

Aussie **CHOMPS**

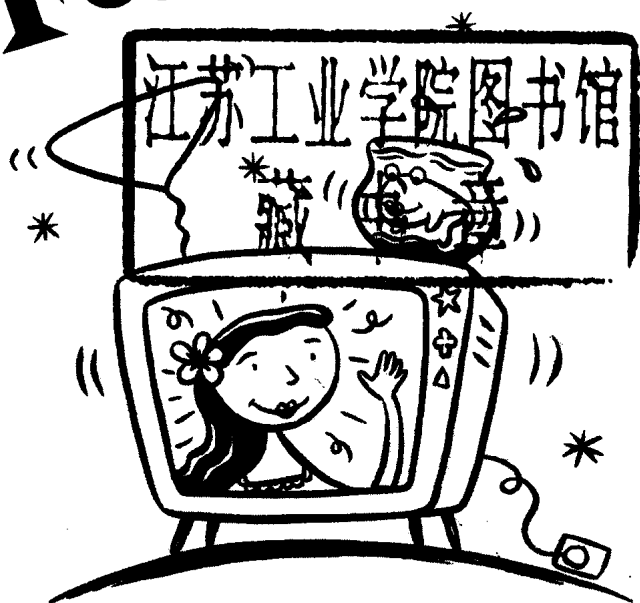
# Famous!



Julia Lawrinson

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Puffin Books

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# 1



One day, in the middle of class, Sophie Callendar made a decision.

Her teacher, Mrs Pavlich, had written on the board, *What are you going to be when you grow up?* Sophie had never thought much about this before, but now, for the first time, she knew exactly what she wanted to be.

‘Yes, Sophie?’ Mrs Pavlich said. ‘What are you going to be when you grow up?’

‘I’m going to be famous,’ said Sophie.

‘Me too,’ said Emma, the class show-off.

‘Me too,’ said Brutus, the class bad boy.

Mrs Pavlich sighed and shook her head. ‘You can’t just want to be famous when you grow up,’ she said. ‘That’s not a job.’

‘If you’re famous you don’t need a job,’ said Brutus.

Mrs Pavlich frowned. ‘That’s not what I meant. Even if you are famous, you have to be famous for being able to do something. Like being a famous scientist, for example. Or a famous runner. Or a famous writer.’

‘There’re plenty of people on TV who can’t do anything,’ said Emma. ‘They’re just there because they’re pretty. Like me.’

Brutus leaned over and pulled Emma’s ponytail.

‘Ow!’ said Emma.

‘Sorry!’ grinned Brutus.

‘Let’s think more about the kinds of jobs

you can do,' said Mrs Pavlich. 'Now, what kinds of jobs would you find in a hospital, for example?'

Sophie propped her chin on her hand and looked out of the window. Nobody believed her. Sure, everybody wanted to be famous, but right at that moment, Sophie wanted to be famous more than anything in the world. If she was famous, people like Emma and Brutus wouldn't make fun of her ideas – they'd listen to everything she said as if it was important. She wouldn't have to worry about things like maths or finishing her English homework. She could stay in hotels all the time and go on big holidays, and even if people didn't know her, they'd treat her with respect when she walked down the street. Right now, Sophie was ordinary, but if she was famous, it would change everything. Her whole life would be better, she just knew it.

Sophie wrote in her exercise book:

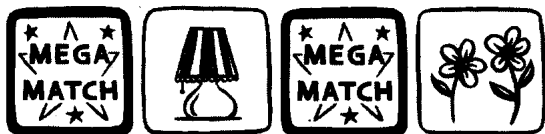
*Sophie Callendar –*

*The most famous eleven-year-old in Australia!*

It looked good. It felt good.

All she had to do was make it happen.

# 2



‘Mikie, give my sock back!’ yelled Sophie. Mikie was running around the house with Sophie’s dirty sock in his mouth, pretending it was a bone. Mikie was only two and a half.

‘Yuck!’ said Sophie, when she finally wrestled her sock out of Mikie’s mouth.

‘Bone back!’ yelled Mikie, rolling over on the floor. ‘Give me bone!’

‘Don’t leave your socks lying around, sweetie,’ said Sophie’s mum, squinting at the chair she was mending. ‘You know he’s in his dog phase at the



moment. He'd much rather be a puppy.'

'Why can't he just stay out of my room?' Sophie complained. 'He's so annoying.'

'He'll grow up soon enough,' said her mum. 'Then things will be different.'

Sophie poured herself a glass of milk from the fridge, went to the living room and turned on the TV. Her favourite show of all time, *MegaMatch*, was on. *MegaMatch* was a game show where you had to play Memory on a huge screen, competing with three other kids. If you guessed incorrectly three times, you were out. Whoever was the last one standing won the game and played again the next day. If anyone lasted five days, they got a big prize, like a trip to Disneyland.

Sophie was quite good at this game, and sometimes she couldn't believe it when the contestants couldn't remember where the two zebras were, or the two top hats. For Sophie it seemed easy.

Today she did particularly well. She beat the boy who had won three games in a row, and she said to herself, 'If only I could go on that show, I bet I could win. Then I'd be famous.'

