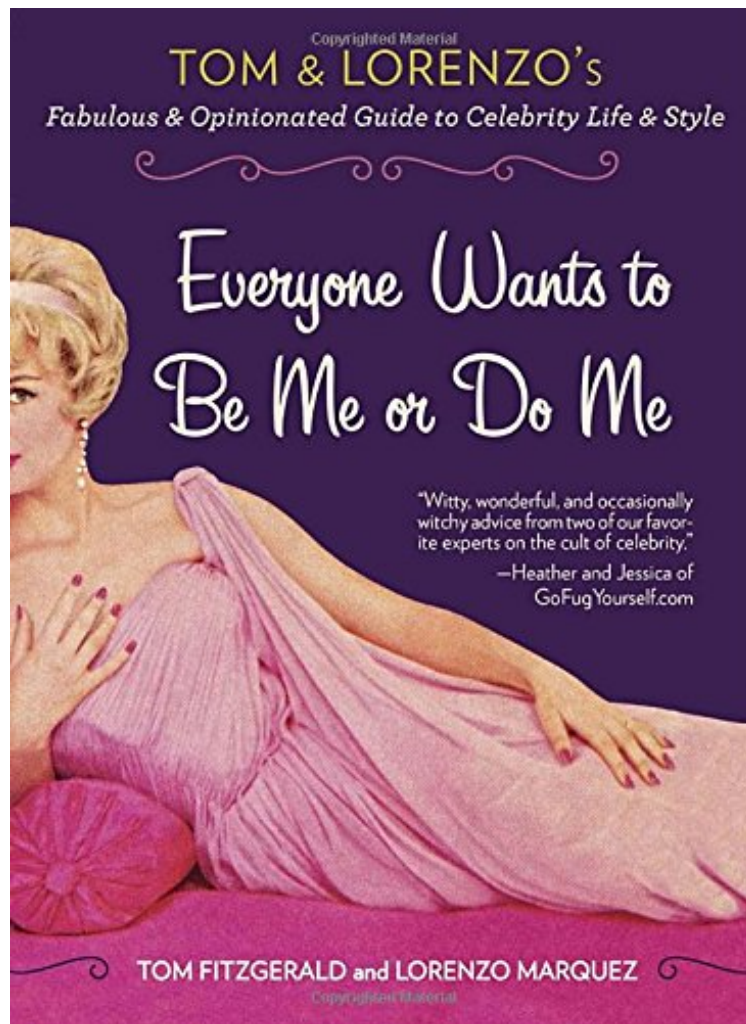


(Download pdf) Everyone Wants to Be Me or Do Me: Tom and Lorenzo's Fabulous and Opinionated Guide to Celebrity Life and Style

Everyone Wants to Be Me or Do Me: Tom and Lorenzo's Fabulous and Opinionated Guide to Celebrity Life and Style

Tom Fitzgerald, Lorenzo Marquez
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Tom Fitzgerald, Lorenzo Marquez : Everyone Wants to Be Me or Do Me: Tom and Lorenzo's Fabulous and Opinionated Guide to Celebrity Life and Style before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Everyone Wants to Be Me or Do Me: Tom and Lorenzo's Fabulous and Opinionated Guide to Celebrity Life and Style:

71 of 74 people found the following review helpful. A Misstep from our Favorite Uncles.By Dustin G. RhodesThere's a frequent admonition on Tom and Lorenzo's wonderfully entertaining blog: "Girl, That's Not Your Dress." After reading this book, I can't help but think they, too, made a mistake.Girl, This Isn't Your Book.It's so condescending,

