

Turning Your Heart Up-Side Down

by Sanjida Shaheed

It seems rather strange to me: right now even infuriating — the series of events I mean; the way they occur. Not that I itch to have any knowledge of future.

No, I wouldn't want that, not that. For that would only rob life of longings for the unknown. That would make life dull, uninteresting, maybe even threatening in some way — a bit like attending somebody's funeral, perhaps — whoever's — over and over again. But I didn't need this staggering imbalance between things either. Could do with some sort of rhythm — if not rhyme — ratio of some kind at least, so as not to spring a sudden surprise of shock on you.

But life has its own ideas, not necessarily according with mine — no, they actually tend to be the very opposite. And they tend to be rigid, grabbing you by the neck, making your heart jump up your throat, stunning your inner being, freezing all your blood cells — all when you're not the least ready for any of it.

Just when you're enjoying a rare perfect moment blessed with the simple nitty-gritty of life, life'll make sure something goes wrong — and jeeps, something does go wrong, wrong enough to stir your entire soul, turning your heart up-side-down.

A moment ago, you were, say, taking a leisurely stroll round the lawn, or your mother was baking a birthday cake, or your father fixing an electrical switch — a moment later you'll encounter with one tragic incident (accident is more like it) or another, directly or indirectly involving (damaging I mean) your sanity, your identity, your whole life — for instance, either your manager to slip and fall, the acerbic consequence of which is a broken spine; or the corner of your mother's saree ignorantly embraces the fire, and she burns to death; or it's your father, electrified, and left partially paralyzed virtually for ever.

God bless you. Today you see the sun in the morning, tomorrow you'll see Devil laughing like hell in the eastern sky — I'm kidding, just kidding — I have a peculiar sense of humour though.

And time has a particular stubborn way of its own. When you need to lavishly suck a moment, with all your senses open, it'll gather a hundred wings (you've noticed, the bubbles of sweetest dreams in the night burst too often too quickly). And again, of course, when you want time to leave you alone to enable you to live at ease; it just lingers on, hanging around like cold dense fog round the shivering naked street kid in long winter nights. Why? But then, isn't it really one's feelings towards time rather than the actual speed of time itself that makes all these differences?

My rickshaw keeps on moving, moving. Time, most dutifully walks on in its usual steady pace — not giving any heed to my urgent need to fall into the lap of future. The rick-

shaw rolls along the dirty lanes, leaving behind a number of stores — its wheels yet waiting to greet the unending web of lanes lying ahead — lanes and alleys that as yet seem would lead me nowhere. I feel a sudden explosion inside me — the impulsive thoughts I've been trying so strenuously to bury inside me now impended to break loose and rush to the surface.

But no, I must keep calm and hold on to hope. I try to concentrate on the moving scenario around me — my head involuntarily droops down, my eyes now facing the road.

The rickshaw suddenly jerks into the main road. My mind no longer takes command from me. Someone from within me nakedly blurts out the worst fear I've been trying to hide from myself. Could it be that he's dead already? A cold shiver runs down my spine. But no, no, it can't be true.

Why, 15 years ago when he left for abroad for the sake of his job, didn't he promise me one day he'll come back to me, take me with him and never leave me again? Yes he came, he came day before yesterday, no he won't leave me, leave me so soon. He can't go away like this, can he — moreover this is the kind of thing that always happened to other people. And besides, the pedestrian who called me from the hospital said he rushed him immediately to the hospital. Then why will he die? How can he die — when medical miracles are available at your beck and call?

My knees shaking, heart beating fast, body running cold I enter the H-shaped building — it is very clean. I don't like hospitals — clean or not. Hospitals don't mingle at all with my world — mom, dad, trees, clouds, music, poetry. Certainly hospitals don't belong anywhere — in your compassionate heart or anywhere in this dangerously polluted yet infinitely winning planet of ours.

Man at the counter directs me to the emergency room. I trudge along. A series of endless passages and hallways. And then, it is there, before my eyes. I don't have to enter the room. For there lies my father in front of its door — a motionless bundle wrapped in white.

The pedestrian is still there. Realizing my identity he narrates the lamentable event. It's them, muggers — they stabbed him hard on the chest. They don't want you to interfere with their business. You stick your nose and you're done for. Protesting the wrong is an archaic way of life. If only my father knew. Brave people don't need to believe so, brave people don't need to change — for they deal with undeliable beauty of eternal truth, all along — whether or not truth is the reality in this world of ours polluted more by poison of mind rather than toxic chemicals.

