

LIVING

A Soft Soothing Balm

by Farzana Haque

When God created Eve, He must have put an additional ingredient, something a little extra. Like a little of patience, of tolerance and endurance — all the qualities she would master and require that would help her to cope with the faulty streaks her partner, Adam had developed. Even though she has been accused of losing paradise because of her greed — when it came to living with Adam, she was good at it, made a fine job of it. There is really no record of the first family even contemplating a break-up let alone marital discords, break downs or the finale. "I just can't stand you anymore" type of battle. In fact the Adam led a good life and Eve managed her part admirably.

Women have not changed much since Eve. In the world over, the same instincts, qualities still rule their hearts and minds, and colour their lives.

Listen to this conversation overheard on a phone. (cross-connections are too frequent these days). More like a monologue.

A voice (young) asked, "Mum was asking why you weren't present at her party". Said voice two, "Too much work at the office." Here, there was a pause in which the talker was probably reconstructing her day at the office then, a spring seemed to burst forth.

"You know I was on leave for fifteen days so all the work piled up at the office. My mother-in-law has, you know, a heart problem and she is here and cannot move around. Your uncle is away in Bogra, the children have their half-yearly and we don't have a single servant except the part-time maid and I cannot trust her with all the work." And so the story went on for about forty-five minutes — the tale of a working wife, mother and a daughter-in-law. The visit of her in-law has made her workload heavier at home, it had made her put up with more demands and a certain amount of peevishness.

My working mother in her late forties, is such an example of rejuvenating energy that I fear and shy away from. When I return home after a hard day's studies and work, all I feel like doing is relaxing. But I find my mother working with her students (being a teacher) on all-

The picture I could envisage was that of a woman bent double with marital responsibilities. What a bother! I counted myself lucky for not being married at all as I saluted her in silence. What took just forty-five minutes to detail must have taken years to adapt. Resentful yet confident, she ended by saying that her in-law complained that she slept like a log. What more could an overworked, ex-

ternate days, attending meetings throughout the month or just sitting on the table setting questions or marking copies. In the evenings, she has time to go out with my father (nearly everyday) for social and other visits; return late and work on her sewing and school work till midnight. Next morning she is up and ready for a busy day. In between she has time to maintain a clear home, throw par-

of course. Especially today's young woman, who being aware of her rights, lets her somnolent anger be fanned by the diverse winds that blow across her life — feminism on one hand; awareness of her right to equality on the other and so on. She grows-up, trapped between tradition and upbringing on one hand and with what life outside suggests to her — to take what is her right, to be counted as an individual. The modern woman is often the victim of such conflicting emotions. Thus, homes are dashed, and marriages crumble under such stress. And somewhere, after making vain attempts to smile that life has in store for them, these women wake-up to find laughter gone from their lives.

Like a soft soothing balm on festering wounds, making herself invaluable to her husband, children, family, friends with soft words, moments of caring and sharing — it may sound like an extinct species. But such kind of women do exist in multitudinous millions! One sees them everywhere — buying fish, carrying heavy baskets, standing in bus stations or in front of schools, riding rickshaws, flying planes, operating computers, scrubbing floors, carrying water pitchers, working in paddy fields, picking tea leaves, cooking or simply waiting upon customers in restaurants with best of smiles — doing hundreds and thousands of tasks women do these days.

Each face in the crowd looks different, each body smells different but deep inside, they are made of the same hard yet pliant substance — like the plaintive voice on the phone or my mother: One finds the same echo in everyone's life.

They are the women of grit, of substance. Women who can throw off peals of laughter and women who are winners in the ladder of life. Most of them may never receive any award, appreciation or words of gratitude. But sooner or later, the tables are turned, that such women are the chords of the home beautifully-managed, of a society well-administered and of a world, kept afloat. It is they who hold the universe together. After doing so much how can they even manage to smile at all?



hausted mind and body go during the night but sleep?

I felt so respectful towards her to hear that in all that resentment — there was no desire for conflict. Catty mother-in-laws, demanding husbands, societies and children — the women of Bangladesh have taken them in their stride.

My working mother in her late forties, is such an example of rejuvenating energy that I fear and shy away from. When I return home after a hard day's studies and work, all I feel like doing is relaxing. But I find my mother working with her students (being a teacher) on all-

ues, cook, go shopping and look after her husband and two adult children, and keep two servants at bay. She smiles a lot too. I know, there are up tompent cases of busier career women with more and more responsibilities/obligations. I pay my respect to their well-managed lives. Not for a woman weighing the benefits in a balance, not for her agonising over whether what she gets from her life is less than what she gives to her family and job; to her it is enough to know she is wanted.

