

# RISING STARS

Maria walked down the dark quiet street, looking left and right as far as she could without once turning her head for even a fraction of an inch. It wasn't too far from her friend's house to her own so she figured she could walk it home.

"I must be crazy to be doing this," she thought. "So what if the security in this colony is great? Which girl in her right mind would be walking the streets of this town at 11:30 in the night anyway?" She offered herself a smile at her bravado.

But, just as she came to a turn in the narrow street, she thought she felt a sharp jab between her shoulder blades. Maria froze in her tracks, for the first time slowing down from the brisk pace she had been keeping up so long. It was as if she knew this was going to happen, but was still quite unprepared for it. A stench of body odour and cheap cigarettes filled her nostrils.

"Now which girl in her right mind would be walking round here at this part of the night, hmmm?" Hearing her own thoughts in the gruff male voice made Maria want to laugh out loud, but the gravity of the situation prevented her from finding it that funny. Hysteria was form inside her. Suddenly, she wanted to scream but it was not such a good idea, she thought. He'd probably put his filthy, stinking hands over her face and drag her off to some corner to the rest of his gang. Or, he might use chloroform and then do the most unthinkable things.

The fact that she might have actually learned something at the self-defense classes she attended once in a while would have slipped her mind completely if what happened next hadn't happened. With the knife still at her back,

the attacker put his arm around her shoulder which aroused in her what was purely an instinct to "get into position". She grabbed his arm and attempted to throw him over. It worked! The mugger was taken completely by surprise, as he was more prepared for a scream and struggle, and was easily overpowered. One slam to the stony path and the skinny guy was out cold.

So Maria's story for the night ended happily. She was able to defend herself that one



time and made the short walk home untroubled — there were no attacks that night. But does everyone get as lucky as she did? Definitely not. Shady looking young men lurking round the corner have become a common sight in our city all the way from Uttara to Jatrabari. Furthermore, most of the time, they are not just innocent college boys playing truant or in search of something more interesting than a

## Your Money or Your Life!

by Judith G Decosta

class lecture. If you can't help but pass by them catcalls, wolfwhistles and the usual vulgar comments are inevitable. Of course, I might be wrong; may be they will totally ignore you. Don't let that hurt your feminine pride. This goes out to all the girls reading this: you deserve more than a wolf whistle as you walk down the street.

Then again, day and night make all the difference too. Somehow the idea of walking a "dangerous area" after dark doesn't seem sensible, so don't take any unnecessary risks. Just because Maria got away don't think you will.

If by any chance any of them do pass a remark, do not retaliate. If, for instance, some unkind (flattering, in his terms) remark is made about any part of your anatomy to any of you girls, just shut up and walk on by. If you're a fiery person by nature, then there is the wrong time and place to go ablaze. Remember, silence speaks all the ugly things you'd like to say to him too!

Possibly the worst victims of harass and hijacking are the poor, helpless (but not totally innocent) women who deck up like Christmas trees in gold and precious gems. And go about town for some reason, they dress up looking fit for a ball to go shopping in the middle of the day. I could think of one or two reasons why they do, but the suggestions are too feeble to be feasible. Either the favourite pastime of the fairer sex is to try and be the object of the others' envy (who am I to deny it?) or the women just like to flash their gold to show how rich they are, whatever the reason, they make the perfect target for attack. Robbing jewelled women has been a trend for absolute ages, here and elsewhere and nothing is going to change that. One would fancy that after the first terrifying lessons some women would have learnt by now that

it is meaningless and foolhardy to wear long earrings (covering the entire ear and reaching all the way down to one's shoulder) rings on all fingers, long gold chains and go about in rickshaws. It looks vulgar and tacky and probably weighs too much to be comfortable. Look around places like Gaucia, New Market, Mouchak Market or any other popular shopping centre and you will know what I'm talking about. I personally feel particularly unforgiving towards anyone who tries to wear ridiculous amounts of jewellery when it's too hot, nowadays, to even dress properly.

What no one sees, until it's too late is the guy quietly looking around the same shop as his "prey", with only half an eye on the items on display. All of a sudden, out comes a revolver and a hand snakes out to ensnare the unsuspecting ladies. People scream, stand still or run the other way. But, unlike the way it happens in the movies, no daring young man or woman comes forward to the rescue.