At the end of *MegaMatch*, Sophie was just about to switch off the TV when a man said, 'And if you'd like to be on *MegaMatch*, we're holding auditions this weekend in all capital cities. Call 1900 000 000 for details – but get your parents' permission first.'

'Mum, Mum!' Sophie squealed, jumping off the couch. 'Can I audition for *MegaMatch*?'

'When is it?' her mum asked.

'On the weekend,' Sophie said.

'I don't know. We were going to visit Gran. She'll be disappointed if she doesn't see us.'

'We can go next weekend,' Sophie said. 'Please?'

'All right,' her mum sighed. 'I suppose so.'

‘Great!’ Sophie cried. ‘I’m going to be famous!’

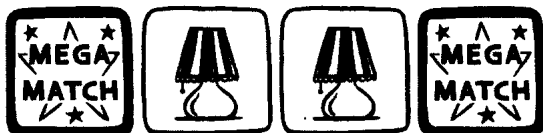
‘Famous!’ repeated Mikie.

Sophie kissed her baby brother on the cheek.

Then she picked him up and spun him around until he chuckled his high, toddler chuckle.

‘That’s right,’ Sophie said. ‘Famous.’

# 3



On Saturday morning, Sophie got dressed in her best skirt and top, cleaned her teeth seven times, and made sure her hair was washed and brushed neatly. She sat in the back of the car and tried not to chew her fingernails. She was going to the audition!

She was going to be on *MegaMatch* for sure!

Sophie's mother strapped Mikie into his carseat and handed him his bottle, but Mikie pulled a face and threw it across the car.

'Bone!' he cried. 'Mikie want bone!'

The bottle bounced off the back of the passenger seat and landed straight in Sophie's lap spraying milk over her skirt.

'Oh!' she squealed, and tried wiping the milk off with her hand. It made a dark stain on the pale denim. 'Mum! What am I going to do?'

Sophie's mum rubbed a damp flannel from Mikie's change bag on the skirt. 'There,' she said. 'That should do the trick.'

But it didn't. It just made the stain darker, and added more darkness around the outside of it.

'Mikie!' Sophie said. 'You've ruined my skirt!'

'Skirt?' Mikie arched his eyebrows. 'Wooned skirt?'

Sophie would usually laugh at the way Mikie talked, but she was too furious. Why did she have to have such an irritating little brother?

'Don't worry, pet,' said her mum. 'It's only the audition. Nobody will care.'

Sophie hoped her mother was right. She tried to stop worrying about her skirt and instead began to imagine what it would be like when everyone in the city knew her name. People would wave at her as she drove past, and maybe people would ask for her autograph at the shops. She decided she would always be nice to people, no matter what. Then she felt guilty at how angry she'd just felt towards Mikie. If she was famous, she was going to have to be nicer than that. Sophie turned to her brother and gave him a smile. Mikie smiled back, as if he hadn't noticed she'd been angry in the first place, and she was relieved her brother was so forgiving.

When they arrived at the television studio, Sophie couldn't believe her eyes. There were hundreds of cars parked all around the streets. And she was even more surprised when she saw the thousands

of girls and boys, all dressed up, waiting to become famous – just like her.

‘Oh no,’ said Sophie, shaking her head. ‘Look at how many people there are.’

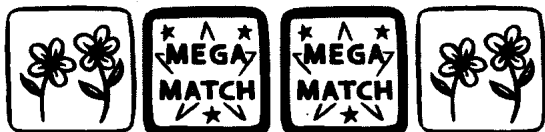
‘People,’ Mikie pointed. ‘Lots and lots.’

‘Come on,’ said her mum cheerfully. ‘We’re here, you may as well go in. You’ve got nothing to lose, have you?’

Sophie thought of how many contestants they had every *MegaMatch* show. She multiplied this by the number of shows in a week, and then by the number of shows in a year. It was a lot of people.

‘Okay,’ she said, more brightly. ‘Let’s go in.’

# 4



Sophie had thought that the inside of a television studio would be really glamorous, with famous people milling about and lots of nice food like meatballs with toothpicks in them, chocolate with nuts in the middle, and as much fizzy drink as you wanted in big jugs. But the auditions were held right at the back of the studio, and it just looked like an enormous tin shed with a glass wall down the middle. All the contestants and their parents were squashed on one side of the wall. On the other side, there was a big room filled with chairs.



‘Hello, mums and dads, boys and girls,’ came a voice. ‘Welcome to the auditions for *MegaMatch*.’

Everybody clapped. Even Mikie.

‘Parents, please stay where you are. Contestants, you need to take a seat in the auditorium.’

‘What’s an auditorium?’ asked Sophie.

‘It’s where all the chairs are,’ said her mum.

‘Now, go on, off you go. I’ll be here.’

Sophie felt strange about going into a room all by herself with nobody she knew. Some of the children were pushing each other to get to the auditorium the fastest.

She found a seat at the edge of one of the rows. Each chair had a small computer as an armrest. The screen flashed, ‘Welcome to *MegaMatch*! Please insert your name, address and telephone number.’

‘Hello,’ said the girl next to her, very politely.

‘My name’s Annalise. What’s yours?’