among other things, to say, "I wanted to like this"--but I really did. I am a super fan of their eponymous blog. But the point of this book confused me. This book lacks generosity, wit, the cleverness fans have come to expect. I don't think I smiled, let alone laughed, at one single sentence in this book -- a surprise for someone who gets his RDA of biting, yet inciteful humor from them. Ostensibly, the point of this book is to deconstruct the modern celebrity, but this book -- page after page -- only reminded me that Cintra Wilson, the author of *A Massive Swelling: Celebrity Reexamined as a Grotesque, Crippling Disease and Other Cultural Revelations*, already wrote that book, 15 years ago, and it's a brilliant, choke-on-your-own-snot kind of funny. *Everyone Wants to Be Me or Do Me* is the humorless, bitter step-sister who aspires to her own reality show on TLC. T and Lo refer to themselves frequently as "bitchy fashion bloggers," but if you are a regular reader you know that they're way more charming than bitchy. The only bitchy behavior I've ever witnessed are aggressive smack-downs when someone veers off topic in the comments section. Bitchy, it turns out, is unbecoming on them. What makes them interesting, and what I suspect keeps the fans coming back, is the fact that they write about TV shows as superfans and write about celebrity fashion from a common-sense point of view; which is to say, they're not "experts," but they have an interesting point of view. They charm and entertain as bloggers who are complete outsiders peering into a rarified world of incestuous insanity that we all take part in. They knock the celebrity machine down a few notches. But the book is another story. *Everyone Wants to Be Me or Do Me* spends too much time stating what most people already know -- that the whole celebrity thing is one big facade -- while using a truly bitchy and bitter voice that just doesn't seem to suit them. These two guys are great writers when they're writing about something they love -- nerdy TV shows, one-liners about the motivation behind a red carpet dress. On their blog, their fashion commentary is typically pithy, sometimes hilarious. This book is neither of those things. Which is a long-winded way of saying I do not recommend this book. 31 of 31 people found the following review helpful. Girl, this is not your book. By Leah Robin I have read T and Lo's web site for a number of years and thought I would enjoy this book, but I have to say that it is a major disappointment. The catty tone is probably their most common voice on the blog, but reads better as a few paragraphs between screen caps than it does at chapter-length. Not a penetrating or particularly witty book written about the narcissism and artificiality of celebrity culture, and the cattiness becomes tediously one-note after a few chapters. Indeed, for people who make a living off celebrity, this book seemed to be written irony-free and with quite a bit of unearned superiority. Fortunately this is a quick read or I would have become too bored to finish it. It also needed further editing to catch typos and could have caught a few quirks of writing. The sad thing is that T and Lo are very much capable of thoughtful and insightful analysis and have published extremely entertaining and thoughtful pieces. Hopefully they will become more confident if they attempt other book-length projects and will present more than this shallow and limited attempt at satire. Really disappointing. 15 of 15 people found the following review helpful. A plethora of shallow, bitter, and cynical thoughts from your gay uncles. By Joe Cason To me, this book is a great caper to the (so-far) career of TLo. Why? Because it reflects perfectly the slow evolution of their online writing over the past several years. I used to get a lot of joy from their thoughts on Project Runway and fashion in general. Their site was a delight. But, the quality of the site has declined until it is mostly just a bitter mishmash of negativity and shallow television recaps. A few bright spots remain (Mad Men posts, mostly) just as there were a few bright spots in this book. But, there were not enough of those for me to recommend you buy or even read this book. Chapter after chapter of unrelieved cynical bitchery gets to be wearing after a while. This book has its highlights about celebrity culture, and can be interesting at times. But, again, I can't say there are enough of those present for it to be worth your time to slog through the rest. It makes me sad, I've been a huge TLo fan and I preordered this book as soon as it was available. I definitely wish I hadn't. Tom Lorenzo, if you're reading this: can we just have our favorite gay uncles back?

Tom and Lorenzo began blogging in 2006 with a fansite for the show Project Runway. In response to demand from their readers, they expanded to cover celebrity fashion, couture, red carpet commentary and other TV shows and TLo (as their "bitter kittens" call them) has become a household name, reaching more than 7 million visitors a month. Thanks to their biting, insightful commentary on celebrity style, they started getting sweet missives from pear-shaped ladies who needed a boost of confidence more than fashion advice. "Every day, before you leave the house," they instructed Lady Pear, after giving her some standard style recommendations, "look in the mirror and tell yourself, 'Everyone wants to be me or do me.'" In this book, they explore the celebrity image and style culture with their trademark acerbic wit, from starlet meltdowns to publicity seeking pregnancies to red carpet disasters, along the way offering readers funny but inspiring takeaways and advice on understanding what constitutes great style and confident self-image: Know the venue, know the image you want to project, and sell it, sell it, sell it. Brimming with insight, humor, and takedowns of the myths of the celebrity culture, this book offers the best of the friends readers want picking out their clothes every morning and gossiping over the newest issue of *Vogue*.

