

RISING STARS

The Perfect Summer Holiday

By Syed Nageeb Mustafa Ali

I suppose you are wondering how I became a millionaire? Well, it all started during the last summer holidays. I was eighteen.

My father had a case in France, so my parents were planning to spend the holidays in France. But I wanted to go to England so my Dad took me there instead. My father is a detective. His name is Sure Break Holmes and he can Sure (ly) Break (into) Homes (excuse the pun).

As he knew a lot of people in England he was able to procure a room for me in a castle in Chester. He took me to my room. The room was cold but the castle was splendid! It was an old castle with never-ending passages and high windows. Some parts of it were closed to visitors. My room was in an area that was used often and was provided with modern amenities.

It was time for Dad to leave. He looked around the room and back at me. "Don't be too adventurous, son, and take care of yourself," he said. "Don't worry, Dad. I will be just fine. And I won't do all those funny things I did last time. I promise."

He gave a faint smile, probably recollecting the tricks I had played on him last summer. "Right," he said. "And don't go into the restricted areas. If you need any assistance call up Agent 0007. As you know, he's an old friend."

After my Dad left I unpacked my bags and tidied up the room. Then I lay down in bed and went off to sleep. I was suddenly awakened by

a cry of pain. I ran out of my room taking my dagger in my hand, ready to fight. Then I heard another scream. This one was a long piercing one. I quickly ran in the direction of the scream. It came inside a room. A sign on the door said "RESTRICTED AREA. KEEP OUT!" I opened the door and went in.

Unbelievably, I just went through the floor. As I had taken karate and judo lessons, I managed to land silently and safely on the ground. But this was not ground! It was an underground tunnel.

There were two paths. One going East and the other West. I took the West one for I could hear voices coming from that direction. The tunnel was long and had a high ceiling. At some places, there were soft inclines but at one place, the tunnel widened and there was a sharp incline. Then there was a curve. The voices were just beyond the curve!

As I peeped round the curve I could see three men. One was badly injured and had a gun pointed at his head. The man holding the gun was smoking a Dunhill cigarette (my Dad's favourite). He was wearing Jordache jeans, Lacoste jacket, Gucci shirt and Nike shoes. He had blue eyes, brown spiky hair, a small nose, small lips and a grin ear to ear. Of course! It was Kobolini, a major thief and superb assassin who has never missed his target. The other person must be Klaskovar. I thought. I had heard my Dad say that Kobolini never worked alone, he always had his assistant Klaskovar with him. Klaskovar was hold-

ing his mace with a very sharp top.

"Now, you are going to die, my friend," I heard Kobolini say with an Italian accent. "You will never get away with this, you criminals!" the injured man said.

"But we will and you're dead, you Secret Service Agent," said Klaskovar. Then the mace pierced and there was blood everywhere. I almost screamed but my nerve just managed to hold.

I quickly darted through the tunnel and ran to the other path. First, there was a curve and then, a long road in front of me. As I was running, I tripped. An alarm went off somewhere.

I got up and ran. I could not find my dagger. Already the criminals were close behind.

I thought I saw a room in front of me. It was camouflaged so it was hard to see. I almost fainted when I saw what was inside.

A jet black Lamborghini Countach! WOW! As I had paused, Kobolini almost stabbed me with his knife but I dodged him. Then Klaskovar tried to jump but I quickly kicked him on the nose, making him unconscious. Kobolini took this chance to kick me in the stomach and I fell on the ground. He raised his gun but I grabbed Klaskovar's knife and threw it at his face. He groaned and slumped onto the floor clutching his bleeding nose.

My heart started beating fast as I climbed into the Lamborghini. The key was in its hole. There was a remote control and a console on the

dashboard. I pressed the red button on the remote. Above me, the top of the car opened up and my car was rising. I was on a moving platform! Behind me, the two criminals tried to climb to the top of the car but they couldn't. I started laughing then because they were going up and down. "I will get my vengeance and then I will be the one who is laughing," Kobolini cried.

After sometime, I saw the surface of the world again, which made me very happy. I had thought that I would never see the world again!

Then I revved up my engine and rocketed over the morning dew on the green grass. I wasn't worried about the driving because I had a licence, but maybe driving this car would have been too hard for me? Naaa!

I drove down to the road. Suddenly, in my rear-view mirror, I saw Kobolini — with a grin from ear to ear — in a deep red convertible Ferrari 308 GTB! He was close behind, going at least 220-240 km/hr while I was going only 210 km/hr. So I just pushed the accelerator so hard that the car jumped to 270 km/hr and soon Kobolini was left far behind.

I drove for a few kilometres at high speed, and when I felt safe, I brought my speed down to 135 km/hr.

