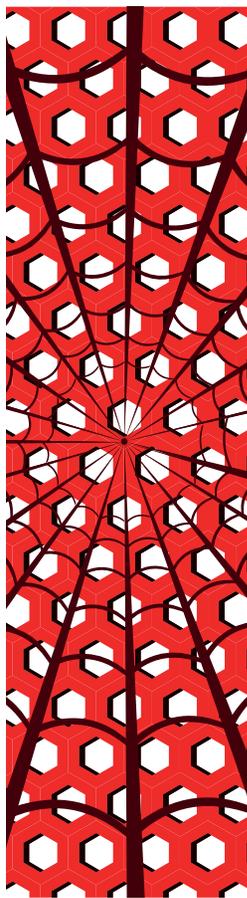




12 | 2020

the INTRO ISSUE



04

Cool ways to social distance with friends

06

REVIEW
Emily in Paris is très magnifique

08

REVIEW
'Spider-Man' swings into the 'Spider-Verse'

10

REVIEW
Truth is black and white in Pokémon

12

ACTION!
How to start a business as a teen

18

REVIEW
Persona 5 Royal is stylish and fun

20

Examining the teenage depression experience

21

REVIEW
Among Us is definitely no Impostor!

STAYING in

STAY
SAFE

STAY
- at -
HOME

#SELF
quarantine

social DISTANCING

Cool ways to socially distance with friends

by DESTINY HALL HARPER

As we all know, in this current climate, we have to adjust to the times. We, as human beings on this crazy planet we call earth, need human interaction. Due to the current global pandemic, we have seen classes go virtual, big events cancelled, and have been forced to see our loved ones mainly through screens or behind doors, should you visit them. This virus, however, has also shown us cool ways to “chill” with friends. Without further ado, here are 5 ways to socially distance with friends!

1. Zoom Watch Party: Hear me out! This may seem lame, but gather a few friends, choose a TV show or movie, host a Zoom meeting at a set time, and enjoy! Press the play button at the same time on camera, so all of you can watch at the same time!

2. A Distanced Picnic: Should the situation arise where you have to see your buds, have a picnic on separate blankets and a few feet apart. Again, not ideal, but I have seen plenty of friends wearing masks in the park on separate blankets laughing and giggling as if they were physically together.

3. Virtual Study Dates: This pertains more towards older students but is perfect to stay motivated during online classes! A virtual meeting can help

keep you and your friends accountable for schoolwork while also potentially having some questions answered. Brownie points if you play dope music in the background.

4. Video Games: Video games were socially distant before it was cool! I cannot think of a better way to relax, unwind, and still connect with friends. This can involve online multiplayer, mobile games, the list goes on and on. Get creative!

5. Drive-By Shout outs:

My family and I have personally driven by family and friends' houses to drop off gifts and say hi, all from the car. You do need a car. Drive by and quickly catch up on life or just give a “thinking of you” gift. The little things go a long way.

We are currently in a very trying time, but that doesn't mean you still can't form meaningful connections. Get creative. Start viewing screens as more of a necessary portal to your pals and not a barrier. Happy Social Distancing! ●

NETFLIX IN PARIS

New streaming show is très magnifique

by RaJAHNÉ HARRIS

Netflix just released a new show called *Emily in Paris*, starring Lily Collins. This show is about Emily (Lily Collins), a marketing agent, whose boss was going to go to Paris for a new job. Sadly, she finds out that she is pregnant and decides to not take the job. In place of her manager, Emily heads to Paris and leaves behind all her friends and her boyfriend. When she arrives, she is met by several people who are not fond of her love for work and inability to speak French. Her new boss, Sylvie (Philippine Leroy-Beaulieu), does not like her from the start and develops a special distaste for Emily. She seems to ruin a lot of things Sylvie was working toward. Along the way, Emily also makes a pretty cool friend Mindy (Ashley Park), and falls into some boy trouble. If you've watched *Sex and the City* (and if you

have not, maybe you should because it is pretty great) then you know the creator Darren Star is amazing at bringing badass female characters to life.

