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orld Folktales and Fables Week celebrates the timeless magic of storytelling. This week invites everyone to immerse themselves in tales that have travelled across generations and countries, from clever tricksters to brave heroes and magical creatures. These stories are so amazing! They capture universal ideas, love, courage, cleverness, in a way that connects us all. When we read or share these folktales, we step into worlds filled with the most amazing talking animals, cunning underdogs, and unexpected victories. And best of all, these folktales and fables also share lessons that feel close to home, no matter where we're from.

SUNDAY 16 March 2025

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**#AROUND-D-WORLD** 

## A Passport Unlike Any Other

Next time, you come across a Latvian passport, try viewing it under UV light. You won't just see a passport, you'll witness a nation's identity glowing



digitized. more electrified, or creative. Smartphones are no onger just communication devices, they are AIpowered assistants. Cars are evolving into self-driving electric marvels, and even clothing is embracing wearable technology. But why stop there? Even something as traditional as a passport is undergoing a transformation, becoming more secure, more artistic, and more innovative than ever before.

When it comes to passports, people are getting more reative, but it's not just indi-

A Secret World Unveiled

assports worldwide incoring. but Latvia has gone beyond mere security. The new Latvian passport, introduced in February 2024, is a fusion of technology and design. It doesn't just protect its holder's identity it tells the storv of Latvia itself.

Under UV light, the pass port pages illuminate with Latvia's natural beauty. These aren't random security pat terns but carefully curated representations of the country's forests, rivers, and

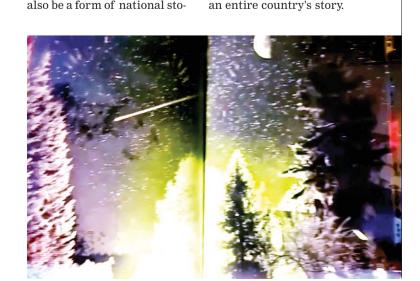
**Where Art Meets Cutting-Edge Security** B eyond its artistic beauty, the Latvian passport is built to be virtually impossible to forge. Every detail has been designed with security in mind. The passport holder's personal information, including their photograph, name, and serial number, is printed with UV-sensitive ink, meaning it only becomes visible under specialized

two are alike. Additionally biometric data is embedded within the document, allowing for seamless digital verification at border checkpoints. This high level of security ensures that any attempt at counterfeiting is easily detected, making Latvia's passport one of the most advanced in the world. I seamlessly integrates with EU security standards, makscanning. Micro-engraved ing international travel both security patterns unique to safer and more efficient each passport ensure that no

#### The Future of Passport Design

atvia's approach signals a global shift in passport technology. With increasing threats of passport fraud and identity theft, countries are responding by adopting biometric encryption. AI-driven verification, and layered security features. However. Latvia stands out by proving that security doesn't have to be purely functional, it can also be a form of national sto-

rytelling. The Latvian passport is a perfect example of how technology and culture can coexist. Rather than sim ply incorporating security features for the sake of compliance, Latvia has used them to highlight its heritage, natural beauty, and national identity. It's a document that represents not just an individual traveller, but



beneath the surface.



viduals pushing boundaries. Governments, too, are embracing innovation. embedding hidden security features that make forgery nearly impossible while turning travel documents into stunning works of art. One of the most fascinating examples of this creativity is the

Designed with security

and national identity in mind Latvia has created a masterpiece. At first glance, it appears to be a sleek, standard travel document. But under UV light, it transforms. revealing an intricate world of glowing landscapes, hidden symbols, and cutting-edge

wildlife. A scan under ultraviolet light reveals the famous Gauja National Park glowing in neon blues and greens, alongside silhouettes of oak leaves, wildflowers, and birds in flight, a tribute to Latvia's rich biodiversity. Hidden within these designs are micro-text engravings, tiny inscriptions woven into the artwork that add another layer of security. Even the national coat of arms under-

term 'maverick' comes from the name of a 19th-century Texas goes a transformation. lawyer and politician, Samuel appearing with enhanced fluo-Augustus Maverick (1803-1870) rescence to make authentica-Maverick was a rancher who refused to do 'hot iron' branding tion at border controls even more efficient. for his cattle, which was a common practice at the time to identify ownership. As a result, any unbranded