About the Author The bloggers behind the massively popular site Tom and Lorenzo, Tom Fitzgerald and Lorenzo Marquez offer their unique take on all things fashion and pop culture-related every day to an audience of over 7 million readers a month and over 100,000 Twitter followers. They've appeared three times on the Sundance Channel's

"All on the Line, with Joe Zee," in which Joe called them "two of the most important fashion bloggers today," made a dozen-plus appearances on Sirius XM Radio's "The Derek Romaine Show," and have been profiled, quoted or interviewed by the New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The Philadelphia Inquirer, The Los Angeles Times, The Philadelphia Daily News, Long Island Newsday, National Public Radio, Entertainment Weekly, People, Vanity Fair, Elle magazine, Rolling Stone, The Daily Telegraph, The Huffington Post, Slate, The Guardian, and Newsweek, among others. They live in Philadelphia. Excerpt. © Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.***This excerpt is from an advance uncorrected proof.***Copyright © 2014 by Tom Fitzgerald and Lorenzo Marquez

Introduction • "Dear Tom Lorenzo," the email began, "I have wide hips and small shoulders. From the time I was a child I've been shy and awkward. I want to make a change before I turn forty and I want to start with my clothes. How can I bring some red carpet glamour to my day-to-day life?" We didn't used to get emails like this, but we'd recently started a semi-bitchy, totally gay fashion and celebrity blog that surprised us by gaining an audience, and since we'd tricked people into thinking we were style experts, we occasionally received sweet missives from pear-shaped ladies who needed a boost of confidence more than fashion advice. But how to continue the illusion that we know what we're talking about while still giving her some helpful tips? We'd somehow stumbled into a hobby, which later—against all odds and reason—turned into a profession that had us reading publicist press releases, obsessing over red carpet photos all day, and conducting celebrity interviews. Despite giving pear-shaped ladies the impression that we're somehow insiders to this world, that was not the case. Prior to the unlikely series of events that resulted in our becoming pop culture and fashion bloggers, we tended to have a positively Elizabethan attitude regarding celebrities: namely, that people who choose to go into the entertainment field are most likely deranged, with severe attention-seeking disorders, and that no respectable person would dare consider interacting with any such person whenever he or she appears somewhere that isn't a stage. Alas, we live in a world where people revere their celebrities and don't say things like "alas" anymore, so our ideas about this sort of thing tend to come across a little, shall we say, archaic. Don't get us wrong; we love celebrities. Adore them, actually. Not only do they work to provide entertainment to the masses, they also tend to have insanely melodramatic personal lives that provide us with something to talk about during smoke breaks, in waiting rooms, or while seated with strangers at a wedding. Politics and religion make terrible conversation topics, but a pop singer gaining twenty pounds or an action star crashing his car into a palm tree can bring people together like a natural disaster that happened somewhere far away. Other people's problems will always be infinitely more entertaining than our own, after all. Most of us would find it hard to get out of bed if millions of people judged us every day for our clothes, hair, faces, bodies, romantic entanglements, financial status, and sexual history. But celebrities blithely sail through their days, eyes straight ahead, even if their field of vision is dominated by a bunch of screaming photographers who would sell their children for a chance to get a picture of an Oscar winner with spinach in her teeth. For a celebrity, every day is a slog through throngs of people clawing at you, both figuratively and literally. But when you get right down to it, isn't every day like that for most of us, on some level? Didn't Lady Pear feel a little beaten down by a world that punished her for being shaped like the wrong fruit? Isn't that really what she was asking us for, a little dose of the kind of blissfully unflappable self-confidence pumped into most celebrity psyches by a team of enablers and a public ready to worship them? And weren't those very celebrities responsible on some level for making her feel like she wasn't shaped correctly in the first place? Didn't they owe her something for that? Didn't we owe her something for being a small part of that celebrity machinery ourselves? This was too perfect. Lady Pear felt bad about herself at least in part (a big part) because she lived in a world where circus performers with eating disorders were worshipped like golden idols. Who better to turn to for the kind of advice she really needed than those very clowns and tumblers? Wouldn't it be delicious if we could pull something from the yawning wastelands known as the celebrity mindset and turn it around so it could be useful to a person without an entourage? What is the essence of the celebrity philosophy and how could we boil it down to one refrigerator magnet of inspiration? Like we tend to do so very often, we pulled an idea directly out of our collective ass. "Darling, every day, before you leave the house," we instructed Lady Pear, after giving her some standard style recommendations, "look in the mirror and tell yourself, Everyone wants to be me or do me." Sure, it sounds more like something a serial killer would scrawl on a mirror in lipstick rather than an affirmation, but it perfectly represents the self-absorption that characterizes the way celebrities see themselves. Lady Pear loved the sentiment, and we sent her out into the world with our blessing to be as happily self-involved as she needs to be. Last we heard, she was seen strutting. But this got us thinking. Our hobby-turned-career had us firmly entrenched as another cog in the massive celebrity-ego-inflating machine, and we couldn't help wondering how it was affecting the many Lady Pears out there, mistakenly led to believe that life somehow had given them the short end of the stick when all they really needed was their own inner publicist to tell them constantly how fabulous they are. Knowing what we know about just how false the modern celebrity image is, it annoyed us that people like Lady Pear were inadvertently buying into it. What people like her really needed was a shot of wake-the-fuck-up on the topic of stars and just how wrong it is to look to any of them or compare any of their lives to their own. Their lives are based on a double-barreled combination of conformity and illusion, and their value is wrapped up in their looks and how young they can plausibly appear to be. These are not role models, these are cautionary tales. Even worse, celebrities write countless books and give endless interviews telling people their philosophies of life, and somehow they've not

