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CHICAGO SINGLE MOM COMPETES FOR MAGAZINE COVER AND \$25,000

Single mom, healthcare worker, author and former Miss Michigan competes for Final Eight in the 2020 Maxim Covergirl Contest

CHICAGO, July 20, 2020 – South sider Octavia Reese, Principal Epic Trainer at Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children’s Hospital of Chicago, author, cellist, and single mom of three boys is competing for Maxim Covergirl 2020 and \$25,000. The competition, which began in May, features thousands of models from around the world, and Octavia has now advanced to the semi-finals. From July 20 to July 30 Octavia is up against seven other women competing for the title, the cash, and the springboard into the world of modeling and entertainment. Octavia has to place first in her group to advance to the Final Eight.

“Someone like me has never been on the cover of a magazine like Maxim before,” Octavia said. “And it’s about time.” Octavia calls herself *The Modern Man’s Renaissance Woman*.

“I chose to market myself that way for this competition because I am a renaissance woman, and so many women today are. We aren’t ‘allowed’ to have just one job. We’re raising children, juggling work and homeschooling during a global pandemic, managing professional goals outside the home, and somehow finding time to care for ourselves. We do it all without recognition or reward. And the world should see that in a beautiful and sexy way.”

Competitions like this aren’t new to Octavia. She was Miss Michigan 2005 and competed for Miss America. Even then, Octavia was advocating for visibility of well-rounded, educated, ambitious women. In her books, *The Hibouleans*, Octavia created a world where leading teens, Taryn and Priya, are STEM fanatics and use their math and science knowledge to solve clues as they embark on a life-or-death treasure hunt against terrifying shape shifting Hibouleans. She said she wrote the series for all the brown girls out there that love problem-solving, strength-building, lab experiments and dream of having superpowers and being the hero in epic adventures.

“It’s incredibly important, not just for young Black and brown girls to refuse to believe their skin color is limiting, but it’s just as necessary for everyone else to begin to envision women of color as main characters with depth, too, not just restricted to silent supporting roles or inferior stereotypes,” she said. “We need an entire cultural shift – we have as much a right and a capacity to lead and grace magazine covers as anyone else.”

To win this round of the competition, Octavia simply has to have the most votes.

“I’ve always wanted to shake up traditional beauty standards,” she said. “I never saw women that looked like me on the covers of magazines or in leading roles in the books and films I enjoyed. It’s 2020 and I still don’t see it enough. If Maxim presents itself as the magazine for the modern man, it should also promote the modern woman. We are all shapes, colors, ages and have skills and talents that deserve to be showcased and valued.”

Octavia plans to use the prize money to help finance graduate school, something she’s had to put off for years to focus on providing for herself and her children.

Vote for Octavia online at <https://maximcovergirl.com/2020/octavia-reese>. Anyone with a valid Facebook account can vote once daily for free or choose to buy extra votes, which support Jared Allen’s Homes for Wounded Warriors. The Semi-Finals round ends July 30, 2020 at 10pm CST.

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