

# RISING STARS

## Mystery at Mandrake Mansion

The adventure continues at Mandrake as our heroes discover new surprises at every corner. And now they've been spotted!

Obviously they were surprised (more so because the twins looked the picture of guilt and it was evident that they were on the point of running away). There were four of them and before any of us could do anything two of the men came forward and grabbed the startled twins!



by Warda Nasser Class II

by Munazah Alam

"Are there any others?" Scar-face rapped out the question. Neither twin said anything. "So we ain't talking, eh?" he continued in the same tone. "Okay we'll find out. Take them away and lock 'em up with the other one." This last sentence was directed at the girls' captors.

I was trembling from head to foot and it seemed as though my thundering heartbeats would give us away, Chris and me. Just what did he mean by 'the other one'? Were these men kidnappers? And if so...then...was that scream we heard from...from one of their victims? Afraid that any movement of my part might attract attention, I stole a

glance at Chris out of the corner of my eyes. She was sitting on an adjacent branch, her face tense. Jean and Diane were taken away without further questioning, but the other two men remained — and true to their word they began searching the 'woods'. They poked at the bushes and looked behind the trees but, thank God, they didn't bother to look above their heads.

But at last, it seemed ages later, they tired of the search, and left. But what were we to do? What would we say to Mr and Mrs Wykoff? But what was more important, how could we contact them in the first place? We did not have their address — only the twins did — and we couldn't get into their house: it was locked and the keys were with Jean.

We stayed a good fifteen minutes in the tree, silent, each in her own thoughts. Then Chris said, "Let's go Susan. We can't do anything over here right now. I'm going to report all this to Dad, and then to Chief Denvers. I only hope Chief hasn't left for his vacation already."

We reached Chris' car without further incident and returned to Marlow in an uneasy silence. "Is Dad home?" Chris asked Mrs. Jameson as soon as we reached the Calvert's home. Mrs. Jameson shook her head.

"No, Miss Christine, you just missed him. He left an hour ago; he said he wouldn't be home for a few days. He might not be able to contact you for a few days but he said that he couldn't possibly leave you his address. She didn't ask about the twins; no doubt she thought we had dropped them off at their home.

"Oh no!" Chris exclaimed as we reached her room. "He had to be called away just when we needed him! An I can't even send him a message!" "So what do we do now — go to the police?" "Yet — there's nothing else we can do! Let's go!"

But at the police-station we were in for yet another disappointment. "Chief Denvers has left for his holiday and will be

away for a few weeks," we were informed by his replacement. He didn't look very friendly and was even less so when he had heard our story. I could see that he thought of us as a couple of high school kids trying to cook up some excitement: he hadn't believed as single word we'd said! Obviously he had not heard of Chris' detective skills. But I couldn't altogether blame him for his suspicions: after all, some people do resort to that sort of prank just for fun! In the end we finally managed to persuade Chief Kinnane to search Mandrake Mansion. But he would take neither Chris nor me with him. "Just in case," he said.

The next afternoon Chris and I were in her bedroom when there was a knock on the door.

"Come in," said Chris. Mrs. Jameson entered with a worried expression on her face. "You two are to go to the police-station immediately — he didn't sound very pleased."

Chris and I exchanged looks. Now what? We soon found out. We hurried to the police-station where we were met by a grim-faced Chief Kinnane. When the lecture was over we returned home with downcast faces.

"What do we do now?" I asked gloomily. Your Dad's away and the police won't believe us."

"We'll have to get Diane and Jean out of this ourselves, however dangerous this whole thing may be. "I was so sure they'd be at Mandrake, but Chief Kinnane said the whole house is empty save for the caretaker — Hey...!"

"Yes!" I cried out as the same thought struck me. "The hiding places!" we chorused in unison.

"Why didn't we think of that before?" Chris groaned. Chief Kinnane will never believe us if we tell him now! Oh, how I wish Dad were here!" "Then we'll have to go." It was a statement rather than a question. "Yes," agreed Chris, "but we'll have to be very careful. We'll go tomorrow. In the morning it's becoming dark al-

ready." But once again, luck was against us. After a restless night, Chris and I were woken up early the next morning by a fierce thunderstorm which raged on throughout the morning, and it was quite late in the afternoon when we finally managed to leave the house.

We took a few precautions, just in case, after all one can never tell what might happen. Chris had some skeleton keys with her, which she had obtained from her father. I took a newspaper and a piece of wire — in case we got separated. And, most important of all, flashlights, of course (with fresh batteries).

