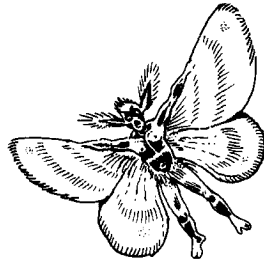


Mysteries

1.

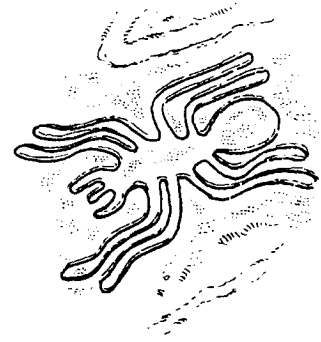
On a quiet, moonlit evening in November 1966, four friends were out driving in the West Virginia countryside near an old, abandoned power plant.



They suddenly encountered an incredibly frightening creature: six-feet tall, with spread-out wings, and glowing red eyes. It was running and trying to balance itself with its wings. Then it disappeared around a corner of the building. As the friends drove toward home, the creature reappeared. Suddenly, instead of flapping its wings, it shot up like a rocket and continued to follow their car.... ■

2.

In the Nazca desert of southern Peru there is an amazing display of art laid out on the desert floor. Outlines of animals have been "drawn" by removing the dark stone layer which



covers the desert to reveal the light-colored sand underneath. There's a bird which measures 390 feet across, a spider of 180 feet, a monkey, a whale, and other birds, fishes, and strange plants. The pictures were not discovered until 1941, but they are thought to date from about A.D. 900. The strange thing is that these pictures can only be seen from the air. ■

3.

The winter of 1884 was an exceptionally cold one in southern England. One morning, people got up to find that the rivers had frozen over and a blanket of snow lay everywhere.



Then they noticed a mysterious line of footprints running up to their doors, through their gardens, over rooftops, crossing fields, and covering an area of about 100 miles. The prints looked like donkey's hooves, but they were in a single line as if the animal had been walking on two legs. ■

4.

On an island off the north of Scotland, a lighthouse was built in 1895. A year later, just before Christmas, Joseph Moore and his crew were due to take supplies by ship to the three men living in the lighthouse. Because of bad weather



conditions, their departure was delayed until the 26th of December. As they approached the island, they expected to see a sign that the men in the lighthouse had seen the ship. There was no response. The ship's horn was sounded, but nobody appeared from the lighthouse. Joseph and three others decided to go and investigate. In the lighthouse, the beds had been made, and the dishes from the last meal had been washed. All the clocks had stopped. But there were no men. The crew searched the island and found nothing except for some damage caused by storms earlier that month. The last entry in the log book, on December 15, reads, "Storm ended, sea calm. God is with us." ■

5.

On June 30, 1908, a farmer in Siberia was resting in his field. Suddenly, there was a great flash and explosion. There was so much heat, he said, it nearly burned the shirt off his back. A "huge ball of fire" covered an enormous part of the sky and afterward "it became very dark." ■



Possible Explanations

a.

Some people suggest that this could have been a nuclear explosion caused by a spaceship from another planet.

b.

One of the crew who helped to search the island thought that the men might have wanted to disappear. They could have been picked up by a passing ship and taken to Australia to start a new life.

c.

About that time, a hunter in Pennsylvania reported he had seen a seven-foot bird that looked like an ostrich. Could "Mothman" have been a migratory bird?

d.

"Antimatter" may have fallen to Earth from space, according to some astronomers.

e.

Many people were convinced that they had been visited by the devil.

f.

According to Dr. Robert Smith, "Mothman" could have been a sandhill crane, which is almost as tall as a human being. This crane has large, bright red rings around its eyes.

g.

It is believed by some people that the Indians must have been able to see their creations from the sky.

h.

One person even suggested that it could have been a kangaroo which might have escaped from a nearby zoo!

i.

It is believed by most historians that the pictures were created for religious purposes. In other words, they must have been put there as presents for the gods.

j.

Some people believe that "Mothman" is a creature from another planet.

k.

The most widely accepted theory is that comets could have entered the Earth's atmosphere. The heat that was generated could have caused the explosion.

l.

One possible explanation was that the marks were made by birds with ice on their feet.

m.

In 1957, an American set out to prove that people could have flown there in hot-air balloons. They could have used materials that were available to them at that time.

n.

It is thought that one of the men could have gone mad and caused the deaths of all three men.

o.

A journalist offered another explanation: even though the sea was calm, a freak wave might have taken the men by surprise and swept them into the sea.

Unsolved Mysteries Worksheets **38a** and **38b**

NOTE: Use Worksheets 38a and 38b for this activity.

ACTIVITY

Groupwork: reading, speaking

AIM

To read about unsolved mysteries, and to speculate about possible explanations.

GRAMMAR AND FUNCTIONS

Past modals to speculate about the past
May have or *might have* to talk about something which possibly happened or was true in the past

VOCABULARY

Mysterious events

PREPARATION

Make one copy of Worksheet 38a: Mysteries for every five students in the class and cut it up as indicated. Make one copy of Worksheet 38b: Possible Explanations for every five students in the class.

TIME

40 minutes

PROCEDURE

1. Explain to the students that you are going to tell them about something strange which happened last night. Tell them that you got up this morning to find that a hole had appeared in the street outside your house, and that neither you nor your neighbors can explain what happened. Ask the students if they can think of any possible explanations. Encourage them to be as imaginative as they like with their suggestions. For example, something might have fallen out of the sky, somebody might have dug a hole, there might have been an earthquake, an animal might have dug a hole, an alien spaceship may have landed there ...
2. Tell the students that they are going to read about some strange mysteries which have never been explained, and that they are going to speculate about possible explanations.
3. Ask the students to work in groups of five.
4. Give one copy of Worksheet 38a: Mysteries (cut up) to each group of students, and ask them to take one section each. Explain that each section contains a different unsolved mystery.
5. Ask the students to take turns reading their unsolved mystery to the rest of the group. The whole group should suggest two or three possible explanations for each one. Each student should write down the group's suggested explanations on the back of their section of the worksheet.
6. When they have listened to and speculated about the five mysteries, compare results.
7. Ask the students to stay in their groups for the next part of the activity. Give each group a copy of Worksheet 38b: Possible Explanations.
8. Tell the students that they are going to read some ways in which people have tried to explain the mysteries they have read about, but that the explanations are not in the correct order. Their task is to match three possible explanations to each mystery.
9. Check their answers and ask them to choose the most likely explanation for each mystery.

ANSWERS

1. cfj 2. gim 3. ehl 4. bno 5. adk