

RISING STARS

Mystery at Mandrake Mansion

by Munazah Alam

The story continues... a piercing scream has shattered the children's outing. What could it be?

We stared at one another with thunder-struck faces. "It sounded like a child," I whispered — I could hardly recognize my own voice! "Oh, let's go back Chris, please let's go back!"

But Chris had made up her mind. "Oh, come on Susan — just because Jean was joking it doesn't mean that something is going on here," she reasoned. "It might well be a kid exploring — just like us. Maybe he got lost and now he's in some kind of trouble."

"This sure is a strange place for a kid to be on his own: it's miles from anywhere!" But I was the only one to hear Diane's remark.

With Chris leading the way we headed for the direction from which the scream had

come. We had walked for about five minutes and had not heard any more screams, when suddenly the purr of a car's engine reached our ears. It was right ahead of us! Quickly we ducked behind some walnuts. And just in time too, for hardly a moment later, a black sedan came into sight and disappeared towards the highway!

"Whew!" Diane heaved a sigh of relief. "That was a close shave!"

"Yes," agreed her twin, "but what on earth did we hide for? We're not trespassing or anything."

"It's a good thing we did," Chris' voice was so grim that we whirled around to face her. "I'm quite sure that Blake Carridine was in that car. I was nearest the car, so I could see; but it was dumb of me not to get its registration number. I was so stunned to see

Carridine that I clean forgot!"

"Who's Blake Carridine?" I asked puzzled.

"He's a dangerous criminal." "But how do you know of him?" Diane queried.

"His name and photograph were in the newspapers a few months ago. He was sentenced to five years' imprisonment for something — I don't remember what — but he escaped from jail. Obviously he's still on the loose. He's also suspected of murder but the police couldn't prove that." Then in an excited voice Chris added, "You couldn't be more right Jean, we've got out mystery all right!"

"Oh my God! Were we going to get mixed up with a murderer? No thank you, but not me. It was too dangerous. I wasn't going to put my life at risk simply to try to catch a criminal, especially when it

wasn't my job to do so. I valued my life too much for that!"

I voiced my thoughts to the others. After a little while they gave in, although somewhat reluctantly. But that was only to be expected; after all, they had had to turn down a new sort of challenge: only because it was too dangerous (and what was a challenge if it didn't have some danger in it?); they had never dealt with a homicidal case before.

"Yes," said Chris finally. "It's too dangerous. I'll tell Dad about it — I'm sure Carridine's up to something — and then the police can handle it."

We had started to retrace our footsteps when suddenly we heard the murmur of men's voices coming towards us!

"Quick!" I said. "Hide!"

Chris and I quickly sprinted up a tree, but to our horror we saw that neither Diane nor Jean had managed to hide herself! And the men had seen them!

To be continued

Like a Bad Dream

by Md Atique Ullah
(A level, The Aga Khan School)



As I looked around my room, in the darkness, I felt very queer as if something mysterious was going on in the room. I became curious but felt reluctant to get up and investigate. I pushed my hands under my pillow to feel its coolness. I thought I would fall into sleep again but no, I didn't.

Suddenly, I heard a clattering noise emanating from the kitchen room. I was appalled by the noise. I got up from my bed suppressing my cowardice. I put on my sandals and switched on the light. I looked at my brother's bed but found it unoccupied. I thought he was the one making all those clattering noises while trying to steal some food. I felt an urge to go and join him.

But just when I was about to proceed, the curtain began to tremble. Then my brother peeped. Alas what a sight he was. He grinned at me while saliva poured down his mouth. He beckoned at me and then vanished behind the curtain. I was totally mesmerised by his sight. My legs felt heavier as if they would not move. But I checked myself and took a deep breath to relax myself. After I had relaxed enough I was impelled to go forward to the kitchen room.

And there I experienced another shock after switching on the light. All the forks and spoons which were kept on the shelves, had enlarged to the size of human beings. They began to dance with music coming from I don't know where. They resembled human beings in most of the features except that they possessed no hair. They laughed at me and waved at me invitingly. The forks must have been the males and the spoons females or was it the other way round? I was transfixed with fright. I felt as if roots had begun to emerge from my legs, pasting me tight to the ground. I shuddered.

I wondered where my brother was and the reason behind this madness. I shovelled backwards lest the forks grabbed me to dance with them. Suddenly, I heard someone laugh so loudly that my eardrums seemed to be shattered. I looked to my right — towards the direction of the laughter. I found that the source of the laughter was a picture of my old granny who had died a long time back. The picture portrayed the face of

my granny (before she died) with no teeth at all and no crop of hair at all. My teeth clattered at the sight of it. She laughed heartily again and suddenly blinked at me. I blinked in response but with amazement.

