a signal that something in you has grown old and stopped developing. Rather than actually changing, it wants to defeat your regenerating feminine self. Jealousy is like the witch disguised as a hag, offering Beauty a poisoned apple. If you bite, your Out-of-Balance Stuck Self wins. But if you recognize jealousy as the warning it is, you can use it to grow, renewing

When your Venus has someone or something to love, her radiance and confidence increase. She is a bold, dynamic, self-expressive Venus. Perhaps this is why, more than any other Venus position, 5<sup>th</sup> house Venuses seemed to have the most fun playing with their appearance.

Growing up, I loved wearing makeup. I felt like an artist applying paint to a canvas. ... I mostly dress for comfort, but I do like to dress up occasionally. It feels like putting on a costume, and that's how I treat it, a bit "over the top." ... My style is my own, especially when I designed and created my own wardrobe. Everyday I choose what to wear according to what best suits my mood. ... I like to play with my looks by dressing as different characters each day: a romantic girl, a mystic fairy, a rock singer and songwriter or a skateboarder boy (my masculine side)—in other words, a modern young woman with her own style.

Whatever her style, a 5<sup>th</sup> house Venus likes to be appreciated for who she is—which may mean entering a room and becoming the center of attention. Her gaze is often direct. She usually knows what she wants and how to get it. But of course there is a learning curve. Until your Venus discovers how to express and hold her own power, she may be attracted to strong and confident partners—only to find later they're just domineering and stifling. And that never works out!

### The Descent of the Goddess

*Truth didn't warn her. Love didn't protect her. Beauty couldn't save her.*

You take the plunge. You leap. You soar. But sometimes you find yourself in a basement heap. Where the goddess resides there are gifts and ecstasies. But as the ancients learned from Inanna, there is also despair. Such is the cyclical nature of the Feminine. Preceding every ascent, there is a descent, a sundering, a rendering, a hollowing out. You are stripped naked, left hanging upside down in the underworld. Always unexpected, it is also necessary. Descent is how the goddess renews herself and her creativity. Going into the underworld is the way that any Venus grows, but it's a particularly important journey for a 5<sup>th</sup> house Venus. If trouble strikes, or when love affairs end, your Venus falls hard. But in the face of even minor irritations, your Venus can rage like a scary winter storm. The 5<sup>th</sup>

house Venuses in my study were often disturbed and embarrassed by their dark sides. Many confessed to overwhelming emotions of hatred, anger, jealousy, arrogance, or pride. These are Venusian too. I've said it before: If you desire to truly know Venus, don't expect just the joy and none of her tantrums.

I recall a waking dream/vision I once had. I remember it because it had such a high emotional intensity for me. In it... I... or someone I identified with strongly... was breaking into an inner altar of some temple. She was dark and powerful and tremendously angry. She trashed the place entirely without any thought or care about what retaliation might happen to her because of what she was doing.

Whatever was being worshipped there... she hated it ... and she was venting.

One of your Venus sisters told a cringing story about how she once struck her daughter at a spiritual retreat. She was trying to be the perfect devotee with the perfect devotee child, but when her daughter wouldn't sit quietly and obediently like the other children, the mother couldn't repress her own wild emotions. She was mortified at what she'd done. Only later could she forgive herself, after hearing stories of the guru Ammachi, who spent hours in mad blisses and wandered the woods falling into stupors and ecstasies. With tears, the mother realized she had a passionate divine madwoman inside her too. "Perhaps I can now let her loose and not be so scared she'll get me thrown in the loony bin or ridden out of town on a rail." Dealing with your wild side is part of the 5<sup>th</sup> house Venus learning curve. May you find how to fully embrace your wild heart. May you continue to love life, both the sour and sweet, the songs and the noise.

I was driving somewhere with the window open, feeling aggravated and generally tired. The radio was blaring some stupid bad song. There was the noise of traffic around me. And then I heard it—this very loud sweet song of a bird—beautifully crystal clear and perfect over all the noise. I slowed down and turned into a parking lot, craning my neck left and right to look for where it was coming from. Way up on top of a light post was a little bird, so high up, it looked like a little round ball of feathers. I saw its belly expand out and in and then it sang again with its sweet voice. I shut off my radio and just enjoyed that pretty bird in that ugly asphalt parking lot.

### **Jealousy...**

your inner harmony and peace. When jealousy flares, let it flourish, like a signal sounding through your soul. You may even find its sharp sting and tender wounding a pleasurable intense sensation—if you let go of the “less than” storyline your mind wants to attach to it. Allow the feeling to move through your body without repression or obsession. It's like sending the witch on her way without eating the apple. See her instead as a wisdom being who came to wake you up.

Now decode jealousy's message. What needs to change in you? Perhaps you've been ignoring your desires for greater abundance, not allowing yourself to dream big enough. Maybe you've lost touch with your innate worth and given your power away to someone less deserving. Possibly you've gotten caught on the nail of feeling special or better than others. Even the wealthiest can make themselves miserable if they think someone else has more.

Restore your radiance with the following healthy remedies. Rejoice in the good fortune of the one who made you jealous. Through the law of attraction, this good feeling will do more than envy to bring the same to you. Visualize your own success and take steps in that direction. Maybe you need to renew your spiritual practice. Refocus your eyes and heart on the equality of divinity. See how joy lives everywhere, in everyone and everything.