

# SEARCH



**SPRING 2021**

**MAGAZINE**

#Enhancingyourhorizon





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## Letter from the Editor

This season's magazine is all about taking chances and expanding our horizons. Sometimes we choose to change, and other times we're forced to by the world around us. It might feel as if we spend most of our time on what we *have* to do and very little on what we *want* to do, particularly during the current coronavirus pandemic. However, changing our ways can lead to opportunities.

If you're cooking for yourself, consider the delight of trying something new. One of our authors, Kay Tracy, explains food from Iceland. Too outside your comfort zone? Brian and Patricia Dake give a recipe for *Spicy Asian Chicken with Green Beans & Mushrooms* that you can make at home. It's all about finding the kind of newness that makes you happy to grow.

If you don't quite understand, try following along with humorist Tim Reynolds as he explains the difference between chance and risk, with examples from his own life. Another author, Michele Roger, discusses the peril of starting her music business. Really, we're always looking for ways to make the most of our world. So, pull out a tarot deck to expand your creativity, or pull out the treadmill desk to buckle down to work. No matter how you branch out, know that we're all searching for the right way to travel the roads of life and find our rewards along the way.

And, if you think everyone else has it all figured out, Kristin Battestella talks us through the reality of imposter syndrome. Even when you have it together, the hardest person to convince is often yourself.

Happy reading,

Heather Roulo / *Editorial Director*



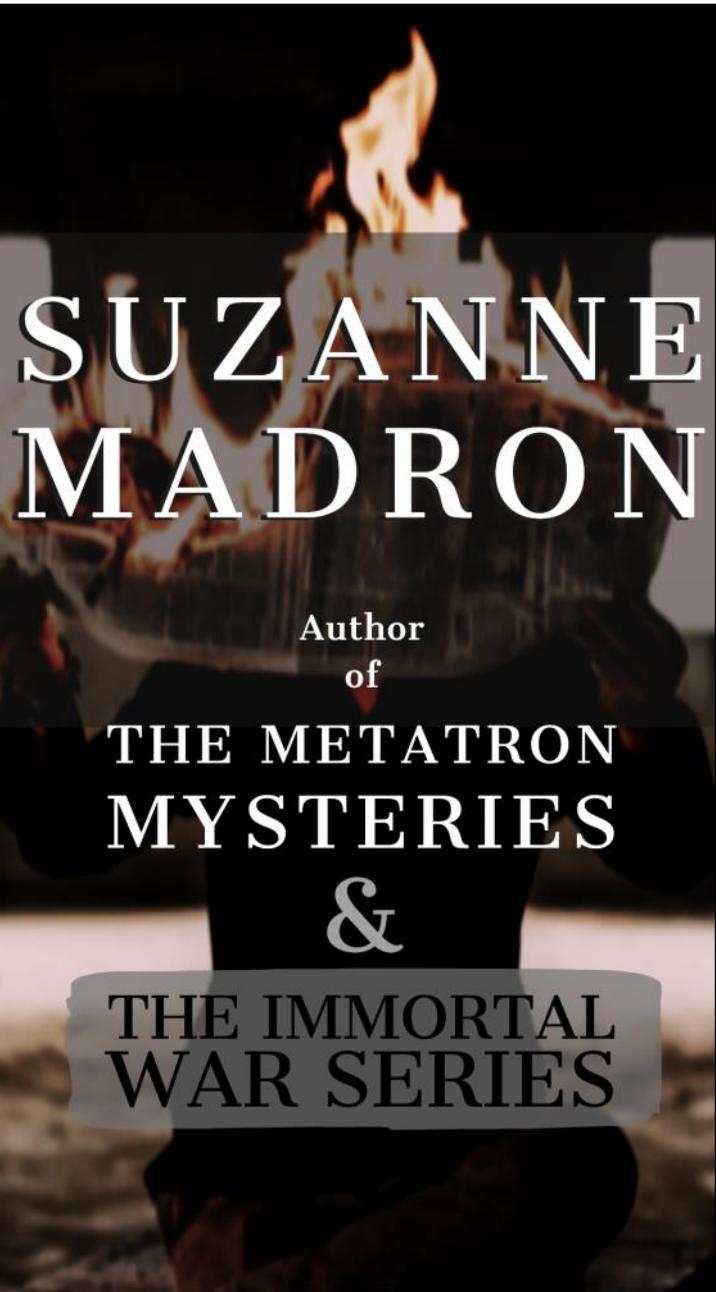
## Dear SEARCH,

In 2020 I had several plans to enhance my horizon, but they were quickly put on hold due to the pandemic. I became bored, stressed, and developed anxiety.

I knew I had to get in a healthier state of mind, so I began looking on Pinterest and other websites for social distance activities that I wanted to experience. I discovered so many sites and things to do.

I went hiking at *Hawk Hill*, in Sausalito, dirt biking, snowboarding and jet skiing. My 2020 year turned out amazing and I was able to experience a lot of different incredible activities that definitely enhanced my horizon.■

Curtis Franklin



# SUZANNE MADRON

Author  
of

## THE METATRON MYSTERIES

&

## THE IMMORTAL WAR SERIES

When the demons are the  
good guys, you know the  
world has gone to hell.



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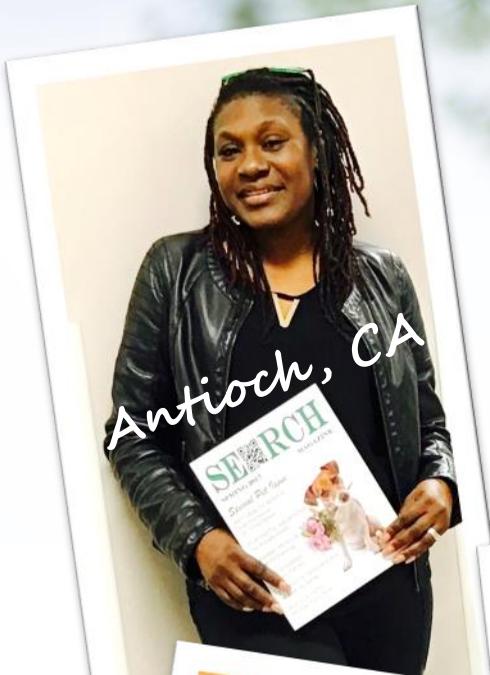
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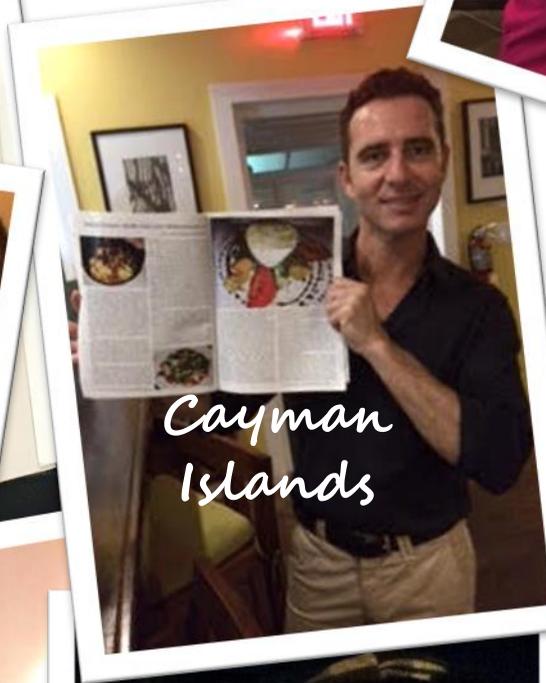
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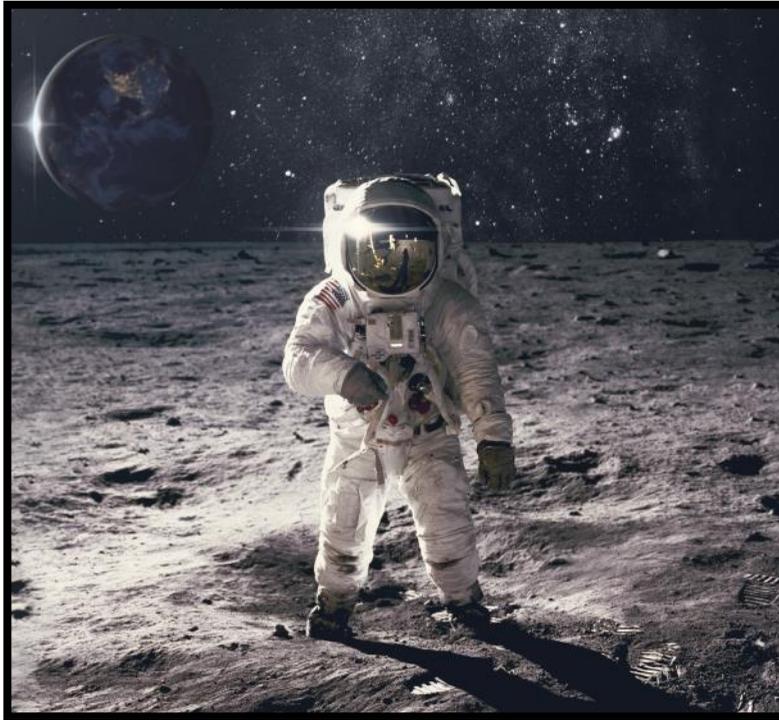
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## #ENHANCINGYOURHORIZON

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My fascination with Mod Podge started years ago when I found out there was this magic glue that allowed you to paste pictures or paper to relatively any flat, hard surface. I was always a bit intimidated with refurbishing furniture, but when a friend of mine was leaving town and wanted to throw out this weather-damaged café set, I took my chance. I would save this poor trio if my life depended on it.



