MANDRAKE MANSION **MYSTERY**

by Munazah Alam

Shivers down your spine! This week we begin a serialised story about a mansion with a differ-

ence "You know what," I said, "that idea of yours was terrific. A picnic will be great fun!"

was speaking to my friends, Chris Calvert, and Jean and Diane, the Wykoff

Chris and I were in the same school and I was spending the summer with her in her home-town, Marlow. She had invited me over and my parents had not put forward any objections.

So June found me in the small town of Marlow enjoying myself tremendously. A few days after our arrival Chris' friends, the Wykoff twins, Jean and Diane, also arrived. They were unidentical twins of seventeen, about the same age as Chris and me. Diane was the taller of the two at five foot six and had black hair, while her sister, at five foot five, had blond hair and green eyes in contrast to her own brown

Once we got to know one another we got on like a house on fire. Chris' father was (and still is) a detective and she too, with the help of the twins, had helped the law several times. Before long they had told me of all the mysteries they had solved. Listening to them I secretly began to wish that something would crop up while I was there.

So there I was, lying in the sun with the other three, drinking lemonade and making plans for the picnic the next day. We had decided to explore the grounds of Mandrake Mansion, now an empty place, but one which had once helped many Negroes escape to the North before the Civil War.

"How far is it from Marlow?" I inquired. "What? Oh, Mandrake. Well

let's see — about forty miles." "When do we start?" the question came from Jean. "We can't get away until after nine. What with Mum and Dad away our chores around the house have increased.

"Well," began Chris, "In that ease how about ten?" and continued as Jean nodded. "It'll take us the whole afternoon to explore all of it, so we'll take some snacks with us too. You two take that and we'll take

"Sure," answered Diane. "What a pity the mansion is private property or we could have explored that too. I'd love to have a look at those hideyholes they used for the

Underground Railway." I agreed with her. "Yes, that would have been fun."

Jean got up and turned to her twin. "Come on Di, we'd better get moving; the groceries are waiting to be bought and I still haven't written to Mum and dad. 'Byc you two. See, you tomorrow."

Groaning, Diane got to her feet. "Heck, I haven't written either, and there won't be any time tomorrow," and turning to us, she added, "Bye, see

The next day Chris and I got up early and helped Mrs. Jameson, the Calvert's housekeeper, to prepare our picnic lunch. Mrs. Jameson had been with the Calverts since Chris was thirteen when her parents had divorced.

At ten we picked up Diane and Jean and started for Mandrake Mansion in Chris' yellow Toyota. Chris was driving as she was the only one among us who was old chough to have a license. After an hours' chatting and laughing we reached Mandrake. Chris pasked the car under some walnuts and we got out and stretched our legs.

"Wow, it sure is dark in here," remarked Chris. "I'd heard that the grounds were more like a wood now, but didn't think it would be this

It was as Chris had said dark and dense. All around us were walnut trees which were blotting out the sun. Here and there, there were patches of grass, and in between sometimes, a flower or two peeped out at us. And it was quict - so guiet that the silence seemed to be screaming at us.

"Let's have an early lunch." I suggested. Then we won't have to worry about coming back to the car; and we can't carry the piente-box if we want to enjoy ourselves."

"Good ideal Yes, let's ent first - come on twin, help me get this out."

As the twins carried the box out of the car Chris and I spread out the rugs. After the

food had been set out we began to cat.

Where shall we start?"

Apathy and Us

by Judith G.DeCosta

VERYONE gets the blues now and again. right ? Altho-ugh why something seen in a very gray. almost black, perspective is termed "the blues" beats me! Various things ranging from tension about upcoming exams to pre-party jitters can make one feel rotten. You look at your favourite dress like it's a burlap sack; your pet animal gets kicked around like the world's least bouncy ball and you're sure that the world is going to end before the day is

The day will finish off and the world still remains intact. But what about you? The exams are history today, and everything around you is bright and cheery but none of that warmth reaches inside you. What began as a bad period begins to drain you of all your energy even though the most strenuous work you're likely to do in this condition is stare around you blankly. Anything you do would be better off undone. You're too sick to even wonder what has happened all

of a sudden. These are the symptoms of a condition called apathy. When you used to see anyone whose fave word was boring. you'd go, "Oh, you apathetic being, the world could do without such lazy creatures as yourself." But the society of the nineties is positively a more aware one than it used to be. Thus when we see people like the one I just described we know that person is in need or serious help. Apathy is not brought about by sitting around refusing to go out and mix. Even the most active person may be doing something just because the job has to be done.