This show is pretty fast paced. For example, within the first five minutes, Emily is already moving to Paris. The beginning of the show leaves a lot to be desired because the transition in the first couple of minutes was, to say the least, drastic. So what keeps the viewer watching if the script is not the best? Quarantine brain. This show was so easy to watch and made me forget about the terrible state of the world currently.

SPOILER ALERT

Before I even get into the show I must address the elephant in the room. Why do English speakers think that everyone is just magically going to speak English? Emily shows up in

Paris, just goes to work not knowing French, and expects everyone to adjust to that. She did not even study the culture before just showing up and expecting everything to go well. Other than this, Lily Collins as Emily is amazing. Her acting really helps the viewer continue to watch the show because you are constantly wishing the best for her throughout whatever crazy plot line the show throws at you. Emily is such a well-rounded character. For someone to be thrown into a completely new job and country, she is well adjusted and confident. She is a workaholic and doesn't take crap from anyone, especially from men. Other than Emily being a great character, pretty much everyone else in the show delivered their role flawlessly. Mindy was so supportive and wasn't flat like most POC best friends in a show like this (YAY).

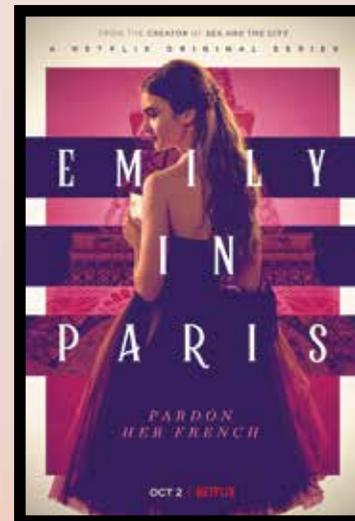
She is much more than just the support system for Emily, which is really refreshing. Maybe I am the only one thinking it, but it is terribly annoying when the best friend is one of the only people of color on the show, and they are solely there to support the main character.

only to find out he has a girlfriend. And this girlfriend is the same person who Emily kissed like 10 minutes ago. Talk about being frustrated. You see the perfect couple, and then the ship gets ripped away from you. The drama of it all is literally the best thing about the show.

Emily is always put in the most awkward of positions and still somehow manages to go through life with her head held high.

Is it worth the watch? I think so. If you love to waste a little bit of time worrying about a fictional story to take the edge off of life's hardships, then this is the show for you. If you can get over all the cliches and really enjoy US American show humor, you will find it very enjoyable. It is a show that does

not have anything sad. You might want to throw the device you are watching on and cringe, but hey, it is way better than wallowing in bed, looking at the world fall apart in front of your eyes! ●



Now, if you have watched it already, you know the main attraction to the show is Gabriel. I mean seriously, he is eye candy. I kept watching because of this amazing guy,

by KAVIN JACKSON

S *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse* is an animated film released December 14, 2018, written by Phil Lord and Rodney Rothman, and directed by Peter Ramsey, Bob Persichetti, and Rodney Rothman. The movie received a gross revenue of \$375.5 million and earned both BAFTA and The Academy Awards for Best Animated Film in 2019, and for good reasons. *Into the Spider-Verse* is a beautifully made movie with interesting characters and wonderful visual effects.

The movie is about Miles Morales who is the new Spider-Man coming into the role after the previous Spider-Man died trying to stop KingPin, a mob boss in the Spider-Man universe.

KingPin built a supercollider that explodes and brings Spider-people from different dimensions.

Throughout the movie, we meet up with the Spider-

people and get to know them as they all try to help Miles become Spider-Man and destroy the collider. The story is funny with some nice student-mentor relationship moments between Miles, Peter, and the other spiders.

The way the movie was made was wonderful and helps to sell the movie. Choosing to make the movie animated was a huge plus because it allowed for more interesting effects that wouldn't transfer as well in live-action. For example, the glitch effect that appears throughout the movie as the dimensions start to bleed into one another as other random objects fuse themselves would not do well live. One of my favorite aspects is how the animation is styled to look like comic book pages. It adds a bit of brightness, highlights certain parts of the background, and frames the characters nicely. The background is also blurred with a color overlay that makes it interesting to look at, especially if you are looking for details in the movie. Even the character's designs look like they

were ripped out from a comic book and placed in the movie. Each spider-person is different from one other with little differences that make them stand out and show that they are from a different universe. As an example, Spider-Man Noir is animated in black and white while everyone else is in color, and Peter Porker is animated as a 2-D cartoon character with the rubber-hose-limbs style of animation like you see in older cartoons. And when the movie explains the dimensions for where each came from, all are styled differently, showing a clear difference between them.

