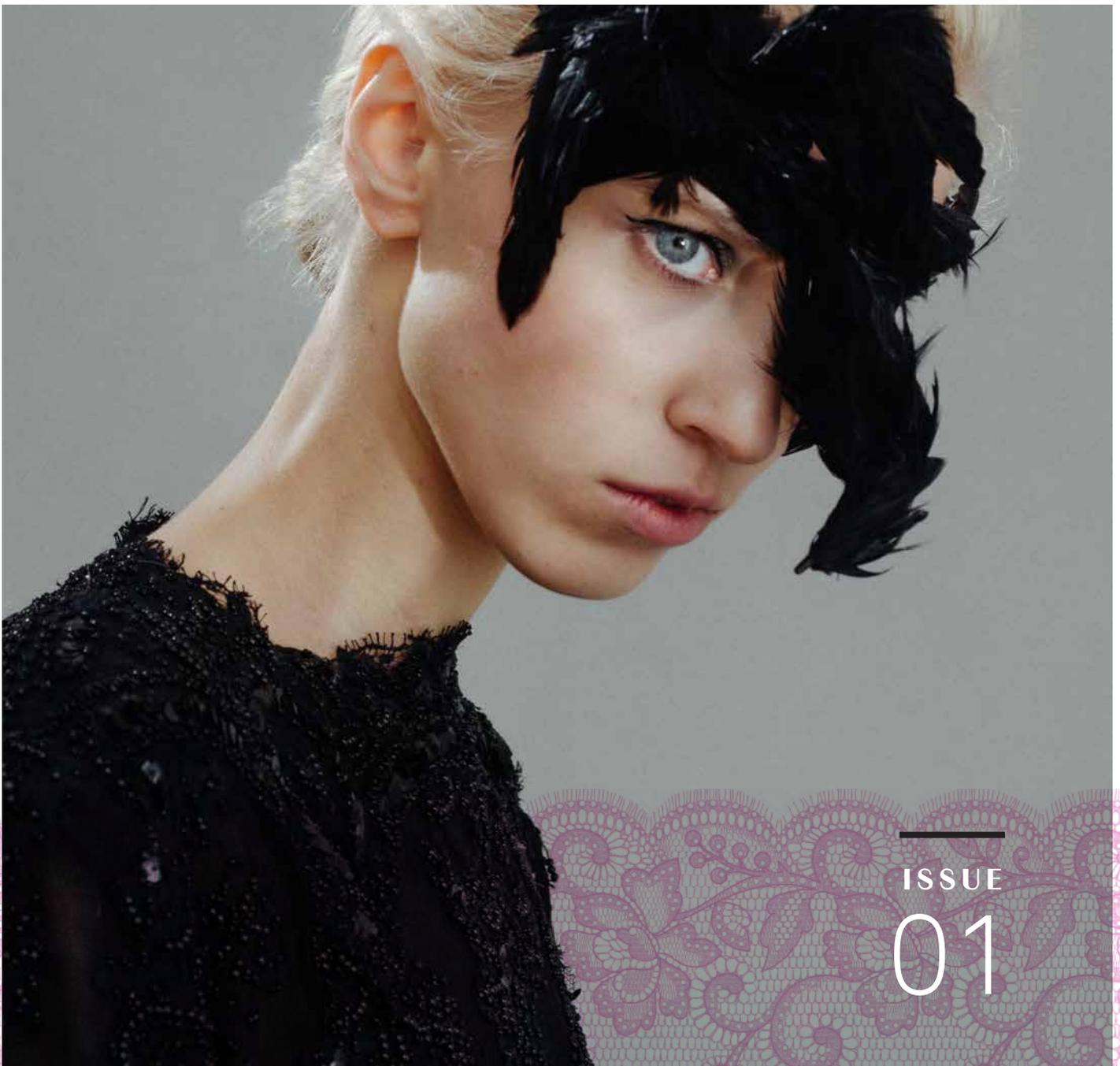

*The Dark Side of
Fashion: Fashion and
Occult Symbolism*

*STRANGER THINGS,
Featuring model
Elena Mitinskaya*

*Interview With Fashion's
Favourite Psychic,
DANTE SABATINO*

The Veil



ISSUE

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Dante Sabatino

OF TAROT BY DANTE

When you get a reading from Dante, you get more than you bargain for, in the best way. His New York apartment, situated in the city's famous gay village, is a cozy space where the Rider-Waite tarot deck waits patiently in an appointed tarot room; ready to predict your future and connect with your past.