Let me relate to you the average day of a working girl. victim to the vicious, mysterious syndrome or acute apathy. It is only the immense pressure of work (she is a reporter) that prevents her from being a complete human veggle. Over the years she has lost interest in reading novels but

hungrily devours journals to improve her won professional abilities. Because she works almost round the clock her social life is almost non-existent, and dates are turned down because "I'm too tired to move another muscle; maybe some other time," which both parties know might never come. After the refusal is made, Ms. A wonders why she did that because I spend to much time with to many people through my work, that's why satisfactory explanation.

Ms A's life consists of a hectic workday and endless moments in solitude. What a life, eh? You'd think a media person could do better. Colleagues presume she is recuperating from a derailed love affair. Our subject believes she receives all the love and support she needs from her family and a relationship is not worth her while.

Ms. A sounds like she needs help, doesn't she? And my guess is that she knows it. In this case you can lead the horse to the water but you can't force it to drink. Unless such victims open themselves up there is nothing to be done. Apathy is more apparent in women than in men but that does not mean it does not exist! Women are less likely to admit there's something wrong with them and develop into amazingly good dissemblers. The typical chauvinistic reply to the fact that women are more widely and drastically affected is that men don't have the time to sit around and feel depressed. Depression is never sought out: you don't go looking for it, it comes and finds

you first. Remember that people who suddenly change from cheery to glum are not pulling sad faces so that you will notice them. Like I said before everyone has their bad days which eventually pass. But the perpetual frown and cyntcal outlook is your cue for taking a

step for humanity. In this world, where some-

Diane asked Chris through a mouthful of chicken sandwich. "Here of course; and we'll work our way through towards

the mansion. Helping myself to some cheese I asked," is there anyone living in the mansion at the moment?"

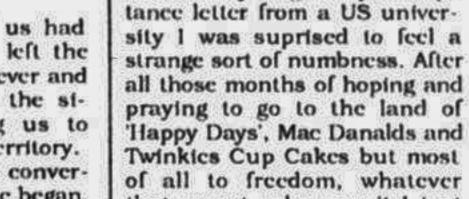
"None that I know of. Dad told me it's empty when I asked him.

When we finished we put everything back into the car and began to walk around. looking around us as we did. We had gone someway into the

wood and not one of us had spoken since we had left the car. It was as dark as ever and it seemed as though the silence was forbidding us to

sation. "Say, Chris," she began, "don't you think this would be the perfect place to start hunting for a new mystery? We... 'She didn't get any further for just at the moment a bloodcurdling scream rang through the woods! And then silence.

To be continued...



The day I got my accep-

But as the day of my flight

date drew nearer, the

trespass into foreign territory. Jean tried to make converthat meant, why wasn't I just bursting with joy? The thought of being 'independent' just didn't seem so wonderful anymore, what would it it be like, how would I fit in what if were questions that kept me awake at night.



by Utpal Bashar

The first thing which struck me as different when I arrived at Heathrow Airport in London was the structure of the houses lining both sides of the roads. They were all of old English style and they all had slanting poofs unlike the modern houses back home. Another thing which struck me as different was the bare and leafless appearance of the trees Hning the streets. I had expected to see thick snow but of course the only thing which greeted me was green grass.

The joy of being able to walk from place to place of always being drives by a chaffeur was tremendous, we usually caught a double decker bus from Esher Gardens, the apartment complex in which we lived, every morning. Another thing which never occurred at home and which I loved was that my breath came out in white puffs, like steam from a kettle, when the weather was chilly, at that time at home I'd be sweating in the tropical heat and the change was indeed very wel-

one is being murdered or criminally violated in the blink of an eye, we should all try and do our bit to lighten the burden of sorrow and depression. Especially for those who live life in the fast lane and the idea of a few quiet moments to oneself means moping around. well forget it. If the oppressed and the starving can manage a smile for the world, surely you can manage one for yourself. Cheer up and forget the things which make you depressed in the least bit, for you never know how far that little bit may stretch. Life's too short to be taken too seriously anyway!

My First Impression of London

by Shyla Sobhan (Class VIII)

Whoever said the British are mean to Asians must most definitely be insane for they're not only sweet but also extremely hospitable. I discovered this when I was travelling to London on my first British Airways Flight. Even as walked happily on the streets of London, if I chanced to bump into people, I was taken aback when I saw how apologetic they were. The whole population wasn't exactly snifting, but then on the other hand, people didn't turn up their noses at us either.