The voice cast all did a phenomenal job conveying the emotions. Shameik More, the voice of Myles Morales, does an incredible job. When Myles is angry

or upset, it is easily picked up on when he speaks in the inflection of his voice. With Jake Johnson, who voiced Peter B. Parker, you can hear how tired he is and his unwillingness to be a mentor to the new Myles sounding,

as he is completely over and done with being Spider-Man. Also, John Mulaney playing the comic relief character was a nice choice. His natural charisma was something that just made Peter Parker that much more enjoyable.

If I had to shame a few things, it would be when the rest of the spider gang gets introduced. Throughout the first half of the movie, we are slowly introduced to spider-people from different dimensions; however, the last three members are introduced at the same time. Although they played it off as a joke, being introduced together limited us from getting to know them and shunted them all as comic relief characters rather than fully developed characters, like Gwen and Peter. I would have liked for them to have been introduced sooner or have more character development, so we have a chance to get to know them. Overall, I cannot recommend this movie enough. Even if you don't like Spider-Man, this movie is heartwarming and very entertaining! ●

Choosing to make the movie animated was a huge plus because it allowed for more interesting effects that wouldn't transfer as well in live-action.

Spider-Man swings into the Spider-Verse

by **TRISTAN WYNN**

Ever since I was a little kid playing Pokémon Pearl on my DS Lite, the world of Pokémon has always been one of my favorites to explore. I could not really understand the stories some of these games were trying to tell at the time, but now as I go back and replay them as an adult, I comprehend some of the deeper meanings within them. No game in this series accentuates this fact better than *Pokémon Black and White* and their sequels. In all honesty, I could write a manifesto-length about the entry of Generation Five from gameplay to story details, but I would surely exceed my word count limit. Instead, I would like to focus on the core themes of *Black and White's* story, and how the characters represent these themes almost perfectly.

I will be dipping slightly into spoiler territory here, so if you haven't played this decade old DS game before and don't wish for it to be spoiled, I would turn back now. For everyone else, however, here is my summary. *Pokémon Black and White* take place in the Unova Region, a region of the Pokémon world that is based on New York City. In ancient Unova, there were once two princes, brothers who shared a legendary dragon-type Pokémon only known as "The Original Dragon." The elder brother loved the pursuit of truth and would not stop at any cost to learn it, no matter how horrid that truth may be. The younger brother loved the pursuit of the ideal life, one filled with ignorance of many things but pure bliss all the way through. Their opposing views drove the brothers apart and their dragon

along with them. Split in three, part of the dragon followed the brother who chased ideals and became the Electric and Dragon type, Zekrom. The other part of the dragon who followed the brother of truth would become the Fire and Dragon type, Reshiram. The empty husk that was left behind became the Ice and Dragon type, Kyurem. The brothers waged a war that destroyed both of their kingdoms and left their dragons dormant in ancient relics. Over the course of the game, almost every major character the player meets represents one of either truth, ideals, or a balance of the two.

Throughout the course of the game, the player meets many characters, starting with their rivals. Cheren is a stubborn, logical boy who is obsessed with finding what it means to be "truly strong;" although, when he starts his journey, he just thinks being strong is the ability to win battles effortlessly. The second rival you meet is Bianca, a girl who simply wants to leave her small town and travel the region on a journey. Bianca does not care about being strong at the beginning. She just wants to live her ideal life and have fun travelling the world. The third rival you meet is Natural Harmonia Gropius, or as everyone calls him, "N." N is a fast talking, erratic boy who can talk to Pokémon and understand what they say back. N is the King of the evil Team Plasma; although, he is not evil himself, just looking for balance and wanting the safety of Pokémon from harmful people.