Perhaps a family heirloom, a little tarnished with age, will be thrown back because it looks fake and of no value. Perhaps the miscreant maybe too greedy to even spare a wedding ring. Perhaps not. Whatever it be, people will (hear of it, either through the media or the grapevine, many will pledge never to wear even a diamond stud the next time they go out. Nevertheless, it is basically the same story you hear couple of weeks later.

You can excuse the victimising of women as a weakness on our part... OK so most of us are weaklings, too scared to fight for ourselves. But what about hopeful young business men who travel in rickshaws with briefcases in their laps and are stopped and looted at gunpoint, usually by motorcyclists? Guys can be built like Arnold

out. We also find ourselves asking, "Is it less dangerous to stay in?" In the beginning of this article, Maria "faked" going home on foot at night, she would have been safe because of the night guards patrolling the area. But why were they necessary if the colony was a safe place? What would make one so sure that the guards were the solution to all problems of burglars, muggers, rapists, etc. I read recently, in one daily newspaper that the security at Uttara Model Town

tally secure urban neighbourhood when these are located right next to the slums? The slum-dwellers spend every living day watching their grand neighbours leave for work in their big, beautiful houses in the care of the "chowkidars". Wouldn't they like to live like kings too? Isn't it possible that if they befriended the guards, they would get a chance to visit the house? But the "saab" would not like it once he found out so it's best to be secretive and to keep both parties happy.

Why do people rob others and threaten one another's lives? It's not as much out of need as it is out of want, is it? It's only when you see something somebody else has that you realise you cannot live without it. There was a time when people would steal food. That's a necessity. Stealing from helpless ladies and scared businessmen is terrorism. It is more for the fun than out of any serious need. Many well to do kids run around terrorizing innocent folks — how do you explain that? They are neither ignorant nor deprived, homeless or hungry! Just plain bored if you ask me. If I rob a gold necklace, I'll hang on to it for a while admiring it's beauty, proud to have acquired one so easily. But after a while I'll grow tired of it and decide to sell it so I can buy a two-in-one like my friend's. The solution to this dilemma does not lie in anyone's hands, but every kleptomaniac or terrorist can (I hope) search within himself for a more satisfying and less dangerous way to make ends meet. Stealing is no answer to one's problems.

Until they do so, the rest of us can keep our eyes and ears open and wonder who the next victim will be.



Schwarzenegger for all that matters, but a bullet in your head or in the middle of your chest is not worth the risk of fighting back, is it? "Your money or your life?" My money, any day.

Terrorists used to be people in uniform usually belonging to some political rebel groups. Now they can be the people who live on the same street as you do. The question is no longer, "Is it safe to come

is really tight and that it is safe for young women to walk alone in the streets, even in the early hours of the morning. They used to say the same thing about the other urban areas, such as Banani and Baridhara. So how come, if a girl can go for a stroll without any fear, almost every house has one or more dogs to guard the premises in addition to the night watchman? How will it ever be possible to have a to-

## Star Profile

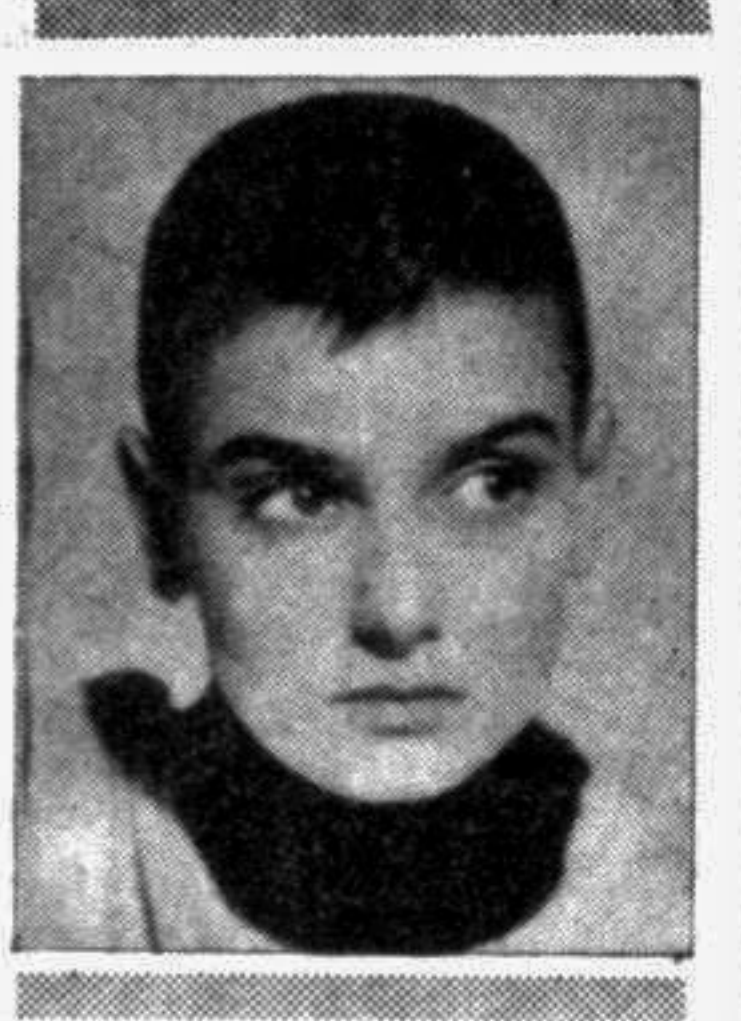
Name: Sinead O' Connor  
DOB: Sometime in December, 1966. She won't tell.