Much to my surprise the London prices weren't astro nomical and we were success ful in doing an adequate amount of shopping. When I say that the prices were reasonable I am of course referring to the prices in stares such as marks and Spencer, Elys, Boots, Miss Selfridge and so on. Harrods definitely does not enter the list since its as-

All in all London was quite an experience. I had left home wondering what lay in wait for me and I returned with a wealth of knowledge.



and care for it but have you

ever thought of transferring

your share of property to it?

Recently, in London a 61-year

old woman called DOLLY

DUFFIN has left FRED (her pet

Bet you didn't know

3. RICH TORTOISE :

Most of you are very fond of

animals. Isn't it ? And so you

1. ALLADIN'S LAMP :

To match with the speed of fast and busy modern life, man has invented fast foods too. This undoubtedly has made life easy and comfortable. But very recently a new polite computerised device has been discovered in which, when a customer places his order, it appears on similar screens in the kitchens, eliminating the need for clerks to shout and walk orders back to the cooks. Getting amazed ? Well, its simply the story of Alladin's lamp come true.

2. GOOD NEWS:

We have speed post, Skypak, DHL and what not in the name of courier service. But SKI (Street Kids' International) is a courier service run entirely by street children in Bangalore, in India and fifteen other cities worldwide. Very soon it will be extended to other cities round the world. So, next time an urchin knocks at your door, don't shoo him away but welcome him with a smile for who knows, in his dirty hands you might find a gift from someone you love.

The Girl

by Badhan

Beauty all around, eternal beauty Beautiful azure sky above Below - never-ending green The two blend peacefully on the horizon Everything in harmony, everything screne and in quietude Everything's perfect - maybe a bit too perfect.

A girl - standing in solitude amidst of nowhere looking at the endless blue sky and the interminable green searchingly, pleadingly Wanting a share of the tranquility

a small share of the peace and beauty of nature a nature so beautiful and yet so cruel For it knows only how to tempt Unwilling to show its perfection and beauty. How she wishes her life could be a scene so peaceful

But she knows its just wishful thinking. So in vain she goes on staring, Her vision soon blurred with tears The tears on a scenery so perfect falls like a blood stain on a white silk dress The perfection lost, the picture stained The girl goes on staring dreaming of a miracle.

'school' for my 'orientation day'. As we trudged over the

by A. M. Amin

child I did not find it at all

parents accompanied me to

snowy hill towards the Inter -

Cultural office I was struck by

the majestic churchlike build-

ings that formed the campus

of this Jesuit College. But as

soon as my parents bid me

farewell after handing me over

to the International Student

Counsellor, I was gripped with

panic. No don't leave me, 1

pleaded in silence, take me

back home, my eyes implored.

where the orientation class

was taking place proved to be

like going through a crazy

maize. I was of course late.

Unfamiliar though, not

unfriendly faces looked at me

as I stealthfly walked in the

student advisor gave me an en-

couraging smile and asked me

to take a scat. While she bab-

bled on about how wonderful

the school was I looked around

at my fellow victims. With mor-

tification I realized how dumpy

I looked in my layers of wool-

lens in front of those girls in

their 'preppy' turtle necks and

designer jeans. I had over-

looked the fact that while it

was below zero degrees

outside, the heating inside the

rooms made it seem like

summer. I also realized as

looked around that I was the

only Asian or to put it bluntly,

what seemed like a compli-

cated introduction that

sounded like Chinese to me [1

seemed to have forgotten

English in my anxiety), we

were informed that we were to

be taken on a tour of the cam-

pus. Now I would never get

'sports complex' which looked

like something out of Space

1999. I felt like a cardiac

patient and the thought about

running around in the gym

By the time we reached the

home, I thought miserably.

After about half an hour of

the only non white.

Finding the classroom

surprising that

adrenaline began to flow through my veins again. It's really happening, I thought. My dream was really going to come true. A life full of new and exciting opportunities seemed to lie ahead of me and I just couldn't wait to begin it. But perhaps my revived

enthusiasm was due to the fact that both my parents were accompanying me for the purpose of 'settling me in' and my brother was already in the states going to university there. The feeling of insecurity therefore, had not hit me -

The first thing that shocked me into reality as I stepped out of Logan Airport was the weather. Boston in January, though pretty with snow, was also bitterly cold and to me, quite uninviting. I suddenly longed for the hot, sultry afternoons of Bangladesh, the fragrance of 'shewly' in the morning, and the hum of crickets at night.