Just then I heard my parents calling me from their room. I found myself going towards my parents room to save myself from God knows what was going on in the house. When I entered my parents' room I saw my father, mother and sisters all standing close to my brother who was lying on a bed with saliva coming out more vigorously. He smiled at me. I also saw my father clutching a sparkling and sharp knife with his hand.

He told me, "Atique, look I am going to slaughter your brother. Watch! Allah Hu Akbar. Allah Hu Akbar..." As he recited Allah Hu Akbar three times instantly he brushed the knife over my brother's neck. My mother and sisters all clapped their hands in approval and excitement. Incredibly, not even a single drop of blood dripped from my brother's throat. He then got up from the bed and his head also lifted itself. He began to

tered a while ago. I saw my brother's head swinging above my head.

I struggled in vain to extricate myself from their grip but it was fruitless. My father soon began to recite holy phrases. He repeated Allah Hu Akbar three times and when he was about to pass the knife through my neck I got hold of my neck and yelled menacingly. I felt my heart pounding with panic and blood boiling inside my veins. Suddenly, I felt as if I was weightless and falling with a high speed into a deep well. I screamed and screamed.

Just then someone shook me saying: "What's wrong? Wake up. You are late for school." I woke up with a big yawn and a sudden thump on my heart and shuddered to restrain myself from falling into that profound well. It was my mother who shook me. I realised that I had had a nightmare. I was glad to escape from a terrible nightmare into an absolute reality or was it another nightmare! I sighed and looked at my mother. My body drenched with perspiration.

"What happened Atique? Did you have a nightmare?" my mother inquired.

"It was nothing mother. It was nothing..." I replied, still not fully recovered. I turned to my left side where my brother was sleeping merrily in his bed while saliva flowed out as ever, soaking the pillow.

Nothing much happened today...

by Nazia Hussain
(Class V)

Mrs Karim dashed home from the market. She dashed home to tell her children about seeing the police chase a robber. She had never seen police chasing a robber before. She turned around the corner of the street. As she did, her mouth flew open. Hundreds of soap bubbles were pouring out of the window of her apartment in Paribagh.

She couldn't believe her eyes. Was this really her house? She just stood and stared for a minute. Then she ran up and opened the door as fast as she could.

"What happened?" she demanded staring at Nazia, Azra and Nida.

Nazia shrugged. "Nothing much, really," she said.

"But look at those bubbles!" Mrs Karim yelled.

Nazia shrugged again. Azra shrugged too. I guess we used too much soap when we washed cooler," she said.

"The dog? You took soap and washed the dog? Why?" she demanded. She stared at first Nazia, then Azra and finally Nida.

At last, Nida, the youngest of the three children answered.

"Cooler got honey all over his fur," she explained.

Mrs Karim put her shopping bags down. How could cooler get honey over his fur? "I was only gone a few minutes." "He was chasing the cat and bumped into the honey jar," Azra piped in. "The honey poured out on him." Mrs Karim gasped. "Cat? cat? We don't have a cat!" she cried.

"You might say it was a visiting cat," Nazia explained. "It came through the window that

we opened to let the smoke out."

Mrs Karim held her head. "Smoke? What smoke?"

"The smoke from the oven when the cake batter overflowed," said Nida.

"Why were you making a cake?" asked Mrs Karim.

"For the School Bake Sale," said Nida.

"But I made one this morning!" Mrs Karim shouted.

"We know, we were making a new one. The cake you made fell on the floor when the police bumped into the table."

"Police? What police?"

"The police that were chasing the robber," said Azra.

"Robber? My robber? You mean the robber I saw at the market? What was he doing here?"

Nazia smiled. "That's easy," she said. The robber dashed around and around the table. The police chased him. They knocked into the table and the cake fell down. The robber slid on the icing. The police caught him."

"OK, OK. Now let's see. Because of the robber the cake fell down. Because of the cake, you made another. Because of that cake, smoke came out. Because of the smoke, the window was opened. Because of the window, the cat came in. Because of the cat, cooler got messy. You washed cooler. Because of that, bubbles poured out."

"Yes, Yes," the children cried excitedly.

"But how could all this happen? I was only gone a few minutes!"

"We told you nothing much happened today," said Azra.

Working in Coal Mines

by Shampa Bari

Have you ever imagined yourself working 16 hours underground dragging tubs full of coal through a 30-inch tunnel? If you were born during the time of the Industrial Revolution, that would have been the case. The conditions in mines were pretty bad at time.

Coal miners were paid well more than workers in textile industries. Their wages were about eight-pence a day, which was lot. The wages were sometimes paid in tickets which they could use in truck shops, which were much more expensive than normal shops. Sometimes miners used to have to buy from these shops even if they were paid cash, just to keep their jobs.