yet managed to improve humankind in any measurable way, except for a brief period in the eighties when everybody took up aerobics, but there was a lot of spandex involved so it was kind of a trade-off. We don't believe anyone should look to us for advice any more than they should look to celebrities, but if you must look up to them, then at least look up to them for their self-confidence and the ways in which they use it to craft a seemingly invulnerable persona and then force the world around them to accept it. We could all use a little more of that in our lives and a little less fretting over our hips or whether our clothes are cool enough. What if we wrote something about all the ways in which celebrities essentially convince themselves and everyone else that they're special? What if we looked—really looked—at all the things they do to get famous, stay famous, and hold on to that fame at any cost when it starts slipping away? What if we wrote something to help all those Lords and Ladies Pear realize that they are no different from celebrities and that all fruits are beautifully shaped, no matter what the fashion and gossip magazines tell them; that everyone is exactly who he or she needs to be; that we're all starring in our own movie; and most important of all, that life is all about resisting the impulse to believe the world when it tries to tell you who you are? Okay, what if we just made fun of celebrities a lot? Same thing. So this book isn't about us imparting advice to you. Unlike celebrities, we're more than willing to ask the question, "Why the hell should you listen to anything we have to say about life?" No, this is about taking a hard look at what celebrities do to become and then remain celebrities and taking the real lessons away from it, boiling them down to sometimes hilariously simple affirmations that don't so much build up self-confidence as they render the opinions of the rest of the world utterly moot (which, from a distance, looks like the same thing). It'll be up to you to decide if the lessons imparted here are helpful or monstrous. We suspect they'll fall somewhere in the middle and be either monstrously helpful or helpfully monstrous, but the point to all of them is the same: The stars have entire armies of people dedicated to telling them how fabulous they are every day of their lives. You have a mirror. Get in front of it and be your own publicist, darling.

CHAPTER 1 Before They Were Stars

CELEBRITY AFFIRMATION #1 Nobody gets to say who I am except me, and I'm not done talking yet.