### Supplies:

- \*A piece of furniture that needs resurfaced or repurposed
- \*Scissors
- \*A bottle of Gloss Mod Podge
- \*Paintbrushes that can be thrown away after (foam works best)
- \*Scrapbooking paper, scraps of paper, and or adhesives that match your new theme



1. Prep the item. The cool thing about Mod Podge is that it will cover most any issues you might have with the piece of furniture. You could sand it or fix holes, but as long as the piece is not damp, moss or mold covered, or missing parts, the surfaces don't really have to be prepped. I took a wet towel and wiped off each surface and let it dry for a day just to make sure the glue would stick well.

2. Figure out how and where you want to place the pieces of scrapbook paper. Cut things out, place them on the dry surface, change the position, and make sure you know exactly what it will look like when you are done. For this set, I wanted it to look like it belonged in the house of a well-travelled archeologist or museum curator. I picked out scrapbooking pages that conveyed an old-world feel as well as postcards, snap shots, and handwriting samples. I burnt a couple of holes in one of the maps and cut out a magnifying glass, so it looked like it was sitting on the table, ready for the explorer to study her next adventure map.



3. Mod Podge the paper onto the surface. I did this in small amounts. First, you put a thin layer of Mod Podge on the table, then set the piece of paper down and Mod Podge more onto the surface of the paper so that the back will stick and the front will be protected when in use. Repeat until the whole surface is covered in your fun, new design. Tip: Less is more until you get used to using Mod Podge, and I advise testing your skills on something smaller like an artist's canvas before pulling out Grandma's curio cabinet. If you use too much, your paper will bubble and wrinkle.

4. Let your piece dry a whole day and then re-apply Mod Podge layers, letting it dry a whole day in between. It took me about four layers until I was convinced it was solid enough to not scratch easily or be ruined by daily use.

Enjoy and show off on your social media profile. Don't forget to tag *SEARCH Magazine* so we can see your creations, too.

Once you've done one of these, I dare you not to do another. I have filled my house with music-covered lamps, creative canvases, and even an up-scaled 70's dresser into a modern sideboard. Happy crafting. ■



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Cultural aspects of food can be varied as well as unusual. If you travel to areas outside of your home, you might have discovered this.

Little things like, in some southern states—I'm looking at *you*, Texas—you automatically get jalapenos instead of pickles on your burger at some places. For that reason, when venturing to other countries, it helps to have an open mind and have a willingness to try new things in the food category. This does not mean you always have to like it. Just be willing to give it a try.

Iceland has a very rich cultural history, and part of it includes times of famine and severe food shortage. The phrase, "scraping the bottom of the barrel" is said to come from those times when the food was stored in large barrels, pickled with whey, and, as the food ran low, one literally scraped that barrel bottom for the last of the food to eat. These culinary traditions continue to this day as a way to remember the culture and pass the history along the generations.

That said, the culinary scene in Iceland is popping with incredible modern and innovative creations using the local fare.

There are fabulous soups and pizzas, as well as full course, distinctive meals all with a unique taste of Iceland.

Don't let that keep you from experiencing the humble and varied versions of the hot dog. Every town and region has a favorite way to prepare and serve them.

Found at almost every gas station, mini-mart, and small stands throughout the capital area, this is about as close as it gets to *American style* fast food.

If you order a burger or anything else at one of the many gas station shops or drive throughs, expect to make a loop around the building after ordering or take a seat at a table while they cook your food fresh.

Haute cuisine is also on offer. From the many varieties of locally caught fresh fish, grass-fed organic lamb, and reindeer. Iceland chefs prepare some extraordinary and delightful dishes. The flavors of Iceland are varied and vast, with combinations you might never have thought of.

If you are feeling truly adventurous, you can go old school with the classic lamb meat soup, which is delicious, and really quite tame or try some of the Thorra foods found during the end of winter, usually in February. Pickled sheep testicles or the singed sheep face, and the Icelandic version of Haggis called Slatur (pronounced Slauter) with rice porridge, pay homage to the historical times of not much food.

For the more modern take and innovative versions on everything from appetizers to desserts, venture forth to the old downtown Reykjavik area for a stop along the waterfront at any of the local restaurants, like the Fish Company for some great food and a fabulous take on preparation and presentation combining the flavors from the mountains to the seashore.

I spoke with my friend, Jökull, and he offered the following thoughts.

**Kay: For a first-time visitor, what would you say is a good start?**

Jökull: The iconic 'Kjötsúpa', Icelandic meat soup, is the go-to introductory meal for Icelandic cuisine. Nothing captures the Iceland spirit better.

**Kay: How would you describe the current culinary scene in Iceland?**

Jökull: I would describe it as thriving regardless of the current Covid conundrum that most restaurants are facing, with reduced capacity and having to swing their business over to takeaway options.

takeaway options.

It has always been a part of the Icelandic identity to thrive in the face of adversity, whether that be cold climate, rough seas, or volcanic activity, and the restaurant business is doing just that. It has been an honor and pleasure being part of this evolution in the scene, though I will not deny it has not been easy.

## Kay: What is your favorite "foodie" tradition?

Jökull: "Number one, Harðfiskur og smjör, rack dried fish, normally haddock or North Atlantic catfish with cold butter can't be beat. It's been here since settlement and is what this country was built on.

Second, Skötuhlaðborð, fermented skate buffets around jule, with an ammonia smelling splendor it is something to be witnessed, if only once in your life. Your food making you cry is an experience. In this case it is a chemical reaction but none the less wonderful. Skate has a semi nasty reputation in Iceland due to the smell, but if you can get this stingray fresh it is no less wonderful than the cod or plaice.

For number three, Hámeri or Porbeagle shark, can be eaten raw in a tartare or as a steak. It is *not* the fermented shark people hear about before coming to Iceland. This treat is one of my favorites because of the folklore it carries. "If you pull up a Porbeagle make sure one person on the crew does not look it in the eye else you will not make it ashore." Stuff like this just vibes with me, plenty more stories out there.

## Kay: What are your favorite dishes from your home country?

Jökull: I love a good fish; seared, grilled, baked, battered, salted, marinated, or fresh. However, traditionally, smoked haddock will make me want to get in a fight over portion sizes. Buttered rye bread is must, especially if you make it as an Icelandic fish stew, Plokkfiskur. Honorary mention to the traditional Sunday roast leg of lamb with family and friends.

I will spend hours on making sure everything is perfect for those occasions.

## Kay: Thank you, Jökull.

Be prepared to have an adventure in food when you visit this small country with big style when it comes to food from the unusual and simple to the sublime. For those wanting to *get a taste* and not able to travel just yet, I offer you a nice, *gentle* recipe to try out, Plokkfiskur, the Fish Stew.



You will need to gather the following:

Large pot

1/2 yellow onion, diced

500 g of haddock, cod, or other white fish, boiled.

Save at least one cup of the water for the fish stock.

Cool the fish and flake it with a fork.

500 g of Potatoes, boiled, cooled, peeled, and cut into bite size pieces

about 1/2 cup of flour More if you like a thicker gravy

50 g of butter

about 2 cups of milk and 1 cup of fish stock

Salt and pepper to taste.

Put the butter and chopped onions into your now emptied pot, and simmer on medium heat until tender and translucent. Stir in the flour to make a roux.

Gradually add the liquids, alternating between the milk (2/3) and fish stock (1/3) to make a gravy or thick soup. Add more liquid if desired to adjust the gravy.



Add the potato chunks and flaked fish to the pot of gravy stirring gently.

Salt and pepper to taste

Serve warm in a bowl with warm Rye bread and butter and enjoy.

The closest thing to the Icelandic rye bread to serve with this would be the equivalent of *Boston Brown Bread*. Either freshly made or the one in the can from the store. Be sure to have butter to go along with the bread

Of course, you won't have the true flavors of Iceland, but you can come pretty close. Just another reason to save some space on your travel calendar to plan a little stay in Iceland. If you do and happen to go by the Fish Company to try their fare, be sure to say hi to Jökull, though it might be easier to call him Tandri.