Marital status: Married to John Reynolds, formerly a drummer with Transvision Vamp.

Interesting info: She didn't listen to any music until the age of seventeen.

She shaved her head to set herself apart in a crowd! She wants to be the purest creature in the world. Her first hit in Britain was in 1988 with a song called "Mandinka" which didn't do all that well, especially when compared with her world-wide No.1 single, "Nothing compares to you." When performing on stage, she stands absolutely still. why? I

can't dance. I can't think of any move easy enough for myself to perform on stage.



## Kids For Saving Earth

by Tahira Nilufar (A KSE member)

We are pouring poisonous gases into the air and dumping toxic wastes into the sea. We are cutting down trees and destroying rainforests. For us hundreds of plant and animal species become extinct every year. We are creating holes in the protective ozone shield. The planet is getting warmer.

Fertile lands turning into deserts. Sea level is rising, threatening to engulf lowlands. We are destroying our planet, our future. As if the whole human race has decided to commit suicide. What are we doing?

A Minnesota boy asked the same question, "What are we doing?" His name was Clinton Hill. Clinton loved nature, the trees around and the animals

in neighbourhood. He loved the planet he lived in. Clinton was concerned about the destruction of his home-Earth. "What can kids do?" he asked.

He believed that kids could make a difference. So he got his class of six graders involved. They talked about ways they could protect the environment. Clinton and his friends decided to start a club — Kids For Saving Earth — at their school. They wanted to do some thing for their dying planet. In Clinton's words — "Give it a shot when it's all you've got. When everything seems to be going bad: just give it a shot and you may start to get a lot.

