

A Short Story: Fame at Any Cost [B2]

Essere famosi non sempre significa ottenere il riconoscimento dei propri ammiratori: quale è la nostra reputazione sui social media?



Wanda sat in the offices of the Fame! agency with about fifty other candidates, feeling furious. She was having another frustrating phone conversation with her sister Clarita. "How many agencies have you been to this year?" asked Clarita. You've tried to be a singer, dancer, model, actress... What is today's agency all about?" "It's called Fame! and it makes people famous online." "Famous for what? You've always wanted to be famous **just for the sake** of being famous. When are you going to get a real career?" "This is my career," **shouted** Wanda, attracting the attention of the other candidates. "I can't have this conversation now. Goodbye." She ended the phone call and tried to calm down. Her sister was right, and she was wrong. Yes, she'd gone to a lot of different agencies that specialized in a lot of different talents. But this time would be different, she told herself. A woman entered the room, introduced herself as Miss Mable and said, "As you probably know, we take ordinary young people like you and transform them into online stars. We guarantee our clients fame, but we are extremely selective. Only **one in about** five hundred candidates become our clients.

Good luck to you all." Guaranteed fame. That's exactly what Wanda had always dreamed of. She looked around at the other candidates. She couldn't help feeling superior to them, because she knew she was. Miss Mable invited the candidates into another room, one by one. When it was Wanda's turn, she **stood** before a video camera and talked about why she wanted Fame! to represent her. At first, she was timid but soon she began speaking freely, expressing her frustration at her sister for not believing in her and at the other agencies for not recognizing her talents, and her **certainly** that she was special, that she wasn't born for a life of mediocracy, she wasn't born to have a normal job like everyone else, she was born to be a star. When she finished, the woman told her she'd call her in a week if she were successful. Wanda left the office, now **certain** that she'd never hear from Fame! again. But, to her **delight**, the agency called a week later. Her video had become very popular on Fame!'s online platform Me! The agency wanted to represent her. She was **already** a star. The next day, Miss Mable gave Wanda a contract to sign, explaining that she would get 50 per cent of the money her videos generated from **advertising**. "Just one thing," said Miss Mable, as she accepted the signed contract. "You can look at the number of views on your videos, but we **advise** our clients not to read the comments. We find this has a negative effect on them." Wanda **shrugged**. "Okay, sure. I don't need thousands of people telling me how **amazing** I am. I **already** know how **amazing** I am!" She filmed another video, this time singing her favourite pop song. Later, she went on the Me! platform and was **amazed** to see her first video had over fifty thousand views. Every day, she filmed a new video, sometimes just talking to the camera, other times **performing**. "The video of me doing ballet has over 120,000 views," she told Clarita on the phone a few weeks later. "You told me I couldn't be a ballerina because I never went to ballet lessons, but you were wrong about that too." "That's great, Wanda. But **erm...** have you read the comments?" "No, the agency asked me not to, probably because their other clients can't **handle** fame like I can." "Oh okay, it's just that... well, **never mind**. You're happy. I'm happy for you." "You don't sound happy for me," said Wanda. "You're obviously jealous of me." "Jealous? Is that what you think? Read the comments and tell me I'm jealous of you!" This time, it was Clarita who ended the phone call. Wanda tried to forget what her sister had said but couldn't stop herself clicking on the comment

section under her ballet video. “What a delusional idiot!” said the first comment. “An elephant in a tutu,” said another. “More like a hippo,” said someone in response, and added a series of laughing emojis. Horrified, Wanda read the comments under her other videos. They were all equally mocking. She went into Fame! and demanded to speak with Miss Mable. “This is not what I signed up for,” she shouted at her. “Oh, I think you’ll find that it is,” said Miss Mable. “We guaranteed you fame, not approval. But wait, don’t tell me how you feel, tell them!” So Miss Mable filmed a video of Wanda expressing her rage, and it became her most popular video yet, with over 250,000 views.

Glossary

- **one in about** = una tra
- **advertising** = pubblicità
- **handle** = affrontare, sopportare
- **delusional** = delirante
- **mocking** = burloni
- **already** = già
- **advice** = consigliare
- **shrugged** = stringersi nelle spalle
- **amazed** = meravigliarsi
- **performing** = recitare
- **added** = aggiungere
- **laughing** = ridere
- **signed up** = iscriversi
- **shouted** = urlare
- **delight** = piacere, gioia
- **amazing** = incredibile
- **hippo** = ippopotamo (hippopotamus)
- **just for the sake** = solo per
- **stood** = stare in piedi
- **certain** = sicura
- **erm...** = ehm(esitante)
- **never mind** = non importa
- **demanded** = pretendere