However there is another side to the story. Not all women are paragons except in movies

Those Schoolgirl Days

by Fayza Haq

"THE best years of your life is during school," a teacher once said to me. I was perplexed at this statement but now that I look back on those carefree days I realise that there was a lot of truth in the statement.

The carefree days of eating "lichts" or fried peas on buttered toast and reading Oscar Wilde, novels, and teen digests are over. One was totally wrapped in the books and there did not seem anything wrong in the world.

While one's elder brothers were away doing practical science oneself helped yourself to their keys and read their novels till one knew it was time for them to return. Exchanging books and borrowing books one made friends. That too was another joy.

There were simpler pleasures like staying after school and rehearsing for plays or concerts. Sometimes, in the long breaks one did little skits of one's own or versions of "Cinderella" or "Peter Pan".

Even though there may have been very few children in the audience it was pure fun. One did not necessarily have to be chosen for the expensive lit up school plays. In the long one hour lunch breaks you could even play the simple game of "school school" and derive satisfaction from it.

When one was very young and there was no television, there was the joy of listening to cricket commentaries and plays on the radio. Along with this went pudding and layers of different coloured "jellos". Today, even as an adult, if one

might have enough to take one's friends to expensive restaurants the satisfaction is not the same. I remember coming home and having homemade cakes and cookies with peanuts. As an adult, having travelled a bit, I still have not enjoyed food the way I did in those days.

As for having birthdays and going out to friends' tea parties, they were sheer fun. There were pretty frocks to

wear, "yummy" food to eat, games to play and gifts to give. As adults one has parties too but the humour is sometimes forced, the conversation self-conscious, even the prospect of coming and going is a hassle. Earlier parents saw to all that. One had little responsibilities, one had only to enjoy oneself.

Life was not only a mixture of quiz games, debates, plays but other simpler and enjoy-

able things at home like playing with paper dolls and climbing the rope ladder to the treehouse on top with plastic or cheap tin and porcelain tea cups and saucers to play with. Nowadays each child has half a dozen dolls and still pines for more apart from have scores of other toys like plastic telephones, TVs, clocks, teddy-bears, cycles and what have you. In my time home-made rag-dolls and a plastic doll was enough to keep the six year old happy.

There were long and lazy sea-side holidays when one read imported magazines, lazily flipped through some school homework, rode ponies and donkeys, waded in the water and collected sea shells.

This is not to say that childhood did not have its frustrations — but they all seem such a giggle compared to what one faces in adult life. There was mathematics to master, Bangla books to plod through, music lessons to be fitted into one's schedule. Monthly reports were a dreaded matter. There was also the latent fear that at the next friend's birthday party others might outshine one. Yet one longed to finish one's education and join the adult world. At sixteen one sported tied up hair, heels, "saris" and believed to be "grown up" was an answer to all one's dreams.

How one would like to trade the school days of homework cum fun and frolics for the adult days of electric bills, tax deduction, rents and insurance policies!



Girls gleefully at play

Cookery

IN choosing poultry for cooking always select young and fat birds. Home-reared birds are always the best. Those bought are usually very lean and should be fattened for at least a fortnight before they are fit for the table.

Chicken Cutlets

- 1 chicken
- 2 tablespoons grated bread
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped red onions
- 1 dessertspoon Worcester sauce
- 1 teaspoonful chopped fennel
- 1 egg
- powdered cinnamon cloves and pepper salt
- dripping
- juice of half a lime
- about half a teacup or a little less of stock
- egg and breadcrumbs

Cut up the chicken and remove all the flesh from the bones. Mince the meat finely or pass it through a mincing machine. Season the minced meat with pepper, salt, cloves and cinnamon, and add the fennel and mix well together. Fry the remainder of the onions in a little dripping, add the chicken mixture and stir for a few minutes, then pour in the stock, add the lime juice and sauce and cook until it is a fairly thick paste. Then set it aside to cool. When cold, mix in the grated bread and the egg slightly beaten, and divide the mixture into seven or eight equal sized portions and form them into cutlet shapes. Stick a piece of chicken bone at the narrow end, dip in beaten egg and breadcrumbs, and fry to a nice brown colour in hot dripping.

N. B. For a richer cutlet a couple of slices of ham or bacon could be minced together with the chicken. Stock may be made by stewing the chicken bones and trimmings.

Indian Fried Chicken

- 1 plump chicken
- 1 large Bombay onion
- 4 oz dripping
- 1 saltspoonful each of ground

mover and wipe over the eye area. Do this gently and never pull or tug at the skin around the eyes, which is very delicate. You may need to go over the lids and lashes a few times until all traces of makeup are gone.

• Next cleanse your face thoroughly. If you suffer from spots or acne you may find using a complexion brush helps to unblock pores.

