

RANDOM HOUSE  BOOKS

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# How to Get Famous

Pete Johnson

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'It's so frustrating,' I cried, 'when we know we've got all this talent inside us. Georgia, the world is waiting for us. We've just got to get famous somehow.'

'Get famous,' repeated Georgia. 'We'll keep saying that to each other so we go out and find that lucky break.' Her eyes were gleaming and we were both elated now by the huge adventure which lay before us. Then she looked at me and said solemnly, 'Get famous, Tobey.'

And I repeated equally seriously, 'Get famous, Georgia.'

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PETE JOHNSON

# **HOW TO GET FAMOUS**

CORGI YEARLING BOOKS

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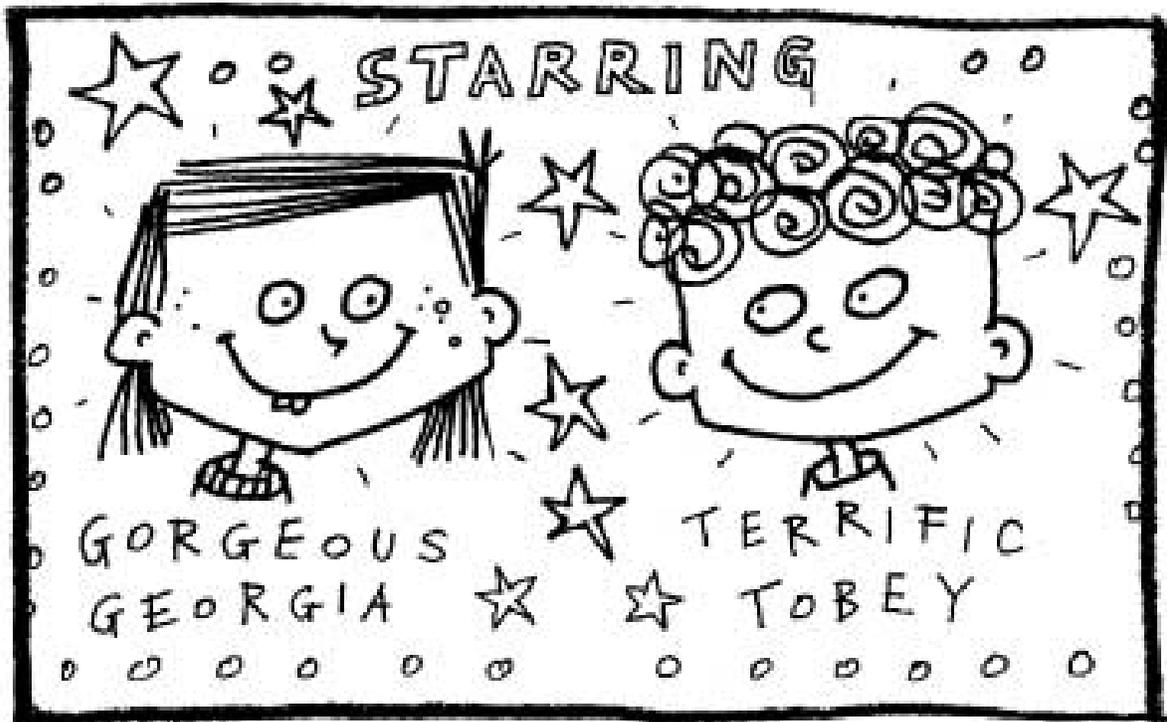
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# Chapter One



TUESDAY MARCH 2ND

4.30 p.m.

Hi, *Cloud Nine*,

Hope you're feeling really well. You're about to play a very special tape: MINE.

I have followed your instructions and limited myself to two minutes exactly. But I wasn't sure which of my many talents to show you. That is why I've jumped from telling a joke to an impression of an extremely angry sheep. I can also do

cats, dogs, ducks and elephants – and in a whole variety of moods too. My tape ends with a cartwheel.

So just sit back and *enjoy!*  
from,  
*Tobey Tyler* (a name to remember)

Now *Cloud Nine* is this new talent show for 'young stars of the future' (ages 10-15). And after watching my tape I was certain *Cloud Nine* would get all excited and say: 'Hey, here's a boy who can do jokes, animal impressions and cartwheels. We must sign him up *now!*'

But today, my ever-so-friendly letter and audition tape has come back in the stamped addressed envelope provided by me (but which I never, ever thought they'd use).

They had also thrown in this unsigned card. It said: 'Sorry, you haven't been chosen to appear on *Cloud Nine* this time. But thank you for your interest, and don't forget to look out for this great new show, will you?'

The card was so annoyingly cheerful I hurled it across my bedroom, just as my mum popped her head round the door. 'Look at the mess you're making,' she cried.

I'm sorry, but one card nestling on the carpet is not a mess. I didn't argue though (too grief-stricken); instead I informed her of what had happened. She didn't even pretend to look shocked, just said, 'Oh, I expect they had hundreds of tapes sent to them.' Then she asked me what homework I had tonight. Cheers, Mum, for being so understanding.

I wondered suddenly if Georgia – we'd filmed each other's audition pieces with her mum's camcorder – had also received such a gruesome parcel. Should I ring her?