THE P U P A L S T A G E • Somewhere, at this very moment, a little girl is standing in front of a mirror in her bedroom, wrapped in a sheet to approximate a couture gown, clutching a softball-league trophy in both hands, and thanking the empty room for this honor. "I didn't even prepare a speech," she says breathlessly, her eyes glistening, her face a perfect mask of faux gratitude and humility, just like the ones the stars wear. It doesn't matter what her name is. It's likely she'll change it some day anyway, to something less ethnic and more generic, like Jennifer—or more likely, generic with a twist, like Gennifer. Pre-Gennifer doesn't know it, but she's doing something all pre-stars have done for as long as there have been other stars to look up to. Around the world, other little girls (and little mostly gay boys) are repeating this ritual, invoking the blessings of celebrities while taking their very first steps on the path that will lead them to their own stardom. That they are also taking their very first steps away from anything approaching a normal human life may or may not occur to them, but that's kind of the deal with ritualistic worship. There's always a price to pay. Higher beings can be real bitches that way. Because she is one of the few who will attain that much-desired stardom, our little girl in front of the mirror will tell this charming story for years to come, to every celebrity interviewer or talk-show host who gives her an opening. In the telling, she will either raise the home she's living in up to palatial levels to bestow a kind of aristocratic air to her past or reduce it to little more than a pile of rags and tarps held up by sticks in the bad section of the trailer park, to give her a "just folks" persona while allowing her to describe herself forevermore as a "survivor." Anything but the boring middle-class reality of her up-bringing. Her parents might be recast as globe-trotting jet-setters or drug-addicted, marginally employed service workers. She will have been teased mercilessly in high school or people will have come far and wide just to get a glimpse of her perfectly symmetrical face and snow-white teeth as she sang in the church choir. The reality won't matter; only the image. The reality barely matters now, as she whispers her tearful thanks to her teddy bear agent and Barbie manager. After all, if it mattered to her, she wouldn't even have this impossible dream in the first place. She will not, however, tell these stories with a grin and a laugh during that period when she's waiting tables or stripping in order to pay for her new veneers. These stories only become fun, charming tales about dreams when the dreams come true. In the interim, she'll keep these stories to herself, knowing that they sound kind of pathetic coming out of the mouth of someone in hot pants serving a tray of chicken wings, but she's secure in the firm, passionate belief that everything she's doing is what she's meant to be doing to become what she's meant to be. This is the kind of self-confidence on a cellular level that most people could benefit from and characterizes most major celebrities from their earliest beginnings.

THE B I R T H O F A S T A R • Stars, as the saying goes, are born, not made. This is of course bullshit of the highest order, and we may as well plant our starting-point flag here, because it's the bullshit that spawns all the successive bits of bullshit that make up a star's personal and professional history. The Mother of All Bullshits, as it were, designed to present a picture of inevitability, rendering stardom as some sort of indefinable concept bestowed genetically upon a single-digit percentage of the population. The Divine Right of Stars, if you will. But despite the attempts by celebrities (and their enablers and exploiters) to paint their status as something born out of some indefinable quality that sets them apart from people, they are not, in fact, modern-day royalty. They are our court jesters, and frankly, they should always be treated as such by the public. The great thing about court jesters was that they allowed certain truths to be revealed about the state of the world they lived in but always had a certain level of deniability because they were mere

entertainers. So when we say stars are more court jester than royalty, stars probably wouldn't like it, but we're actually paying them a kind of compliment. They're not to be emulated, but you can definitely find some answers from them, if you know how to phrase the question. As a general rule, if you refrain from looking to celebrities to answer questions about child rearing, nutrition, financial management, and current events, you're on the right track. If you look to them in order to see how to (re)create yourself in your own perfect image, then you're doing it exactly right. One glance at a "Before They Were Stars" magazine feature dispels the myth about stars being born. That succession of toothy grins, crooked noses, and bad haircuts only serves to underline the truth of the matter: Stars were people once. But even then, even in those high school glamour shots and band camp photos, you can see the delirium behind the eyes, like plates spinning on poles: the incredible, burning drive to lift themselves out of the muck of obscurity and into the spotlight.