• Tone your skin with the appropriate formulation, then apply a light film of moisturizer. Gently massage it in and tissue off any excess.

• Moisturize your neck and throat, too, as the skin in these areas can easily become dry. Work the moisturizer up from the throat towards the jaw.

• Always pluck your brows from underneath the natural arch and in the direction of the hair's growth.

• Apply one of the special eye creams that reduce morning puffiness and swelling. These are usually made from herb extracts.

(To be continued)

Chicken Pie

- 2 chickens
- a few slices of ham or beef
- 3 or 4 perboiled potatoes
- 1/2 lb Bombay onions
- 1/2 tablespoon Worcester sauce
- 1/2 teaspoon mustard
- 1/2 teaspoonful sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon vinegar
- powdered cinnamon cloves and pepper salt
- dripping
- 1/2 pint stock
- 2 hard-boiled eggs

Remove the meat from the chicken, and cut up into small pieces, slice the Bombay onion very finely, and fry in the dripping until a light brown in colour. Drain, and allow to crisp in the over just before it is required. Add the spices to the dripping in the pan, the chillies (with seeds removed before slicing), and fry for a few minutes, then add the chicken lightly sprinkled with salt and pepper, the finely-chopped red onions and fry all together over a low flame until the meat is cooked and tender. If required a little more dripping may be added.

Roll out the remaining portions of dripping have thus been used. The last time roll out the pastry to the required thickness.

To Cover the Pie — Roll out the pastry about 1/4 inch thick, and cut a strip about 1 1/2 inches in width. Wet the rim of the dish with white of egg, lay on the strip nearly, ad press down lightly. Then wet the strip or pastry with white of egg, roll out the remaining pastry thinner, take up a piece large enough to cover the dish, and lay it carefully over the entire top of the dish. Press this piece of pastry well on, and with a sharp knife cut off any surplus pieces overlapping the edge. Then decorate the pie nearly. Roll out the trimmings of pastry and cut out leaves, and a flower or two. These look attractive placed in the centre. Beat up an egg lightly and brush over top about 2 1/2 hours or until the pastry is nicely coloured.

Chicken Vol-au-Vent

- 1 large chicken boiled with good seasoning to make a well-flavoured stock and to flavour the bird nicely

Remove the pan from the fire and mix in the stock a little at a time, beating until quite smooth. Add the yolks of the eggs, and cook over a very low flame again, still stirring, until the flour is quite cooked. Do not let the mixture brown or colour at all.

Add the chicken, halved mushrooms, chillies, and lime juice, and season to taste, then add the cream and parsley. Warm up, and add a little more salt, if needed. If the sauce is too thick it may be thinned down with a little more stock or cream, but for a vol-au-vent the sauce must be fairly thick. Put the mixture, very hot, into the hot case, cover with the pastry lid, and serve immediately.