**Jökull Tandri Ámundason.**

I am a master chef and waiter with fifteen years of experience in the culinary industry in Iceland. Joint maître d' as well as a social media manager at the Fish Company restaurant in downtown Reykjavík. The Fish Company is a well rooted restaurant in Reykjavík, having received such honors as the Best Seafood restaurant by Reykjavík Grapevine for ten years, as well as having chefs which have won and placed top three in “Chef of the Year” titles in Iceland multiple times, had culinary trainee of the year for seven years running, and contributed to a team of chefs which have placed gold multiple times in the Culinary Olympics. ■



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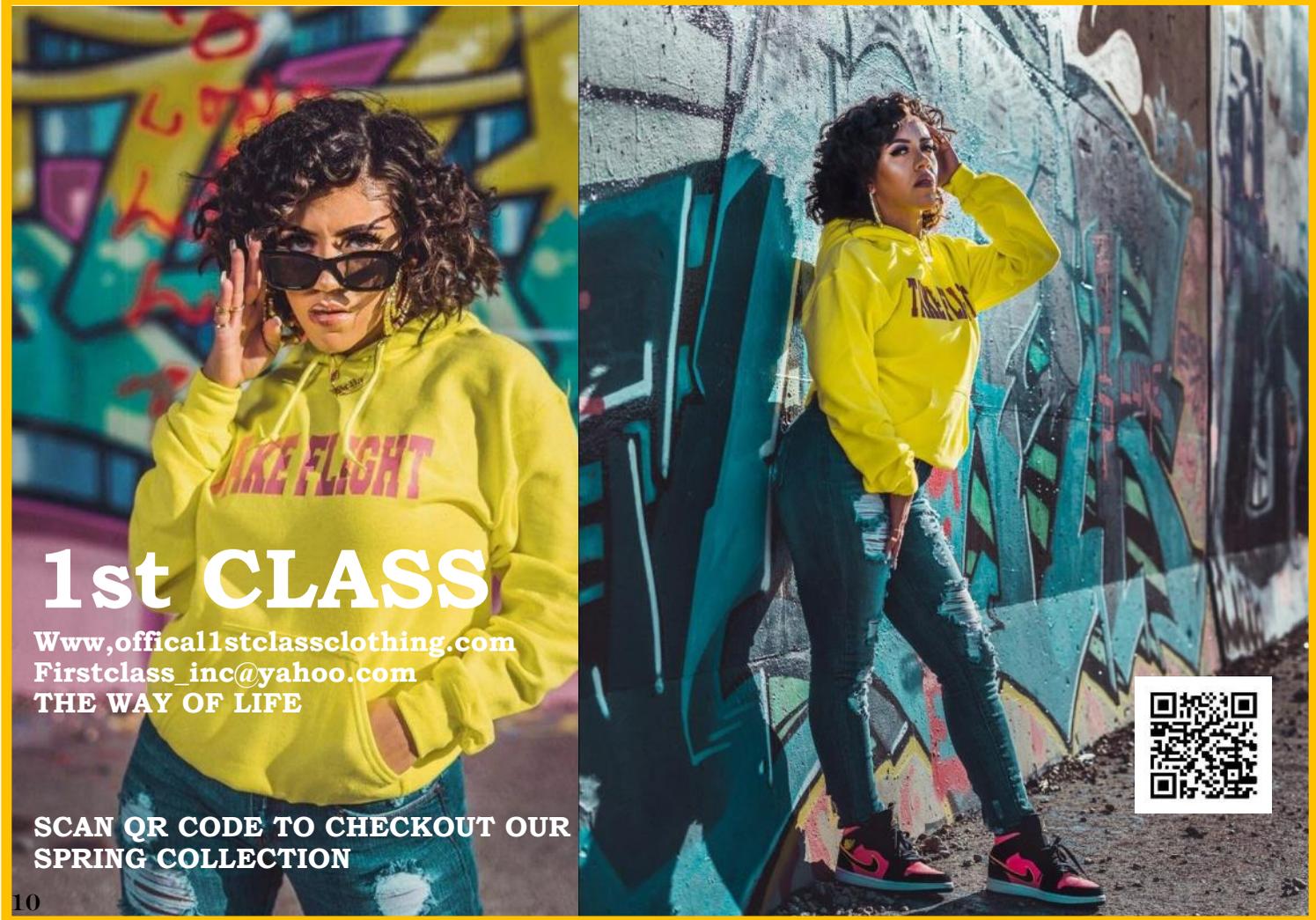


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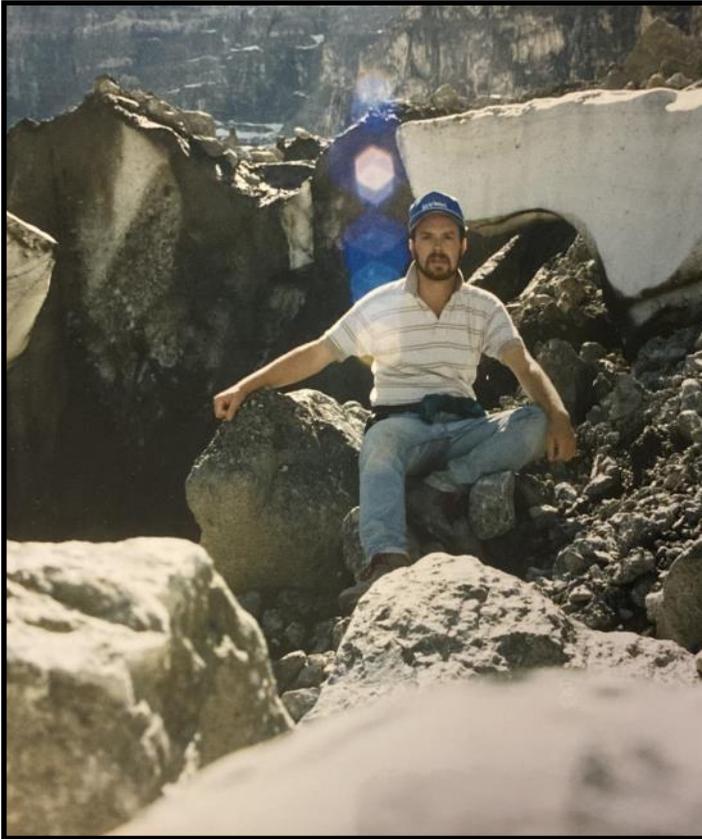
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I'm a big one for taking chances, but occasionally I take risks. What's the difference? Well, taking a chance is acting with the possibility of something happening, while taking a risk is to expose yourself to the possibility of injury or loss. Let me use my own life to give you some clarity.

I once took a chance and auditioned for a stage production of *West Side Story*—I was Nibbles the Shark—which was definitely not the same as taking the risk of joining an actual Puerto Rican street gang.

Taking a chance would have been eating a raw egg as a stunt in high school, but I had to risk illness by eating *thirty* raw eggs to raise money for the United Way.

Taking a chance that I could dance for nine hours to raise money for the United Way would have been okay, but I had to take the risk that I could do it the day after eating thirty raw eggs.

Taking a chance was when I studied only one-third of the course material for a university history exam, while taking a risk would have been not studying at all. And no, none of the three questions were about the one-third I studied.

Taking a chance is getting out of your car to take a picture of a black bear. Don't do it! Taking a risk was chasing an eight-hundred-pound grizzly bear to try and get a better picture. Do what I say, not what I do.

Taking a chance was riding my mountain bike down a two-and-a-half-mile-long winding mountain road, but I had to risk injury or death by not wearing my helmet and getting up to fifty-one miles per hour.

Taking a chance was learning to skydive. I did. Taking a risk would have been packing my own parachute. I didn't.

Taking a chance was speeding along on a country road on the way to the beach. Taking a risk was smart mouthing the police officer who pulled me over to give me a ticket.

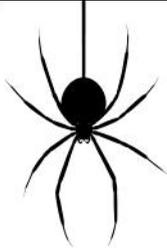
Taking a chance was going for a walk in the mountains where I lived and not telling anyone where I was going. Taking a risk was sliding down the loose rock slope onto the six-hundred-foot-thick glacier and nearly falling into a crevasse where I wouldn't have been found until Global Warming revealed my resting place in a hundred or so years.

Taking a chance was training for a marathon by running on a mountain road where I came across a young black bear. I backed up and jogged the other way, rather than risk him catching the scent of sweaty, terrified lunch on the run.

Taking a chance was proposing to my girlfriend at the time just before she got on a plane home to donate a kidney to her mother. Twenty minutes late I was offered a free ticket to be on the same flight she was on, but I wasn't willing to risk the new job I started the next day. "I'm not going to make it for my first shift, Ray. I'm in Halifax trying to convince Andrea to marry me." I didn't, so she didn't.

Taking a chance is writing this article and hoping you'll chuckle once or twice. Taking a risk is telling you that it's all true and now you're going to think I'm crazy.

I am. At least a little. ■



**Name:** Emerian Rich

**Location:** Concord, California

**Give us a sense of what you do; what are some of your creative endeavors?**

I am a writer, artist, and voice actress. I love writing fiction most of all, but I've recently been involved in the creation of a Spooky Writer's Planner. I've also created a coloring book and am working on an ABC book for spooky kids!

**If you're creative in your work life, how does that influence being creative at home or on hobbies?**

I don't think creativity (or at least mine) can be contained. I love crocheting, doing diamond paintings, and most recently working with resin crafts. I rarely do the same thing again, so whatever the next craft craze is, I'm up for trying it.

**What inspires you?**

So much! My imagination is always cranking out new ideas. It could be the way the light of a lamp reflects off the wall, the shape of the clouds on a morning walk, or a snippet of conversation I hear in line. When I'm studying a certain topic, I will watch movies and videos about the subject to near exhaustion!