These three rivals perfectly represent the concept of truth, ideals, and a middle ground. As the story progresses,

they each learn there is no concrete truth of strength, no ideal adventure, and no real way to be truly neutral, and that is perfectly okay. N in particular is interesting. He serves as a foil to however the player responds to his questions, and as such, is interestingly dynamic. By the end of the game, he can either come to respect the player as a trainer and a person or fear the world they will create with their newly found power.

The three rivals are incredible, but there are two more very important characters I would like to touch on briefly. Champion Alder and Ghetsis are polar opposites of one another, and like everyone in this game, represent something important: Proper and improper balance. Alder represents a proper balance of truth and ideals. He teaches Cheren that true strength comes from living a balanced life and to not just shoot for victory, but to also have fun. Ghetsis, on the other hand, is Team Plasma's true boss. Ghetsis sees the world in black and white, and his truth is that the strong will rule over the weak. He who has the power controls the world, and Ghetsis wants that power. He loses, however, due to being out of balance and flying into a blind rage when he sees that N has lost and turned to the side of the player. These two are such deep characters and it takes so much more to explain how truly deep they go.

Truth and ideals are not mutually exclusive. They require balance. Idealism alone cannot get you anywhere, but truth alone makes you lonely and leads to failure. *Black and White* goes so much deeper into this concept, and these five characters highlight this pretty well. ●

THROUGH THE LENS OF *POKÉMON BLACK AND WHITE*



TRUTH & IDEALS



LIGHTS CAMERA TAKE ACTION

HOW TO START A
BUSINESS AS A TEEN

by RaJAHNÉ HARRIS



TEN YEARS AGO,

my dad let me sit in on some of his photo shoots. As a pretty well-known producer here in Richmond, he had a large group of clients. I would sit and watch him and my mom work together to create the best picture possible. Just being a small part of this made me the happiest. From that moment on, any time I was near a camera, I would soak up everything I could. The camera was my best friend, and after a long time of watching my dad take pictures, I started to take my own. My dad had some customers, and since he also has a knee problem, I started taking the pictures that he couldn't get. From there my love for photography grew bigger than expected.

At 17 years old, I decided I wanted to do pictures on my own and hopefully make some extra money doing it. I found some people I went to school with and started taking their pictures. Right off the bat, I had a pretty bad experience. One of my classmates was not happy with the way I ran my business and was pretty vocal about it. Hearing someone trash your work when you first start doing it can be a pretty big slap in the face, and it was for me. I did not take another photo shoot for almost a year because I was worried about the negativity that might come with it. It takes a lot to prepare yourself for the kind of criticism you get when you start offering a service, and truly nothing can help you learn how to deal with it other than having a bad experience yourself. Through talking with someone at a community center I used to go to, we decided to do a shoot together, and it was the best experience. She helped me become more confident in my work and start building my business. Having a big support system and people who share your work or recommend you is a huge part of becoming a successful business owner. I surrounded myself with people who were passionate about their new businesses, and we worked together to support each other.

Starting my business was hard, there were so many small things that I didn't think about. How do I get a business license? What is a trademark, and do I need to have one? My first stop was YouTube where there are hundreds of people going through similar experiences. It is so helpful to learn about the hurdles they had to jump through. I decided that there were still so many things I didn't know how to do, and a lot more questions I didn't know how to answer. I decided to hire someone to help me keep track of all the decisions I was making and guide me through all the hoops. This alone was one of the best decisions I have ever made. Having someone to help me when I didn't understand or had questions was great, but they also asked me tough questions I did not know I needed to answer. I had to figure out a business model, a price, and most importantly, I had to be able to stick to those decisions.

Pricing was really hard for me to decide on. How does a person decide what they are worth, and what happens when someone thinks I am not worth that? I know that my product is good and worth a lot, but other people do not know that, so how do I get others to see my worth? How do I stand up in a room and advocate for myself? It's a hard



PHOTOS BY JAMES HARRIS

Above, RaJahné takes promotional images for a new brand. Previous page, RaJahné's photo room sets the stage for an album cover shoot.

lesson, but not everyone is going to see my art as something worth a lot of money, and big businesses will always be out to undercut my rates. I had to learn to stick to my price, and honestly, I am still working on that. Another thing I never thought about was a deposit for my time and effort. If I am going to spend a lot of time preparing for a shoot and someone cancels, how do I receive compensation for that time wasted?