calf found on the range was called a 'Mayerick's calf.' Over time, the term 'maverick' came to describe any independent-minded person who refused to be branded or constrained by conventional norms or expectations In the 1950s and 1960s, the term

ick' has a fascinating origin! The

Dr. Goutam Sen

averick, a person

who does not behave

or think like every-

one else, but who has

independent, occa-

sionally incorrect

and unusual opin-

gained popularity in American politics to describe individuals who defied party lines or conventional wisdom. Today, a maverick is anyone who exhibits independence, nonconformity and a willingness to challenge the status The word 'mayerick' has

become synonymous with boldness, courage, dissonance and a commitment to individuality. Magnus Carlson is again in the headlines. But not for the excellent game that makes him an acclaimed World Champion in Chess! He continues to have a run-

ning battle with the Federation

Internationale (acronym is FIDE- International Chess Federation). Magnus, like any high level player, does not appreciate restricting and often suffocating rules and regulations of the Chess organization. Chess has actually got too many rules! It tries to control the minuty. It even dictates the size of the chess board and its pieces, besides the height of the table and choice of chairs. (This is under the premise of creating an equal playing field.) They have recently even created a glass soundproofed room in which high level matches are played! Besides all these, I am sure there are many small directives to keep the players in line, which mavericks like Bobby Fischer in the earlier days and Magnus Carlson now, do not relish. Magnus is particularly annoyed with FIDE for insisting on total control of all the tournaments in Chess. According to Magnus, the FIDE pays very little

attention to lower level chess players, making the participation for them a difficult task with money being always short. He has therefore proposed a Free Style Grand Slam Chess Tour. Many prominent players like Fabiano Caruana (USA), Hikaru Nakamura (USA), Nodirbek Abdusattarov (UZB),

asked the maverick champion to

Alireza Firouzja (FRA) and new World Champion Gukesh Dommaraju are some of the players participating in this tournament beginning in February, 2025. Such a meeting is expected to draw large crowds and hence good money! This has gone against the grain of FIDE as it will be an independent tournament with no revenue for it. They have started pressurising the players to desist from Magnus decided to protest in his novel manner. He appeared in the current rapid Chess tournament wearing jeans. This was not appreciated by FIDE and they

## **#RULE SHIFT**

been seen with Carlson and

Diokovic. Ultimately, the accept-

ance of maverick behaviour

depends on whether it aligns with

societal norms and expectations.

as well as the individual's ability

egy and precision, there have been

many instances of maverick

behaviour that have shaped the

game. Bobby Fischer was known

for his eccentric personality and

unconventional playing style.

Fischer challenged the established

norms of chess. His aggressive

While chess is a game of strate

to deliver results.

Mavericks

Make The World

change or else... Finally, a compro mise has been made and now Magnus is playing in his grubby People, at the peak of their careers or sports, often exhibit maverick behaviour for several reasons. Success breeds confidence and those at the top often believe they have a unique perspective or approach that others

may not appreciate. This can lead to unconventional thinking and behaviour. Mavericks often challenge the status quo and seek to innovate. This can be seen in athletes who experiment with new training techniques or artists who push the boundaries of their medium. In a competitive world, standing out can be crucial. Some individuals may use eccentric behaviour to attract attention and maintain their status. A high level can be overwhelming. Some individuals may rebel against these expectations by behaving in ways maverick behaviour varies that defv norms. depending on the context and the There are many instances of individual's level of success and Behaviour. vision. While some mayericks are celebrated for their originality and creativity, others may face criticism and backlash for their

Maverick Entrepreneurs like Elon Musk and Steve Jobs are known for their unconventional leadership styles with constant risk-taking and willingness to challenge industry standards. Artists like Picasso, Salvador Dalí and Andy Warhol pushed the boundaries of their respective fields with their experimental and often controversial work. Even impressionists like Vincent Van Vogh are renowned because of their individualist techniques. Actors like Johnny Depp, Naseeruddin Shah and musicians like David Bowie have often defied conventional norms with their eccentric fashion choices, public statements and artistic expressions. The acceptance of