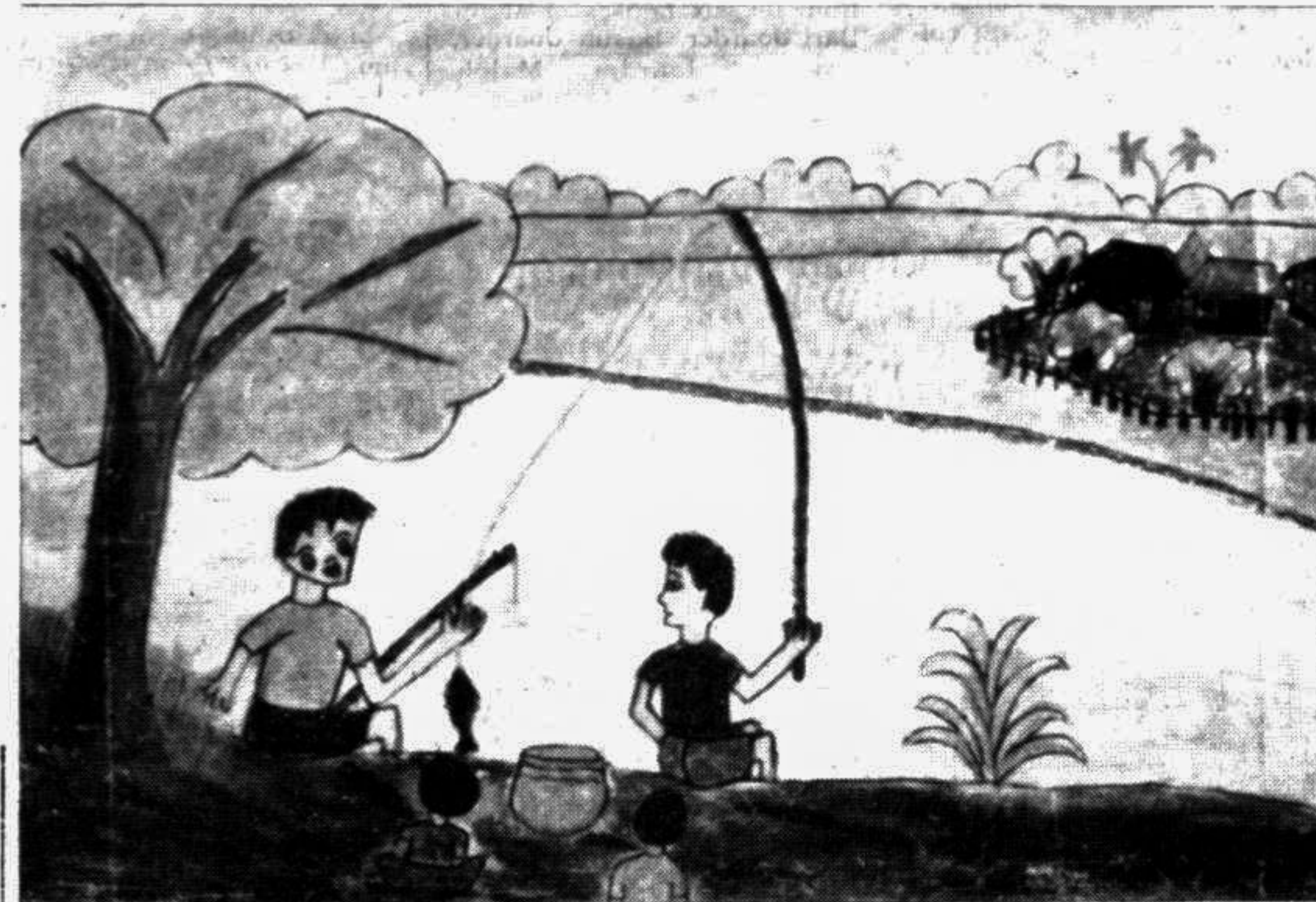
Oh give it a shot when it's all you've got." Clinton and his little friends did little things to save the Earth. They loved and cared for life around, recycled and reused whatever they could.

They told their parents about the destruction of our planet, the poisoning of our environment. They asked in their innocent and peaceful way, "Do some thing for our future." Clinton Hill was not to have any future — he died of cancer just 11 years of age. But his dream lives on.

Clinton's parents and friends spread his message across the globe. Throughout the world kids like Clinton

started their own KSE club and more are joining in. What do these thousands of KSE members do? Little things like collecting, recyclable garbages,

and his friends all over the world are making a difference. Little things they do will make a cleaner Earth. Why don't we too join with those who are



Can we save all this before it disappears?

— Sketch by Mainul

writing letters to save dolphins from tuna hunters, making posters, telling friends about the importance of saving the earth and over making sculptures using garbage! Clinton

trying to save our home? We can do little things too. Together kids of the world can make the earth a better place to live in. Perhaps you would like to

Write to:  
Kids For Saving Earth  
P.O. Box 47247  
Plymouth, MN 55447-0247  
USA.

## A Thing a girl was good at ...

by Prima Chowdhury

SELINA held her slight smile and kept her fingers stiffly pinching the "anchal" of her sari as she scrutinized herself in front of the mirror. Dancing black eyes stared back at her, placed in a small heart shaped face. Her reflection could not show the tingling pleasure running inside her. Her left hand was poised holding a flat plate and a glass balanced on it, both of brass with lots of fresh flowers around the glass. Her posture

was excellent, had her reflection been photographed one would have thought her to be a happy young village Indian

**This is a story written in response to our Picture Quiz competition on May 22nd. Prima Chowdhury is the lucky winner for her excellent story. Congratulations Prima! Please collect your prize from our office.**

bride, greeting her husband, perhaps. No one could have guessed that actually she was Selina Khatun of Kushitia, dressed up as an Indian for her

father's lungi for this purpose. Dressing up and posing had always been an obsession for her; fashions appealed to her ever since she could sew. Being cooped up in the village had not blocked out her creativity in this field, for she made use of every 'Ananda' or 'Bichitra' magazine that came to her house, occasionally. In the village she had once in a while roamed about in her creations, much to her parents' horror who did not hesitate in giving their daughter stern advice against making herself a spectacle. She was amazingly broad minded when it came to displaying herself. One would not expect such a quality from a village girl with simple minded conventional parents.