Dealing with clients was also hard for me. You have to be confident in the work you create and able to communicate exactly what you need from your client. As a photographer, I wanted the pictures to look absolutely beautiful. How can I tell my client that the face they have is not the right vibe for the picture? How can I get my client comfortable enough with me that they trust exactly what I'm telling them to do? I had to watch a lot of videos to learn ways to communicate with people in a clear and efficient way. There are also certain clients who do not treat you the best. I have had my share of clients who ask me to do something extra, and I was afraid to tell them it would cost more.

Starting this business so young, people don't take me or my prices seriously all the time. I cannot tell you how many times that I had to introduce myself as the photographer because clients thought my dad was going to take the pictures. I also cannot tell you the amount of times I have shown the product and people have gasped at the work I do. Being a young business owner means being the smallest in the room and having to command attention to get your job done. It also means having to constantly blow people's expectations out of the water. It is really hard to manage sometimes.

Social media is very important to getting your business up and running. You have to learn about hashtags and promoting your work. Sometimes, a good day of marketing is you going through a bunch of Facebook pages and sharing about your product. The best thing about social media is that people are constantly on it. If you scroll down any social media thread, you will pass at least two ads and at least two friends asking for recommendations. You just have to be the person doing and ►►



PHOTO BY ROBIN ALEXANDER

RaJahné adjusts her model's jewelry as part of a photo shoot for a friend's new business venture.

getting recommended. Whether you use Facebook, Instagram, or TikTok, you have to catch people's eyes. My favorite TikToks are the ones where the photographer stops a random person and does a photo shoot. Those videos lead to other people wanting to take pictures and asking you to do them. Socials are the best way to connect with people, especially if your work is visual. Hashtags are another amazing way to get traffic on your page. You'll reach your target audience because hashtags help guide you to people who are the most interested in your work.

The biggest lesson I have learned from starting this business is that I am enough. Not every person is going to cheer you on, and a lot of people will tear you down. You have to keep going because it is so worth it in the long run. I learned that my voice, if used correctly, is strong enough to command attention and to hold it, and that working with people is really beneficial because word of mouth is the best way to get people to look at you. ●



PHOTOS BY JAMES HARRIS

Above: RaJahné takes her first set of senior pictures. Right: She captures images for a clothing line and helps to create an album cover.



I highly recommend it to anyone looking for a game with enjoyable gameplay, cool moments, and characters that you will instantly fall in love with!

PERSONA

by KAVIN JACKSON

When *Persona 5* hit the scene in 2017, almost everyone who played it was instantly enthralled with its stylish and fun gameplay. Then when Atlus announced that a hyped-up version of *Persona 5 Royal* would be released in early 2020, all the fans once again came out in full force to show an appreciation for such an iconic game.

Persona 5 Royal is a turn-based, JRPG (Japanese role-playing game) with a sprinkle of social simulator developed by Atlus, who is known for the Shin Megami Tensei series. The original *Persona* games were an offshoot of the series that slowly became more popular after *Persona 3* and shot itself into mainstream status with *Persona 4* and its upgrade *Persona 4 Golden*. An important note, you do not need to know anything from the previous *Persona* Games nor any games from the Shin Megami Tensei series to play. Each *Persona* game has a brand-new cast of char-

ROYAL 5

acters, and aside from a few unique themes and references, you don't need to play the original *Persona 5* before playing *Royal*. I do, however, recommend playing *Persona 3 FES/Portable* and *Persona 4 Golden* (Now available on steam) as well because

they are really good, enjoyable games.

The story of *Persona 5 Royal* is that you play as the protagonist codenamed Joker. He was charged with a crime he didn't commit, put on probation, and forced to move to Shibuya with a coffee shop owner Sojiro for one year. Two days into your new life, you get an app on your phone that transports you and your friends to another world. Known as the metaverse, it is where you and your friends all form the Phantom Thieves and encounter shadows and palaces, dark, twisted manifestations of a person's desires. You steal the core of their desires, also known as hearts, to reform society for the better. In *Persona 5 Royal*, they added new characters, a third semester to the story, and numerous quality of life changes that make the gameplay all that much more enjoyable. As expected with these with JRPG, there are multiple endings, and if you are not careful, you could end this 130+ hour game early and miss out on some jaw-dropping moments.