When we reached Mandrake Chris hid her car in a small clearing in the 'woods'. Neither of us spoke: it would be wiser if we were as quiet as we could afford to be.

Slowly we inched our way towards the mansion — which we had not seen yet. It was a medium-sized, two-storied building — not one of those huge, grand structures one would expect from grounds so extensive. The paint was peeling off from many places on the walls, or rather what was could be seen of them, for they were heavily carpeted with moss. All the windows were shuttered. The building looked desolate — but it had a formidable air about it.

Quietly we advanced towards the silent structure, the trees screening us from any invisible eyes that might be watching from behind the shutters. Reaching the backdoor, we looked around a bit and tried the windows nearby. No luck. All of them were tightly secured.

Chris gestured to me to go back to the door. She would use her skeleton keys.

We were in the kitchen. Once we had closed the door, it was very dark indeed, and we could hardly see anything. Taking out our flashlights, we examined our surroundings.

There was a modern stove in one corner of the room and a few cupboards attached to the walls. Otherwise the room was empty.

To be continued

## Carrier Pigeon Service

Farhat Amin, India

Name the bird which signifies peace and also helps in carrying messages? Yes, PIGEON. Oh yes, DOVE too. Both are correct because both mean the same bird. The names 'Pigeon' and 'Dove' are really interchangeable. Actually there is no basic difference between them except that the name 'dove' has come to be used more often to describe the smaller species. In fact, there are more than three hundred different species of these birds. One of the most interesting species of pigeon is the carrier or homing pigeon. When it is released, it has an instinct which guides it back to the home it left. This makes it very useful as a carrier of messages and apparently man recognised this usefulness a long time ago.

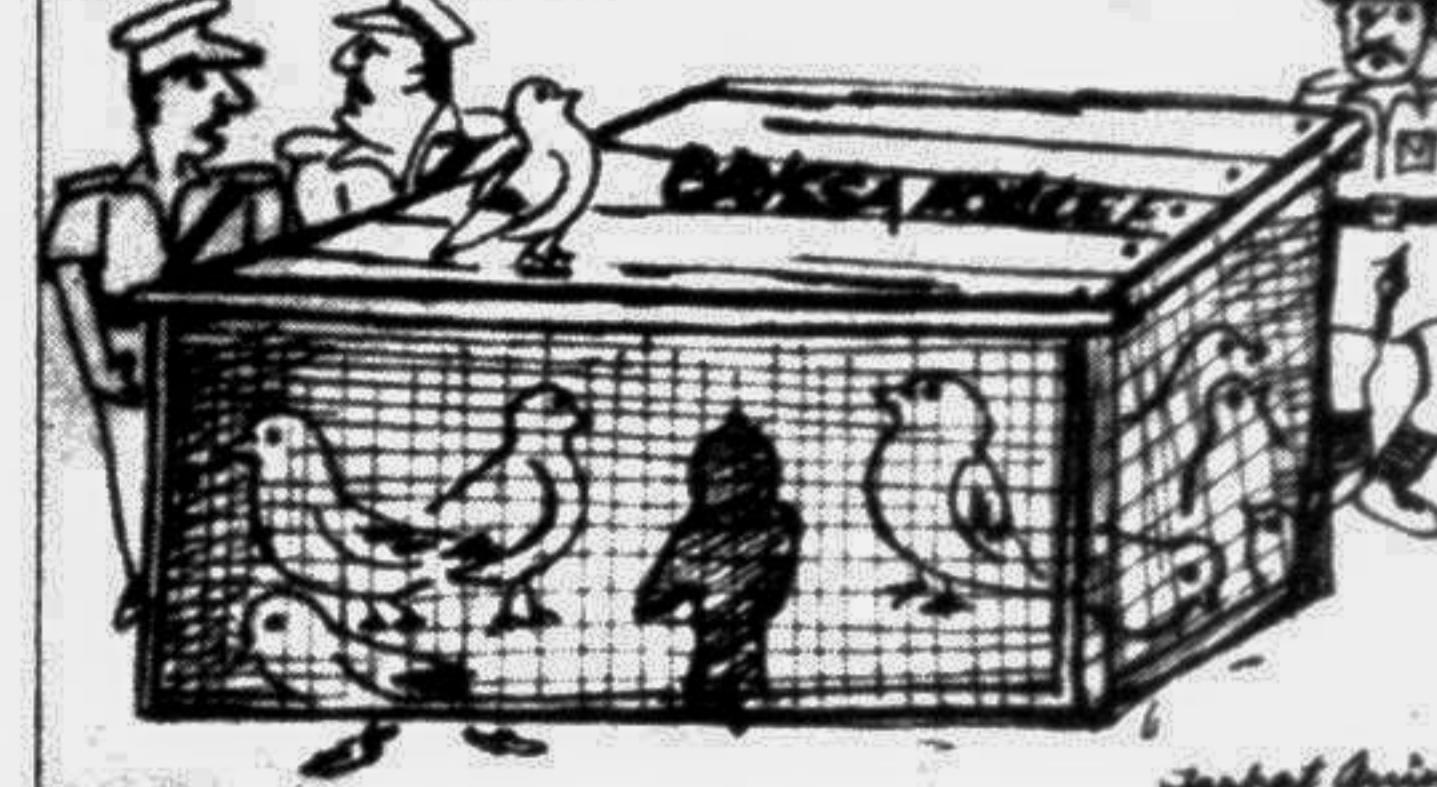
If we go down the ages then we will find that the Roman emperors used carrier pigeons to send messages to and from their armies in the field. And in the twelfth century, the Sultan of Baghdad maintained a regular postal system by using their birds. In 1849 the great news agency REUTERS also used pigeons to carry messages. Later, in Europe pigeon post was used in 1873. But their greatest use in modern times has been during Wars.

