

LANCE LIVE?

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“Don't do anything you wouldn't want the entire world to see.”

Executive Summary

LANCE LIVE? is a comedy series about a 13 year-old boy who figures out the new security cameras at his home and school are secretly recording him for a reality TV show.

Imagine THE TRUMAN SHOW except rather than attempting to pull back the curtain once the secret has been discovered, the hero decides to play along and use this knowledge to his advantage. Knowing that millions of people (maybe trillions!) are now watching, Lance becomes a better student (don't want to look dumb on TV) and gains the courage to stand up to bullies. (The producers wouldn't let one of their stars really get hurt.)

By playing along, the show goes on and Lance gains incentive to become a better person. Everyone wins.

Except for one thing -- There is no show. It's all in his head.

Blue Collar Details

The Montaltos have one son and are struggling with the bills. In an effort to save money, Dad cancels their expensive house insurance policy and installs video cameras all around their house to dissuade would-be robbers. Lance notices that cameras have also been installed all over his junior high school. That's curious. A few days ago his mom told him to treat others as if the whole world was watching-- Hold on a sec...

Lance puts 2 and 2 together -- He's being filmed for some kind of reality TV show!

With the help of his only friend Kyle, Lance attempts to get the principal and teachers to come clean. They all claim they know nothing about a show but that doesn't disprove anything because reality TV shows are notorious for demanding everyone keep the secret. When Lance confronts his parents, however, they do something very telling -- they too swear they know nothing about a show. They NEVER swear. That, combined with Dad's blinking when he denied it (he actually had something in his eye), is all the confirmation Lance needs. Must be some serious prize money involved! Even his own parents won't level with him!

But what IS the show? How long will it last? How many others are being taped? Clearly Lance and the other players (or contestants or whatever the right word is) are not supposed to know. But Lance DOES know. He lost his innocence and now he's nervous -- he's being watched by millions of people. Maybe even trillions! How embarrassing is it gonna be when he's the first one kicked off or disqualified or whatever they do on this show? Darn! Why does he have to be so perceptive? Ignorance really IS bliss.

Lance fears he'll be kicked off early because in the cut-throat world of reality shows you need “something” to keep you in the game. Some talent, some special-ness that makes you stand out. Lance has nothing. He's

not a dumb kid but he's also not the smartest. Or the best-looking. Or the most athletic... His family really needs this prize money and already he's failed them. Until he realizes...

He knows about the show! That's his ace in the hole -- He can talk to the audience directly. Make a connection. If he can get the audience to care about him, to see him not as a lacking contestant but as a funny, sensitive guy who they like and care about, they'll keep him in the game. They won't vote off their "friend," right? It's brilliant. The others don't even know there's an audience so Lance will be the only one doing it. Knowledge really IS power.

If you held down Kyle and threatened to put a red-hot needle into his eye he'd admit he's not actually convinced about this whole show thing. But Kyle has only two options -- alienate his only friend or play along. Besides, maybe it IS true. Lance claims his dad wouldn't blink wildly and swear unless he's delivering a coded confirmation and who is Kyle to argue with that?

So starting the next morning, Lance (with Kyle as his wingman) goes through life as if he's the star of a show. More specifically, the "host" of a show about his life.

A host's job is to communicate with his audience so Lance will occasionally talk directly into a camera. Or mirror. Or wherever else he suspects the audience may be watching from. It's common for kids this age to do weird things so most of Lance's classmates don't even notice this new "quirk" of his. And the ones who do just chalk it up to Lance trying to get attention. What do they care if some geek is talking to mirrors? It's not like they sit with him in the cafeteria during lunch or anything.

Lance has decided his best strategy is to be as honest as he can. The more he's open about his feelings and fears the more likely the audience will bond with him. And the more they bond, the more likely they'll grant him slack when judging his actions...

(Before school, into bathroom mirror) *"Hello Audience. Tonight's the school dance and if you're gonna 'kick someone off the island' or however it works, just take into account that I've never had any dance lessons or anything so, you know, I kinda suck. I just want you guys to take that into account."*

(Into a security camera while Mom yells at him) *"This isn't about me leaving the door open and the flies getting in. Mom's really just frustrated she burned the string beans and needs someone to yell at."*

Of course, with fame comes responsibility. With millions of fans watching his every move (maybe trillions!) Lance feels a need to set an example and do his best. He studies a little harder, dresses a little nicer, and even makes an effort to appear braver...

In one episode Lance will be approached by a bully. In the past he'd hand over his money but now his fans are watching. How will it look if he comes across as chicken? Besides, the producers will certainly run over from wherever their broadcast van is hidden to stop the bully from REALLY hurting him. (Can't have their new star injured.) Knowing somebody's now watching his back, Lance stands up to the bully and wins!

The kids might not care but Lance's new behavior is not being dismissed by the adults. His parents, his teachers and even the principal try to convince Lance there is no show but it falls on deaf ears. (He knows they're just upholding their promise of secrecy.) So Lance's parents do what anyone would do when their teenage son talks to imaginary people -- they take him to a psychologist. Lance just assumes the visits are the part of every reality show where the contestants talk directly to the camera.

The psychologists are torn: Lance is being nutty but he's also trying harder in school and finally standing up for himself. Yes, he's acting crazy but only when it comes to this one thing -- a thing that's making him a better person. Why fix what isn't broken?

Easy advice to give when it's not YOUR kid talking to an imaginary audience behind mirrors.

What The Show Is

LANCE LIVE? is a unique mix of elements blatantly stolen* from 2 successful TV shows, one play and one major motion picture...

THE WONDER YEARS

At its core, the show is about a boy dealing with life in junior high. The problems will be simple -- standing up to a bully, asking a girl to a dance... What makes our show different is that the stories take place in a world our hero believes resembles...

THE TRUMAN SHOW

Lance's life may be normal on the surface, but he's discovered that there's actually a secret test being given under everyone's noses and he's stumbled upon the teacher's answer sheet! He now knows how to pass the test and he's going to use this secret knowledge to do just that! He is now in control of his destiny. The problem is, to the casual onlooker, Lance's actions are beyond quirky and border on full-blown nuts. Which is where the show steals elements from...

HAMLET

Wait, wait, don't leave, hear me out. Was Hamlet insane or was he just pretending to be insane? 400 years of debate and the jury's still out. My point being, one very good story has contained a main character whose actions straddled the Nut Line. This premise is in good company, that's all I'm sayin'. Moving on...

FREAKS & GEEKS

This show, one of Time Magazine's 100 Greatest Shows Of All Time (an honor HAMLET never received), explored the interplay between the "bad" kids and the geeks in high school. Although the characters in our show are years younger, the theme of dorkiness vs. popularity is still shared.

* *"Borrowed" would mean we plan on giving them back one day which is not the case. I purposely chose the word stolen.*