Persona 5 Royal is well known for its smooth and stylish visuals with fun, interactive gameplay that make you feel as if you were a member of the infamous Phantom Thieves, stealing the hearts of criminals to reform society.

What sold the game for me was the characters. All the members of the Phantom Thieves have a costume that represents their sense of rebellion, leading to very interesting and unique designs that represent them and the manifestation of their rebellious spirit. Their personas are based on real thieves, such as Zorro, Captain William Kid, Goemon, and many more, with unique designs referencing their original tales.

The main gameplay of *Persona 5 Royal* is a mix between turn-based fighting and social sim where you have to split your time managing relationships, your social stats, and traveling to the metaverse to complete your Phantom Thieves' work. Time management is key in this game.



You want to make sure you max out your stats and relationships because they give you great buffs while you are in the palaces.

In the palaces, you fight with a team of four party members. Each member has different abilities and takes turns completing actions before passing onto the next person in the turn order. Now, the way to win in *Persona* is to find your enemies' elemental weakness and get a knock-down.

That allows you to get a "once more," which is another turn to do whatever you want; however, it is recommended that you knock down all the enemies and do a "Hold up." This has a few options, such as asking for money and items or, more importantly, asking them to join your persona pack. This expands the skills you can use while fighting and opens up new fusions in The Velvet Room. The last thing you can do is an "All Out Attack," a very flashy over the top move that has a high chance of ending the fight right then and there. Added with *Royal* is the "Showtime Attack," which is like "All out Attack" but does not require you to knock down your enemies and happens at any time.

Persona 5 Royal has quickly become one of my favorite games this year, and I highly recommend it to anyone looking for a game with enjoyable gameplay, cool moments, and characters that you will instantly fall in love with! ●