**What are you working on right now?**

An anthology of Gothic Romance stories coming out in May and a rewrite of Jane Austen's Northanger Abbey, also due out this year.

**How do you stay organized?**

Many, many, many lists! Hahaha. Me and my writer friend, Loren Rhoads have shared many of our tips and tricks in our new planner as well as sheets for keeping you organized and in tune with your goals.

**Is it difficult to find time, money, and energy for crafts? Time?**

No, because I can't sit still. Crafting is something I actually do in my downtime. Money? Well, we'd all like more, right? Energy? Not usually. When I do crafts I make sure they are something that will help me relax, not amp me up.

**Do you prefer to find projects online, or come up with your own?**

I have a bad habit of pinning things on Pinterest that people have made with plastic or fabrication and trying to recreate them with crochet. Since I don't use crochet patterns, it's all about trial and error, and as Tim Gunn says, "Making it work!" ■

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There is far more work in opening a brick and mortar music business than one might think.

### Step 1 Find a Space.

Space is a strange thing. I'd like to say that it isn't all about location, but I would be lying. A rental space with a lot of foot traffic here in Southeast Michigan is about \$3,000 per month. Do you know how many music lessons I'd have to teach to make rent? Neither do I, but I know it's a lot.

A space with less traffic means pumping more money into spreading the word and advertising. All small businesses are screaming at the top of their lungs on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to get their message heard. Luckily, a friend of mine was doubling his business and his rental space. One day, he invited me to see the place. When I walked through, he noted, "and this will be your studio."

My heart jumped into my throat, and my head became a cyclone of arguments. One part of me was elated because it was in a great location, the other part of me terrified. Money between friends is never a good idea. In the end, I couldn't pass up the deal. The custom-built space was set to be completed by December. I would open in January of 2018. New year.

I should have kept count. There were at least two flat tires and countless close calls driving through snow and ice storms. I probably drove through at least sixty blizzard like days/nights. My car needed an oil change every six weeks. I had to replace my brakes and tires every nine months. After all those years of driving from house to house and town to town to teach private music classes everyday, it was time for a change. It was time to open my own music studio.

To most, it would seem obvious to have made this leap far sooner than I did. From the outside, many saw my job as crazy. The mileage on my car, the lost time between lessons, the weather, why would anyone choose to run a business this way?



## Step 2 Sell The Message

As I mentioned above, I'd been traveling to people's homes for eighteen years. Basically, I was the home delivery service of music education in three counties in Michigan. Not many teachers were crazy enough to do that. With a studio, I was no longer so unique or convenient. It took me a couple of weeks to see that I wasn't just selling a new studio. I was selling myself as a teacher with twenty years of teaching strings and piano under my belt. What made me different? The month of December saw a lot of soul searching.



Eventually, I broke the news to my students and parents. I did so in such a way to spin the upside and downplay any inconvenience. The studio was within walking distance of the middle school and high school in town. Older students could walk from their last class to their lessons and parents could pick them up later. There was also a pizza place, a Mediterranean restaurant, and an ice cream parlor next to the studio. Parents could hang out or moms could meet for coffee or pick up dinner while kids had their lessons. It

was 2018 and things were looking up. The studio opened in January. Students came and a few left but for the most part, I kept my head above water.

## Step 3 Evaluate After the First Year

I learned so many lessons that first year. When I first started, I invested in a few extra stringed instruments; a cello, a viola, a couple violins in the event kids might forget theirs. That never happened. Eventually, I sold the instruments and used the money to pay back my initial investment. It was important to me to get out of debt. I bought the piano used so that was free and clear. There had been office furniture, computer programs, company signs and banners that needed paying off. My second year saw to that.

## Step 4 Look Ahead, Listen to the Community

The second year of business taught me to listen to my community. I had a vision for the studio, but if no one joined me in the vision, my business wouldn't have much staying power. I diversified. From the studio, I taught some students remotely because parents couldn't drive their kids due to scheduling and work conflicts. I started a bi-lingual preschool music program on days when the local preschool co-op was closed. I offered recitals at local businesses to introduce parents to their products and services.

## Step 5 Adapt

Covid-19 has closed many music studios. I am fortunate that my landlord has worked with me. Two years of online music teaching set me ahead of the pack. Luck and adaptation is the only way I've survived. Like music, I take each week day by day, note by note, hoping for a grand finale. ■



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Santa Cruz, is a lovely central California town a little over half an hour from the South Bay.

As a college town, it's home to UC Santa Cruz, a world-class research institution. Its lush two-thousand-acre campus is covered in gorgeous Redwood trees.

Downtown Santa Cruz is home to many fine eateries, bookshops, record stores, bars, and a kava shop. Wednesdays from 1 to 6 there's a Farmer's Market. First Fridays showcase the creative side of Santa Cruz, hosting local artists and artisans.

Santa Cruz is home to many gorgeous beaches. Natural Bridges State Beach features tidal pools and natural arched bridge-like structures on the shore and out in the water. There is an observation deck at Pyramid Beach, looking down over cliffs. Mitchell's Cove Beach offers a luxurious stroll for dog owners under natural arches and over golden sands. Lighthouse Point, the northern most point of Monterey Bay, is a well-liked surfer destination. The Mystery Spot, just outside of Santa Cruz in the redwood forests, features strange gravitational anomalies that have been perplexing visitors since 1939.

Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk is a popular tourist attraction featuring roller coasters, rides, and an arcade. Established in 1907, the popular Boardwalk can be seen in movies such as *Us*, *The Lost Boys*, and *Bumblebee*. It's a stop on the Santa Cruz, Big Trees and Pacific Railway, a heritage railroad track. The bridge on the track is shown in the movie *The Lost Boys*. The amusement park itself includes vintage rides such as the 1911, Loeff Carousel and the 1924 Giant Dipper roller coaster.

Near the Santa Cruz Wharf and adjacent to the Boardwalk, is the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Exploration Center, which gives insight into local marine life. ■

An advertisement for StraightUpSauced\_ featuring frozen fruit bars. The background is a collage of ice cubes, water splashes, and various fruits like raspberries, kiwi, and strawberries. The text "NEW SAU-CEE FLAVORS!" is in large blue letters at the top, with "GRAB IT WHILE IT'S COLD!" below it. A QR code is in the top right corner. The flavors listed are "FORBIDDEN FRUIT • ORANGE DREAMSICLE" and "WATERMELON WATERWORKS". The brand name "StraightUpSauced\_" is in the bottom left corner.




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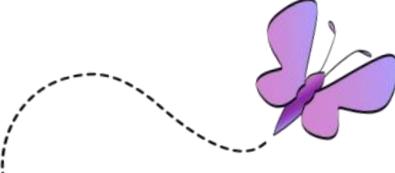
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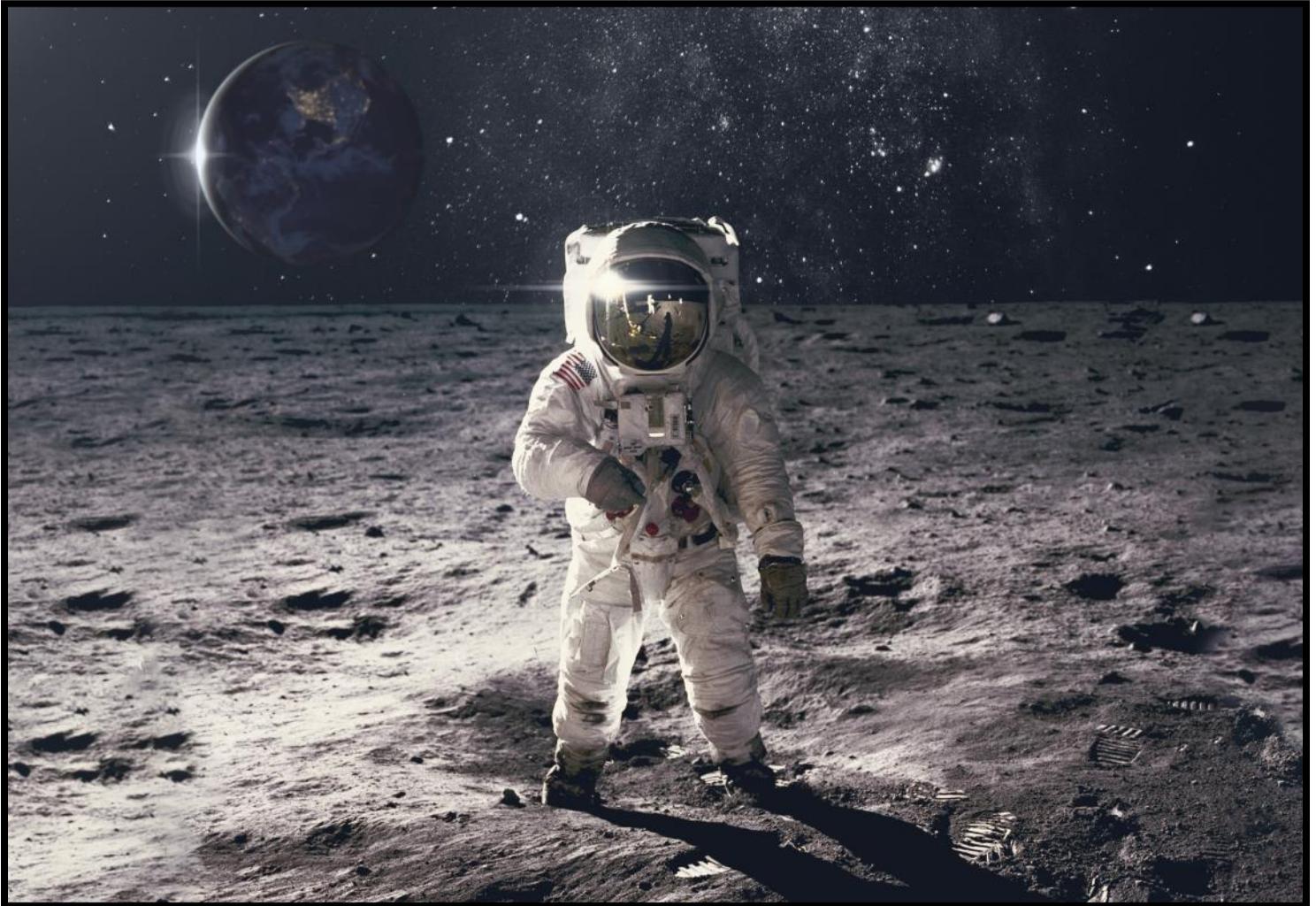