Dante's frank, tough-love readings are full of an ever-present, positive energy that just flows through him, so that afterwards, you'll feel as if you've just had tea with a therapist. I've seen Dante three times over the years, and his predictions have been accurate to a T. Described by WWD as "Fashion's Favourite Psychic", with clients at Nicole Miller and Victoria's Secret, I ask him about his process and outlook on life.

ISABELLE: *In your own words, what does it mean to be a psychic?*

DANTE: I believe everyone is psychic. Psychic is the adjective of psyche, which just means invisible self; so the be psychic means you're in-tune with your invisible self. Everyone has an invisible self and everyone can be in tune with it. There are talents associated with the invisible self, like clairvoyance or clairaudience that people can develop skills in, so I just have more of a finely-tuned and developed skillset that keeps me in touch with my psychic self, and therefore, in touch with others.

I: *Would you say that those talents that you're describing are there at birth, or are they something you have to learn?*

D: It's like any major talent. A piano virtuoso is born being able to play the piano really well, and then they have to study really hard. It's the same thing. I'm born with it and I've developed it through the years. And I know as I get older, my ability gets stronger.

I: *What is your exact process? How do you start a reading from the very beginning to the very end?*

D: If I'm giving a private consultation I offer more than one tarot spread. Usually my full session lasts an hour to an hour-and-a-half, and so I engage the client by having them shuffle the cards to bring out the issues or questions they may have; if they have any. I don't put pressure on people to have an agenda, sometimes they just want to come for the experience and not have specific questions answered. From that point on, I work with them in a tarot spread, which is laying out the cards to promote the reading and I explain the way in which I look at the cards, how I use them and the spread, so that they remain comfortable. It's really important for me that my client is comfortable with what we're going to do, because some people might be scared or nervous. My focus on reading cards for others is to empower them and explore the ways in which they handle their life choices. I generally read into the next chapter of someone's life, usually a year ahead, maybe a little bit longer. I take a very therapeutic approach and allow the cards to make them feel empowered. I end the reading by asking if they have any further questions or if they have any follow-up questions from a part of the reading. I then close up with a conclusion or summary card. The process is pretty involved and intense through the whole course of the reading. It has a beginning, middle and end; it's a continuous engagement with the other person's psyche. A lot of people ask if they can come back, and I say absolutely, I'm in service to the public. I usually only read someone once or twice a year, I think the type of reading that I do, and the intensity of it, means that this is enough. There are a few exceptions, but I would have to also sense that it would be a good idea to do more.

I: *You use the word "therapy", which I find interesting. Do you notice a change in people when they start the reading and then after you finish with them? Is there an openness there?*

D: Oh yeah! Oh my god, yes! A lot of times people are coming in with fears and questions and dilemmas and all kind of things that I try to address and work out. So once they finish their session, they have a sense of what could happen, at least through my eyes and the way that I see the cards reflecting off of them. I describe cards as a system of mirrors that look into the psyche. The skills that I have are to read those reflections of the psyche, the same way a doctor reads a CAT-scan. It's like a psychic scan. I work with things that are inside themselves, and help them make better choices, find a path, and to experience a way of life that would be more fulfilling to them.

I: *So it's a very positive experience.*

D: Yeah, I take a very positive and empowering focus on the cards. I'm not a "doom and gloom" reader. Absolutely not, no.