Pigeons were also used in espionage work by dropping them in special cages over enemy territories. They were caught by friendly hands who subsequently released them with vital messages giving details of location of enemy factories and ammunition dumps. Even miniature cameras were fastened to these birds' breasts and by means of timing device a lever was released which caused the shutter in the camera to snap the picture. And thus, many heroic deeds have been achieved by the pigeons during the wars. A pigeon called 'CHER AMI' is one such notable instance who became immortal by saving the Lost Battalion of the American Army from the hands of the Germans. And some of the pigeons have become proud possessors of the coveted Victoria Cross.

But you will be surprised to know that even today, yes, in the age of Telegraph, Telephone, Fax, Computers, and Satellites, Orissa (an eastern state of India) continues to have a CARRIER PIGEON SERVICE. This service was started by the Orissa Police to operate pigeon service in all those areas where the neces-

some nearby prominent landmarks such as a tall minaret, temple, chimney or a church so that it can easily locate the loft from a great distance while returning from long distance flights.

These little feathered friends can be trained and used in many ways to carry messages. The STATIC SERVICE or the one way service is meant to carry one way messages. When a contingent of Police force move out to interior they carry a few pigeons in portable baskets. Such pigeons are released daily with messages. Usually a pair of birds are released each carrying the copy of same message. This is because at the time of flight there are chances that the winged messengers may come across stray hawks. In such a case when one is en-



gaged in eluding the hawk the other heads for the loft. This sounds like a filmy action packed scene, doesn't it? Usually the pigeons know how to fight their way ahead or at times to be on the safer side they generally avoid areas infested by the predatory birds. During the General Elections this type of STATIC SERVICE was extensively used and was a great help to polling and other officers engaged in election work.

Now you would like to know as to why a pigeon returns to its home without failing? Well, this has been a subject of great mystery and controversy to man ever since he came in contact with these feathered friends. Some say that the birds are guided to the loft by the mighty Sun. But some go on to prove that they respond to electrified airlines and tune in on those leading to the loft.

And a few believe that pigeons are guided to the loft by means of their smelling instinct like the dogs and cats. But all these theories do not lead to any definite conclusion. Thus the mystery remains a mystery. While the deeds of the brave birds create history.

## Snooker is not a widely acknowledged game in Bangladesh. A game which is English in origin — having travelled this far — is played only in a few clubs which can afford the tables, space and other necessary accessories, which are not easily available, not to mention, expensive.

Only recently has the game received any exposure by the media and not so long ago the F M Majumder Memorial Snooker Championship Tournament, 1992 was played at the Narayanjan Club. Now my dad has been a snooker freak for as long as I can remember!

## Jokes

Grandfather was telling his little granddaughter some extraordinary incidents which happened while he was journeying to London from Boston. The granddaughter was very amazed. Granddaughter: Oh, Grandfather, you're grand! Grandfather: You're grand, too! Granddaughter: How? Grandfather: You're a 'grand daughter'!

Fanny was at the dining hall about to munch a piece of chocolate cake. Just then her bother Richard came home from school. Fanny: You must be hungry, Richard, have a piece of this cake. Richard: No, thanks, I'm fed-up. Just then Mother came in. Mother: Fanny, give Richard a piece of cake. Fanny: Don't bother, mother, he says he's fed up.

