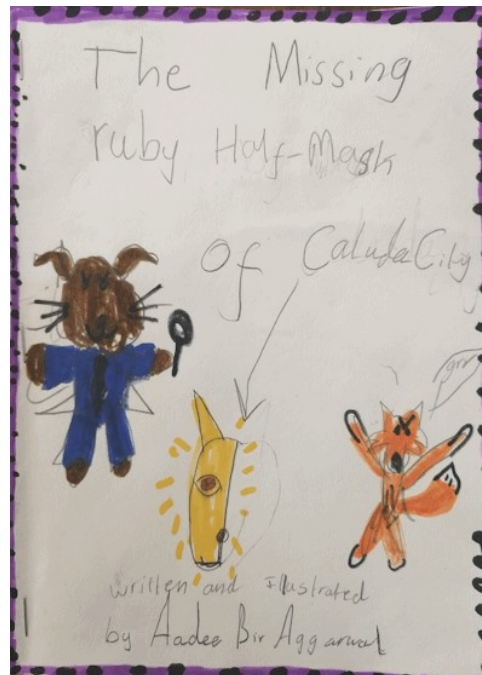


The Missing Ruby Half-Mask of Caluda City

by Aadee Bir Aggarwal



Caluda City is a big, bustling city, the air is filled with the sound of cars honking and engines roaring. One must be alert when walking about as it is very crowded with people and cars as busy as bees. Big buildings tower over you and the polluted air strangles your lungs. The residents of the city are different kinds of animals from all over the world.

High above, in a building was detective Aida's office. She had just received news that the ruby half-mask from the City Museum had been stolen.

After weeks of tracking the mask, detective Aida had found out that the criminal mastermind, Dr Foxington, was behind this. She also learnt he was now looking for the emerald half.

If the two halves were reunited, whoever holding it would have the power to control the animals of Cauda City! He would order everyone to leave the area, so he didn't have to share it with anybody except any chickens and geese. His plan was to imprison them to eat until the end of time.

Detective Aida was a dog, she had fluffy brown fur and wore an indigo suit along with a white tie. Her suit felt soft and velvety while her fur matched her deep, dark brown eyes.

She was very clever and was a master at solving crimes. As the top detective in Caluda City, the police chose her for most cases.

While investigating the crime scene she found a trail of paw prints leading to the nearby Catuma forest.

Strolling deep into Catuma, she saw a purple butterfly with blue spirals on a trunk in front of her. Bounding towards the butterfly like an excited bear, she realised that it was actually a button!

The leaves parted quickly and quietly as she pressed it.

“Wow!” she exclaimed in awe. Her heart was pounding with excitement. Slowly walking in, she was greeted by the sight of a wide shelter made out of leaves and twigs.

“What is this place?” she mumbled to herself. “Could it be the lair of Dr Foxington?” she barked eagerly answering her own question.

Suddenly, she realised that her bark had been too loud. Standing tensely upright and ready to pounce she waited, but nothing happened.

With a flabbergasted look on her face, she walked in. The lair was dim and gloomy but she could see in the dark. It was full of potions, inventions and machines, you could hardly walk without bumping into one.

Scanning the room with her night vision she noticed two things:

1. A map on the wall opposite her
2. The ruby mask in a beam!

The map was a treasure chart leading deep into a network of underground tunnels. It showed the way to the emerald half! She then carefully folded the map into her jacket pocket.

Looking at the mask she pounced like a lynx and grabbed the ruby half-mask out of the beam. This set off a booby trap and the wall started collapsing.

At the speed of lightening she leaped out just in time!

Finding herself outside as the lair fell to the ground she gulped. “Dr Foxington isn't going to be happy when he comes.” With that she took off, back to Caluda City.

The next day she gave the police the mask and a copy of the map, keeping one for herself. The police displayed the mask under bullet proof glass in the City Museum.

That night, a letter was delivered to Aida's home. It was from Dr Foxington and it read:

“You may have the map, but I have memorised it and I am going to find the emerald half. Mwa-ha-ha-ha-ha!”

Detective Aida was scared but determined, so she began planning her next adventure.

Will she find the emerald half-mask before Dr Foxington?