

Grimsley

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The number one problem, Grimsley, sat at his desk, noisily shuffling papers. He looked up and his beady, little eyes behind the wire-framed glasses bore into Joe and made him sweat. Grimsley shifted his pudginess in the creaky chair and set his glasses on the desk. Then he stared. Everyone knew that if anything could give the devil frostbite, it was Grimsley's stare.

Joe shivered and mentally slapped himself for doing so.

"I assume you are here to converse about your grade, Mr. Beckley." The thick English accent was veiled with the odor of pastrami. Joe nodded.

"I also assume that you feel you deserve a higher mark than you received."

Darn sure, Joe thought. He nodded again.

"May I see your report card, please?"

Joe hesitated, then withdrew the crumpled paper from his pocket. He

hurriedly straightened it and handed it to the waiting hand.

"And just what do you feel is wrong with this grade, Mr. Beckley?"

Joe summoned up all of his courage. "My percentage was in the C range, and I'm attentive in class."

"Quite so. Well, that sounds like a worthwhile explanation."

Joe's eyes almost popped out as Mr. Grimsley reached into his desk for a new copy of Joe's report card, which he handed to Joe. It was identical to the original report card, except it read:

Advanced chemistry — C.

Silently, Joe stared at it, then picked it up and carefully placed it in his pocket. He turned and walked toward the door. "Mr. Grimsley, why was it so easy?"

"I wanted to know if you cared enough to complain if you were graded unfairly. It seems that so many don't."

Joe turned to face Mr. Grimsley and smiled. "Oh, and, Mr. Grimsley, thanks."

"No problem."

Joe walked out the door, shut it and smiled. He stood for awhile, but his smile disappeared as he remembered Mike. He tore off down the hall to get Mike's spirits, and maybe his grade, up.

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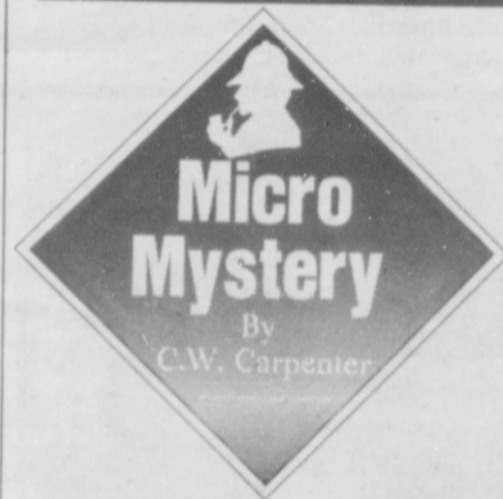
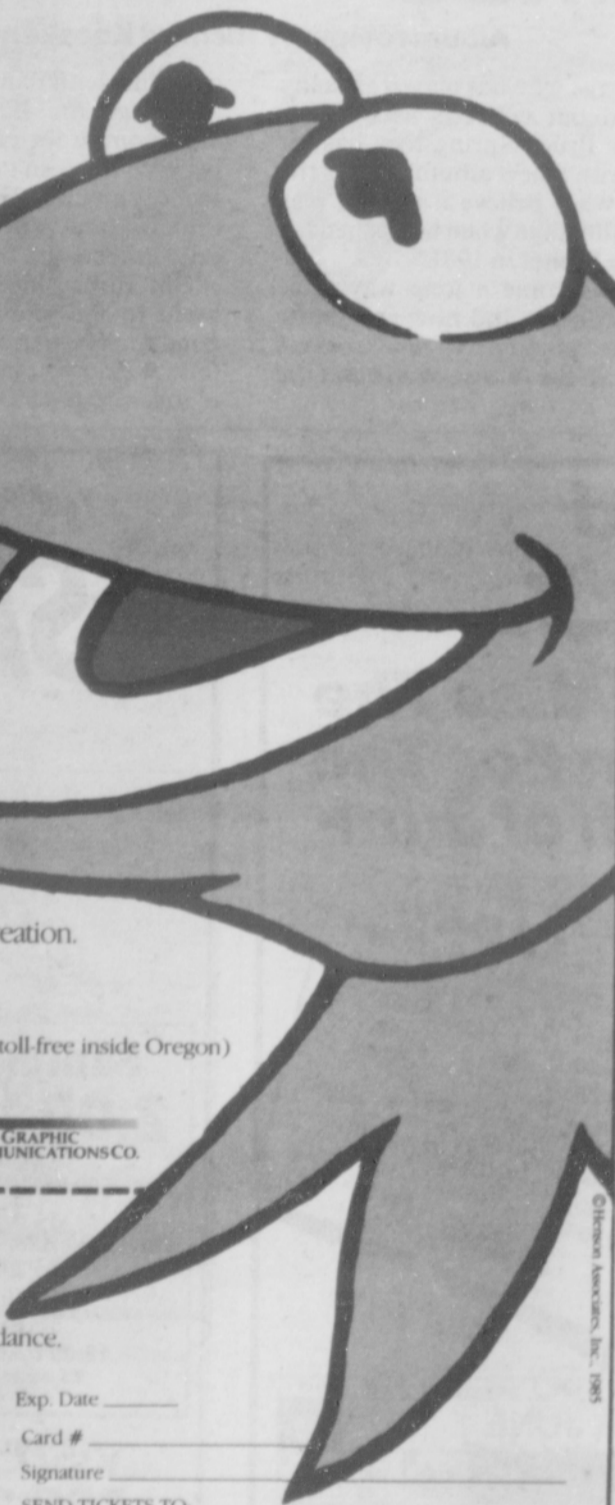
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The neighborhood clean-up party was going well. It was fun for the adults and the kids to work together, but it was hard work — especially hauling gravel to repair the sides of the road.

"Whew!" exclaimed Ricky as he dumped a wheelbarrow full of gravel. "That stuff is heavy. There must be a million rocks in there."

"As a matter of fact," said Randy, "there's a little over a hundred thousand — not a million."

"What makes you think you know so much. You couldn't possibly know how many rocks there are in a wheelbarrow load of gravel," challenged Ricky.

"As a matter of fact," repeated Randy, "I do know. Yesterday when I was waiting for the rest of the group to show up, I counted a load. It took almost two hours, and there were just over a hundred thousand. I know what I'm talking about," he added smugly.

John Young spoke up at that point. "I think you're bluffing. You couldn't have counted those rocks yesterday."

What made John skeptical?



After hearing the boys arguing, John looked at his watch and counted as fast as he could for one minute. He got up to 300. Since there are 120 minutes in two hours, the most rocks Randy could possibly have counted in that length of time was 36,000 — far short of the 100,000 he claimed.