Jane: What do you call the butter that flies? Jenny: I don't know. Jane: A butterfly!

Hazel: What is the reverse of Europe? Barbie: Thames, Niger, Dec etc.

Ambrose: A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I... Oh no, it's over two seconds already Harold can you say A to Z in two seconds? Harold: Course I can. Here I go, A to Z, see I took only one second!

## A Day for Dad

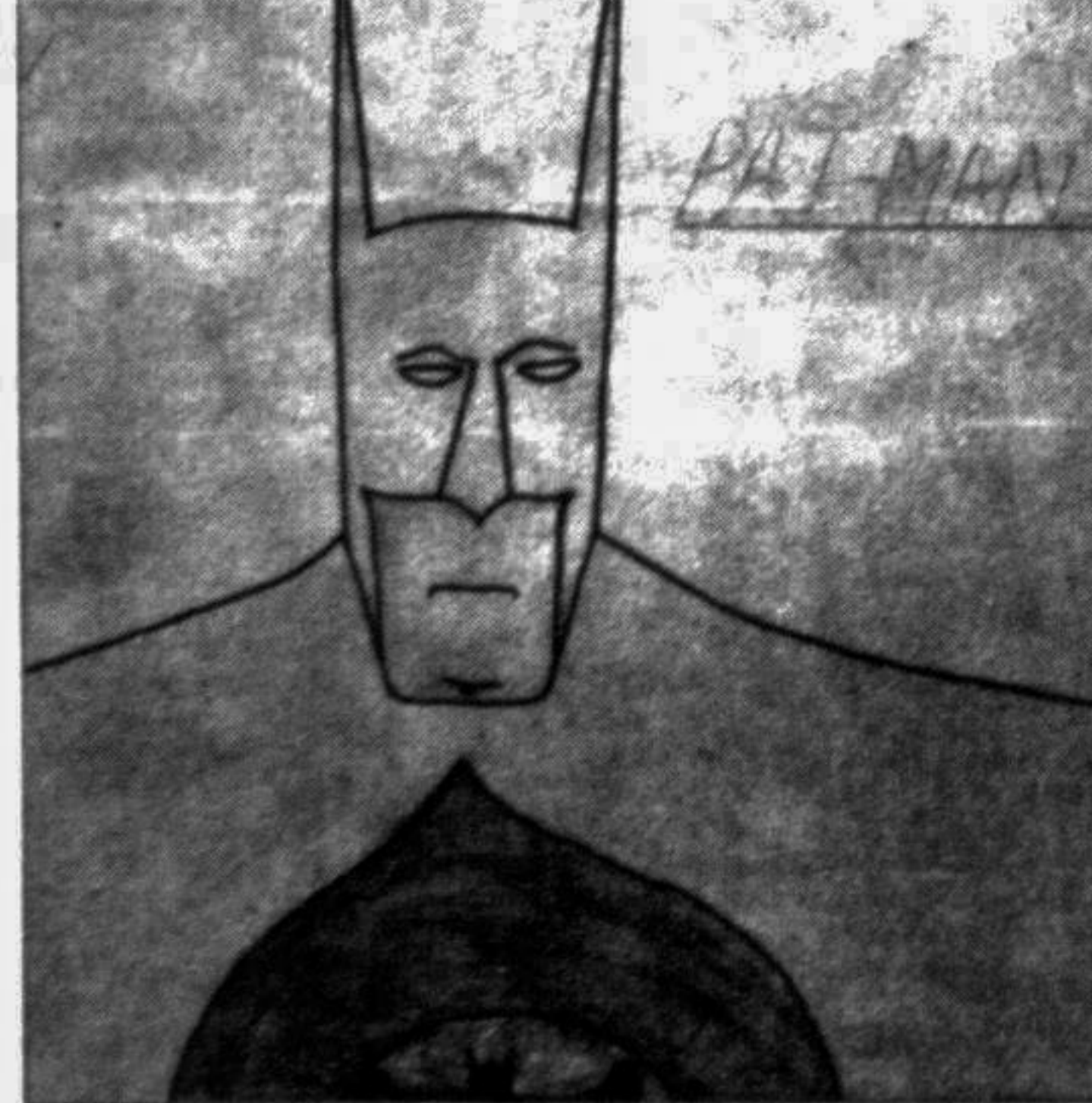
Judith G De Costa

have accompanied him to Dhaka Club and sat for what used to seem several millennia watching him pat bright, colourful balls into pockets time after time. That's how the game's played, ridiculous as it may sound. Not much different from pool but a little more complicated, there are no numbers marked on these balls, and if you pat carelessly, you get 'snooked'! Hence the name, I think!