I: *How does that make you feel by the end of a session?*

D: I love helping others and I love what I do. When people are happy and overwhelmed, or at least feel more calm or more centred from the session, it makes me feel good. I love the positive feedback that I get, it makes me feel like I still have value. I try to keep a humble approach to my work, and to be available as people need me. I'm in service. You can't be a psychic or a reader unless you're looking to serve others.

I: *Is there anything you have to do before a reading to prepare? Like meditate?*

D: Not usually. There are times that I have quiet moments before readings. I'm in the constant process of giving out lots of psychic energy and therefore I do a lot of self care; all week long, all month long, all year long, to keep me ready, stable, available and grounded. It's an ongoing process to keep my psyche strong.

I: *Is that why you do readings mostly in your apartment? Does that have an impact, as it's your space and your energy?*

D: Well, when I was younger I used to do house calls when I didn't have a space to read in and it just makes it easier for people to come to me. That way I can read more people, and New York City travel can be tight. Most clients come to me, unless your VIP or you're hosting a party or event. I could do it in an office if I had one, but I found an apartment that I created a tarot room out of; so it's just more convenient.

I: *Why is tarot your preferred medium?*

D: I grew up with it; my mom's a reader. I do have skill in reading palms, as well as astrology charts but I feel most comfortable with the cards since I grew up with it. I used them in young adulthood and I developed my skills and since then it's just felt natural to me. Why does a painter paint and not sculpt? Same reason.

I: *Speaking of your mother, do you feel that your abilities have been passed on genetically from her?*

D: Oh yeah. Absolutely. My mom's a really good reader. She's been reading since I was a child. She never really took it to the level of business that I've taken it to but she's read all of her life. Also, my father's side has the gift. My father's aunt was a reader as well.

I: *Did your mom get it from someone or is she the first psychic in the family?*

D: My grandmother had abilities, I don't think that she used them to serve others. My mom was the only one in my family, other than my father's aunt, that would serve others with her gifts. I guess she would be the originator in that respect. Unless there's people generationally I don't know about. My family's roots are in Italy, so it's part of the culture. Perhaps way back when, there were family members that performed occult work or had psychic abilities.

I: *Is there a reason you prefer the Rider-Waite tarot deck?*

D: It's the deck that she [mother] used back in the 70s, so I'm most comfortable with it. At that time, there was a revival of that deck, I think a new or remastered edition of it came out, and it became the most popular deck of the time. I have other decks, but I don't really use them.

I: *When did you first discover that you were psychic?*

D: As a child, I felt strongly connected to spiritual matters. I felt I could anticipate things that would happen in my family or around me. When I was a teenager, I did have an experience where you "receive the light"; I can remember that I was seeing a ray of light, and it was a very odd experience. I don't really talk about it very much, but this experience made me feel a part of my psychic self was opened. I'm born with a lot of astrological configurations that promote psychic ability; a lot of it is in my chart and astrological profile. I was born with this purpose and vocation to work in this area.

I: *Do you feel that all the roads of your life have led to you doing this? Do you feel like you're fulfilling something?*

D: The fulfillment is from this vocation, this "calling" experience that I had. It did evolve in a way that I wasn't always consciously aware of, which was really exciting because I had other careers and other jobs and now I do this practically full-time. I didn't think when I started out that I would even develop it into a full-time practice, but that's where I am. I've been reading cards for 35 years, so I've

been servicing New Yorkers since I moved to New York in '95. Prior to that, I was also reading clients, even in my early twenties, but I did it as a side thing and then it just kept growing. It's nice that this was an organic evolution and that I didn't seek it out. That's why I feel so comfortable, because it just evolved out of my ability and my purpose. I'm lucky in that regard. I don't search for what I need to do, it just happens.

I: *So you're not from New York originally?*

D: I'm from the Philadelphia area.

I: *Was there something that attracted you to New York?*

D: I always knew I wanted to live in New York when I was younger. I had a different career then, and with this career, I was able to transfer to New York. I was reading on the side for a while. My job brought me here overnight, it was a "pick up and move" situation. I lived with friends; my being here just started out that way.