Her mother, worried about her dark complexion (her smooth skin meant nothing to her). She found her bright eyes disturbing and desperately tried to thicken her daughters silky hair with coconut oil. However, her city cousins upon her arrival in Dhaka, had declared her dangerously attractive. Her height was envied, and her youthful face admired.

Dhaka had always seemed a wonderful place to her, full of surprises in every corner. It had been a month since her arrival in Dhaka here and she was out visiting a friend of her

cousin, Irma. Irma was with her when this friend's father, a professional photographer made Selina an offer she could not refuse: He was delighted with Selina's features, form and size and offered her a very well paid job as a model. Selina fell from the sky. Here was her golden opportunity — the answer to her dreams. In her excitement she completely forgot to consider her parents' reaction to this. However she soon found out. It didn't take her cousin long to blab the grand news to her parents. Her father was so furious he even threatened to strangle her for accepting such a 'third degree job'. No matter how persuasive her cousins were, her father could not be calmed. It would have helped if her aunt had supported her, but she appeared to be as disgusted by the idea as her narrow-minded father. Selina's mother declared that it was high time she was married, which would be the easy way to suppress her talented daughter, once and for all.

So it was that within a month Selina's mother had arranged a 'suitable marriage.' However it was a broken-hearted, unhappy bride sitting on the grand stage on the wedding day. For a door had opened which would have made her dreams come true if it hadn't been slammed shut on her face so unjustly, by her own parents.

It's a shame, so many girls like Selina have their dreams shattered because of the rules of living in society. "Deprive everyone, don't let anyone shine" seems to be the NAME OF THE GAME.

## On the Receiving End

Rather they seemed to be more excited and ferocious and improved their method of treatment.

The poor man even tried to defend himself but he was too weak against so many. Blood began to flow out of his nose and gums. His eyes were bulged which had attained a similar colour to that of the dark complexioned man's. His shirt was torn apart. He had little hair left on his head. And most of the parts of his body were swollen and naked.

The guardians of the streets stood not very far away from the father of the ailing child. They knew from their animal instinct that the crowd had mistaken the man and they could do nothing but give a faint cry to express their sympathy — such a difference between man and animal. When the crowd felt the unresisting and still body of the man, they stopped beating. Some of them jerked their hands as if shaking off dust from their hand. Soon people began to disappear satiated and left behind the injured man quite unfeeling at his sight.

The injured man lay crooked on the concrete floor of the street, the moon — a bright crescent — on the cloudless sky shone on his face which looked surprisingly compassionate. It looked very innocent yet charming. The guardians of the street came close to him and sniffed whether there was any life left in him and only they knew the answer.

The man oblivious to his situation and surrounding now dreamt of his ailing daughter. He dreamt that his daughter was poised on the crescent of the sky and giggling like a mischievous child and waving at him invitingly.

by Md Atique Ullah

## QUIZ CLUB

Here are this week's Quiz Club questions:

- Who invented the atom bomb and when?
- Who discovered the Suez Canal?
- Who wrote Les Miserables?
- Who said 'A thing of beauty is a joy forever'?
- Who wrote Uncle Tom's Cabin?
- Who was Al Beruni?
- Who was Lord Curzon?
- Who assassinated President Abraham Lincoln?
- Who was the famous philosopher who was sentenced to death for 'corrupting the youth of the country'?
- What is a constellation?

Answers to June 5th's Quiz Club are:

- 1886 by John Pemberton. It was originally used as a medicine for headaches and hangovers.
- Jerome K. Jerome.
- 1945.
- Yuri Gagarin in 1961.
- The Philadelphia Zoo in Pennsylvania which was built in 1872.
- Ellora (Maharashtra).
- Rabindranath Tagore.
- Emperor Shih Hawang.
- Famous cricket play ground.
- 400 metres.

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.

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