

Hero Essay by Abby Jones, Hamden Middle School, 8th Grade

“Pull the car around back, George!” The valet caught the keys to the red Corvette.

“Absolutely, Mr. Starr!” he called back. Hudson Starr, the biggest new model for Abercrombie and Fitch this season, walked up his circular driveway to his customized McMansion near the city. He had had a hard day at work; one of his “clearly incompetent” staff had spilled coffee on the brand new blazer he was supposed to be modeling at the next show.

He walked through the double-doors and collapsed on his leather couch. He picked up his Macbook Air from the coffee table and opened Microsoft Word. He had decided that he was now successful enough to write the story of his life, and was going to surprise his new agent, Randy Brown, with the rough draft. *I am a hero of modern times*, he wrote. *I rose up from being a dropout of high school to the top model for one of the best stores in the country. I'll have at least 300 pages, maybe more.*

He wrote for two hours, about his minimal schooling, one chance, and how he stopped at nothing to grasp it. He had a good fifty pages when he retired to his bedroom. He fell asleep on his Tempurpedic and cream silk sheets thinking about what a hero he was, what a role model, an idol. He anticipated working more on his book the next day.

Hudson woke to being violently shaken back and forth by Randy Brown.

“Randy, what are you doing in my house at – what time is it... 2:00 AM?!?” Hudson bellowed.

“Quick, get dressed,” Randy instructed urgently.

“Wha – what? Why?” demanded Hudson.

“It’s an emergency.”

Hearing this, Hudson panicked. “What? What happened? Did I lose my job?”

Randy made a calm-down-you-spaz motion with his hands. “No. Nothing like that. It’s about your book.”

Mr. Starr was confused, and a little bit suspicious. “How did you know about that?” he asked.

His agent waved him away. “That’s not important. Just get dressed and follow me.” Hudson was exasperated by the lack of answers he was getting, and gave up.

“Fine,” he sighed.

Once he had put on jeans, a T-shirt, and a jacket, Hudson turned to his agent.

“Now what?” he asked impatiently.

“Take my hand,” said Randy.

“Umm... do I have to?” Hudson hesitated.

“Just do it,” replied Randy. Hudson grumbled for a few seconds, but did as his agent told him like every good celebrity does.

After they were hand in hand, Randy instructed Hudson to hold on and close his eyes. Begrudgingly, he did as he was told.

Three seconds later Randy dropped his hand and said, “Okay, open them.” As soon as Hudson did, he fought the urge to yell. He was surrounded by people, thousands and thousands of people, and at the front of the crowd, standing at a podium encircled by microphones, was Martin Luther King Jr.

“H – How did you do that?” he sputtered, pointing his finger at his agent.

“We’re here to show you what a true hero is. Martin Luther King Jr. spent and gave his life trying to equalize the relationship between races. He didn’t care what people thought of him, because what he was doing was so revolutionary, he couldn’t afford to. He was arrested many times, but didn’t get discouraged. He made sacrifices; the greatest sacrifices someone can make. He had legendary self-control; no matter what happened to him or his marchers, he refused to use violence. And he did all this not just for himself, but for the common good of people everywhere.”

Hudson stood very still. He could hear Martin making his most famous speech in history, he could hear people of all races and ages cheering around him. He was in the presence of a real hero. Dropping out of school didn’t make him a hero just because he was successful now. It only meant that he had quit on himself, and that wasn’t what a hero did.

“I think we can go back now,” suggested Hudson quietly.

“I think you’ve seen enough,” agreed Randy.

They held hands, and just as they were about to go, Randy opened his mouth and started screaming, “Beep! Beep! Beep!” in loud obnoxious spurts. Hudson gasped and sat up straight in bed listening to his alarm clock blast. *It was all a dream... just a dream,* he thought to himself. He sat still, and thought about what this dream might mean. But he shook it off quickly, and got up to work more on his book. He walked to his living room and powered up his laptop. It was

just as he was opening up his autobiography when he realized that he was still wearing the jeans from his dream. He looked himself up and down, and was still wearing the T-shirt and jacket, also. Hudson sat down slowly to keep from collapsing. He stared at his story, and slowly closed the file. He opened up a new document, and gave it a new name. He wrote, “What Makes a Hero, by Hudson Starr. Introduction: I was sleeping one night, and had what you might call an “out-of-body experience. I was taken to witness one of the heroes of our time make history...”