WHAT ARE LITTLE STARS MADE OF?•Stars are made, of course. They're made out of attention and compromise, not to mention an overwhelming need to be loved while keeping the world at arm's length. They're made in a vat known as the entertainment industry complex, with swirling, bubbling ingredients like mind-gnawing ambition, selective amnesia, and just a pinch of personality disorder. Then they're stamped out in cookie-cutter shapes with the rough edges smoothed off, ready for public consumption; eager for it, in fact. A row of happy, smiling products on a shelf, like cereal boxes with dreams. But they have to start out, like all of us do, as (somewhat) normal people first. What separates true pre-stars from mere starry-eyed pretenders at this point is an exact, laser-like focus on what is required of them to become a star, without any illusions muddying the view, including a willingness to strip their own identity down and build it up into something else. Talent alone won't do it, nor will unfocused ambition. It takes a burning, nuclear desire for love and attention and an accompanying eagerness to do whatever it takes to secure them. In order to become a grade-A, capital-S Star, one must do the work of leaving behind one's icky, messy, unfortunate humanity. Big-time celebrities can't afford to think, act, or look like real people, because if they did, actual real people wouldn't elevate them to the top of the star heap. Some celebrities figure this out as they go along, but a select few had this realization hit them at a very young age, like a thunderclap during nap time, forcing the little nippers to sit bolt upright with the dawning horror that their parents, friends, home life, and possibly even their ethnicity and facial features have all been terrible mistakes foisted on them to prevent them from becoming stars. These are the true pre-superstars: little mutated humans who can survive without food, water, or sleep for alarming lengths of time but need attention like a flower needs sunlight. We wouldn't suggest taking too much inspiration from these rabid fame seekers except the burning desire and the willingness to do the work to become so much more than what others tell you you're destined to be.

PROSTITUPHEMISMS! How do the stars paper over their seedy past once they become stars? **WHEN THEY SAY: THEY REALLY MEAN:** "Waiting table" Stripping "Fitness model" Stripping for private clients "Bike messenger" Massage with release "delivering pizzas" Gay-for-pay "Studying at Juilliard" Full-blown hooking Like becoming president, becoming a star is not something that happens accidentally, to humble and unassuming people. And despite what they all tell us in interview after interview once they reach their goal and realize that the life of a star is empty and meaningless, no one who becomes a star is ignorant of what that entails, not these days. In fact, the two go hand in hand. Bud- ding pre-celebrities are all too aware that if they achieve their goals, they'll never be able to walk through a mall, sit in a restaurant, or pick their nose in public lest they pay a very heavy price for it, like getting swamped by dirty, wild-eyed strangers who know their sexual history or having their dried mucous expeditions memorialized in pictures. And they just don't care. But they'll bitch about it endlessly after they're famous.

WHO WOULD YOU LIKE ME TO BE?•This pre-fame, pre-talent period is when theater geeks begin the work of reimagining themselves into punk rebels and chunky girls cultivate mild eating disorders and beg their parents to let them have their hairlines resculpted. This is that period when clumsy ethnic names sometimes get discarded completely or nerdy names get shortened down to syllables. It's not so much "Be the person you want to be" as "Be the person that you want the world to see" or, more accurately, "Be the person the world is asking to see." In essence, it's what everyone goes through right around his or her freshman year in high school: that frantic sense of trying to become the kind of person that your peers won't consider a loser. With the pre-star, this period starts roughly around the age she learns to speak and will, in fact, continue until roughly around the time she forgets how to speak. These people never grow out of it. They will spend the rest of their lives trying to be the person the public rewards them for being. Family and longtime friends will smile politely at their attempts to rewrite themselves, and some might even cut off ties completely when it becomes obvious that this is no phase, or if the pre-star becomes insufferable (which is all too likely), but the fetal celebrity simply won't care. There's a bus ticket out of town with her (new) name on it, and no one's going to get in her way. By the time she's done with herself, no one from her hometown will recognize her or even be able to spell her new name, but you can't make an omelet without cracking an egg, and you can't make a star without a rhinoplasty or two. Again, this is not what we would call a road map to self-fulfillment for most people, but we can't help admiring these types who know so clearly, against all outward evidence, that they're destined to be and do so much more than anyone believes they can. Certainly, we wouldn't advise anyone that a good breast augmentation or nose job is the key to happiness, but we think there's something to appreciate about someone willing to make major changes to achieve her goals. It's just a matter of channeling that intense desire for change into something a little more constructive and down-to-earth.

