



RISING STARS

Crazy Dashu

by Sukumar Ray

Translated by Rabeth Khan

It was the last day in school. After school, there will be a meeting at the students' club where all the boys will act together. Dashu also had a desire to take part in our play. He tried to convince us through others, to take him in, but we all together said that was absolutely impossible.

Last time, Dashu took part in the play as a commander; it was a total blunder. When the spy of Trichur challenged the commander to a duel saying, "If you have courage, then open your sword!" Dashu was supposed to open his sword and say, "Then come face to face." But Dashu failed to open his sword due to lack of experience and forgot his dialogues. When the spy again roared, "Open your sword", Dashu screamed back, "Can't you see, the button holding the sword pocket is jammed!" Luckily I hopped in the stage and helped him open his sword or else it would have been the end of the drama.

Near the end of the play, when the king asked, "Tell me, Commander, what do you want as a reward?" Dashu was supposed to say, "Long live the King!" But Dashu blew something else and quickly bit his tongue saying, "Oh no!" He began laughing saying, "I forgot." He quickly controlled himself and began the correct dialogue.

So this time, on hearing his name we unanimously said, "No, he can't take part." Bishu said, "Will Dashu act?" Tapa said, "Our school gardener will do better!" Dashu initially requested, then became angry and sat down with a round, dejected face.

Dashu used to sit down at the corner of the hall, and watch us perform. A few days before the school holidays began, Dashu developed a deep friendship with Gansha of Class four. Gansha was young but could recite poems very well and so he was given the role of Debdu — or angel — in the play. Dashu used to bring him food, coloured pencil, books everyday and promised to buy him a football too. We couldn't understand why Gansha and Dashu suddenly were great friends. We could only see, Gansha was becoming a great fan of Dashu.

When we were getting ready for the play it was only then we understood the whole matter. No sooner the clock struck two-thirty, Dashu entered the costume room and started to change. We asked him, "What are you doing here?" He replied, "Won't I change my

clothes?" I said, "Why will you change clothes? You are not taking part in the play?" He said, "You don't know the news, who will impersonate the angel?" Something struck my mind on hearing the news. I said, "Why, what happened to Gansha?" Dashu answered, "You can ask Gansha what happened." Then I noticed that everybody came except Gansha, Rampada, Bishu and myself hurried off in search of Gansha.

After searching the whole school, we found the unfortunate in the tiffin-room. He was trying to flee on seeing us, but

was decided that Dashu would act Debdu; there was no point talking to him. Dashu became very happy and authoritatively said, "If any one of you disturb again, then like the last time I will foil everything."

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Suddenly facing the disruption, the minister lost his line of speech. We were also stunned. And the act nearly came to a halt. Seeing this, Dashu commanded the minister, "Proceed, what you were saying!" The minister sweated, becoming more nervous. Rakhal was acting as the imperial guard. He came forward to stop Dashu. Dashu screamed, "Thou art imbecile, thou tried to stop me from this play; and hit the turban off Rakhal's head. On dropping the turban he began 'delivering the last speech of the king' — "In this kingdom, there will be no hatred, no anarchy; neither will there be poverty nor pain." We stood there dumbfounded. The bell rang and the screen dropped.

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