

Hero Worship

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2004

Done as a series of first-person snippets; possibly diary entries, but more likely emails or even IMs/text messages. Perhaps increasingly disjointed, like the suicidal kid in *The Sound and the Fury* or narrator in King's "Survivor Type."

- 1) Kathy! Did you hear? Reality Channel 7 is going to be in town! They're holding auditions! Isn't that great! I'm going to try out for...no, I'm not going to tell you. I don't want to jinx it. It's just the greatest show *ever*, okay?
- 2) Oh. My. GOD. I passed the audition! I made it on, Kath, I made it on! I'm going to be on *Hero Worship*! I'm going to be the star of the third season of *Hero Worship*!
- 3) Well, okay, yeah, the first two people stars died, but come on. Those were accidents!

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

THIRD SEASON OF HIT SHOW *HERO WORSHIP* ANNOUNCED

Hollywood, CA – Reality Channel 7 has announced the hit television show *Hero Worship* has been renewed for another season. The show, in which a lucky citizen becomes the past celebrity of their choice, has been a ratings success in the highly competitive field of surgery-based reality programs.

"We're thrilled to get to run for another year," says executive producer Mark Stapleton. "Getting to provide top-notch entertainment while allowing someone to fulfill their dreams? Blessed. That's the only word for it. I feel blessed."

The show was marred by controversy when the second season's contestant, whose wish was to become Kurt Cobain, was killed in a shotgun accident. It might have just been considered an unfortunately ironic accident had the first season's contestant, fulfilling a Jimi Hendrix fantasy, also died...

- 4) Shut up! It was *too* an accident, both times! That Hendrix guy didn't mean to choke on his own puke? I mean, gross! Who *would*? And that hottie playing Kurt Cobain was just *cleaning* his shotgun. You know that as well I as do.
- 5) Anyway, this is going to be the best one yet. I totally know who I'm going to be, too. There was never any doubt in my mind: Karen Carpenter. I've loved her music ever since I was a kid.
- 6) What do you mean, weird? There's nothing weird about Karen Carpenter. At least she wasn't a drug addict like those last two. Look, this is a one-in-a-lifetime opportunity, okay? I am NOT going to mess this up.

"Coincidence," Stapleton says in regards to the deaths. "Total coincidence. People die every day from vomit-related choking and self-inflicted gunshot wounds. The fact that two of our stars happened to pass on in such a manner means nothing."

Auditions for the new season will be conducting as part of a national tour.

- 7) What do you mean, weird? There's nothing weird about Karen Carpenter. At least she wasn't--
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- 1) she's excited about the auditions coming to town, and is her gushing to all her friends about how it's just the greatest show ever and she simply **MUST** be on it. But she's all superstitious and stuff, so she can't tell them **WHAT** the show is. Teevee is nothing but reality shows now, and there are dozens of auditions for various shows every day.
 - 2) Oh, my god—she passed the audition! She made it on! The show? "Hero Worship," in which she gets to become any dead celebrity she wants. It's in its third season now. The last two celebs had been Jimi Hendrix and Kurt Cobain, and those were pretty great, but this is going to be the best one yet! Well, okay, yeah, they both died, but those were just *accidents*. Shut up! It was *too* an accident when he blew his head off with that shotgun!

- 3) She totally knows who it's going to be, too. There was never any doubt: Karen Carpenter. She's loved her music ever since she was a little kid, y'know?
- 4) Her friends are a little...concerned. Isn't that a weird choice?
- 5) No WAY! She's already sixteen, and this is, like, the greatest thing that's ever happened to her! She is NOT going to mess this one up.
- 6) Transfiguration begins; fame rises.
- 7) First health problems appear.
- 8) Physical transmutation more or less complete.
- 9) She is no longer herself. Or maybe she's finally herself.
- 10) She dies, not unhappily.

means of transformation: surgery, parasites for weight loss; some form of hypnosis or mind-alteration to further blur reality? Loss of identity total by the end (though she still uses the technology which would be anachronistic to her, because, well, it's how the story is told); stress media satire while somehow attempting to not be made irrelevant by reality.



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