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## The Final Frontier and Beyond



This is not the article I had planned on writing. With the advent of Covid19, everything in our known world has changed, perhaps a few of them permanently.

From virtual video Zoom meetings to how we handle our children's birthdays, every part of our lives has been affected, regardless of age, social standing, or electronic equity. Right now, all our localities are suffering from lack of resources and funds. This can affect everything from our food banks, to museums, art spaces, and in this case, a local learning center and valuable resource to its community, the non-profit Chabot Space and Science Center.

The center is currently not open to the public and won't re-open until June of next year.

Located in the lovely Redwood Regional Park in Oakland, California. Its inception began in 1882 when the Oakland School District Superintendent determined the bay area should have a telescope. In 1885, Anthony Chabot funded a Transit Telescope that served as the official time keeping station for all the bay area. In the subsequent years, the observatory was built in two prior locations until it came to its final resting place here in Oakland during which time it acquired two more telescopes, a full dome planetarium, individual classrooms, and an array of permanent and changing exhibits. It has been in this location for twenty years, now. In that time, it has become a hub of learning and exploration.

The facility hosts more than 189,000 general visitors with 50,000 students: pre-kindergarten to high school annually from various schools within the bay area.

It reaches more than 2000 teachers annually through field trips, science fairs, various outreach programs, dinner with a scientist, and other various activities.

I consider Chabot Space and Science Center one of the leading providers of Science, technology, engineering, mathematics, (S.T.E.M.), and Science, technology, engineering, arts, mathematics, (S.T.E.A.M.) Education in the eastern bay area is a growing and important part of the future.

With the main facility shut down, the majority of the learning is done online now. However, I'd like to go over some of their permanent exhibits that shall be awaiting you when they re-open. Consider it something to look forward to.

Chabot Space and Science Center has twelve permanent interactive exhibits at their disposal. One is called the *Observation Deck*. It includes the following: *Sound Observations, Sky Station, Sky Mirror, Sky Mosaic, Pinhole Cameras, Lab Bench, Heat Camera, Daily Log, Mounted Scopes, Big Dipper, Sun Observatory, Telescope Pad, and Mutual Air*, a collaborative installation. To quote Chabot's website is it "...a network of bells that reflect the composition of our air.



Thirty chimes will work together in Oakland and across the bay to provide a detailed picture of real-time pollutant concentrations. *Mutual Air* is a series of sensor-activated chimes that sonify carbon fluctuations." To learn more about this permanent exhibit, please visit the observatory's website.

Other exhibits include: *Destination Universe, Going the Distance: Our Reach into Space*, which explores how human curiosity and endeavors propel us forward in our journey of space exploration. Featuring updates from *Space X, NASA Ames Research Lab*, and *CalTech JPL* among others, we can explore the future of space and the vast plethora of job opportuni-

ties it will provide us. *Project Create*, which is a hands on explorations of creativity and ideas includes a stop motion film station and tinker tailor. *Touch the Sun, Sky Portal* can show you exactly what the sky looked like on your birthday or any other important day to you. *Cosmic Ray Spark Chamber, the Discovery Lab* is geared towards the youngest of explorers, ages 0-5, and my favorite, *One Giant Leap: A moon Odyssey* not only gets you behind the wheel of a Mercury Space Capsule, it also boosts a moon rock retrieved from the Apollo 15 Mission and is 3.3 billion years old.

When the facility is open, it provides free evening viewings of the night sky through one of its telescopes on Fridays and Saturdays from 7:30-10:30pm, weather permitting. The space and science center is currently working on providing social distancing outdoor programming opportunities in the courtyard, amphitheater, observation deck, and surrounding areas with its *Learning Everywhere* initiative.

Before I move into what the facility is doing now amid the pandemic, I'd like to start off with a quote from Chabot's website. I feel it's important as it speaks to the facility's ultimate goals and aspirations. "The Chabot of today seeks to inspire visitors of all ages about the wonders of science, space, and our planet, Earth, through a wide range of hands-on indoors and outdoors exhibits, a tinkering space, community based S.T.E.A.M. events, workshops, lectures, displays, planetarium shows, school, programs, and three historic, research level telescopes."

Side note: the *Maya Skies Planetarium* show is my favorite thing at the center besides the moon rock. The show is beautifully put together and really manages to bring the creation stories of the Maya people to life. I recommend seeing it if you ever visit the facility.



The space center currently has a program called the *Learning Launchpad*. This is a virtual resource center and here you will find a plethora of activities that you can do from home. Currently, they have fun items such as the *Eye Patch Challenge*, *S'More Science*, which sounds like a real tasty activity, the *White Bread Experiment*-which is anything but tasty and not for germaphobes, *Design a Moon Habitat for Your Pet*, and their *Space Garden* series, featuring about half a dozen different plant related experiments which provides information on what it takes to feed people not only here on Earth, but in space as well. You can also compare your findings to the current tests being done on the *International Space Station*.



Currently on their events calendar, they have *Live Science* scheduled for every Wednesday. The half hour program asks a question about an experiment being performed with the answer given at the end. The theme of the experiments change every month to keep things fresh and interesting. Every Saturday night they have a *Virtual Telescope Viewing* where the viewer can look through the observatory's most powerful telescope into the bay area night sky and even boosts live astronomers to answer your questions. These events are free to watch via Facebook live.

One of my favorite available resources is listed under the *Learning Launchpad-More from our Friends and Partners, Storytime Videos-Storytime from Space*. It's children's stories read by astronauts in the *International Space Station*. The great thing about this is, aside from the fact it's an astronaut reading a story while on the *International Space Station*, is the fact they do it in various languages such as Arabic and Japanese.

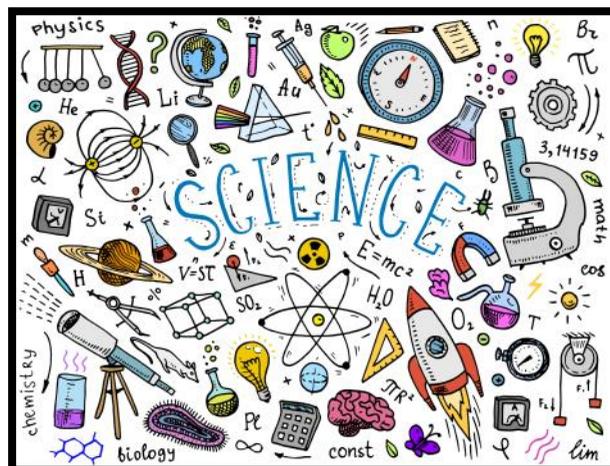
My personal favorite is the reading of *Mousetronat*, written by astronaut Mark Kelly and read by his twin brother, Scott Kelly, who is also an astronaut.

I look forward to hearing *Mousetronaut Goes to Mars* when it comes out. There is even a story written by LeVar Burton of *Star Trek* fame that is coming out soon. I can already think of friends that will want to check that out.

Chabot has a strong social media presence in Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube which is updated frequently. However, surprisingly, the space center's website blog seems to only be updated sporadically. My suggestion is if you want to keep up with the ever-revolving door of wonder with the facility is to follow them on one of those platforms.

So, you see, even though the facility itself is shut down, that doesn't mean that the learning ceases. As humans, one trait has defined us as a species, aside from our curiosity. It's our ability to adapt to changing circumstances. It's that ability that has kept our species evolving, seeking ever expanding horizons, and leading us through a wondrous journey filled with endless mysteries and exploration. If you get a chance or are in the area, please consider stopping by Chabot Space and Science center once it is safe to do so. In the meantime, you have a whole universe of exploring you can do, right at home. Just because time has seemed to have slowed down a bit, that doesn't mean the world has gotten smaller. In fact, you're only just now seeing how big it can really be.

