

# RISING STARS

## A witch called Abigail II Stars

by Tazeen Mahtab

OUTSIDE, standing on the brawbridge Kate Megli-ly nervously bit her nails. She was a slim, red-haired girl of eleven, rather saucy-looking, and the daughter of one of the villagers. Now, as Kate waited for some response, she regretted her coming. In the village, there were rumours about the castle being haunted, and Kate, foolishly accepting a dare, had come to find out how much truth there was in these rumours.

Drawing up her courage, she again yanked at the bell rope. Meanwhile, Abigail was still rooted to the spot, when the bell rang out again. She snapped out of her trance, but had walked no more than a few steps when she heard the bang of a door. Kate had decided to wait no longer, and was walking towards the dining-hall. No sooner had she walked in, when she saw the witch. Her mouth fell open in surprise.

Abigail, in her turn, gasped in amazement. "A girl!" she shrieked, then she began muttering quickly. "Must find a spell to catch her before she escapes! What shall I do? What shall I do? A frog — that's it! A frog!" She began chanting and at the same time damning about wildly. Cathy, any of her previous fear completely forgotten in bewilderment, watched Abigail tromping about waving her arms.

"Enkelee-Zambecree — Rokol!  
A spell to make her croak!  
Squiggly — no, squaggy  
Oh, what was it?  
Umm... squaggy — squishy!"

Before she could finish, Abigail stepped on her long gown and fell flat on her face on the floor. Kate burst into peals of laughter. Abigail got up crossly. "You impertinent child, didn't your mother ever teach you any manners?"

"I'm — I'm sorry," choked Kate, her shoulders shaking with laughter. "I didn't mean

to... here she broke off and collapsed into giggles. "Well," said Abigail huffily, "what are you waiting for, get out of here quickly before I — mumm... before I turn you into a frog."

"Another peal of laughter. 'Well, as a matter-of-fact, I am!' answered Abigail with great dignity. 'This had no effect on Kate. Tell me another one!' she said scornfully. You don't really expect me to believe that I and I expect you also want me to believe that crazy Red Indian dance was part of a spell to turn me into a toad. Oh really!"

"Muh!" said the witch, her pride hurt. "I'll prove it to you that I'm a witch, and that I can do magic. Follow me! And she tromped off up the stairs with Kate and Midnight following behind."

She led the way into a large room which had the look of a laboratory. Shelves and shelves of bottles holding various coloured liquids lined the walls, and there was a peculiar smell about.

Abigail walked upto a table on which lay a fat dusty book. She opened it to a page and then picked up a stick from the ground. "Watch this!" she commanded. The witch then proceeded to mutter a string of queen words. The stick gave little quiver and suddenly sprang up into a venues fly-trap. The witch looked smug at Kate's open-mouthed admiration. "So I guess you believe me now!" she said.

Kate gave a nod, then looking about, remarked, "I say, what a shabby-looking place this is! You should get it remodelled."

"You rude girl!" Abigail exclaimed. "I must add at this point, though you must already have noticed, that Kate sometimes, though she didn't mean to, tended to forget her manners." "How dare you comment about my living-quarters! After all," she added with a sniff, "witches are supposed to live like that!" "Sorry, well, I'll come and see you tomorrow. You can show me around then." And Kate skipped off, leaving the witch staring after her in disbelief.

"What an extraordinary girl! She isn't afraid of me!" They looked about her at the cobwebby walls of the room. Abigail couldn't help remarking, "She does have a point, though. This place needs a bit of a cleaning up. Not that I mind," she added hastily. You see, Abigail didn't like admitting, even to herself, that the whole place was in a horrible condition, and that being a witch who lived in an old castle was no excuse for slovenliness.



"I turn me into a frog! That's a good one! And I suppose the next minute you'll be telling me you're a witch! You're certainly dressed like

## "New, 'Dinotopia' ?"

by Mushfiqur Rahman

by Naina Ahmad  
"TWINKLE twinkle little star  
How I wonder what you are!

Up above the world so high  
Like a diamond in the sky!  
Yes, stars do look like diamonds. Why? What are they made of? These questions have baffled scientists for a long time.

Stars are made up hydrogen — the simplest element in nature. In space, gravity pulls the hydrogen gas together into a mass. As the mass increases, gravity increases. The hydrogen atoms are pushed together in the centre and finally, due to excess pressure, the atoms combine to form 'helium'. During this time, large amount of energy (also light & heat) is released. This is called thermonuclear energy.

When this energy is released, light is also released. That is why stars shine so brightly. Our sun is also a star, a huge one. It may sound strange to say that our sun is only medium sized; there are much larger ones in space.

The history of stars take billions of years to change. Lucky to have such a long life, eh?

DINOSAURS or the 'terrible lizards' reigned the earth some 225 million years ago from the start of the Triassic age till the end of the Cretaceous age, in the Mesozoic era. Conventional theory is that the dinosaurs were extinct due to scarcity of food.