A R T A N D

C R A F T•Of course we should pay some lip service to talent here. Yes, some people make it to the top of the stardom heap based on their talents, whatever those might be. But the number of A-listers who make it to that point without having to make some fairly hard personal sacrifices along the way (like their personality, original teeth, or any objections to showing their nipples on the regular) is so tiny you might as well be talking about the number of people in Kansas who speak Urdu. And when you take a tumble farther down that fame ladder, into the B-, C-, and D-list celebrities, then you're definitely dealing with a high percentage of mildly talented (to not talented at all) people with a vast range of personality disorders and neuroses, who have to pole-dance like their rent is due in order to remain marginally famous, and thus employable. These are the true court jesters of stardom. These are the ones who make up the vast majority of the celebrity population, and their humorous and sometimes pathetic attempts to remain above water in their careers can provide enormous lessons about how a little hustle and a little bullshit can go a long way in life, if you know how to apply it. A-listers teach you the basic mantra of "Walk through a room like you're better than anyone." B- to D-listers, by grasping and clawing for recognition, teach us, "Chin up, tits out, bitches. Sell that shit like you're behind a counter at Tiffany." So while we might be focusing on the persona-crafting aspect of pre-stardom, we're doing so because for most stars, it'll be the most important work they do prior to stardom hitting them. But many of those proto-stars will also be tapping their way through dance or vocal lessons, joining local theater clubs, smiling through the beauty pageant circuit, fronting an endless succession of garage bands, and generally just doing the work to get themselves a marketable set of job skills, like anybody else does. A distressingly high number of them, however, will reach stardom with no discernible skills at all, except the ability to get and remain famous. There was a time when the public sneered at people like this, but we're so used to it at this point that we're on the verge of creating some sort of award for the untalented famous. D E V E L O P I N G A C E L E B R I T Y P S Y C H E•But the dance lessons and acting classes and singing coaches that pre-stars will beg their parents (or wait tables, or turn tricks) to pay for will never be as important as the work they do in their heads to turn themselves into stars from the inside out. First, they must cultivate an intense, blinding belief that they are some sort of incredibly rare combination of talent and charisma, no matter what the rest of the world says. This will keep them in a kind of overly confident fog that will allow them to shrug off bad auditions, disappointing mentors, backstabbing cohorts, and the chronic low-level degradation that comes from having to suck up to repulsive people constantly in order to further their career. Fortunately, most pre-stars came to this conclusion about themselves before they learned how to read. At the same time they are developing this fantasy, they must feed and care for their nascent addiction to attention so that it grows to such proportions that it will allow them not only to weather the most humiliating forms of scandal and public personal setbacks, but also to thrive in the frantic fishbowl atmosphere created by them. Since stars are subjected to forms of humiliation that would keep the rest of us bed-bound with the curtains drawn for weeks at a time, this ability to blossom under the glare of other people's judgment is key to their future stardom. It's too limiting to call it selfishness or even self-centeredness. Those are human terms, and they're trying to make themselves into something more than that, something that survives in the spotlight like plants survive on sunlight. They're answering a higher calling, one that just so happens to have an end result of fame, adoration, and wealth beyond imaginings. And if they're dull or have an awkward name or teeth that look like chipped tombstones, they'll have to have all that sanded and buffed away. They'll consider it a small price to pay. T H E N A M E G A M E•The first—and easiest—external change a pre-celebrity can make is to her name. If she's been dreaming of stardom from the time she could first get through the night without wetting the bed, then she's probably pondered dozens if not hundreds of potential brand names for herself. It may be that she has a perfectly fine, acceptable name, and in the long run, she may even decide to keep it, but she will still toy with the idea the entire time she's preparing for fame. When you're rebuilding yourself from the ground up, you'd naturally want a new name to slap on your new product. There was a time when celebrities with awkward or unpronounceable names were forced to change them into something more palatable to the public, and no one ever questioned it. Countless young men and women with names that sounded either too old-school or too Old World were handed new, non-threatening, easy-to-pronounce names that fit nicely on marquees and assured Americans that they were not being entertained by undesirable ethnic types or challenged by too many consonants or vowels in a row. Norma Jeane Mortenson never gave a second thought as to whether "Marilyn Monroe" sounded like a better product name, and Archie Leach was happy to leave behind his clumsy origins to become the more suave and sophisticated Cary Grant. Would Judy Garland have captivated generations if she'd stuck with her birth name of Frances Gumm? Not bloody likely. No drag queen is going to tuck his penis between his legs just so he can hit the stage playing someone named Frances. Since today's world of celebrity is so varied and wide-open, not to mention more international and multicultural, this isn't quite the issue it once was. Few rising stars really worry that they might lose ticket sales because people will know they're Polish. And what used to be considered an awkward name can now be passed off as exotic or quirky with the right image control. So when someone with a perfectly fine name changes it in preparation for stardom, you can bet it's because she wanted to shed the last of her pre-fame self. Her original name will remind her of the small-town or small-breasted person she once was, and out it will have to go. No matter what the original name was, the new name will be something totally nonthreatening, gender appropriate, and, above all, generic, hence a land populated by Jens, Jesses, and Jons instead of Moiras, Mohammads, and Stanleys. These are also