If you have not already done so, please consider donating to one of your local resources. You'll be helping your community in ways that you can't even imagine. Even a few dollars can go a long way with these programs. ■





## Using Tarot in Your Creative Life

The Tarot is a system of divination that uses seventy-eight illustrated cards to reveal universal truths. Most modern decks are based off the Rider-Waite-Smith deck, designed and illustrated in 1909.

From a structure of twenty-two major arcana cards and fifty-minor arcana cards (the latter divided into four suits), illustrators and authors have designed an immense number of works including not only new decks but also songs, plays, novels, and other forms of art.

As writers, we can use tarot motifs in the text directly or as inspiration behind the scenes. Whether as a writing exercise or a brainstorming technique, the cards can be used to spark the imagination and try out potential plot. A number of books contain tarot exercises for writers, including *The Creative Tarot* by Jessa Crispin and *Tarot for Writers* by Corrine Kenner.

The simplest way to use tarot as a writing prompt is to lay out a sequence of cards. I suggest three cards since it gives you a beginning, middle, and end. You might pick a fourth to represent your protagonist. Use these pictures to make a story. You do not have to know the assigned meanings of the cards to do this. Let yourself be inspired by the pictures. Let's say for instance that I use the Rider-Waite-Smith deck, Major Arcana Cards only. I pull The Moon as my protagonist card, followed by Temperance, Justice, and The Magician. My story might read:

*A traveler journeyed all night along an empty road under the full moon. At dawn she came to a river where a guide helped her cross and offered her clean water to drink. She kept following the road through the hills until she came to a marble city. She went to court and asked for justice because her family, who lived a long way away, had been killed. The judge turned her away but in the plaza outside the courthouse she met a magician who promised to teach her all she would need to know to avenge her family herself.*

In *The Creative Tarot*, Jessa Crispin suggests using tarot to form and check the structure of your book as it progresses. In this exercise, it helps to know something about the cards before you begin. Let's say your book is projected to have twelve chapters. You can randomly draw cards, one to represent each chapter or select them yourself by whichever images you think best match the theme and tone of the chapter or section. By choosing deliberately, the writer can get a high-level symbolic view of the story structure. Many writers have had the experience of one element of a story overtaking all the others. Are the suits evenly distributed? Does one dominate the story, and if so, is that by your design or has the plot accidentally skewed in one direction at the cost of another? Are the transitions clear? For instance, imagine the first half of a story is dominated by cards from the suit of cups, which represent emotion and intuition, and the second half by swords, which represent logic and intellect. Is that on purpose, or did you forget to include something important? If intentional, does the tonal transition flow?



Tarot is art, not science. Have fun.

Should you use a tarot reader as a character in your story, please be aware of common pitfalls around cultural appropriation and derogatory terms regarding the Romani people. The word *gypsy* is considered derogatory. The preferred terms are Roma, which may be the language, Romani, or Roma. People in subgroups such as the Sinti or the Lovari usually prefer to be referred to by their subgroup name. Tarot did not originate among the Romani, and not all Romani read tarot cards. Some do, of course, but most practice no divination at all and of those that do, many do not use tarot cards, preferring plain decks of cards or palmistry. Romani history, culture, and religion is complex, and a Romani person should not be reduced to a *fortune-telling* character.



Another way to use tarot as a writing tool is to turn the characters on the cards into characters in your story. Where is the Fool going? How did the Hanging Man get up there, and how will he get down? What secrets will the High Priestess reveal?

It is completely acceptable for an author to make up their own cards, as T.S. Eliot does in *The Wasteland*. Terry Pratchett, author of the Discworld series, made up a whole new deck called Caroc which has eight suits and includes a card called *The Importance of Washing the Hands*.

Tarot is a beautiful and complex system of using art to link the subconscious and the conscious. For more about this art form, check out *Seventy-Eight Degrees of Wisdom*, by Rachel Pollack, or *Holistic Tarot*, by Benebell Wen. Examples of Tarot in fiction include *The Books of Magic*, by Neil Gaiman, a graphic novel. For an experimental work of literary fiction, read *The Castle of Crossed Destinies*, by Italo Calvino. *Eight of Swords* by David Skibbins is a modern-day mystery, and *Last Sun*, by K.D. Edwards is a science fiction novel. A wonderful world awaits you. ■



# Spooky Writer's Planner

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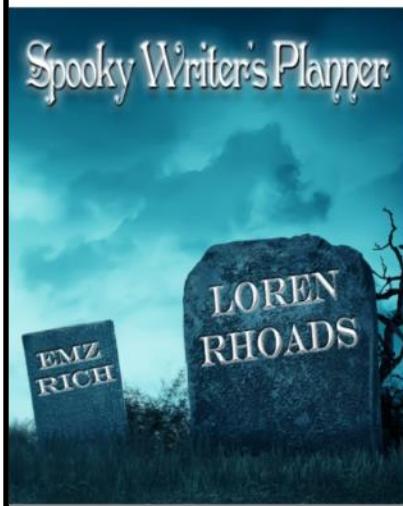
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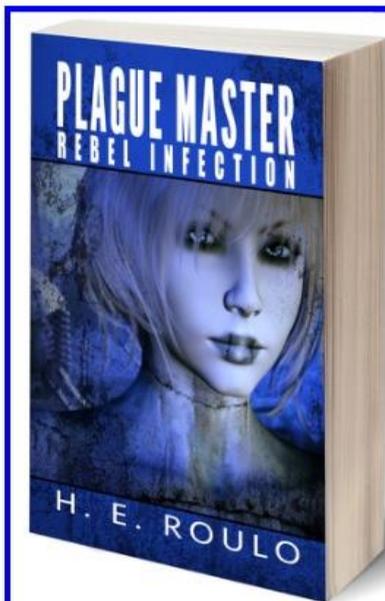


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## PLAGUE MASTER: REBEL INFECTION

BY H.E. ROULO



Trevor's return from the zombie infection makes him unique. It also makes him dangerous.

He's a hero on his homeworld, celebrated for finding a vaccine against the zombie virus, but the ruling Founders don't trust him and his low origins. When the revolution comes, Trevor is caught in the middle.

Despite his homeworld's troubles, a message from a Plague Master forces Trevor to seek reinforcements. He hunts for Kristin, the woman he left behind, and an answer to why the vaccine is failing.

He and his friends must fight on space stations and worlds overtaken with infected to discover the terrible truth about his cure.

# FOOD | #Enhancingyourhorizon BY BRIAN AND PATRICIA DAKE

## Spicy Asian Chicken with Green Beans and Mushrooms



Stir-fried green beans have long been a personal favorite of mine. With a texture both crisp and tender, they combine admirably with garlic, mushrooms, and chili paste.

Chili paste comes in many varieties and varies in heat, color, and quality. We prefer a Vietnamese chili paste called Sambal Oelek as it is very hot, bright red in color, and has a fresh chili taste. Be careful to avoid chili paste that has turned dark, brown, or smells rancid. Chili paste, while used as a seasoning, cannot be kept as long as spices. You want to always make sure yours is fresh. Because good chili paste is quite hot, we only use a teaspoon in this entire dish. It is just enough to infuse it with a wonderful chili flavor that melds incredibly well with the other ingredients. Sesame oil is also essential for the flavor of this recipe; so, for the best results, use only high-quality sesame oil.

We use cornstarch as a coating for browning the chicken. The secret to making this work is to keep the cooking heat at medium level. Using higher tem-

peratures will cause the cornstarch to flake off the chicken pieces and stick to the pan. This makes for difficult cleanup. Using the lower heat increases the chicken cook time but produces a more desirable result.

One would expect this dish to be served over white rice, which is traditional; but as we become ever more conscious of carbohydrates in our diet, we've come to prefer serving it over hot riced cauliflower instead. The riced cauliflower provides added flavor while reducing carbohydrate intake.

If you desire a wine pairing, I recommend a spicy Sauvignon Blanc, as it will complement the natural flavors of the chicken, garlic, and chili paste without overpowering the more delicate flavors of the vegetables.

### Ingredients

- \*1 pound Green beans, fresh
- \*4 large Garlic cloves
- \*1/4 teaspoon salt
- \*2 tablespoon water



- \*1/2 teaspoon Cornstarch
- \*2 tablespoons Ginger root, fresh, grated
- \*1 teaspoon Chili paste
- \*3 tablespoons Soy sauce
- \*1 teaspoon Agave syrup
- \*6 to 8 mushrooms
- \*1 Chicken breast, large, boneless, skinless
- \*3 tablespoons Cornstarch
- \*2 tablespoons Cilantro, fresh
- \*4 tablespoons Sesame Oil

### Preparation

\*On a cutting board, cut both ends from each green bean. Discard ends. Cut green beans into 2.5-inch to 3-inch lengths.

\*Cut ends from garlic cloves, remove and discard peel from cloves.

\*Mince garlic into small pieces. Add salt. Mix to distribute salt. Let sit at least 3 minutes.

\*In a small bowl, mix water and cornstarch until cornstarch is dissolved.