So, where to now? I don't know. I can't think of anything now. I just need a little rest, a little rest, please.

A little peace — dear life, that's the much I really ever wanted from you.

But I felt dull and lonely in a rainy day. Suddenly, an idea came to me. I called my friends to my house. Four out of five agreed to come, and they were in my house by long, 5 minutes. One of them put on a cassette into the stereo, and played it on full volume. One began to fiddle with the VCR, one with the TV antenna, and the other looked around for food. We played games, and suddenly I found me and my room in a mess. My friends had crept out hearing the Pajero zooming and I was left alone in the world with my parents staring down at me. Boy, now I'm really in deep deep trouble?

Let me forget what happened next.

RED

Shumon Momen

Red is the colour of roses
Blood might come down your noses
Volcanoes go red hot
My mum has a red teapot
Red is the colour of my cartoon book
Red is a colour to look
Red may be nice,
But it also means danger
Red is like fire
Red is the peaceful sunset.

THE MISSING MACHINE

By Sharier



Asian Games : A Sad Story All the Way

by Rabeth Khan

FAILURE is the pillar of success — but no matter how high that pillar is we never seem to reach it; even after so many successive failures. The Hiroshima Asian Games is one of that same repetition of failures. But despite the disappointing results again and again, our high-ranked government officials are still eager to send a large contingent. As if it is a fun trip, (minus the embarrassment).

In the 12th Asian Games held in Hiroshima, Bangladesh participated in eight events: shooting, swimming, boxing, kabaddi, hockey, athletics, soft tennis and weight lifting. Apart from kabaddi and shooting,

Anyway, three cheers for our kabaddi team. The shooting team led by Atekur Rahman in the men's section and Kazi Shahana Parveen in the women's section has done moderately.

In boxing, the Bangladeshis boxers with the exception of Harunur Rashid were busy dodging and running around the ring rather than fighting. There was no logical reason to send eight boxers and the athletics squad, looked like they were more serious in their jogging skills rather than sprinting. All the athletes were placed last in their individual events. Only Bimal Chandra Tarafdar, the fastest man of South Asia was placed fifth in

would have taken the fourth place. His time was 10.84 secs far below than 10.61 secs he took in the last SAF Games.

The swimming team and the lone weight-lifter made us blush. The soft tennis team went to Hiroshima just to participate so their performance is not much of importance. Finally our hockey team played inconsistently and came back without any trace of success. They fought bravely against India only to go down to a controversial penalty goal. In that match, there were no other sports officials of Bangladesh to cheer the team. They were busy marketing. In the other two group matches, there were thrashed by South Korea and beaten by China by a solitary goal.

I would blame the government for this disappointing performance. Astroturf hockey fields have been common in all hockey playing countries except Bangladesh. If our teams could have practised in astroturf field for the last two years, our hockey team would have surely made us proud. What is gone is gone, but the government should prepare astroturf hockey field as soon as possible.

In all the sports event, everyone performed below their best performance. The reason is simple — lack of practice. The two gold-medal winners of the last SAF games, boxer Mozammel Haque and ace swimmer Mosharaf Hossain has clouded our minds. We want to know the cause of it. Lastly, we request our high-ranked officials to select proper athletes and delete marketing as their prime object in their foreign schedules.

There is still time left before the next Asian Games and SAF Games, we are sure that hardwork, skill and confidence will give us the success we want so much — whether it is a dream or reality, only time will say.

Captured

by Irina Ahmed

As a young deer, belonging to one of the rare spotted families, I was really happy in the jungle. I used to rule over my siblings, as I was the eldest. I was captured by the two-legged creatures known as "humans". They were strange creatures; really strange.

These humans have two legs and two hands. They also had this long stick with them from which fire came out. Just then I didn't know what that was, but later on I got to know it was called a 'gun'.

All the same I was captured in quite a dramatic way. It all happened when I was taking a nice, soothing walk along the jungle. I stepped on something and as quick as lightning, I was trapped! The "humans" came out of bushes close to me. I could see that I was surrounded by tall "iron trees" without any leaves. Well, at least that's what they looked like to me.

Anyway, let's leave that now. I was taken away by the "humans" to a big, big boat called a ship. It was only then that I saw: I was not the only one being taken away by the "humans". There were other animals such as my friends, the little monkeys, jumbo, the elephant, the baby squirrels and many others. These "humans" were mean, cruel creatures. I never knew there were such creatures on earth.