*4.45 p.m.*

Actually, Georgia rang me. 'Are you in receipt of a foul-looking package containing—?'

'Yeah, yeah, yeah,' I interrupted.

'But my mum says not to worry,' she cried, 'because they haven't possibly got the time to look at them all . . . they just pick out a few tapes and ignore the rest.'

'Well your mum certainly knows about show business. So we haven't actually been rejected at all,' I went on.

'Oh no, my mum was quite firm about that - we just haven't had our chance yet.'

How lucky Georgia was to have such a very wise mum, I thought. Then I said, 'Well, I'm relieved we haven't been rejected, because I thought my audition tape was quite marvellous.' Then I added, 'And yours was pretty good too.'

'You're too kind.'

'I know.'

'So my mum says we mustn't get despondent.'

Cheering words, even if Georgia did sound pretty despondent while she was saying them.

Life is very hard when you should be insanely famous - and you aren't. So I'm waiting, very patiently, to be discovered. Georgia is too. She told me she's been acting in plays and going to acting classes since she was four . . . that's eight whole years. You'd have thought someone would have spotted her bright shining talent by now.

As for me: well, my last acting role was playing the fourth shepherd in a nativity play. To improve my very dull part I threw in an impression of a lamb who was lost and baaing for help. Personally, I thought it was the highlight of the whole play, and it certainly got a huge laugh. But instead of

thanking me afterwards for livening things up, I got the sack.

Right now, I'm not appreciated - anywhere. But my life isn't going to stay like that. I know there's gold in me that's just waiting to be brought out by a TV camera. That's my top ambition - to be a TV star. And it will happen. Have no doubt about that. That's why I practise my autograph every single day.

Does that make me seem like a bit of a SADDO? Well, don't you dare even think it, because I'm not. I just want to be completely prepared for the moment when fame strikes. Here's my latest version.

TobeyTyler

I bet you like the way I've joined the two names together. Dead professionallooking, isn't it?

WEDNESDAY MARCH 3RD

Guess what: I'm not allowed to watch TV when I want now. This is my parents' latest crackpot idea. No, I have to go and ask their permission first.

'Did you know,' said Mum tonight, 'that by the age of six, most children will have seen six thousand hours of television?' 'Is that all?' I said. 'I thought it'd be tons more than that.'

'In your case it probably is,' said Mum, looking guilty and sad at the same time. She went on to say how she thinks I'll be calmer and more peaceful when my mind is freed from TV and advertising.

'And you'll be able to concentrate better on your schoolwork,' chipped in Dad.

My mum's bad enough – but my dad's a scary dude. Even when he's in a good mood he looks as if he's been dead for at least a week.

But tonight when I told him the show I wished to watch, his face turned bright red with rage. 'That sounds like utter tripe . . . and if you haven't got better things to do with your time, I'll find you something else to do.'

Mum managed to change his mind. I heard her whisper, 'The important thing is that Tobey is making choices.'

But the horror didn't end there. Dad insisted on watching the show with me. It was called *KIDZ*. And straightaway Dad started complaining about the spelling. 'Why don't they spell the word properly? It's K-I-D-S with an "S".'

'They just wanted to be a bit original,' I explained patiently, 'because it's a cool, new show.'

Then the presenter started speaking and Dad gave this great bellow of fury. 'Why can't presenters today pronounce their words properly? It's lazy and sloppy.'

'Hey, take a chill pill, Dad.'

'Are you going to watch this programme or annoy me?' he snapped.

'I can do both,' I quickly replied.

But Dad didn't smile. In fact, he switched the television right down, as he said it was giving him 'a bad headache'. So of course, I could hardly hear it at all now. And while the credits were still rolling he switched the television off again. 'How anyone can choose to watch that is beyond me,' he moaned.

THURSDAY MARCH 4TH

Ever since she moved here last October, a pack of girls in Georgia's class have been making her life a misery – for no reason at all. They keep stealing her stuff and doing mean little things like . . .

Well, the first time I ever spoke to Georgia (she goes to an all-girls school and I'm at an all-boys school – boo, hiss) was in the local newsagents one day after school. I went up and asked if I could take something off her back.

I knew right away she thought I was mad – people are always thinking that about me, actually. I can't think why. But she said, 'Yeah, all right,' while getting ready to run for her life from this loony boy.

But instead I peeled off a massive sign which said 'MOST UNCOOL GIRL ON THIS PLANET', and she gave this huge gulp of horror and yelped: 'Oh no.'

She looked so distressed I said quickly, 'Look, don't worry, no way are you the most uncool girl on this planet. I've seen loads of girls who look more uncool than you . . . In fact, I've passed at least two on my way home tonight.'

And suddenly she was laughing – a bit hysterically, but she certainly seemed to have cheered up which was the main thing. And then she said, 'I'm Georgia, by the way.'

'And I'm the great Tobey – but you can just call me Tobey.'

And in that moment a top friendship was born.

Georgia hasn't even told her mum about all these girls picking on her at school – she's only told me. So I try and give her the best advice my brain cells can manage.

And tonight I said, 'You've just got to rise above it and never ever let them see you're bothered.'

FRIDAY MARCH 5TH