But this traditional theory had been challenged by Dr Robert T Bakker, a paleontologist at the University of Colorado museum in Boulder. In his contradictory book 'The Dinosaur Heresies', he claimed that the dinosaurs are not ex-

known bird.  
"Alternating images flashed before his mind's eye as he scrutinized the Dutch specimen," Bakker relates. "He recognized the bony hands, with three long, clawed fingers, as a miniature version of Deinonychus."

The small birds hand and the dinosaur hand were virtually identical. There was an important message on the Dutch slab, and Ostrom read it correctly. Birds were the direct descendants of dinosaurs!  
"And that," Dr Bakker,

When the Canada geese honk their way northward, we can say: "The dinosaurs are migrating. It must be spring!"  
Dr Bakker contradicts another conventional wisdom that the big two-ton-plus species were always slow shufflers. "Some were, he concedes, but others were proportioned like three-ton white rhinos, which gallop with all four huge feet off the ground in midstride!"

A clue Dr Bakker uses to estimate speeds is a bony ridge on the shin-bone, which anchors the knee tendons. "One can

### Monster of the ice

Reconstruction of the first dinosaur found in Antarctica. The fragments found are marked in black.

Fossils discovered here

The Antarctic ankylosaur

tinct. They live on — as the winged creatures we know as birds!

The connection between birds and dinosaurs especially fascinated Bakker. He describes how, in 1970, John Ostrom made a startling discovery in a set of fossilized fingers in a Dutch museum. The long, bony digits, embedded in a limestone slab, had been misidentified. Ostrom realized they belonged to the most sought-after of all fossils, an "Archaeopteryx", or "ancient wing", the earliest

"implies dinosaurs are not extinct. One great, advanced clan of them still survives. The more than 8000 species of modern birds are an eloquent testimony to the success of the dinosaurs' heritage."

Dr Bakker believes that the traditional grouping that places birds in a class of their own and dinosaurs together with reptiles is "neither fair nor accurate", and he ends his provocative book on that note:

"Let us squarely face the dinosaurism of birds and the birdness of the dinosauria.

gauge the muscle power of a knee from the size of a cnemial crest," he claims. "The biggest meat — eater, three-ton-plus Tyrannosaurus, had an absolutely huge cnemial crest, even by dinosaurian standards. A bull tyrannosaur could easily have overhauled a galloping white rhino — at speed greater than 40 mph!"

Reference Guide: 'The Dinosaur Heresies' by Robert T. Bakker, 'The Science Library' edited by Paul E. Blackwood, 'The Reader's Digest'.  
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## "Snowflakes"

by Tanzeem

Snowflakes.  
Oh beautiful snowflakes,  
Slowly — Oh, ever so slowly,  
Only to be here today —  
And gone tomorrow.

## My Pat

by Naomi Ahmad

I have a little cat  
Whose name is Pat  
He is terribly fat,  
He sleeps on a mat  
My darling little Pat  
Who is a naughty little cat  
Sat on his mat  
Waiting for a rat

## Little Rabbit Joe

by Naina Ahmad

Little Rabbit Joe  
Said, "I want to grow!"  
But he stayed small,  
And round like a ball!(!?)

## The long, long wait

by Gazala Yasmin Hoque

CABBY Martin Holloway settled himself as comfortably as he could in the driver's seat of his cab. He had driven Lord Dragg's, a noted yachtsman of his day, to the West Pier in Brighton on the afternoon of September 20th, 1887. His fare had asked him to wait whilst he took his new yacht for a trial run. "I expect to be back later this afternoon, so you can drive me home when I return," he said.

The cabby waited all afternoon but there was no sign of his Lordship. He went home and returned bright and early the next morning to resume the wait for the return of Lord Dragg's.

Days stretched into weeks, weeks into months and still Martin Holloway waited, turning down people who wanted to hire him.

Finally, on 12th May, 1889, after a wait of 599 days, the patient cabby spotted his fare disembarking from his yacht. Lord Dragg explained that he had had every intention of returning the same afternoon, but once aboard he had decided to take an around the world trip.

Holloway pulled forth a sheet of paper with all his waiting time and meticulously entered on it as required by police regulations. It came to a staggering £989 15s 6d. The only sign of surprise shown by his Lordship was a slight raising of the eyebrows, but he settled the bill, got into the cab and said, "Home, Martin!"

# To kill or not to kill that is the question

by A. M. M. Adeeb

FINE. But what's the answer?  
The dawn of 1993 saw the fighting and killing in Bosnia and Somalia continue everlasting. Its all okay to watch people getting killed in "Raven", "The Fall Guy", and many more action movies but when it comes to real-life we begin to have second thoughts.

The majority of victims in these are mostly innocent people and children getting killed. Whenever I see the scattered bodies of women and children in the news lying in a pool of blood it makes my stomach churn. This huge cold-blooded massacre (or is it massacre? It's so scary I can't get the spelling right) should be put to an end immediately. It is a horrifying feeling to see teenagers of our own age slaughtered mercilessly and not be able to do anything about it.

