

## THE MAKINGS OF A STAR

by L. HALL

I'm going to be a star, I know it. I'm not sure quite how, but I have lots of time to figure that out. Maybe I'll be an actor, or a baseball player. Or I'll play basketball; I just need time to decide.

At school, my teacher shakes her head over my homework. "Garrett, this handwriting is terrible. How do you expect anyone to read it? What are you going to do when you have a job and your boss can't read your writing?"

Not a problem. "I'm going to be my own boss," I say, tossing a crumpled paper into the wastebasket. "I'll be able to hire secretaries to type everything for me." The class laughs; the teacher smiles and shakes her head again. The ball of paper sails in smooth. In my mind, the crowds go wild.

When I come home from school, my mother tells me to do my chores. I say, "Why should I? One day I'll be able to hire someone to do everything for me—not just type, but all my chores, too."

"Until then, it's your job to vacuum," says my mom. "And don't forget to take out the trash."

While the vacuum rolls over the vast brown carpet in the living room, I imagine the roars of the crowd, the unending cheers, the thunderous applause. Oh, it'll happen; I'm sure of it. I'll drive through

the streets in a bright red convertible, leading a parade. A band will march behind me, while people crowd the street in order to get a look at me, a hometown boy who made it big. So big an armored car follows me wherever I go, full of cash for me to spend. I reach into a bag on the seat next to me and toss handfuls of cash into the crowds of people. The cheers are deafening. I stop the car, stand up right there in the driver's seat and take a bow.

"All right, Mr. Big," says my mother from the hallway. "Furniture is for sitting on, not standing on."

I scramble down from the armchair and finish vacuuming. I hear my mother's footsteps down the wooden floor of the hallway. When I'm sure she's gone, I climb up for one last bow.

After I put the vacuum cleaner away in the hall closet, I grab the trash bag from the kitchen and take it out to the cans by the garage. I wave at our neighbor, Mr. Rodriguez, who's outside working on his car. He straightens up, wiping the grease from his hands with a red rag.

"Let me give you a piece of advice," says Mr. Rodriguez. "I know you're at that age when you think getting a car is the best thing in the world. Believe me when I tell you it's not all that it's cracked up to be."

Mr. Rodriguez says this every time he works on his car. "Yeah, right," I say, dragging the cans out to the curb for pick-up the next morning. "I'm getting a car as soon as I get my license."

"Listen, cars are nothing but pain and heartache. Take it from me, I know. You have payments. You have insurance to pay. And then the work! Oil changes, tune-ups, radiator hoses—there's no end to it." He looks at his car with disgust. "A bus, now there's convenience: no payments, no insurance, no getting your hands all greasy."

Whoever heard of a star riding the bus? I'll be cruising in a car the day I turn sixteen. "Forget it," I tell Mr. Rodriguez, who has once again disappeared under the hood of his car.

His muffled voice echoes from under the hood. "You'll be sorry."

Not likely, I think as I walk up the driveway and into the house. I imagine myself behind the wheel of that red convertible; once again, I am surrounded by adoring fans. "We love you, Garrett!" There are screams and yells and cheers.

At dinner, my mother reminds me to do my homework.

"One day I won't have to do any homework ever again," I say. I imagine three or four secretaries and assistants following me around, carrying clipboards and calendars and schedules and calculators and portable telephones.

"I'm glad to hear it," says my father dryly.

He'll be sorry when I'm famous. I'll call him from my car telephone while I'm heading down the highway in my beautiful convertible.

"Garrett!" My mom's voice interrupts my reverie.

"What?" I can't hear her very well; it must be the noise from the V-8 engine.

"If you're not going to eat your dinner roll, leave it on your plate."

I realize I'm holding the roll against my ear. I put it back on the plate.

"He's been so absent-minded," says my mother to my father, as if I weren't even there.

"Maybe the growing pains have affected his brain," says my father, and they both laugh while I excuse myself from the table.

I wonder if every star had to put up with this.

- 1** What is the author's purpose in writing this story?
- A. to encourage the reader to achieve fame and fortune
  - B. to demonstrate to the reader the effects of growing pains
  - C. to entertain the reader with an amusing story about a teenager
  - D. to prove to the reader that an adult knows more than a teenager

**1** The correct answer is C (to entertain the reader with an amusing story about a teenager).

Type of Passage: Literary Text

Benchmark: LA.A.2.3.2 The student identifies the author's purpose and/or point of view in a variety of texts and uses the information to construct meaning. (Includes LA.A.2.2.2 identifies the author's purpose in a simple text and LA.A.2.2.3 recognizes when a text is primarily intended to persuade.)

The correct answer is C. The author presents a humorous story about a young boy whose daydreams cause him to be absent-minded.