THE TEENAGE DEPRESSION EXPERIENCE

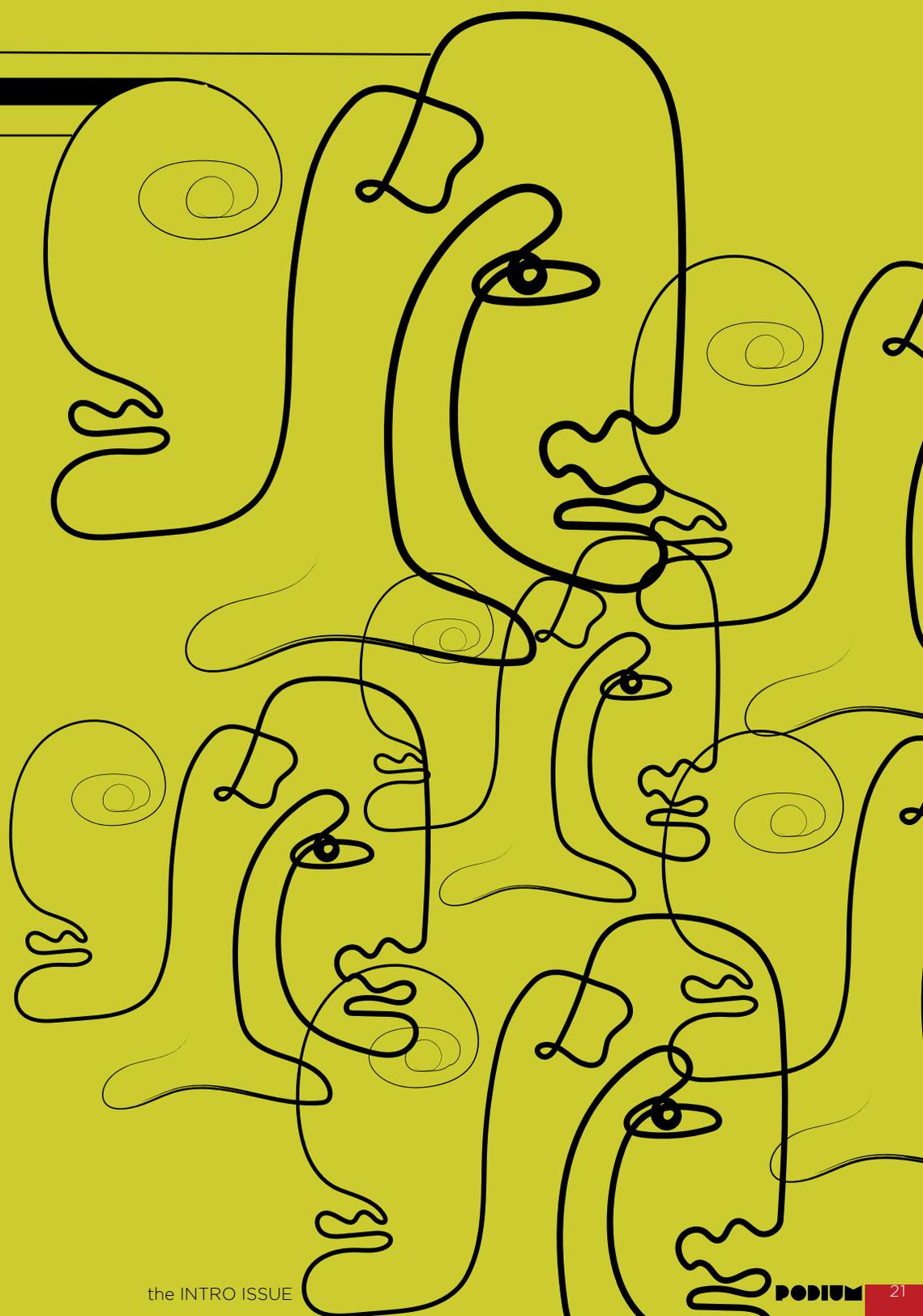
by **TRISTAN WYNN**

I am going to start this off with a bit of a trigger warning. This article discusses some very sensitive subjects, and it's okay to turn away. If you don't wish to continue, that is perfectly fine. There are so many other amazing articles here to read. With that out of the way, let us get into it.

When I was 13 years old, I attempted to take my own life. I had begun to learn so many new things about myself, and I could not mentally handle it. I did not want to handle it. I just wanted that feeling to go away, to remove the pain; the emptiness; the self doubt; the self hatred. I just wanted it all to go away, but then I looked down at my phone and saw a message from one of my best friends asking if I was okay. I had seemed kind of off at school earlier that day. That one message stopped me for long enough to really contemplate the things in my life. I remember thinking about who would take care of my leopard gecko if I was gone and how my friends would take it. Would they even care? I decided they would and went to bed that night.

Over the years, I would attempt many more times, and every single time, something would pull me back from that edge. That emptiness has never completely gone away. I do not think it ever will, but as the years have gone on, I have grown to accept myself much more. The biggest cause of the emptiness for me was not being able to accept who I was and the things I could not change about myself. If you keep running from who you are, eventually you will reach the edge of an abyss, and if you fall in, there unfortunately is no hope of escape. Depression is what I call that edge, and I have lost count of how many times I almost ended my journey too early.

So, how did I get here? Special treatments? Therapy? Antidepressants? Drug abuse? None of the above. I could not do therapy. Honestly, I was too afraid to tell my parents about anything I was feeling because I didn't want to know how they would react. I was worried they would laugh, or ignore it, or just tell me to read the bible more. In hindsight, I doubt anything but that last one would have happened if I pressed it enough. You know what they say though, "Hindsight is 20/20." I have ▶▶



now taken the time to look back at myself and have isolated where my issues were coming from and what I couldn't accept about myself. Slowly, I have cut those influences out, no matter how ingrained they are in my life.