It wasn't the first time that I had been to the States. I had gone on a one month long trip with my mother to about 7 American states when I was twelve. But my visions of 38 flavoured icecreams and Mickey Mouse seemed to melt into nothingness as I felt the cold wind biting into my flesh and thought of the prospect of going through another 3 winters. But perhaps the greatest shock of all was seeing so many foreigners. Then I realized with a self deprecating laugh - I was the the foreigner, not them !

Being a rather coddled

tronomical prices cause reactions varying from laughter to tears in different people. Another thing which comes to mind when I mention Harrods is the sign on top of the bakery shelves. We were admiring the beautiful icing of the cakes on display when it came to my mind that they were good cnough to be photographed. Just at that moment I chanced to look up and saw in front of me, fixed to the wall, a sign which read, THOTOGRAPHY LIMITED". What an ironical coincidence!

JOKES

hot day it is today ! Mack Rabbit: Yeah, lct's put off our coats!

your hands? Alice: I don't know. Susan: When you are a

Harry: How 'magnify' cent!

Close Encounter with the 'Holy Pig' made me feel positively ill. I was also getting a little tired of the continuous 'Oh Cool', 'Awcsome' and 'wicked nice' from my New England companions. I asked our student assistant, a cheery Jewish girl, when I would be able to go home. To my surprise she replied, "Don't worry honey we're moving towards the 'tea' stop. I alluded this strange answer to two possibilities either I had lost command of the English language, or she was one of those escaped mental asylum patients in the American movies they showed on TV back home.

> Keep calm, I thought and meckly followed the brood towards the 'dining hall'. After meeting some faculty members and the huge stadium I was feeling almost psychotic torwards the student advisor. Everytime I brought up the question of going home she told me that she was taking us to the 'tea stop'. Finally I could bear it no longer and with the determination of an obsessed E T, I burst out, "But I don't want any tea, I just won't to go home." This time the student advisor just convulsed into hysterical laughter joined by some of the other students. I could barely contain my anger and frustration. It was then that she explained. "That's why we're going to the T' stop which is the train stop that will take you home!" During the rest of the

> 'orientation' day many such incidents were to occur with the blunders made not only from my side I had my own share of laughs when I was asked questions like 'Oh do you avoid eating pork because the pig is a holy animal? and 'Do you really live in trees'.By the time 'orientation' was over my fascination for cating out of slot machines were off and I had almost convinced my student advisor that I did not belong to any 'tribe'. "Culture shock," I realized, could go both ways!

QUIZ (LUB



Here are this week's Quiz questions 1. Which city is called the Bride of the Sea.

2. Which ocean has the world's greatest source of offshore

3. Who wrote The Prophet? 4. Name the youngest elected president of the US.

5. Who was Francois Voltaire?

6. What is a trombone?

7. Where is the 'Charles River'?

8. Where is the palace of Alhambra. 9. Who made a century in the first match between Australia and New Zealand in the fifth World Cup Cricket?

10. How many bones are there in a normal human body.

Here are the answers to Feb 14th's Quiz Club questions. Lucy

First minister of France from 1624 to 1642. Poet, philosopher and artist born near Mount Lebanon

William Kidd was born in Scotland in 1645. He was convicted of piracy and hanged in London in 1701. Mauna Loa in Hawaii is 13,680 feet high, with a crater 3

6. Cassius Marcellus Clay Franklin D. Roosevelt for 12 years and 39 days.

Faster, Higher, Stronger.

miles long and 1 miles wide.

Jahangir Nagar

10. 'Kabadi'.

Jack Rabbit: Phew, what a

Susan: When can't you clap

Billy: Here's my new magnifying glass, Harry. I can see everything very clearly when I see through

Mary: Happy Birthday, Vicky and here's your birthday present. Vicky: Thank you very much, Mary, but I didn't really need a present! Mary: Then you won't mind if I take it back! A student was clapping his hands in the class. Teacher: Why are you clapping your hands? Student: I'm not clapping my hands! I'm killing mosquitoesl

> Compiled by Sanjida Shaheed Class-X

Fill out this form and send it to us, and you will be a member of the Rising Star Club. Send in your writings, illustrations, and cartoons. It is an ideal opportunity to express yourself through the print media.



Name:

Father's Name:

will. And this tortoise doesn't

know how to spend its moncy.

So, the Royal Society for the

protection of animals is ad-

ministering the money. Thus,

the tortoise again wins the

Farhat Amin, India

Compiled by

School:

Full Address:

Telephone No.

Class: