

# ★ RISING STARS ★

## The City of Sadness

by Naheed Kamal

"Without art we are left with the dull, dark abyss of facts."

sation ... steel and concrete. We cannot live in the past forever nor can we forsake the past for the sake of the present because the future cannot be forbidden to us. The art, dance, music, poetry and handicrafts made in Dhaka were the pride and joy of the nation. There was beauty and elegance in all forms of art from pottery to saris to silver jewellery. We still have art and

the city's inhabitants. They have lost their sense of belonging ... there is no joy derived from shifts spent in a garments factory. What is there to be proud of? What heritage is there to belong to?

True, modernisation has given the unemployed the much needed jobs and helped us regain some semblance of lost pride. We are not necessarily a "basket case". Changes

the city of hopes into a fertile ground for exploitation. It is now a city of steel hearts, blank eyes and sadness.

Art gives the human heart a reason for happiness, for living, for dreaming. There is little place for any form of art to flourish in a city filled with sadness.

The people need to know that the handmade pottery, woven "Jamdani" sari, impromptu singing and poetry—all these are precious forms of art and a source of pride for them.



Dhaka — the city with a glorious past.

— Star file photo

beauty but the only cause for what survives is money. The artisans no longer can take pride in their creations for no one gives them due credit.

The land cannot be turned back to what it was a century ago. This is an unrealistic wish, nor can we isolate ourselves from the rest of the world. We need to revive our lost heritage and culture. A culture which was once the pride of the nation, when a nation loses its sense of pride and belonging it also loses direction. This loss gives way to sadness. We cannot let our tradition go to ruin.

Once traders came from far away seeking the many wonders of Dhaka: the spice, muslin, handmade pottery, silver jewellery, etc. Now traders still come to Dhaka but it is only because we are a cheap source of labour! The sadness has enveloped the majority of

are inevitable. We cannot stop progress, neither can we forsake our sense of the sake of it. The people need to know that what they have is a source of pride and joy.

It is not possible to preserve any culture in its purest form. Decisions about change, if there are any, are often done collectively, but they tend to be political. But political decisions did not help any culture get where it is now. It is for the individuals to decide for themselves how much of the old they wish to retain, how much of the new they find useful in life. This is how cultures have enriched themselves in all great civilizations. No culture has flourished in isolation, ours cannot either. The reason for our sense of loss is simple. We have taken advantage of simple people and their simple dreams. We have turned

This is an ancient art which need to be encouraged and preserved. This is the only way for the common man to realize that it is okay to dream and that they do belong and they do have worth.

It is not for the sake of tourism or wealth that we must revive our lost culture. This will only benefit a handful of people. We must revive our heritage to bring about a sense of belonging and forego the sense of loss which is enveloping us.

It is time to see the sadness which lurks at every street corner, art is not a cheap movie at the cinema hall nor is it a Hindi movie. Art in our culture gives hope and allows for one to dare to dream and this gives us the courage to live, happily.

## On the Receiving End

by Md Atique Ullah

A Level, Aga Khan School

Here is a new and exciting series story. Two burglars are about to open a safe while the inmates of the house are away ... a lone man walks despondently on the streets ... Where is the connection? What will happen ... Who will be ... "On the Receiving End"?

"HURRY up! We don't have much time. The owner might turn up any moment now," urged the man with a dark complexion as he undid his lungi and knotted it properly. The other man whose eyes were fixed rigidly on the safe lock making his best effort to unlock the safe, producing feeble clattering sounds slightly stooped over and looked bitterly at his companion as if vexed by the urgency.

"What do you think I am doing? Sucking lolly pop? I am trying my best to open the safe and you are here doing nothing but delaying the process by talking," the man busy with the lock said coldly as he jerked off the bunch of hair hanging over his eyes.

"Well, go on. Try your best. It's no time for a quarrel," the dark man said feeling that it was not the right moment to annoy him.

It was almost midnight. The streets were secluded and people were already sound asleep in their bed. And these two men were trying in vain to open the safe of a rich man who had gone off to attend a marriage ceremony with his family save the maid servant of the house, by whose grace and help these two burglars had succeeded in entering the house.

The maid servant stood near the edge of the door keeping her eyes on the street to warn her accomplices of the arrival of the owner who was due to come before midnight. She was poorly clad in a dirty worn-out saree which was donated to her during the last Eid festival by the lady of the house. She was gripping the end of her saree with her light yellow, stinky teeth for she felt shy in front of the man busy with the lock with whom she was not acquainted. Of course, she knew the dark man — he was her lover.

"Well, how far?" the dark man asked impatiently. He rubbed his two hands in expectation. His eyes were flickering in the semi-darkness — darkness mingled with the dim light of the torch — of the room, looking at the safe greedily.

"Easier said than done. Be patient, will you?" "You don't understand. If we get caught we are dead meat."