I was driving peacefully when I suddenly heard police sirens behind me. I slowed down.

"Pull over, now!" the policeman shouted, pointing a gun at the car.

So I pulled over. The policemen came over to my car. "What's the matter, sir?" I asked. "Apart from breaking the speed limit, you are arrested for stealing this machine from the billionaire Dr. Watson."

So, this was not Kobolini's car, but a stolen car. One thought kept on going through my mind. I must get Kobolini captured and give the car back to its owner. "Get out of the car." The police car was in front of me so I could not go forward.

An idea came to me. I reversed the car with a sudden jerk. The gun that the policeman had in his hands pointed at me, fell from his hand right into my lap. I put the car on drive and drove past the police car. As I passed it, I shot out its left front and rear tyres. Then, I put the gun in my pocket.

After sometime I saw a hotel. I parked the car in the rear of the building and went inside. The hotel was quite cheap and therefore affordable. I went up to my room and ordered some food. After dinner, I dozed off to sleep.

At about 11 o'clock, the phone rang. I picked up the phone and said, "Hello." On the other side, someone said, "It's him." It was Klaskovar's voice.

I looked out of the window. I saw Kobolini get out of his Ferrari and run towards the hotel. I ran to the window on the other side of the room.

There was a creeper going down from my window to the car park at the back. I opened the window and climbed down the creeper. I reached my car, climbed in and zoomed off. I was safe, for now.

After travelling a long distance, I went off the road, and turned my engine off. I looked behind my seat. There was a telephone in the back, but it was disconnected.

I climbed into the back and connected the phone. As I put it to my ear I felt something. Then I saw the object, I had seen Dad handle one of these things. It was a bug! "That's how they found me," I thought.

I took the wire off the bug. I looked around and saw a red card wedged behind the phone console. It had a telephone number written in gold. I dialled the number and waited.

"Dr. Watson speaking," it was the owner of the car.

I told Dr. Watson my story. I arranged to meet him at seven the next morning at a place near Chester. I told him to bring the police with him for I intended to capture Kobolini and his assistant.

Then I went off to sleep. At six in the morning I reconnected the bug and started back towards Chester. My plan was to let them capture me and then the police would spring up on them.

Within an hour the bad guys were behind me. I cruised comfortably to the ambush area and stopped the car. Kobolini came out with a gun. "You are dead," Kobolini cried. "No, you are!" The police chief cried. "Drop your gun."

In the next instant twenty men with M-16's came out from nowhere.

Kobolini put the gun at my throat. "The child will die!"

The men lay their guns down. Kobolini told me to get out. Before he had time to

move away for me to open the door I jerked the door open, shoving the handle into his stomach. He fell backwards and I jumped up on his chest. The policeman quickly disarmed him. Klaskovar tried to run away but was soon captured.

Well, Dr. Watson was so happy to have his car back he said that he would give me anything I wanted, so I asked him for a Lamborghini. I auctioned off the car for a million pounds and became a millionaire.

When my parents returned from their holiday they asked "How was your holiday?" "It was cool!" I said. "It was the perfect summer holiday." — Age 13 years.

The Curse of The Video Industry

Sagheer Bin Faiz & Judith G DeCosta

Dhaka is a very bleak city for the movie lover, especially if his taste inclines towards the sort of movies produced in the West, mainly in the US and UK. Whenever one passes the big cinema halls, one sees colourful posters advertising the latest box-office hit, starring Rosina and Wasem or some other member of the 'multi-talented' community of filmstars in Bangladesh. Any cinema halls that are showing English movies at all show action movies which are over 10 years old and have become long obsolete for the aforementioned movie lover!

But this situation is in contrast to that just twenty years ago, recounted by our parents. We listen in awe as they tell us how, before the independence, they used to watch movies like 'The Sound of Music', which was a current hit at the time, right here in Dhaka. How could that be possible, we wonder. Countries develop in time, but this seems more like assign of regression.

There is an explanation for this, of course. One of the many electric appliances invented in the West near about the '70's is the VCR and it didn't take a long time for it to get here. Thus, the demand for video tapes naturally rose by the early '80's, and as a result, a video cassette industry was set up. By the mid '80's everyone was the proud owner of a video recorder. The demand for the cassettes grew higher and higher. The supply increased largely by the provi-

sion of pirated tapes. The profit was too large to go unnoticed.

One man's food is another man's poison, we hear so often. Thus the boom of the video industry was the death of the movie hall business. Today, you get plenty of Bengali movies on video tape, which you can watch in the privacy and comfort of your own home, instead of queuing up to buy yourself a ticket in the hall.

