

# THE TALENT QUEST



## Epilogue

'We are really cutting it fine, Laleh,' called Aiden, as he weaved his way out of the crowd. 'It's almost time for our audition.'

'I know!' she panted, out of breath from running. 'We solved those last riddles just in time for the posties to get the mail out today, but if we don't get back in the next ten minutes then the show will be off. You can't have a competition without the trophy!'

Laleh and Aiden raced through the city, arriving on the lawns right back where they started. They searched everywhere for numbat, but couldn't find him – and the trophy was not on the podium.

'What are we going to do?' groaned Aiden. 'I'm sure we answered all of his riddles. The final clue told us to come back here.'

'Well, that was quite the performance,' came a posh voice from behind them. 'Very entertaining. You proved to be worthy opponents, and almost caught up with me a few times.'

They turned around. There stood Neville, holding the trophy under his arm and grinning from ear to ear.

'But you said that if we solved all of the clues, you would return it in time,' Laleh said, panic written all over her face. 'The show is about to start!'

'I'm a numbat of my word young lady,' Neville said, disapprovingly. 'I have every intention of returning this trophy. But first, before you try out for your audition, I want to save you the time and offer you both roles as a backup dancer and singer when my concert tours next month.'

'Um, er ... well ... the thing is ...' choked Aiden, about to

burst into laughter.

‘No thanks, Neville,’ Laleh said firmly. ‘I think we’ve proven today that we can make it on our own!’

‘As you wish,’ he replied, snootily. ‘But you will regret the day you turned down an opportunity with Neville – the World’s Greatest Show Numbat!’

With his parting words and in the blink of an eye, Neville was gone. The trophy reappeared on the podium (in all the chaos, no one had even noticed it was missing), leaving Laleh and Aiden questioning whether the events of their day had even really happened.

But before they could contemplate it, a crackly voice came over the speaker. ‘Team AL, Team AL, calling Team AL to the stage.’

Laleh stared at Aiden in horror. ‘You didn’t,’ she said, looking mortified. ‘I can’t believe you registered us with that stage name.’

Aiden laughed, ‘Aw, come on ... we’ve got this Laleh!’

And the name certainly beats Neville the World’s Greatest Show Numbat’.

They grinned at each other, walked on stage, and the lights dimmed ...