Many prominent players like Fabiano Caruana

(USA), Hikaru Nakamura (USA), Nodirbek

Abdusattarov (UZB), Alireza Firouzja (FRA)

and new World Champion Gukesh

Dommaraju are some of the players

participating in this tournament

beginning in February, 2025.

and often unorthodox approach to the game, combined with his intense focus and preparation, made him one of the greatest 'maverick' chess players of all time. Magnus Carlsen is not as flamboyant as Fischer. Carlsen has a unique approach to chess. He often plays intuitively, relying on his exceptional pattern recognized nition and positional understanding. His willingness to deviate from established theory and experiment with new ideas has made him a dominant force in the chess world. His recent objection to the dress code by wearing jeans is a typical example of maverick behaviour. Teimour Radjabov is known for his outspoken nature and his willingness to challenge the status quo of the chess world. He has boycotted events and tour-

naments to protest issues like

prize funds and player rights.

These are just a few examples of mayerick behaviour in chess. While such behavior can sometimes be disruptive, it can also lead to innovation and progress in Maverick behaviour in academics often involves challenging anconventional behaviour as has

the status quo, pushing bound aries and thinking tangentially and outside the box. Albert Einstein challenged classical physics with his theories of relativity. It revolutionised our understanding of space, time, gravity and the universe. He often questioned conventional wisdom and pursued his own unconventional ideas, a true trait of a maverick. Marie Curie was a pioneer in the field of radioactivity. Curie's relentless pursuit of knowledge and her disregard (maverick behaviour) for societal norms led to multiple Nobel Prizes. Her work

laid the foundation for modern nuclear physics and medicine. Steve Jobs was a visionary (mayerick) entrepreneur. Jobs revoluionised multiple industries, from personal computing to smartphones. His unconventional approach to design, marketing and business strategy made Apple one of the most valuable companies in the world. It is a matter of great concern as to where Elon Musk is going to lead this planet

Carl Sagan popularized science. He made complex scientific concepts understandable to the general public through his books critical thinking and skepticism. He expressed unconventional views on extraterrestrial life and the future of humanity which are only now being accepted These individuals, among

many others, have demonstrated maverick behaviour by challenging traditional wisdom, pursuing unpredictable ideas and advocating for their beliefs, even in the face of opposition. Their contributions have significantly advanced their respective fields and inspired future generations of

Sports have always been full of mavericks. The abounding talent often questioned the norms of the game! Roger Federer has been often hailed as the greatest tennis player of all time (G O A T). Federer's elegant and unorthodox playing style set him apart. His fluid movement, precise shots and artistic flair revolutionised the sport. His skill and his excellent ground strokes identified him as a maverick, extending his game beyond the normal. John McEnroe was another example of a hugely talented player who refused to follow the norms. His excellent performance on court contrasted with his off court may erick behaviour. Lionel Messi was

recognised for his dribbling wizardry and uncanny ability to score goals from impossible angles. Messi defied conventional football tactics. His mayerick style has led to numerous records and titles. Usain Bolt was the fastest man on Earth. Bolt's unique running style, characterized by long strides and effortless speed, redefined sprinting. His contravention of normal racing practices and ontrack behaviour put him in the naverick category. His dominance

in the sport was unparalleled. These individuals, among many others, exemplify the power of maverick behaviour. By challenging the status quo and think ing outside the box, they have made significant contributions to their respective fields and left an

In today's world of politics, Donald Trump is a classic maverick in making tall claims of taking over Canada and Greenland. His political actions are often beyond comprehension. It is yet to be seen whether his maverick behaviour will lead to doom or redemption. Perhaps, Jesus was history's

greatest mayerick. Pharisees considered him a maverick because he would not conform to the traditions of the elders. The Sadducees considered him a maverick because he would not acknowledge their authority. Pilate considered him a maverick because he would not defend himself. Let me make it clear that I am not blaspheming. He was so amazing that he was perceived as different in behaviour by the people of that era. There was even a suspicion that he may have been an alien! Mavericks may be hard to understand but it is possible that they speed up the development of the world in their quirky behaviour.

