



Magical Doors – The Symbols of Astrology

Jean-Marc Pierson

(Swanage UK: The Wessex Astrologer, 2021)

Jean-Marc Pierson can certainly turn a phrase! A consistent theme throughout this book is the author's unique approach and sense of humour. He has taken the basic elements of the Planets, Signs and Houses, which one might find in any 'astrology cookbook', but rather than listing the relevant characteristics and themes he weaves a story enabling the concepts to become instantly relatable. And he does that quickly, with humour and brevity. There are no over the top narratives of the symbolism associated with each planet, but a down to earth and practical description of how we might use real world observations and experiences to understand key concepts.

The notion of observing life and attaching mental tags to everything as a way of learning about planetary energies is, on one level quite basic, but on the other, almost genius! How many of us have thought about walking along the streets in a town or city with the goal of categorizing the businesses or buildings as a planetary expression? For example, the 'Fire Station the Police Station, Sports Centre' each warrant the label of Mars. Or, in the case of the Post Office, the label of Mercury. Simple but illustrative!

As Pierson's narrative progresses, there is a natural evolution and expansion of his ideas and thinking. The synthesis of key words and ideas could almost be considered conversational. Using examples which each of us might relate to in one way or another, and presented in plain English, he weaves a story in such a way that the mind conjures a visual picture. He grabs our attention with descriptions seemingly out of the fantastic. Highly creative, for example using the notion of a wolf wearing a tutu to understand the relationship of a zodiac sign to the planet inhabiting a sign, is unforgettable.

Initially, I found myself thinking "this is a basic introductory book" that would be helpful to new students. However, before that thought even occurred to me, I was contemplating how much I was enjoying the read. By the end of the book, Pierson has taken things up a notch elevating the text beyond the level of 'beginner' and, in fact, making it appropriate for a broader audience. A relatively short book, it is easy to understand, practical and entertaining. I remember reading once that use of humour is one of the best ways to get ideas across while anchoring the learning. *Magical Doors* checks that box!

Most importantly, Pierson reminds us that 'Astrology is a language of symbols, like dreams, myths, religious narratives and fairy tales.' His abundant use of metaphor reinforces this. He states that 'metaphors do not mean anything "exactly". They give us clues [and] we need to find the story or the stories in which all the clues in a horoscope make sense together.' The symbols, and the clues, are the 'Magical Doors' Pierson refers to and, throughout the book, he provides us with the opportunity to examine these symbols with a much different perspective. [JL]