"OK OK. Don't worry. I'm almost at the end" the lock expert said raising his head. He was a better looking man than his companion and the maid servant was glancing at him through the corner of her eyes now and then, forgetting her vigilance of the street. Not very far away, there was another man walking on the streets searching desperately

for the doctor's house. His daughter, a three year old child, was terribly ill. His wife had requested him to go in search of a doctor; she told him that there was one at the second street where many wealthy families dwell.

At first, he stubbornly resisted saying he wouldn't go out in search of a doctor at such an hour but the pitiful wail of his daughter melted his stubbornness and persuaded him to go.

Drops of perspiration had accumulated on his forehead in desperation and failure and poured down his moist face like an avalanche gaining momentum every second. He wiped off the sweat with the crook of his finger and glanced at the luxurious bungalows and

wished he lived in one of them. For sometime he forgot about his ailing daughter and became deeply absorbed in a fantasy world where he was very rich and had no sorrow. He imagined having expensive cars whose glittering colour was pleasant to look at. He also imagined having many servants and his wife ordering them or admonishing them for their offence and his daughter having beautiful and expensive toys. A mild, blatant smile appeared on his face unconsciously which triggered off his eyes into a wider range of vision in the fantasy world.

Suddenly, as if oozing out of his sub-conscious mind, his fantasy shattered into sheer reality at the barking of a stray dog where the reminiscence of his ailing daughter displeased him for a moment. He heaved a sigh of sadness. He stood in front of a gate of a bungalow and studied the inscriptions on the number plate hung on the gate. Although, the inscriptions on the plate were obscured by the low intensity of the light of the lamps hoisted high above on the lamp-post, his eyes became quite powerful enough to see them.

To be continued



## What If Nightmares Came True....

by Mahruba Sameen Hussain

I was running. Running breathlessly through some long dark tunnel. I could hear my pursuers' pounding feet behind me. What had I done? I had no time to think as they nearly caught up with me. As I turned my head I could see the barrel of a deadly Uzi of one of them. I ran on till I reached the exit of the tunnel and came to a huge glass building. There was a front door.

Apparently the place was deserted. I went inside and into another room. I pressed some kind of button and the door was locked. I looked around the room which was windowless and doorless apart from the one I had come through. There was a bed, two Victorian chairs, a Louis XIV writing desk and an IBM computer.

"What a strange assortment of furniture," I mused. Hanging on the wall was a calendar dated 2004. Was I in the future? Oh dear! I looked at

myself in the mirror which hanging on the far corner of the wall. Clad in a black leather jacket and trousers, thick black boots and gloves, with my hair tied up in a ponytail not to mention the "extra large" rings dangling from my ears I was looking like a criminal from one of the TV shows.

Suddenly a loud banging noise on the door roused me from my thoughts. "My pursuers! I thought fearfully. There was no escape. I was trapped.

deserted. I went inside and into another room. I pressed some kind of button and the door was locked. I looked around the room which was windowless and doorless apart from the one I had come through. There was a bed, two Victorian chairs, a Louis XIV writing desk and an IBM computer.

"What a strange assortment of furniture," I mused. Hanging on the wall was a calendar dated 2004. Was I in the future? Oh dear! I looked at



Lion - O by Zassim Gani

## Lion-o's Story

by Zassim Gani

LION-S is the Lord of the Thundercats and his weapon is the Sword of Omens. Through his sword he can call the other thundercats when he is in trouble. Thunder was the home planet of the thundercats and Lion-o's.

But ever since its destruction Lion-o and the others have been searching for another planet.

Now they are the rulers of a new planet called Third Earth. Even if they are the rulers they also have enemies. Their arch enemies are mumm-ra and s-s-s-lithe who intend in destroying the thundercats.

Yet through justice and honesty the thundercats have always beaten their enemies.

## Mystery at Mandrake

by Munazah Alam

... Now our heroes face the problem of climbing walls. But what awaits on the other side? Will they make it or is there another danger ahead. Read on to find out about the rest of Mystery at Mandrake...

I didn't say anything. Slowly I got to my feet, massaging my sore neck. What had I tripped over? It wasn't a root, it was too hard for that! Like metal. Metal?

As quietly as I could I scrambled back to where I had fallen with a startled Chris at my heels.

On my hands and knees I groped about until my hands closed around what I had been looking for — a metal handle. Clearing away the layer of mud around it, I took out my torch and switched it on. Yes, it was what I thought it would be — a lid. A lid that at a guess opened into the coal cellar. But here? I thought you got that kind of thing only in Britain.

"Wow!" a wide-eyed Chris broke into my musings. "Don't stand there wowing at me, Chris," I whispered back. "help me lift this."

Together we lifted the lid. At first it did not budge because of the rust which had formed due to the long stages of neglect. But Chris and I were determined. We cleaned away the best part of the rust with our penknives, and then, as we applied more and more pressure on the lid it finally moved, though only a little. Quickly Chris put a stone in the narrow gap. After that it was easy work and the lid lifted to reveal the coal-hole we had expected. Yes, it was a coal-hole all right, although there wasn't any coal in the cellar, as we noticed when we shone our torches inside.

