

Chandamama wishes its readers a Merry Christmas and A Happy New Year



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What Can I Become?



M.A.F.



Pied Piper of Berlin!

“Did the rats flee? Or did they fall dead?” “They began to dance upon their hind legs,” Uncle Alok spoke dejectedly.

“Wow! Guess what?” Mala said excitedly to her younger brother Rohit, “We are enacting ‘The Pied Piper of Hamelin’ for our School Annual Concert next month.”

“Not bad!” laughed out Rohit, “hey didi... you’ll look fantastic dressed as a fat rat!”

“Hey, that was awfully mean,” Mala protested glumly. “Look at yourself in the mirror,” said Rohit teasingly, “You’ll make Mickey Mouse or Jerry blush with your looks.”

Mala smacked Rohit.

“Stop teasing me for my mousy looks!” said Mala tearfully, “After all, it is mum and dad to blame for my rodent-like frontal teeth.”

Mum ambled into the room, picking up sparks of rat heat flying around from the tongues of her two cherubic dragons.

“What’s all this Rat Talk about?” mum asked laughingly.

Even before Mala could explain, mum added:

“Guess who’s coming to dinner?”

“My brother Alok from Berlin,” she wrapped up, “What a coincidence! He’s a famous rodent expert!”

Mala and Rohit split into bouts of laughter. That evening, Uncle Alok arrived with a huge piece of luggage and a number of baskets draped with pink-laced nets. He placed them neatly in his allotted private bedroom.

“Hi Mala! Hi Rohit!” he squeaked like a mouse. Even his shoes creaked and squeaked. When dinner was served, he nibbled the chappatis with his two front teeth like a rodent. “I had got too close to a rat,” he sighed to mum, “The horrible rat clipped off two of my frontals.”

“That was really rude of the rat!” mum added, “What did he do with your teeth?” He simply swallowed my teeth like two energy tablets, grinning at me. “Was that your closest encounter with a rodent?” asked Mala, aghast.

“No, no, worst than that,” he gobbled up the omelette like a man breaking his hunger strike after weeks. “On another occasion, I had live wild rats tickling my nostrils with their long whiskers at the heart of Amazon Forest.”

“Oh, how terrible!” chipped in Rohit.

“And Uncle what did you do?” asked Mala, “Did you sneeze loudly?” “No!” He looked upset, “I sprayed anti-rodent repellent upon them.” “Wow! That was clever!” said mum, “Did the rats flee? Or did they fall dead?” “They began to dance upon their hind legs,” Uncle Alok spoke dejectedly. “Oh, how did you finally get rid of them?” Rohit asked. “Ha! Ha! Just look!” he slipped out a strange musical instrument which he unfolded.

“It’s called the Rat-A-Tat-Tat Flute!”

Mala examined the flute carefully like Sherlock Holmes.

“Made in Germany in 2012!” she giggled,



*Dejectedly – affected or marked by low spirits

"Call that technology in advance?"

"Now listen carefully," Uncle Alok hissed, "When I blow at this flute, the rats begin to think high and mighty of themselves."

Mum had tuned her ears in awe.

"See, something like this."

Alok blew into the electronic flute. Suddenly to everyone's shock and astonishment, a train of rats began to march into the room. They walked on their hind legs, their nostrils held high up in the air, and they wagged their long tails excitedly.

Uncle Alok was up on his toes.

"Hail Hitler!" he barked.

The rats clicked their teeth, gnashed them and halted in an orderly line.

"Good Lord!" cried out dad who had returned from office, "What's happening?"

"They are my rodent regiment number 420!" said Uncle Alok. "They are the re-incarnations of the famed notorious Generals of Hitler's cruel regime."

"That reminds me of Pied Piper of Hamelin!" said dad light-heartedly.

"Yes, in fact," exclaimed Mala, "Uncle Alok...please stay back till next Sunday. I've got my Annual Concert on. And I'm playing an active part in it."

"Great!" smiled Uncle Alok, Dad's eyes bounced upon the rat regiment.

"Good Heavens!" dad wiped perspiration off his forehead. "By the way, where did all these rats come from?"

"I brought them," said Uncle Alok, "in my baskets, packed with yummy cheddar cheese and other great goodies!"

"That's atrocious!" howled dad. "What if one of the rodents nibble at my toes and infests me with rabies?"

"I fear it's the other way round," said mum sternly. "I fear the rats will contact rabies with your verbal bites!"

Uncle Alok decided to stay back on Concert Sunday. "I'll catch up later at the concert," Uncle Alok assured Mala and Rohit.

All the seats were filled up for the Saint

Helen School Annual Concert. The hall was jam-packed. The play: The Pied Piper of Hamelin was announced.

Mala's teacher, Mrs Tripathy, the Director of the play was a very unpopular lady. She was rude, a strict disciplinarian who used the slender cane upon the girls liberally.

(Irony: she was terribly scared of rats!)

In the excitement, everyone forgot that Gina Sarin, the Head girl of the school hadn't turned up. She was going to play the crucial role of the Pied Piper.

Suddenly, Mala spotted Uncle Alok in the audience. She dashed off the stage and whispered into his ears, begging of him to save grace. Uncle Alok, standing six feet four inches tall stepped into the stage. Mrs Tripathy took one look at this huge man.

She began to tremble and her legs wobbled like guava jelly! Uncle Alok twitched his furry moustache. He fished out his electronic HITLER flute and grinned. Then he blew hard.

Suddenly, the stage was rocked with the sound of hundreds of rats marching upon their hind legs...and worse, they headed straight for Mrs. Tripathy!

A few ran up her legs, taking refuge inside her skirt. Her shrieks must have measured 9.0 on the Richter scale! Chased by the rats, Mrs. Tripathy leapt off the stage, did a somersault and zoomed out of the hall!

Rattled by huge, real rats, Mrs. Tripathy was struck by Rat Fever! When she finally came back, she had turned meek as a lamb. Every kid thanked Uncle Alok - the Pied Piper of Berlin! ♦

- DEBASHISH MAJUMDAR

"Good Heavens!" dad wiped perspiration off his forehead. "By the way, where did all these rats come from?"



*Hissed - show displeasure, as after a performance or speech