

The reality is rarely as good as the dream

At ten years old Paige knew exactly what she wanted in life – fame and fortune. She had been dreaming of this for as long as she could remember. What could be better, she asked herself, than a celebrity lifestyle? It seemed that to achieve this ambition she didn't have to be very good at anything! She would be asked to appear on T.V., be invited to 'red carpet' film premieres, meet pop stars and famous actors and be paid vast amounts of money to do these things. Whilst Paige wasn't too sure how to achieve her ambition she was sure that she would manage it somehow.

On this particular evening however, her future dreams had to be put to one side whilst she did her homework. At school they had been reading 'A Christmas Carol' by Charles Dickens, a story in which the central character, Scrooge, was visited by a series of ghosts who showed him his life and what it could be like. Her task this evening was to write a story based on this famous tale. Paige was bored and couldn't think of anything to write. After all, celebrities did not need to write stories based on those of famous authors. She was listening to music and yawning as she looked at the blank sheet of paper that stared back at her accusingly.

As she stared at the paper the world seemed to fade away and the empty sheet took on a life of its own. There was a title at the top, 'The reality is rarely as good as the dream'. 'How did that get there?' thought Paige, 'I didn't write it.' Pictures began to appear on the paper, moving scenes starring Paige herself. Staring at them intently, she wondered what would happen next.

In the first scene, Paige saw herself arriving at school and everyone seemed to be her friend. They were all asking her what it was like to be on T.V., and whether they could go shopping with her at the weekend. Paige was quite a popular girl, but in this she saw herself surrounded by classmates who wouldn't normally spend time with her. After watching for a while she realised that the Paige in the book was rather uncomfortable, wondering which of her classmates were really her friends and which of them just wanted to be seen with a celebrity.

The paper slowly cleared and another scene began to appear. In this scene she saw a group of her classmates talking about a forthcoming birthday party that one of them was having. They were wondering just what sort of present she would be taking to the party. Fran, a girl who she hadn't known long, said, 'I bet Paige will show off by turning up with a present that is more expensive than any of us could afford.' Another replied that if she only took an ordinary gift it would be mean, as she had more money than any of the others. Paige began to think that this celebrity lifestyle she yearned for might not be as easy as she thought.

As she was considering this, another picture began to move on to the paper. In this she saw herself as she really was, with her good friends that she liked and trusted. She was not dreaming of a different life but enjoying the one she had and making the most of all the opportunities that school offered her. As this final picture faded leaving only the writing at the top of the paper, Paige, began to understand the title that was there and realised she had a good idea for a story too. She yawned, stretched, and began to write.