We made sure that there was no one in the cellar and

then lowered ourselves into it one by one. It was empty except for the inch-thick dust everywhere.

With Chris leading the way we slowly climbed up the cellar steps to the door. But unfortunately, we saw that the lights in the next room were still on since the glow showed under the door. We would have to wait until the occupants of the kitchen left. I peeked through the key-hole but my view was blocked by a key. At least we would be able to unlock the door if it was locked!

Impatiently we waited ten minutes. But not a sound came from the other room within that lapse of time. Unable to contain myself any longer I gently, depressed the door handle. And opened the door slightly (it hadn't been locked). Nothing happened. No shocked eyes staring, no angry voice shouting, nothing. In fact, there wasn't a single soul in the kitchen! Once I was sure of that I went and switched off the kitchen lights, not realizing until it was too late how disastrous that action might have been had someone seen me through the window! Thank God, no one did!

There were only two other doors leading away from the kitchen. One opened outside, so we went through the other one to find ourselves in a small, narrow passage, which opened out into a large, dimly-lit hall.

The hall was empty. At one end there was an ancient, marble stair-case leading to the second floor. Four oak doors opened from the hall but at the moment all of them were closed.

Everything was so still that we stared all around us, rooted to the ground. The silence had an expectant quality about it, as though something were

about to happen. Something did. We were rudely shaken out of our trance by the sound of approaching voices from the other side of one of the doors — but thank God it was the one farthest from us!

The instant we realized our imminent danger we retreated, quick as lightning, to the shadows from which we had emerged. Neither of us managed to see either of the two men: doing that would have given us away. Nor could we hear what they said as both men talked in low tones. They did not pause in the hall but moved on, disappearing through another doorway. The murmur of their voices died away and once more, silence reigned.

Our search of the first floor proved fruitless. The four oak doors opened into passages and rooms, none of which concealed anything suspicious, and which provided us with further access into the house. Fortunately, we weren't disturbed by anyone during our investigation, which wasn't very satisfactory anyway.

A little low in spirits, we ascended to the second floor, not by the stair-case in the hall, but by another one in a corridor. But here too, we were as unfortunate as ever.

Our luck changed for the better while we were on the third floor. Chris and I were walking down a corridor on this last floor when the sound of an angry feminine voice greeted our ears! I jumped violently, sure that it was Chris and me who were being addressed! But then, another voice — Diane's voice — answered back! We could not catch anything of the conversation that followed for we were not close enough to the speakers. But we had found them — finally!

To be continued



by Sanjida Shaheed Class - X

## A Wish

Srabonti Ali

Make a wish.  
Make it on a bright, bright star.  
Make any old wish.  
Make sure the star is not far.

I wish there was love,  
I wish there was glee,  
I wish that we were all one big family

I may be too big,  
I may be too small,  
But if I do wish,  
I'll wish happiness for all!

## Bet You Didn't Know...

In 1909 when Annette Kellerman wore the first swim suit with trousers that ended 5 cm above her knees and sleeves just covering her shoulders she was arrested for indecent exposure.

The first use for "Coca-cola" was as a medicine. It was not successful until bubbles were put into it by mistake. The "cure-all" became a popular drink as almost 200 million are sold all over the world daily.

Shakespeare was the first person to use the words "dwindle", "hurry" and "lonely".

It has been scientifically calculated that, on the whole, more people die in the first 2 months of the year than at any other time.

Everybody knows Picasso's first name was Pablo, but did you know his full name was, Pablo Diego Jose Francisco de Paula Juan Nepomuceno Maria de los Remedios Cipriano de la Santissima Trinidad Ruiz Picasso.

The first guns took so long to load and fire that it was found that bows and arrows were as much as 12 times more efficient.

## QUIZ CLUB



Here are this week's Quiz Questions. Send in your answers fast. An attractive reward awaits the one who can answer all questions correctly.

- Who was the first woman governor of India?
- Who was the 17 year old who won the Wimbledon championship in the Men's Singles in 1985?
- What is the full name of Mahatma Gandhi?
- What is the fastest fish in the world?
- Which is the largest island in the world?
- Which is the highest statue in the world?
- Which country has the largest electorate?
- Which city is called 'The City of Palaces'?
- Name the year when Russia sent a woman cosmonaut?
- What was Marilyn Monroe's real name?

Answers to Friday 20th's Quiz Club

- Charlotte Bronte
- Reggie Music
- Queen Victoria
- Polish born Arthur Rubinstein
- The heaviest and largest brass musical instrument
- New York
- The Sahara Desert where the sun shines 97 per cent of the time.
- A group of stars
- Endeavour
- Sri Lanka

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:

