

The Inuit Sea Goddess, Sedna

By Marcha Fox

Astronomical Description

Sedna was discovered as a minor planet on 14 November 2003 by Chad Trujillo, Michael E. Brown, and David Rabinowitz and reported on 15 March 2004. She is different than other heavenly bodies and the first object of its kind to be discovered. They have since been referred to as trans-Neptunian objects. She does not make her home in the asteroid belt between Mars and Jupiter; Sedna's domain is beyond the Kuiper Belt, in what astronomers believe is the Inner Oort Cloud, from which comets are believed to originate. Sedna is about 1000 miles in diameter, which is very large for an Oort Cloud object. She is believed to be half rock, half ice and is the second reddest object in the Solar System, next to Mars. She has a highly elliptical orbit that extends out to approximately 84 billion miles from the Sun which takes approximately 10,500 years to complete. Needless to say, no one reading this is going to be experiencing a Sedna Return anytime soon. Other objects in this class include Varuna, Ixion, Quaoar, Orcus and Eris.

Mythological Background

Unlike the asteroids and planets which were named after the gods and goddesses of Roman and Greek mythology, Sedna is named after the Inuit goddess of the sea. Her story varies somewhat in the various versions, but the basic myth tells of a beautiful girl with long, flowing hair, whose father was a great hunter who provided well for his family. So much so, that Sedna was quite comfortable and had no desire to leave home in spite of various offers of marriage, some of which were greatly encouraged by her parents, who like most parents wanted their child to move out. Sedna, however, was quite content, with no intention of marrying any of the local moolyaks.

One day a mysterious, handsome stranger showed up in town clothed in fine furs and feathers. Sedna took one look and started to change her tune. This guy was hot, and she started rethinking her former position. Judging by his dress, he could support her as well or better than her parents. The romance took its natural course, and pretty soon they were married with Sedna paddling away into the sunset with Mr. Wonderful to his island home.



Like most marriages, once the vows were said things started to change. In this instance, Sedna soon discovered that Mr. Stud Muffin was actually a Fulmar, a dangerous bird spirit, in disguise. He was a lousy provider who left her cold and lonely on his desolate

island for days at a time while he went off doing whatever it is birds do for a good time. Once in a while he'd show up long enough to throw her a fish or two, but that's about it.

Needless to say, Sedna is extremely distressed by this sorry turn of events and starts wailing. Her cries reach all the way back to her village and at some point her father sets out in his kayak to bring her home. He was less than enchanted, however, that his foolish daughter was not only causing him trouble again but would resume being his problem to feed. When he gets to the island, Sedna is overjoyed and the two set out for home. The kayak, however, was a single seater, so Sedna had to balance herself on the bow. They hadn't gotten very far when the Fulmar returns and realizes what has happened. Unlike her parents, he's thoroughly outraged that his latest toy is leaving the nest, so he uses his powers to create a huge storm, causing the wind to blow and the sea to toss.

Before long, Sedna is tossed off the kayak and she tries desperately to climb back on, sort of like Jack trying to climb onto that piece of debris with Rose in the movie "Titanic." This sets the small, unstable boat to rocking. Her father was already in a panic with the waves crashing all around and he wasn't the slightest bit interested in getting into that cold water for anything. Figuring that his foolish daughter had caused her own problems, he decides to save his own life and let her get whatever she deserves.

Sedna, however, is hanging on tight to the side of the boat and won't let go, so he starts whacking her hands with the paddle. Cold as they were, her fingers broke off and fell into the sea, where they morphed into various sea creatures such as seals, whales, walruses, dolphins, fish and so forth. Giving up in despair, Sedna sinks into the icy water and descends to Adlivun, the Arctic equivalent to the underworld, where her lower body transforms into a dolphin.



As mother to all sea creatures, they obey her beckon call. When so commanded, they willingly sacrifice themselves as food to those in need, whether human or animal. Conversely, when Sedna is displeased, she keeps them far from shore or any human interaction, allowing those who have treated her so badly to nearly starve, as she had on the desolate island. With her fingers gone, Sedna cannot care for her once beautiful hair and when it becomes hopelessly tangled and

snarled with seaweed and sundry sea creatures, her mood darkens far beyond any human incidence of PMS, with the possible exception of that astronaut who drove over a thousand miles in diapers to threaten her love rival. When this happens, the only hope for the human race is for the local shaman to take whatever steps are necessary to either beckon Sedna to the surface so someone can comb out her hair or find her below. When that gets taken care of, she's satisfied again, at least for a time, and the food sources return.

Astrological Implications

Sedna moves so slowly that her influence extends beyond the generational effect of the outer planets such as Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto. If you're one of those people who believes there's no such thing as a coincidence, then you'll appreciate how the discovery and subsequent naming of heavenly objects always introduces a new archetype to the human family. For example, Uranus, planet of upsets and rebellion, was discovered in 1781, and heralded various events such as the French Revolution. Pluto, discovered in 1930, heralded the start of fascism.

The complexity of Sedna's myth invites various symbolic factors to the fore. Besides the obvious ones of abuse, betrayal, and abandonment, one of the most popular associations is with an awareness of ecology in general and the plight of sea creatures in particular. When man is kind and obedient, they can partake of the sea's abundance; and when they're careless and cruel, they will eventually suffer. It's important to remember that every archetype has a positive and negative expression and Sedna will be no exception. The asteroid, Sedna, as well as all the others, represent all aspects of their respective myths, which includes the behavior of all involved, in this case Sedna, her father, and the Fulmar as well as the sea creatures that sprang from her severed fingers.