The ages of coal miners varied from 6 to 80. The youngest used to keep the rats from their fathers shoes and clothers. Other children were forced to drag coal tubs along tunnels 30 inches high. Some children used to open and close trap doors along the mines to let air in to keep the men and women from suffocating. Some kids had to carry coal baskets on their back attached to their necks by a rope. The rope would break sometimes and the coal would roll on the child coming up next. This was often fatal.

The four major accidents that usually happened were accidents involving machinery, road and wall failures, accumulation of gases, and concentration of coal dust. These are also the major accidents that happen today. If the steam

pumping engines were improperly handled they would explode. The supports that held up the roof and walls would sometimes break and crush or trap people. Methane and carbon monoxide are two of the most dangerous gases. Methane is an explosive gas which is harmless in small amounts but if 5-15% is present in the air it may cause a violent explosion. Carbon monoxide is a poisonous gas which is harmful to lungs. Pneumoconiosis or Black lung disease comes from breathing too much coal dust. It interferes with one's breathing and eventually causes death. Coal dust can also cause explosions if there is too much of it. Methane and coal dust together are very harmful because they're both explosive.

Working in mines involves hard manual labour under conditions of high personal risk and danger. The state did not care about the mining condition because all they wanted was the coal. The strikes were ineffective.

You should be glad you weren't born in the time of the Industrial Revolution, you could have started work at three. Workers then were very dirty and tired. Most worked 16 hours a day. They never went to schools, which were too expensive.

8th grade, International School of Kuala Lumpur

Juan Tamad and the Flea-Killer

One weakness leads to another. So it was with Juan Tamad's laziness. As his body was lazy, so was his mind. Truth being often hard to tell, he took recourse to lies, which came easy to him. Telling lies became his second nature.

One day his mother sent him to town to buy a cooking pot. It so happened that the townspeople were afflicted by fleas. Nobody knew where they came from. They crawled up one's legs and body and lodged themselves in the hair until one itched like mad. It was horrible.

Juan bought a nice pot and set off for home. On his way back, a flea got inside his clothes and bit him. He yelled and threw out his arms and scratched himself as he pranced around. In all this confusion the pot fell on the ground and broke into a dozen pieces.

Juan squatted before the broken pot, imagining his

mother's wrath. He had to do some quick thinking.

He collected all the pieces of the broken pot and, with the help of two stones, ground them very fine. Then he wrapped up the powder in several pieces of a banana leaf, and went back to town. Up and down the road he went shouting, "Buy flea-killer! Buy flea-killer!"

This seemed heaven-sent for the townsfolk who crowded around him and bought all the packages.

Juan took back home no cooking pot, but instead a bag of coins. His mother was pleased. But she still wanted her rice pot, so she sent him back town the next day.

Great was the dismay of Juan Tamad when he arrived in town and was soon set upon by angry men and women shaking their fists in his face and cursing him.

"We shall tear you limb by limb," they shouted. "For you

sold us no flea-killer but common sand. You cheat! Now tell us a likely story so you should not die like a dog. But the story has to be convincing or you will not be spared."

"Oh, my good neighbours," pleaded Juan, "first tell me how you used the flea-killer."

"Why, we dusted it on the fleas, of course. How else?" said the neighbours.

"Ah," said Juan. "That is what I feared. Have you any of the powder left?"

"No one had any powder left. 'What a pity,' sighed Juan, 'for I could have shown you how to kill the fleas. First, you catch a flea. Then open its eyes. It is really very simple," said Juan.

"Ho-ho-ho-ho!" roared a neighbour, and "Ha-ha-ha-ha," laughed another.

"It is hard enough to see a flea and catch it, let alone open its eyes," said one man.

Juan tried desperately to go on with his story, but such was the din and noise of angry protests from the people that he found himself cornered.

"Juan, why not tell truth for a change!" shouted an old woman.

And for the first time in his young life, Juan saw no escape. He told them the truth.

As some men lunged forward to pounce on him, the old woman stopped them and said, "Let the fool go this time. But listen boy, try your tricks again on us and God save you!"

"Come, we must tell his mother," came a voice, and the crowd melted away, leaving Juan standing alone, still worried about his mother's wrath. Tale from 'Laughing Together' — a Unesco publication



Registration

The latest registration list is out. Check to see if you're on it! The new additions are whose coupons arrived during the month of February.