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## **#PET-LIFE**

# How To Train Your Cat

Cats have never been selectively bred to enhance their ability to cooperate and communicate with us, or perform working roles such as herding, hunting or guarding.



Just like dogs, cats need support to adjust to living alongside us. Simple forms of training can be good for their wellbeing. At home, we can use simple techniques to help cats with things like feeling comfortable in a cat carrier, getting used to car journeys, as well as tolerating being groomed and receiving basic health examinations and treatments. Such training can also help



#### **What Works!**

ats are not born with an innate affinity towards humans and must be exposed to gentle, warm handling from two weeks old so that they can learn we are friend rather than foe. There is limited evidence that younger cats are more attentive to our social cues, which could mean they are more amenable to training. Kittens should also be played with using cat wands or fishing rod toys so that they learn not to attack our hands or feet.

Punishments such as shouting rough handling or using a water spray can induce stress and compromise the quality of ownercat relationships. Always use positive reinforcement (such as treats and praise). This is not only the most effective way to train pets, but it's also better for their wellbe ng. Reward-based techniques can be an excellent way to teach a cat being taught to give a high five, or to sit or spin. But cats are often less motivated than dogs to pay attention to us, or do what we are asking, especially in situations where they don't feel comfortable It's important that we make sure that the cat is somewhere

they feel at ease when we under take any training with them. Always ensure the cat has the option to walk away or end the session when they want, and try to give them a break, if they seem uncomfortable. Signs to look for include the cat turning their head away, nose licking, head shaking a raised paw, sudden bouts of self grooming, looking hunched or tense, a twitching or thumping tail and rotated or flattened ears.

to enter a carrier on their own or

sit calmly whilst we deliver their

flea treatment. Some very friendly

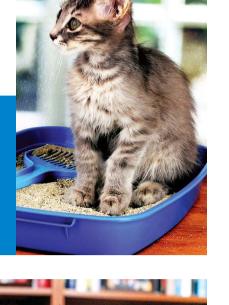
food motivated cats may enjo

## HERE'S HOW TO TEACH YOUR CAT ENTER A CARRIER AND SETTLE IN FIVE EASY STEPS!



n a place where your cat already feels safe, teach him or her to settle on a blanket. Do this by luring the cat onto the blanket using food. Reward the cat for staying on the blanket with more treats, petting or verbal praise, depending on what your cat likes most. Feed treats at nose height to encourage them into a sit position, then, feed treats at ground height to encourage the cat to crouch and then eventually lay on







bottom of a carrier with the lid removed. Repeat the same luring and rewarding steps.

W hen your cat is happily resting on the blanket in the carrier, place the lid on top of the carrier (without attaching the door) and repeat the luring and rewarding

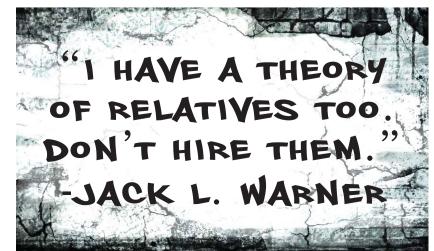
#### 4. Let your cat set the pace fter your cat has happily

antered the carrier and settled inside, place the door on the carrier but keep it open to start with, so that he or she doesn't suddenly feel trapped inside. Allow them to exit the carrier when they want and use treats to encourage them back in. In small movements, start to close the door slightly, then, open it again, each time giving the cat a treat Build this up slowly until the door can be fully closed (for only a few seconds at first) while the cat is still comfortable. Feed the cat treats through the closed door.

#### 5. Almost there

Work towards the cat being in the carrier with the door closed for longer periods, adding a few extra seconds each time. Keep rewarding the cat by popping treats through the sides or door of the car rier, gradually increasing the time between each treat delivery. Each training session should last no more than a few minutes in total, and some cats may prefer only one session a day. It might take lots of sessions and many days or weeks before this final step is complete.

## THE WALL



## **BABY BLUES**



#### ZITS