the stars most insecure about their level of talent and thus most willing to change any part of themselves in order to overcome any disadvantages the lack of talent might bring. But at least they're surveying the marketplace and making the changes needed to become a viable product within it. You could apply that to anything from school to career to romance, really, even if we wouldn't suggest anything so drastic as a name change or so disappointing as a quest to become more generic.

E A R L Y S T A G E B O D Y D Y S M O R P H I A•Truly dangerous eating disorders and plastic surgery addictions await the pre-star in the years to come, but her always just-under-the-surface body dysmorphia will begin its ascent to the light during this pre-fame period. She won't have a lot of money or be subjected yet to the kind of ego-crushing criticisms that will define her career and ruin her self-worth over time, so she won't be indulging in anything too extreme at this point. A nose job, definitely. Boob job, probably. An obsession with weight maintenance and working out will develop by now if it hasn't already. Teeth will be capped, straightened, and whitened to gleaming perfection. But she will still remain nominally human-like in appearance. The truly horrifying mutations are years down the line, when her fame is long established and she's working to maintain it at a certain level, but that's for later. For now, she's scrubbed, starved, and plucked to physical perfection—or at least, the non-star definition of the term.

O N E - W A Y T I C K E T O U T•Once she's made the commitment, gotten the boob job, and hitched her dreams to a trailer heading to the big city, the process of self-creation only ramps up further. Successful stars like to classify that period when they were starving, unknown, and considering prostitution (if not relying on it) as a time of blossoming creativity and yeoman-like efforts at perfecting their craft, when in fact they were desperate and trying mostly to make connections and stave off organ failure for another week. It's at this final stage of pre-celebrity life that all the delusions and neuroses that will characterize stardom begin to gel and coalesce, damaging the future celebrity's psyche for life but exponentially increasing his or her earning potential.

What are the HOT celebrity pseudonyms this year? **FOR THE LADIES:** Jennifer John Gennifer Jon Ginnif'r Jesse Jen Javier Gen Jack J'En Jak And while the pathways to fame are more numerous and varied than at any other time in history, most pre-stars are still going to have to eat piles of crap to get anywhere in their careers. The soon-to-be famous have to come up through the ranks somehow, whether that's local commercials for carpet outlets, cheap reality television, or dancing on cruise ships. Whatever the route, it's sure to be humiliating and soul crushing, which means the vocal exercises and rhinoplasties they've already paid for are never going to matter as much as that diamond-hard veneer they're forming that keeps them from becoming too damaged by the process. Even so, they will tell everyone that this pre-stardom period was a fertile one when they worked on their craft and learned to enjoy the simple pleasures in life. What they won't mention was that they spent as much or more time learning how to immunize themselves against the harshness of it all so that when that big break comes, they'll be primed and ready for it.

Persona-Crafting Tips of the Stars!

1. Know your goals. Are you seeking the big, glitzy blockbuster life or the smaller, quieter indie-release life?
2. Know your strengths and focus on them. Perfect pitch or a great rack? Innate charm or intense focus? Whatever it is, run with it.
3. Know your weaknesses and obliterate them. Nose too big? Name too ethnic? History too messy? Snip. Snip. Snip.
4. Look for the niche you'll fit into best. And then become the embodiment of it. Quirky? Sultry? Girl next door? Action hero? Intellectual? Earth mother? Pick the type you think you can become.