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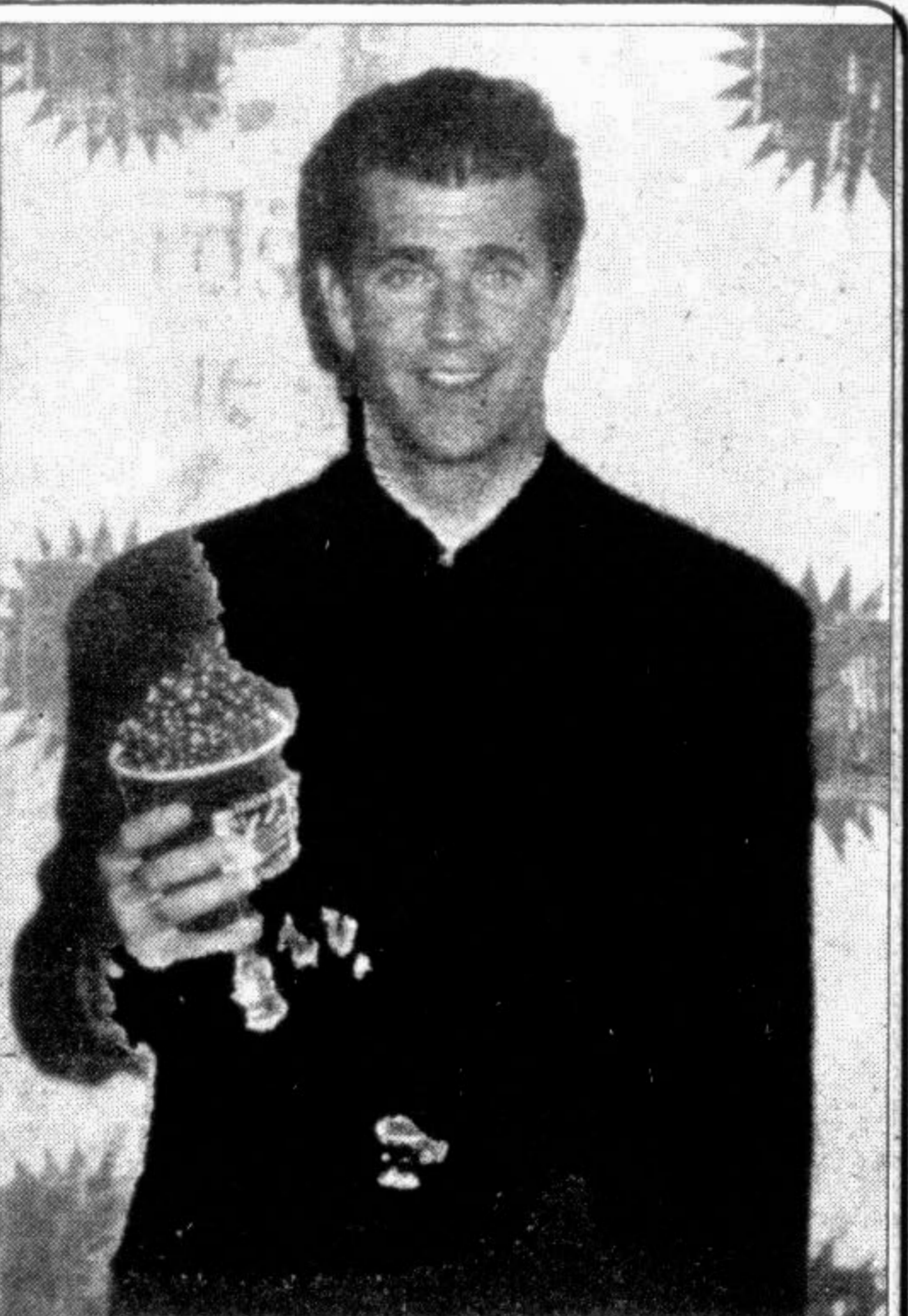
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Sharon Stone with MTV Movie Award '93



Mel Gibson with MTV Movie Award '93

Developing a Skin Care Routine

There are many products on the market these days that promise to give you younger looking skin, to remove wrinkles, and to perform miracles. No skin care product can do this. As it cannot penetrate below the surface of the skin, it cannot remove wrinkles that are already established, and it cannot push back the clock and eliminate any signs of ageing. But this isn't to say that you cannot improve your skin and make it look as good as you possibly can. With this in mind, it is important to develop and maintain a good skin care routine from an early age.

The most important thing to remember is to use products that are designed for your skin type. Some products, such as astringent toners designed for oily skin, will be much too harsh if used on dry skin, and moisturizers for dry skin will be too heavy and greasy for oily skin. One you have chosen your

products, it is easy to organize a simple cleansing, toning and moisturizing routine that takes only minutes to perform both morning and night.

Cleansing

This is the first step in your routine. Morning and evening are usually the best times for cleansing, although if you are going out in the evening and reapplying makeup, always clean your face first. There is such a wide range of facial cleansers on the market today, formulated for various types of skin, that you will soon discover the one that suits you best. The decision as to which type of cleanser you choose is a personal one, but it is important that you select a product that is right for your skin.

Women used to believe that soap and water should be used to clean the face, but soap is drying and defatting, and

should not be used on the face unless your skin is very oily. Special soapless cleansing bars are perfect if you love the feel of soap and water. These are designed to be gentle on the skin, particularly dry skin. Other cleansers that foam up when combined with water are available — these are ideal if you dislike the feeling of cream. But don't forget that hard water alone is defatting and dries out the skin.

There is a wide variety of cleansing creams and lotions available. These are probably the best way to clean, as they are gentle on the skin and contain none of the harsh ingredients that some of the other forms of cleansers have. Most cleansing lotions are intended to be applied to the skin and then wiped off with clean cotton wool pads or tissues; others are rinsed off with water and a

flannel.

After cleansing, make sure that any residue of cleanser is thoroughly removed. With facial bars or soaps, rinse your face repeatedly to remove any film that might have adhered to the skin. If your face still feels sticky, wipe over it again with dampened cotton wool pads — if it doesn't come away clean, rinse again. If using a cream or lotion, wipe the face with a dampened cotton wool pad to make sure that all the cream is removed.

10 Minutes Skin Care

Once you have developed your daily skin care routine it should only take a few minutes every morning and night. Be sure that the products you use are correct for your skin type.

• Always remove eye makeup before going to bed. Dampen a cotton wool pad or ball with re-

Beauty Tips



Sea, Sand and Smiles. British Fashion in Barbados. — London Pictures Service