But the video monster is a self-consuming one. The tapes which are released into the Asian market, even before the legal video tape version of the movies are released in the countries of their making, are mediocre and dissatisfying. They are recorded not in the traditional tape-to-tape manner, but by folks who record them in the halls abroad while they go to watch, and then sell that for a quick buck! As a result the print is dreadful, just like your typical camera print, the sound echoes and you have to endure any sounds made within the theater. Not to mention the shadows of human forms on the screen and the silhouettes at the end when everyone gets up to leave!

What should be the protection of the cinema halls in Dhaka and elsewhere, has turned into the protection of the video industry. If the film industry of Bangladesh is to be thought of as a child, then that child is a retard, for the film industry is one that seems to remain an infant for its life! Then the movie industries

have the video industry staring down at it like an imposing monster.

Initially, the cinema industry, still popular back then, posed a threat to the newly rising video industry. Like most threats, it had to be wiped out. Video shop owners had already seen the possibility of millions flowing in and conspired together to silence the enemy. They bribed the Ministry of Culture, even some hall owners and soon the current hits were made unavailable. The only source to quench the public's thirst for new releases was now the video industry.

Some tried to do a good job. Others just did it for the money. The concerning ones took care to give the public their money's worth by importing. "Laser Vision" prints for others to make inferior copies out of. So, while we are deprived by the curse of the video industry, from watching crystal clear, magnified prints, it is a boon to others! Still, think about it. For every clear print you see you probably see 26 foul ones. Unless someone takes a stand here, we either kill off the video-monster or send it to reform school, the situation is going to stay very much the same.

Save the theater from the video or get them to be friends. If you can't be bothered, wait to watch Terminator-2 or Robin Hood in the hall until the year 2012! Don't think BTV is going to put it out as a Movie of the Week!



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A LUCKY HUNTER

that he got to the duck, for he wore baggy cotton pants and thick leg-guards made of straw.

When he finally got hold of the duck by the neck, it hit the water with a last desperate flap of the wings. Then — splash! Something jumped out of the water and landed among the bushes near the beach. And guess what — it was a huge carp, the largest and most delicious-looking one he had ever seen.

"I must catch it now," said the hunter and grasped some roots of a tree at hand to help himself get out of the water. Well, what he took for roots were actually the hind legs of a great big hare! In its frantic efforts to free himself, the hare dug out with its front paws twenty-five fat yams from under the ground!

The hunter went into the bushes to pick up the carp, and there he found out that the fish had landed on a pheasant nest. The fowl was lying dead with its neck broken by

the hunter.

— Laughing Together (Asian cultural Center for UNESCO)

was an accident. The way in which these drivers drive is absolutely amazing. Their average speed limit is about 80km/hr. even in such a broken down and narrow road.

No wonder the rate of accidents in our country is so high.

Gradually we neared Chittagong. It had become pretty dark and we had gotten used to the uneven road.

Without any street lights we headed towards Chittagong, the chief port city of Bangladesh. Somehow, by the grace of God we reached Chittagong safely by 8:00pm, exactly six hours twenty minutes after leaving Dhaka.

When I had gotten down from the car I realized that my whole body was aching like mad. Since I had vomited on the way my stomach was growling for food.

This journey would always be a memorable one. I have now taken a vow that never again will I travel on that road until it is a matter of emergency. I am even requesting to those people who were planning to go in the near future, that please take my advice and stick to journey by train or aeroplanes. (This goes especially for those people with back problems.)

Thus, I ended up arriving to Dhaka by train. Believe me it was heavenly compared to what I had gone through.

QUIZ CLUB

Here are this week's questions. Now don't forget to send in your answers by the end of next week. If you get them all right you may even win a prize!

- Where can you find the Bumblebee Bat?
- How long is the Great Wall of China?
- When was sir Isaac Newton born? (Just give the year)
- Who was the first wife of Henry VIII?
- Who won the most

Grammy Awards (given for artistic achievement in the recording field) in one year? Hint: the last name starts with a 'J'.

- Where was Helen Keller from?
- Which country is called the sick man of Europe?
- Which woman player won the Wimbledon title a record of nine times?
- What is the national bird of Britain?
- Who wrote "pickwick papers"?

9 (Daihatsu). I was thus quite excited about the journey till I realised that my dream had actually turned out to be a nightmare.

We left home at 1:40pm to start the dreadful journey. We first took the road from Motijheel to Jatra Bari. That's

the road that proceeded was in a dreadful state. I am sure that even the most bombed area in Iraq could not be worse than the ones we were experiencing. It could actually be defined as a crude bulldozer track for 'road' because of the mud, puddles and what not. Some sections of the roads which had definitely been improved lasted only for a short time; the major part of the so-called highway were filled with broken rocks.

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