\*Add fresh-grated ginger, garlic, chili paste, soy sauce, and agave to bowl and mix.

\*Slice mushrooms in 3/8-inch slices.

\*Chop cilantro until you've cut approximately 2 tablespoons of loose-packed cilantro.

\*On a cutting board, cut chicken breast into 3/8-inch slices approximately 1.5 inches long.

\*Add 1/3 of chicken to a medium bowl and sprinkle with 1 tablespoon cornstarch.

Mix well with a cooking spoon to distribute cornstarch. Repeat twice more with the remaining chicken and cornstarch.

### Cook

\*A lower heat helps the chicken retain the cornstarch coating when cooked. In a wok or a large skillet over medium heat, add 2 tablespoons of sesame oil. Cook individual pieces of chicken in small batches. When chicken is golden brown, remove to paper-lined plate.

\*Repeat with small batches of remaining chicken, adding more oil if necessary.

\*Set cooked chicken aside.

\*Set heat on wok to high and add 2 tablespoons of sesame oil. Heat the oil. Just before it begins to smoke, add green beans and sliced mushrooms.

\*Stir until green beans begin to slightly blister and are almost tender. Remove green beans and mushrooms. Set aside.

\*Turn off heat under wok and allow to cool for 3 minutes.

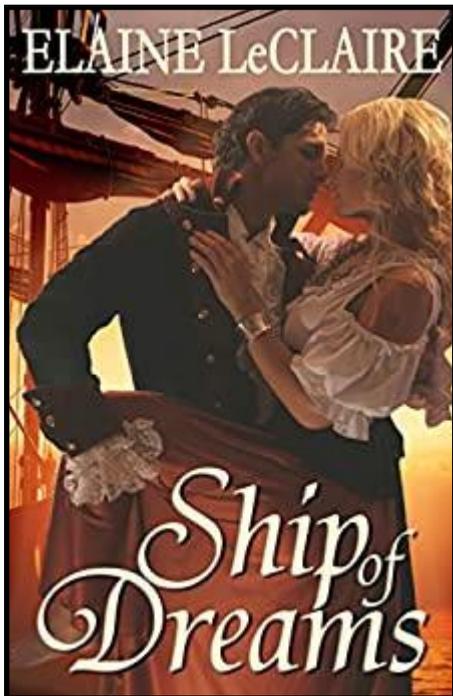
\*Stir soy-chili mixture and add to wok over medium heat. Stir while mixture cooks and thickens slightly (1 to 2 minutes).

\*Add green beans, chicken, and cilantro to wok and stir until coated. Continue to cook until cilantro wilts and garlic begins to release its aroma (3 to 5 minutes).

### Serve

\*Place stir-fry into serving bowl and drizzle with any remaining sauce from pan. Serve over hot riced cauliflower or cooked white rice. ■





Master of his destiny, terror of the Caribbean, the pirate Black Angel is also elegant, charming and seductive.

En route to Jamaica to bring her brother news of their father's death, Lady Rosalind Hanshaw is captured by the Black Angel, a legendary French pirate who targets English shipping.

Torn between her loyalty to her homeland and her growing attraction to the one man she should hate above all others, Rosalind must decide whether the Black Angel is nothing more than a despicable pirate or if he holds the key to both her heart and her future. ■

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# FITNESS | *Using a Treadmill Desk*

BY KIM RICHARDS

Working on a treadmill desk sounds like a great way to get work and exercise done at the same time. However, there are things to consider. Safety first. A good 8-10 inches of clearance is needed on any side. Get measurements of the treadmill before purchasing. Tiled flooring is best, but you can use it on a carpet with a mat to protect from wear or heat from the treadmill. Outside isn't a good idea. Weather adversely affects the performance and longevity.

Solid footing and good foot support prevents injuries. Get a good pair of shoes, nothing with a slick sole. No heels, sandals, bare feet, or in socks. Avoid wide pant legs or long skirts that might get caught up in the treadmill. Wear clothing, particularly pants, which allow for non-restrictive movement.

Begin sessions at the lowest setting in five-minute increments, gradually increasing speed and time as you build up leg muscles. The idea is to be able to comfortably walk and talk at the same time.

Be mindful of *how* you walk. Normally we walk heel to toe propelling our bodies forward. The treadmill does the forward motion. Think of it as a flat-footed step, holding onto the handrails until you feel confident.

Be aware of your surroundings. When someone speaks to you, stop. It's easy to become distracted and stumble.

The next things to consider are tasks you want to accomplish while walking. Sewing or using tools can cause accidents. Typing can be done with practice but at a slower rate. Some useful things are online meetings, reading, watching videos, listening to music, talking on the phone, or watching television.

Enjoy your treadmill desk. While there's a lot to consider, it can be a beneficial experience. ■

Advertisement for "body by me FITNESS". It features two women in branded clothing (black t-shirts and leggings with "body by me" and "tbm" logos) holding coffee. The background is black with the "body by me FITNESS" logo in pink and blue. Social media icons for Instagram and Facebook are present, along with a QR code and the website URL [www.bodybymefitness.com](http://www.bodybymefitness.com).



In this new world where many families are sheltering in place, parents must find creative solutions when it comes to keeping our kids happy, healthy, and moving forward. A predictable, consistent home life with a regular routine is a key element of good mental health. This provides a safe space for the exploration of something new.

From *Why is Routine so Important to People with ASD?* "Though it might seem counterintuitive, reinforcing routines can actually help those with ASD to stop relying on them so much as a crutch. Routine can be powerful in reinforcing a feeling of well-being and stability for autistic individuals. When that sense of stability and wellness is fulfilled, then it can actually be easier for them to handle other changes."

Finding new areas of interest and the appropriate activities can be a challenge. This is all the truer when our kids are on the spectrum. What happens when our kids don't want anything new?

When they actively resist anything that's not familiar, not part of a long-established routine?

#### **Why ASD kids have trouble with change?**

Difficulties with the executive functions of the brain are hallmarks of ASD and ADHD. This often shows up is an inability to start new tasks. The team at [www.understood.org](http://www.understood.org) explain why.

Kids with executive functioning issues and ADHD often have a hard time firing up the energy for tasks they have little to no interest in. It comes, not because they're lazy, but from an inefficient chemical process in the brain.

The brain uses electrical impulses to carry messages from one neuron to the next. These messages help us notice things, pay attention, and act. The release of certain brain chemicals help make those connections.

In some kids, the brain doesn't always release enough of those chemicals, but when something comes along that's interesting or exciting, their brain releases a larger amount which helps them get started and stay engaged with that task. That's why some kids can focus for hours on videogames but not on homework.

## Transitions:

ASD kids often have trouble making transitions from one activity to another. In his article *Smoother Transitions for Children on the Autism Spectrum*, Christopher Lynch, PhD writes, "With autism, the difficulty with making transitions is not intentional. Instead, the child struggles with making the cognitive adjustments necessary to move on. Consequently, transitions in autism are often plagued with stress, anxiety, and frustration."

Some proven ways of helping ASD kids get all the way to the end of an activity include visual support, verbal prompts, and gentle redirection. Such support can keep an ASD kid focused and motivated.



### How to capture their interest:

1. Anchor the activity to something familiar. If you can demonstrate the similarities between the positive experience the ASD kid had with a food, an activity, etc., that will help make cognitive connections to a reference the ASD kid can process more easily.

2. Frame it so it gets the ASD kid closer to where they want to go.

My son John wants to work as an animator for movies and TV. That requires a lot of study and practice. I have to build a bridge between that abstract information and the goals John wants to achieve. A friend of mine, Tom, has worked for Warner Bros. To John that is the top of the mountain. John wants to be like Tom, so when I explain which subjects Tom has studied to become a professional artist, John is more willing to give them a try.

3. Reward even small victories:

Success deserves recognition. Words of praise, a sticker for the chart, bonus time with electronic devices, whatever works best.



### Be flexible:

Looking into the new activity might lead to the ASD kid taking an interest in something else. Go with it. Encourage the open-mindedness that leads to such discoveries.

### Build on success:

Which parts of the search brought the ASD kid the most pleasure? Use those as starting points for the next adventure. The fun they had last time will motivate the ASD kid to try something new again.

Positive reinforcement: Always cheer on any success, no matter how small. Any willingness to consider something new is an act of courage for ASD kids who spend so much of their time battling anxiety.

"Now, bring me that horizon!"

In *Pirates of the Caribbean, The Curse of the Black Pearl*, Captain Jack Sparrow is desperate to recover his ship. The Black Pearl is not the end of the quest. For Jack, the pirate ship is the means to an end. The ship will take him anywhere he wants to go, and to Jack, that means freedom. All of us have a pirate ship inside our heads, our imagination. Helping our ASD kids learn to trust the joy of discovery will surely enable them to lead lives of much greater scope and meaning. ■



So far, so good is my mantra these days. Each day brings with it a little more change, a little step forward, and I've learned to appreciate each of those incremental shifts of both my life and the garden from sunrise to sunset and night, from spring all the way to winter and back around again.