I: *As of now, giving readings to people is a huge part of your life. Are you ever able to 'turn it off'?*

D: I view my abilities as my tools, so when I'm working, I'm using my tools. When I'm not reading, it doesn't mean that I'm turning off my intuitive feeling or reception. I'm not going to walk around giving predictions to people when I'm going about my daily life or having dinner with a friend. It's organic with me, it's not something you turn off or on.

I: *So there's not necessarily a moment, where say, you're on the subway or something, and you just get this crazy message for someone or a feeling?*

D: Yeah, I can at times. I could be on the subway and get a sense about someone, but I don't need to go tell them. It's intrusive and I don't really want to spend my energy doing that; it's reserved for my clients when they come for a session. I guess I "lower the volume" to a certain degree.

I: *Can anything affect a reading, positive or negative? It terms of how a client behaves?*

D: I've been reading forever and there isn't much I haven't seen. Of course, I'm humble when something happens that I've never seen before during a session, but I'm quite skilled at handling anything that comes up in a session and I feel that of someone's seeking me out for a reading and spending time and money, then they want to be here. The main thing that I need is an open mind or an open heart or open psyche, so I don't have to work so hard. Most people that come to me are willing to do that, that's what they want me to do; they want to hear what I have to say. They allow me to enter their psyche and make perceptions and rearrange what's going on inside.

I: *What about on your end? If you're tired etc.?*

D: Like any job, there may be times where I feel a little more tired and I think, "I don't want to do it today". But that being said, I do try to approach each reading with the same kind of excitement and willingness to serve as I usually do. I get tired like everybody else, I get hungry like everybody else and I could wear myself out if I do too many or if I'm not taking care of myself. It does happen once in a while, where maybe I've been travelling and I'm jet-lagged, I'll be tired during a reading, but I make the effort. That's why self-care is so important to me.

I: *There are some that view psychic ability as both a gift and a curse, would you ever consider it a curse in any manner?*

D: "Curse" seems really strong. My opinion about that is that I feel blessed and grateful to have the abilities that I do, especially because they kept developing and manifesting in my life, so this is something that I feel very grateful for. In that respect, I see it wholeheartedly as a blessing. I don't really feel that there's a curse element to it. People that make prophecies, that can feel a little negative, just because they tend to predict the bad things, as most of the new in the world isn't positive. If you're going to have visions of things that aren't working well, which I do when I'm giving people their readings, I don't consider it a curse because my goal is then to empower them and work with them to the best of my abilities. In a way, I guess you could say ignorance is bliss, and sometimes having an intuition or message may bring with it a sense of responsibility or a heaviness or burden. In that regard, you can consider it a curse, but I just don't really like that word.

I: *Obviously, there are cases where you touch upon something negative in a reading, and so is there anything you would ever withhold from a client? Or just not tell them for the sake of maintaining that positivity?*

D: Not really. It's not that I would hold it back, but there are different ways to deliver a message. A lot of times in my work I may see something that is pretty much guaranteed by the way that I look at it, but then there's also times where I see things weighted- like it's 60% possible. So, I try to be clear on that when I predict something negative by saying that I don't know if it'll happen 100% because we have free will and there are a lot of variables that come into play when you deal with someone's life. Especially when it comes to relationships, because relationships involve other people, and I'm not reading those other people. If it's something negative, I'll usually say to them that, "You know about it already, that's why you're coming; you want to find a resolution". Then that'll be my focus. Sometimes there's things that come up, but I have a way of expressing them depending on the way that the client and I connect and his or her personality. I may be very aggressive, and very strong, but I may also be very mild and weak. It depends on whom I'm dealing with when the situation arises.

I: *If you could read anybody in the world, dead or alive, is there somebody you would want to read?*

D: I don't really look at life like that, so I don't know. I might say, "Yeah I love this singer, I would love to read her one day", but then two months later, I wouldn't have the same feeling. I don't seek people out to read, people seek me out to read them. It's always nice to have prominent people, I've been impressed by a few people that I've read. I've read a few actresses that I liked, so that was interesting for me. But I don't really focus my practice that way and I don't daydream about reading someone.