Anyway, this tournament was receiving media attention from day one and everyday scanned through the sports pages to find those inconspicuous columns on who played what, who won and so on. My father was really happy this was finally happening and proud to be part of the tournament even if his name didn't come up till much later. We all knew he wanted to be mentioned and noticed how particularly devoted he became to the game all of a sudden, staying back really late at nights so

## The Origin of Batman

by Jasim Gani (Class V)



Batman by Jasim Gani (Class V)

nals that father took the pains to play a little attentively. It was after reading one particular report on one of his games that said 'De Costa was given a good run for his money' that we — my mom and I told him.

"Show them what you're really made of." There was a noticeable change in attitude and like a typical sports object, he became a subject for big bets.

Mary a big hole was four in many a big pocket. we heard, after he'd emerged the victor. Three cheers for Dad!

It was only once that my father was the runner-up and I remember my disappointment. I myself am not a sports enthusiast and always turn down the opportunity to participate in swimming contests, badminton and such. My dad always scolds me for being a 'spoil sport'. I put it down to physical apathy. I could imagine his constant disappointment in me in the single moment when I felt disappointed in him. Since then, I've tried

## by Jasim Gani (Class V)

When young Bruce Wayne saw his parents murdered before his eyes, he vowed to spend his life making war on all criminals. To this end, he pushed himself to the very limits of human endurance, training his body to physical perfection and having his mind to razor sharpness, becoming a top criminologist and a master of deductive reasoning. He devoted himself to the art of disguise, until he was virtually a human chameleon who could assume a thousand different faces. He also developed a unique utility belt, stocking it with the various weapons he would need to aid him in his noble crusade.

By day, he poses as a millionaire philanthropist, chairman of the prestigious Wayne Foundation, while, by night, he is transformed into a weird figure of shadows a dark avenger of evil known as BATMAN!

to please him by participating in other fields & projects. And in turn my dad's given me the privilege of becoming a nationwide acknowledged expert in the game of snooker.

## Think Twice

by Ashek Sakhawat

I was sitting in my car wondering what to do to celebrate this coming New Year as I waited for my mom to come out of the market. I suddenly noticed two big brown eyes staring at me and then came a smile — the little boy was barely seven with a huge basket on his head. Waiting for someone to hire him. What could his wish be I thought.

He waited and waited. But no one called him out. He was too small to carry all that which he wouldn't even dream of tasting. Why? I couldn't suppress my curiosity any longer and finally called him and started talking. His name was Kamal and he said that he was a porter or 'Kul'. His life was filled with misfortune, "we were never rich", he said, "but we use to have three meals a day back at our village". Their financial condition began to deteriorate, when it was time for his sister to be married off. What ever little assets they had, were sold for the wedding and above all the demands of their new son-in-law had to be met. Things were rough but life went on.

One day, unexpectedly, Kamal's mother fell very sick. They scraped all that they had for her treatment. But she did not make it. She died of cholera. They were left with barely anything — their only possession now was themselves.

Kamal's father had heard that work could be found in Dhaka city. They came with high hopes and full of expectation. But almost everything began to fade away. In the end he was employed as a rickshaw puller. Things were turning for the better, a small family of father and son were at least having a decent life.

Then every little dream was shattered into pieces when Kamal received the news from his father's employer. His father was in the hospital.

## QUIZ CLUB

- This week's questions are easier than usual. So send in your answers real quick!
1. What is the name of South Africa's President?
  2. Who is the captain of the Australian cricket team playing in the World Cup Cricket?
  3. Who is the bowler in the Indian team playing in the World Cup Cricket, who is nick named 'Hunter'?
  4. Who are Janet Evan's and Matt Blond?
  5. Who was Maulana Abul Kalam Azad?
  6. Which insect carries Yellow Fever?
  7. Which democratic country has the largest electorate?
  8. Which country is known as the 'Cockpit of Europe'?
  9. Where is the Gobi Desert?
  10. Where is Tianamein Square?

- Answers to February 28th's Quiz Club
1. Venice.
  2. Indian Ocean.
  3. Khalil Gibran.
  4. John F Kennedy.
  5. French philosopher.
  6. A musical instrument that has no valves.
  7. Boston, USA.
  8. Granada, Spain.
  9. Martin Crowe
  10. 206
- Dear winners of previous quizzes: Are you still waiting for your Quiz Club prize? Come and get it! It's waiting for you at The Daily Star office.

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: \_\_\_\_\_

Full Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone No. \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_