Stepping back to the first part of the myth, we have a distinct lesson of "be careful what you wish for." Originally, Sedna was proud and selfish, wanting only the best in abundance with no sacrifice on her part. Those that have always had a comfortable life aren't very enthusiastic about going out on their own and starting from scratch, yet their search for an easy life is rarely handed to them. The more they resist reality, the harsher the lessons may be. Nonetheless, new life can spring from tragedy.

The story also contains a variety of examples of betrayal and abandonment as well as child and spousal abuse. These, also, are lessons for our time. By all appearances Mr. Birdman didn't necessarily suffer from his actions, but as goddess of the sea you can bet that Sedna instructed her figurative offspring to give him a wide berth, making his fishing expeditions significantly less productive than previously. Her father, also, would have ultimately paid a price for his cruel treatment, particularly that of severing her fingers. Our fingers and our ability to control them are what allow us to take care of ourselves physically. Someone or something that would deprive someone of that and disfigure them as well wants to render them helpless.

Is perhaps Sedna also an icon of the disabled and does she perhaps herald the many scientific advances in robotics and prosthetics that are easing such burdens? Or does she represent the many women in the world who are the victims of backward societies that treat them in much the same way? What about those that are victimized by less harsh circumstances, but exacerbate their situation by their own unwillingness to accept responsibility for themselves? What of those who maintain a sense of entitlement, burdening tax-funded shamans to fulfill their needs?

The depths of the sea are easily compared to that of our unconscious. It can be cold, dark and mysterious as well as churned to a frenzy by violent storms. Conversely, it can be the peaceful, tropical waters of the South Pacific or Caribbean. The depths of the sea are not always apparent from its surface, except to a trained observer. Yet deep within the sea, in what we would consider an entirely inhospitable environment, living creatures adapt and live over 7800 feet below the surface. Could Sedna be the patron goddess of hurricanes or tsunamis? More astrological research will be required in all of these areas before we know for sure.

However, a quick look at the Exxon Valdez oil spill disaster that occurred off the coast of Alaska on March 24, 1989 at approximately 12:04 a.m. shows that transiting Sedna was at 09:55 Taurus. Without going into the various other transits in force at the time on Exxon's incorporation chart (August 5, 1882, 10:00 a.m., Irving, Texas), it's interesting to note that Sedna was sitting just barely in the 7th House of relationships and right on the cusp of Exxon's 8th House of death and regeneration, which is at 09:59 Taurus. Can you think of any event that is more illustrative of betrayal of a trust, especially in Sedna's world of the north countries? When one thinks of environmental disasters that killed scores of wildlife and grievously damaged their habitat, particularly those creatures in the Arctic regions which were spawned by Sedna's severed fingers, this seems more than coincidence. Another interesting tidbit is that Sedna's red color is attributed to tholin, a hydrocarbon sludge.

Another factor we shouldn't ignore is how rare it is for Sedna to be this close to Earth. Her orbit is highly elliptical and takes thousands of years to make one circuit around the Sun. Why is she paying us a visit at this time? Is this the first time in our planet's civilized history that warranted her presence? What are we supposed to learn now that we possibly weren't ready for or didn't need earlier? All the possible situations to which Sedna could apply are not new, but have been around as long as man himself. Maybe her message is simply that enough is enough.

Some speculate that Sedna would be a better fit to rule Virgo than Mercury. Personally, I see more correlations to Scorpio or even Pisces. There are definite similarities to the Sedna myth with that of Ceres and Persephone's troubles with Pluto, another dark, covert, underworld figure. Pisces, by definition, are fish, ruled by Neptune, king of the deep. And of course there's also Cancer the Crab, another sea creature and, not coincidentally in my estimation, yet another water sign.

Asteroids lend another layer of depth to a horoscope, being much more versatile and rich in meaning than the planets, which are more basic. With the possible exception of recently demoted Pluto, they typically co-rule Signs as opposed to ruling them, and are often involved with more than one. I can see Sedna fitting in with any of the water signs, especially Scorpio, though a case can be made for the others as well. Clearly she'd be a logical companion for either Pluto or Neptune in their respective domains.

At any rate, she definitely bears watching, particularly as events occur that resonate with the themes of this largely dark and unhappy myth replete with lessons for today's world. Be careful what you wish for.

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Marcha Fox has a bachelors degree in physics from Utah State University and has worked at NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas for over 20 years. She began studying astrology over twenty-five years ago with the intent of debunking it and instead became convinced of its credibility and astounded by its accuracy. She is currently an advanced student pursuing her diploma from OCA. The mother of six children and grandmother of (currently) 15, she has had a statistically significant sampling of astrological test subjects within her close perusal for many years. Much to the mortification of her offspring, some of these long-time observations are documented in her sign write-ups.

As a physicist she is deeply aware that the most profound questions in the universe are yet unanswered. When those answers are found, she believes that the truth and mechanism of astrology will be among them. She has worked with the space shuttle in a variety of capacities ranging from engineer to manager for most of her career. As that program fades into the sunset she hopes to do the same and focus her sights on a new career in astrology. Marcha is a Capricorn with a Virgo rising and Gemini Moon. She welcomes your comments at astrogoddess@ValkyrieAstrology.com.

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