Name	Number	Sara Amcen	0081
Syed Mohammed Ali Zain	0060	Syed Sayeed	0082
Iftikhar-ul-Haque	0061	Syed Muhammad Abu	0083
N Malathy	0062	Hares	0084
N Sangetha	0063	Mehnaz Chowdhury	0085
Alina Andalil	0064	Syed Muhammad Abu	0086
Ri MaZ	0065	Khaer	0087
Layega Dashed	0066	Tanita Chowdhury	0088
Mohammad Asifur Rahim	0067	(Tumpa)	0089
Jasim Gani	0068	Ashqur Khan	0090
Md Mizanur Rahman	0069	Raquib-ul-Hassan	0091
Warna Nasser	0070	Quamrul Islam Khan	0092
Alwina Sharmeen	0071	Golam Shajice	0093
Md Kamran	0072	Adeeb Chowdhury	0094
Sheikh Tina Saleem	0073	Ayasha Nilufar (Kot)	0095
Shamama Shahcen	0074	Sarah Ahmed	0096
Md Zafar Barkat Rumi	0075	Budhan	0097
Shahed Chowdhury	0076	Tahira Nilufar	0098
Munazah Alam	0077	Eissa Hatem	0099
Saqib Chowdhury	0078	Julian D'Silva	0100
Sheikh Tina Saleem	0079	Ehtesham-ul-Haque	0101
Mohammad Moycen	0080	(Shantonu)	0102

Here is the solved puzzle from 2 weeks ago. See if you got it right!

by Sanjida Shahced
Class-X
RS No 0055

D A T S C R A B B I L E D O G S S R H C T S
O N R O G N I L T S E R W E T M U S A U C
N G E M P I N E F N A S K E T B A L L P I
K N E R W O T N L L A B Y E L L O V E T T
E I B B P R N O O B Y E O K A Y S S L O E
G I H O C K E Y G N I L B M A G K I Z H L
N K E T A S R S Y L O P O N O M I N Z S H
I S S U L U S A T G L O L E G O P N U P T
T I E A G R K R O L O A T R E S P E P I A
P M M G N F A Y D X I O B M A T I T D U G
I O A Y I I T A S S O N D D T L N E R Q N
L Z G M L N I T O O H S G L N Y G D O O I
T S Y N T G N R F G P H S J U A O R W T C
H G T A S O G O L C I M O W O C H A S P A
G N H S E O O L Q G R S U J I A K I S Y R
I I E T R L A Y H A T I I J L M A L O R R
E X L I W B E Y H A R D C A G F M L R C O
W O A C E A U S E Z A M O K T N T I C M T
I B O S R M C Y C L I N G A E L O B N U O
N T A R P O R B O A T R A C E T R L F G M
K B W A T E R P O L O L L A B T O F A S

Bet You Didn't Know

5. KERMIT'S NEW VOICE: Eureka, the world's most lovable frog KERMIT has a new voice and a new lease on life. The amphibian will soon join the rest of his pals to salute their creator, the late JIM HENSON in a CBS TV special to air in the US. For 35 years Henson had been KERMIT'S voice and after his death last May, many feared KERMIT would never speak again. But luckily an unidentified Muppet player has agreed to croak for KERMIT.

6. LONGER THAN LONG: Name the only man-made structure visible from the moon? Yes, THE GREAT WALL OF CHINA. But your idea about its length is erroneous. According to the archaeologists, the most casirly part of the wall is not a Shanhaiguan where it plunges into the East China Sea but on the Yalu river along the border with North Korea.

And this adds 1,040 kms to the long wall and makes it greater than great.

7. SMELLING GOOD: Want to refreshen your room? Just put a few drops of cologne on the bulbs of your lamps a few minutes before you switch them on. Your room will be mildly perfumed when the bulb gets heated and then

you can say the best place in this world — my room. But, remember do not put cologne on a hot bulb.

8. COBRA COMBAT: No referee, no rules but amidst a lot of spectators, two five foot long cobras fought out a one-hour long, grim battle in Malenahalli village of Karnataka, India. It ended in the death of one of the giant snakes. And the victor neither posed for a photograph nor waited for any award. But swallowed the vanquished and then vanished.

QUIZ CLUB

- When was Queen Victoria proclaimed Empress of India?
 - Who was the founder of the Boy Scouts?
 - When was Mahatma Gandhi born?
 - What is the currency of Morocco called?
 - What is a piccolo?
 - What does the Olympic symbol represent?
 - Why is the Black Sea black?
 - Who is the captain of the South African team? (in this World Cup Cricket)
 - Who were the finalists of the last World Cup Cricket?
 - Who scored the highest runs in cricket history.
- Answers to February 21st's special Quiz Club:
- Abdur Gaffar Chowdhury, Altaf Mahmud.
 - Holding of public meetings of more than 5 people and demonstrations in public places
 - February 11th and 12th
 - March 19th 1948
 - Tamaddun Majlis and Awami League
 - Azad
 - SH Gureishi
 - Committee of various political parties to decide on the question of whether or not to break Section 144.
 - Hamidur Rahman and Novera Ahmed
 - January 26th 1952

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: _____

School: _____ Class: _____

Full Address: _____

Telephone No. _____