Now, I must stress two things going forward. First, this is just how I did things. Therapy is a much better way of dealing with mental health issues such as depression and anxiety. Second, everyone is different, and things that bring you joy might bring someone else pain, and vice versa. I stress these two very heavily because the root of my problems was my belief in god and how the bible specifically conflicted with both my love of science and my sexuality. It was the single biggest block of me accepting who I was and pulling myself back from that edge, yet it had also been my only source of "truth" since I was a small child, and cutting it out would only result in a deeper depression. That said, I had not truly believed in God since I was about 13. I just held onto it as a relic of the past and to make my family happy. In truth, all of my issues came from knowing the only way they would ever be proud of me was if I was this perfect Bible boy who never strayed from that path. I knew I couldn't live up to that, and it sent me so far down I could barely escape. I didn't know what to do, and then, I started to fail English class. Little did I know that would be my breakthrough.

My English teacher had a way of earning extra credit. You could stay after school and participate in a writing program called Podium. Yes, the exact same organization responsible for this magazine is also responsible for giving me the thing I really needed in my life: An outlet for all my feelings. I will not lie, my writing started as a suicide note, and if you read it modern day, you can still see remnants of that within its frantic and yelling tone. I remember when I showed one of my first pieces to, my now longtime friend, Vicki, now Podium's Executive Director. She looked me in the eyes and just told me, "Tristan, you have an incredible voice with an interesting perspective! I would love to hear more from you!" That gave the

push I needed to open up about all of the feelings I had, to write about who I was, and to write about what I wanted to be. I finally had a place to yell, and nobody could shut me up after that. I made great friends who would always uplift me when I was down but kept me grounded enough not to go overboard.

I learned a very important lesson: A person is only as strong as their support system. Through a small non-profit writing program, I bolstered my support system and was slowly able to recover from my depression. It was not right away, and if you are in a similar situation, I want to make some things very very clear. It is okay to not be okay, and it is also okay to not be okay right away. Those are some lessons I wish I had learned when I was in middle and high school. Had I known them, I would not have done some of the things I did in an effort to instantly feel okay again. I really want to stress this to anyone who may have made it this far in: It is perfectly okay to not be fine all the time. Even the most stone and stoic people break down and cry on occasion.

Even now that feeling of emptiness rises within me again. Like I said, I haven't exactly "beat" depression so to speak. Rather, I was finally able to make peace with it and diminish it to a point where I can be happy with and for myself. I figured out how to love who I am going to love, be who I am going to be, and if anyone might have a problem, that it is not my problem to deal with. I shouldn't let it drag me down anymore, and neither should you, my dear reader. Find some friends who vibe with you, love you for you, and will help you talk out issues that are causing you pain. Take it from me, bottling it up for years inside will not do you any good. It will come out one way or another, so why not talk, write, draw, paint, sing, or whatever it out?

If you made it this far, then congratulations! You have seen my mess-of-a-mind talk about how I got here. How I got to be happy for myself, with myself, and with a little help from some friends. To those friends, thank you. To the reader, I wish you the best, and I know you can fight it. Just don't give up. ●

by DESTINY HALL HARPER

IMPOSTOR! Is what I'd be saying if I was actually playing *Among Us* right now. *Among Us* was initially released in 2018, but it has swept the masses by storm during this quarantine with its incredibly interesting gameplay. The game is available on smartphone and windows. At its start, you are randomly assigned one of two roles: crew member or impostor. Your little character resembles a tiny spaceman, and you have to lead them to victory.

As a crew member, your job is to complete tasks and avoid getting killed by any of the impostors on board. Those tasks can involve swiping a key card, diverting power, emptying the garbage, and a host of others. As an impostor, you look like everyone else, except your job is to corner and kill the crew. You can use the vents on the ship to move between sections and pick them off, but, be careful! Anyone can call an emergency meeting and can vote on who they think is the impostor once they see a dead body or watch an impostor use the vents. If you receive enough votes, then sorry, you are booted off the ship into outer space regardless if they successfully picked an impostor or selected a regular crew mate.

The game is also very fun in multi-player! You can make a private room and invite friends and foes to play together! Or, you can choose to play online and join a random room, if it is not filled already. Fair warning: If your friend is an impostor, don't take it personally.

You can also get cool accessories for your little characters! Personally, I main the color blue, but I also am horrible at the game. Hopefully you have more luck than I do! There are a few ways to win, including an impostor faking a task properly or the crew completing all the tasks. But I won't spoil it completely. Don't get caught by an impostor. You just might not escape! ●

AMONG US