Let's take Somalia for instance. There the fighting is between two or more powerful groups who wipe out anything that comes their way and most

frequently it's innocent people. For a nation like Somalia who don't have food for half the population, it is very unreasonable to go into war. The outcome can be disastrous. After the war is finished or after one of the groups are defeated the victors can take over Somalia and maybe then peace can be restored. But why all this killing? Can't it be settled without thousands of people being killed? There could be a few solutions without so many people getting killed.

The United Nations could take over Somalia for a period of time until the warring factions can settle something between themselves, or the UN can disarm the warlords and hold an election to elect a new leader. (great advice isn't it?)

Now let's come to Bosnia. Here it looks like World War III has broken out. I think it's a bit "China Beach" style. Nearly all the superpowers are here — the US, the UN and the Serbs (if they can be considered a superpower) armed to their teeth.

The atrocities committed in Bosnia are getting out of hand. The Serbs and Croats are getting more ruthless every day and are stopping at nothing to capture the areas in their list. On the other hand the Bosnian civilians are like sitting ducks in a shooting gallery, unarmed and targets of something they didn't commit. How long can the Bosnian troops hold these elite Serb troops at bay?

Along with Owen and Vance, I also have a few suggestions. Both sides — can give their arms to the UN and settle all their disputes with their mouths (i.e. verbally). Or Bosnia-Herzegovina can be divided in two parts and the Serbs can have one part. But it looks like the Serbs want to be dominating and in a situation like this were both sides won't give in this not possible.

I hope the fighting in Somalia and Bosnia-Herzegovina end soon. Last week I had to skip lunch after watching the BBC. Maybe they should appoint someone like us to make the negotiations!

## "Please can I go to school?"

by Raffat Bint-e-Rashid

SOCIAL deprivation for a girl child in South Asia is a stark reality. This passing decade, declared as the decade of the girl child, calls for urgently promoting the status of girls. In the SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) countries female children are subjected to deprivation from the moment they are born, initially of the parents' blessing: a girl — she'll have to go. She is always regarded as someone else's. In terms of education, nutrition, health and social status her's is the last name on the list. To bring about a change in her situation, a radical and creative mass communication initiative is necessary to reach every level and sector of society.

For this purpose a team of South Asia Network of Unicef communication and women's development officers, media specialists, artists and animators from all these countries have worked together to evolve a regional design, Meena, the girl child in South Asia, an animated film project.

The idea was first conceived in March 1990 at a Unicef workshop on animated film for development, and in collaboration with Hanna-Barbera productions the film was launched in 1991.

This series was proposed for the South Asian region to highlight the situation of girl children and to educate on the need for promoting her status, survival, development and protection.

This project represents an exciting joint initiative by the South Asian region. The countries taking a leading role in the project are Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan, where the plight of the girl child is most acute. The Meena project represents an impressive example of regional cooperation. Meena is considered an appropriate name for a regional heroine. The film is fully animated with music, sound effects, and a dialogue track in Bangla, Hindi, Nepali, Urdu and English. A delightful, funny, playful young girl, Meena is not just a cartoon character. The entertaining stories about Meena are full of awareness and advocate for the reduction of existing disparities in the status and treatment of boys and girls; to produce a dynamic role model for

adventure and comedy, but at their heart lie the real life problems faced by female children and this offer insights into how these can be overcome.

The main objective of this interesting project is to create

girls through which they can acquire self esteem and learn essential life skills, and to communicate information regarding the survival and development of the girl child, including specific messages on her health, nutrition and edu-

mated cartoon character is always able to create impressions and influence viewers of all ages. It can be a strong spokesman for social causes. Films are known as grassroots educational tool, the vitality, determination of Meena, with her infectious zest for life and aspiration for her future, she represents the dynamic dream of the girl child in South Asia.

In popularising this animated heroine, we are able to appeal to the people across South Asia to look at girl children with positive attitudes, change their views and promote their social standards. Meena aims at inspiring girls to take action to help themselves and others, now and as future mothers, in these countries with gender discrimination.

In a seminar organized on 27th May '93 the project's future was discussed and a plan to undertake a nationwide popularization and dissemination of the Meena concept was discussed. Six other Meena animated film series will be produced in collaboration with commercial animation studio in Bombay. Say no to Dowry. Stand up for Yourself. The Money Lender. Like Birds in a Cage. Dividing the Mango. Raju the Tiger, are the outlines of the six possible episodes.

Besides, to support the Meena package a wide range of educational and promotional materials are now marketed. Literacy materials, pencil boxes, video and audio cassettes, posters, badges, stickers, rickshaw printings, Meena dolls and games are among them. Initially, comic books, posters are available at various NGO sales outlets. Moreover, the Asia Service of the BBC World Service has approached the Unicef, Dhaka with a proposal to co-produce a Meena soap opera, to be broadcast on the Bengali Service for Bangladesh and West Bengal in India.

Send your daughter to school along with your son, give her the same chances and help her achieve her aspired goals like your son. This should be the realization of every South Asian parents — rural or urban.



**The Girl Child in South Asia**

Humour and fantasy are animation's most powerful means to attract general viewers and the fact remains that an anti-