The garden has come full circle. The earth is more packed than last year, and it is now interspersed with established plants. The spot I liked to once sit in the curve of the stone wall, the space that got over-run with tomatoes last year, is now framed by a lavender bush. On the other side of the path is a rosemary that may or may not make it. Rosemary is weird like that here. It will last through the snow and rain, send up new growth, then it will either turn brown and shrivel or it will survive and thrive. There is no in between. I can only hope the precautions and adjustments I've made by mixing more sand with the soil and planting among the flagstones and stones of the bed walls will enable this rosemary bush to thrive this time.

Winter is always a bit of a coin toss season in my area as it tends to be much warmer than the mountains where I grew up, but it is still cold enough during some years that it will kill off everything in sight. Other years are so mild everything comes back in force, and the pruning season starts early. Spring is the wait-and-see time, to regroup and take stock of what winter left behind and to begin the process all over again.

First: the fertilizing and refilling of the beds. The soil here is clay, and it gets packed quickly.

My plan is to mix in vermiculite as it is a great additive to break up the clay, but I also like to add organic garden soil to the mix along with kitchen scraps so the entire bed becomes its own compost heap over the winter. Throughout the season last year, ground eggshells fed the tomatoes and squash while the winter broke down whatever vegetable scraps were left in the beds.

I marked off where everything was and planned, planned, planned. Because I am a bit of a Darwinist at heart, I left more than a few plants to fend for themselves with a backup plan to get replacements in spring should the need arise.

Some surprises awaited me at the end of the season last year, such as late-blooming borage, a tiny emerging pawpaw patch where the pawpaw trees were planted originally, and the tomatoes and squash bloomed and produced straight into November.

The big pawpaw tree we transplanted will continue to be babied until it perks up a little more. Since the pawpaw tree is a bit of a late leafer in the spring, it's hard to tell sometimes if it got killed off until it starts putting out flowers.

The areas where squash and tomatoes were left are marked so when I see the first hints of the new year's vegetable garden, I'll be ready. I'm still trying to figure out the best locations for the vegetables. The squash did great, better than ever before, as did the tomatoes. Observing the movement of the sun throughout the day and the season has given me a better idea of where to position everything.

The tomatoes will go in the area of the garden that gets more indirect sunlight. The squash will go toward the front and get trellises. The mint is coming in nicely, which will protect the apple trees from the squirrels. The pawpaw trees protect themselves from the squirrels for the time being, but they will also have mint to protect them since the squirrels don't like the scent of mint.

In redoing the entire garden so drastically, I learned something about myself: I still like to help and connect with people as much as I used to when I was much younger, and the garden has really helped me do that while also helping people who walk past, stop to take a moment, and enjoy everything that my small area has to offer. This year, it also provided food as well as joy. ■



*Sole Sistahs*  
STYLISH LOOKS FOR STYLISH SOULS



## Overcome Imposter Syndrome



Are you stuck in a rut? Feel like no one notices your work? Are you phoning it in because your talent is totally crap?

If you think you're an embarrassing amateur wasting everyone's time, then you are not alone. You have Impostor Syndrome, which Wikipedia defines as *a psychological pattern in which an individual doubts their accomplishments or talents and has a persistent internalized fear of being exposed as a fraud*. How does one overcome these fears? Here are a few tips to infuse your niche and heal your ego.

1. Try something new. Beginners get a free pass when learning something for the first time, right? Tackle something easy. Pat yourself on the back for the accomplishment. Returning to an old hobby allows for mistakes, too. You're just rusty. Take an online course adjacent to your work and arm yourself against doubts by gaining knowledge. If you fail to meet a new goal, it's okay. You didn't know what you were doing. Make a list of things you want to do. Try one every week. How bold trying anything once. Check off every attempt and prove what confidence you've gained. With a fresh task, you are never an impostor, just a humble novice with forward the only place to go.

2. Don't have time for tackling new projects?

Stroll barefoot around the yard or put out a bird feeder. Rather than seeing the garden or lawn as work, pause and breathe in their nurturing qualities. Lay down on the moss and look up at the sunshine, clouds, and rustling trees. Don't have a nearby retreat? Take a drive. By foot or motor, there is no destination, traffic, or rush.

3. Deadlines, procrastination, and a lack of timelines can contribute to inferior impostor blues. If you must live by the calendar, build in a detox hour. Physically writing *Me Time* in your book or giving yourself phone alerts to have a cup of tea breaks the stress of the day. It's not time wasted if you are rejuvenated. Shut down your devices. Allow yourself nothing time. Remember how soothing it can be without the constant smartphone pressure. Use music, meditation techniques, or breathing exercises. No one else is going to take care of you, so stop letting others impose on your time.

4. Ignore social media. Are we failing because we're busy comparing ourselves to the apparent success of others? We're in a constant one-upmanship battle against rampant peer pressure on everything. Get rid of it! Use website tools to unfollow or block envious handles. You aren't missing the latest. Pinterest distracting you more than it's inspiring new ideas? Let it go. Don't be afraid to leave groups or forums when keeping up becomes a draining chore. If you must remain online, research new websites that provide a more beneficial experience than *keeping up with the Joneses*.

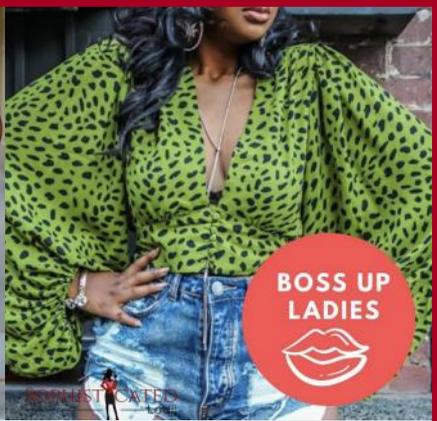
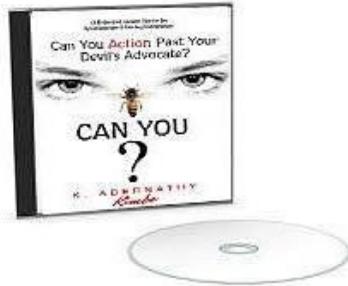
After our recent collective toils, it's okay to not be okay. If you feel like an impostor, admit it's a struggle. Who said achievements only come with mastered perfection? Rather than obsessing on deceptive appearances, remember it's not a fraud to enjoy the quest.

A perpetual sufferer of Impostor Syndrome, author Kristin Battestella also writes at *HorrorAddicts.net* in addition to film criticism at *I Think, Therefore I Review*. ■

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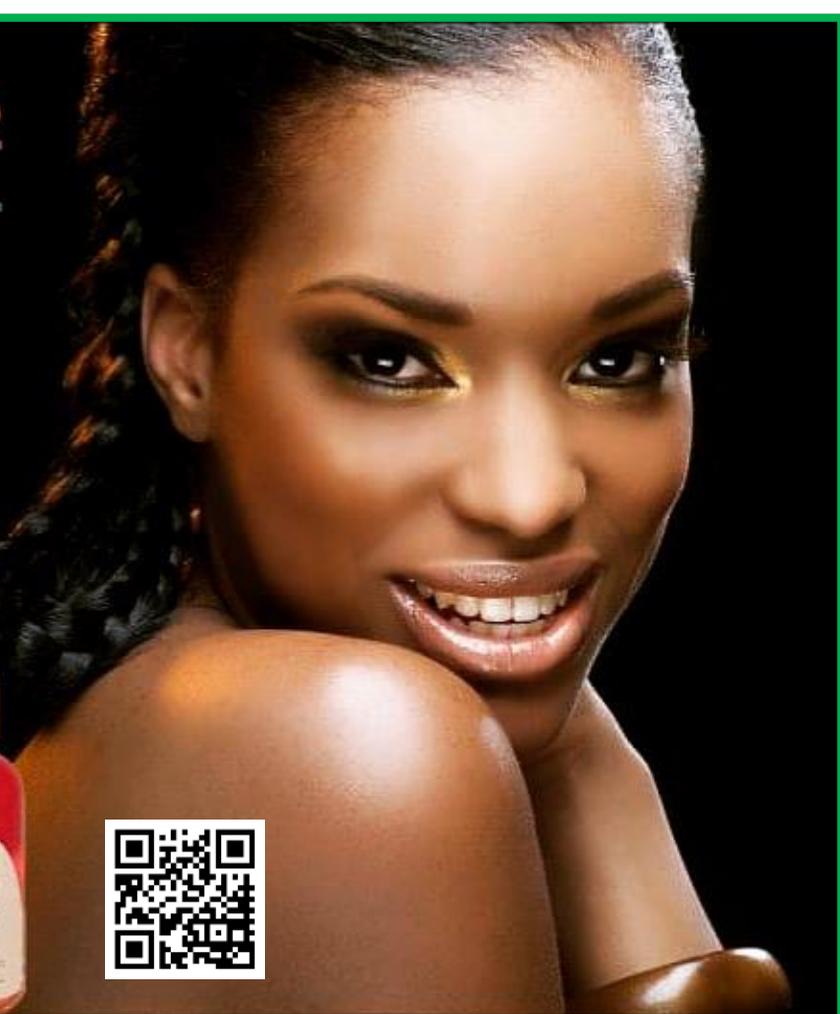
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