I: *So it's very much that you're open to whoever wants to come to you, you don't try and attract or summon.*

D: I put myself out there and I think it's important to be known. I have to keep up with the technology and the ability to connect to others. My business is very word-of-mouth, so different people have heard of me from different sources. Especially in New York, I'm kind of the best-kept secret in New York at this point. People know about me.

I: *I remember I found out about you from an article, and I remember my mom and I read it and thought, "yeah we need to see him while we're in New York". So you are out there, you have promoted yourself quite well.*

D: With any press that I get or public exposure, I feel grateful. I'm grateful to have the variety of articles written about me. Again, I've never sought any of those out, they've all just asked me, and I think it's really gratifying. I had some press in the early days, I had a few articles about me and mentions of me in a gift guide. I was in the *New Yorker*, *New York Magazine* and a college publication because I was reading a lot of students at the time. It's nice that even back then, I had some exposure. And even now, I still read some of the people I read in the nineties. There are still clients that come to me every year, for twenty years! I've seen them through marriages, divorces, births, jobs and all of that stuff. It's pretty amazing that I still have that kind of following, where I know that I'll see a person every year. It's beautiful. It's beautiful for me, and it's beautiful for them, I think.

I: *You must form friendships or relationships with these people.*

D: Yeah, I do. There are some clients that have crossed over into friendship, I can count them on my fingers. But from a reading perspective, everything I do is very subjective, so it's nice to have a relationship with people that I can connect to through the cards. I'm really grateful. I may not see them out for dinner, but I've been invited to clients' weddings because I've predicted their union. It's really nice to be part of that experience.

I: *Do you have any favourite anecdotes from readings that you've done, or anything that you thought was really special?*

D: There's too many. It's part of my weekly experience. I can think of different predictions I said, and then the person told me it came true, so it's a "wow" moment. But there's so many of them. I had a client email me saying, "Oh my god, you told me I was going to move to Australia and get married in six months, and I did, I can't believe it!" I don't remember telling her that. I'm almost like in a trance state when I'm reading, I'm using a certain part of my brain. I can't remember everything, I read every day! I do appreciate when people feel moved to email me, that makes me happy, I love it.

I: *The amount of people that come back to you indicates something. You obviously have hit on something really important in their lives.*

D: I'm really grateful about that. I'm like a therapist. People come to me because they choose to. I have people that have seen me for years and I have people that come to me for only a certain period of their life. Sometimes people get married, and then they don't want to be read anymore because they've found their romantic partner. People have children and get busy. Like a therapist, people come to me until they don't need to anymore. But if people want to come back to me, I'm available to them. I had someone come in last week who told me that I read them twelve years ago! She moved, and she had found her notes from her session, and she wanted to find me again. I've been in the same space for the past 16 years, and I've had the same phone number for the past 22 years. And with the internet, you could just google "Dante" and "Tarot" and my website comes up. I love people that come back from the past, it makes me happy.

I: *On that final note, what does the future hold for you? Are you going to be in business for the foreseeable future? Is there going to be a change?*

D: That's a great question for me, personally. I don't quite know how I would expand. This past year in particular, my business has grown to full-time work. So, I'm adjusting to managing my tarot business as my only career, whereas before I had another. I don't know what the next steps are for me. I'm comfortable as I am, I do think there could be changes in my future, like if I decide to create a psychic curriculum and want to teach it. I could go on the radio circuit, or be on television. I could write a book! There are places I could go to, but I feel it'll come to me if it's meant to be. And if it doesn't, then I'm just comfortable being a reader the way I am for the rest of my life. I do feel my practice is evolving, but if I physically move or change my work venue, or broadcast my skills for the mass media, things would change. Maybe when I'm older I'll decide to write that book, or teach a class. I'm very open to that. ●



If you would like to have a reading with Dante, visit: www.tarotbydante.com He does in-person readings in New York City, but is also available on Skype. You won't be disappointed.