The baby squirrels were crying for their mother. Unlike me, they were caged up in a smaller box with "wooden trees" without any leaves surrounding them. Jumbo was hoisted up in the air with a canvas sling roped under his stomach. (I felt really sorry for him.) The monkeys, caged up in a large box with the "wooden trees" without any leaves so close that they couldn't reach through, were gloomily talking to each other. Indeed, these "humans" were heartless.

I, for one, was not scared. Though, not being used to being at sea; I was a little sea-sick. Anyway, now at the London Zoo, kept as an exhibition, I am straying in a large netted area with other deer. Though I have a different opinion about the "humans" now, I would like to go back to the jungle and live a happy, free life.

"It has Its Thrills and Moments"

by A Ryter

BEING a teenager is not the most interesting of occupations. It has its thrills and moments and those who are not teenagers covet it and the more elderly reflect upon it. But the teenager himself comes to realise that it is an age that has both the brighter and frustrating sides to it.

Unescorted journeys to school, parties and fatter allowances all have their own delights. Plus there is that "air" of being what a teenager is. Only when household chores, endless errands and tougher responsibilities are clamped on us we are not so optimistic about the "I am a teenager!" expression and begin to have second thoughts. And for those of us who have younger siblings and parents who, with every good intention, think highly of us, we complain of having to look after the younger ones and pretend to be young ourselves (Sometimes this sort of "acting" is necessary).

There are numerous "problems" we can have with our parents at home. Most of these can be solved by a ten-minute conversation with lots of smiles coupled with a big hug at the end! But some of them require "long-term" negotiations. To buy the new dress or the latest watch we have to coax (bribe sounds

more like it) our parents into making their purses lighter. This "bribing" has to start at least a couple of months before purchasing the item. Then there is the universal problem of getting a raise in allowances. We never seem to have enough money for our needs; it seems we have bottom-less wallets! Whenever we get a raise, however large, our needs somehow gobble up all the money.

A bit scientifically speaking, our raises are directly proportional to our needs! One problem we all share is that of having to go to the shop to buy something when we are watching our favourite TV serial. Another instance when we scowl at our parents is when they shout at us for the third time to hang up the phone after we have been talking to a best pal for only about one-and-a-half to two hours! Sulking, we hang up but are babbling away again when they are not prowling nearby!

On the brighter side we can look at ourselves and think of how responsible we have been in carrying out our responsibilities and think (a bit selfishly) that our parents told us to carry out the responsibilities and not our siblings. Secretly we feel a bit like adults but let's not go that far yet!

Tales of the Supernatural

by Mir Saaduddin Ahmad

RUHAIL Ali, and his wife Rukeya, had gone to visit his brother Salman, living in the village Thelapara. Salman was honouring the newly-weds on their marriage by inviting them to a family dinner. Even though they were villagers, both the brothers were comparatively well-off as they had started a joint business. The brothers' parents were there and so the happy family gathered around to eat. While eating, everyone was chatting away except Rukeya. She hardly spoke, let alone ate. However, no-one made a fuss about that as that was what they expected. The new bride would be shy.

Ruhail and Rukeya returned home late that night. It was in the house that he saw his wife was quite pale. She hadn't spoken a word after leaving her in-law's house. Thinking she was ill, Ruhail asked her, "Are you all right dear, you look a bit ill."

Rukeya answered, "No, I'm fine. It's just that I had a strange feeling in that house." "What type of feeling?" "I don't know. It was really weird! I felt the presence of great evil in that house."

Ruhail burst out laughing, but one look at his wife sobered him down. "You're not serious are you? he asked."

"Very serious indeed," came her retort. "I felt that evil in the form of one person."

"Oh, come off it Rukeya, you know my father is a very pious man."

"Oh no, it's not your father I'm talking about, it's I, think, your brother!"

Rukeya please! Don't go accusing my brother of being evil. We've been very close since childhood. You're lucky that I don't believe in ghosts otherwise I would have thought you were possessed by one!"

That brought Rukeya to a silence. The thought of witchdoctors and the sort, beating her to a pulp to rid her of a ghost was terrifying. But no matter what anyone said, she knew that there was a great evil present in her brother-in-law.

Soon a year past and the brothers' business was thriving. Then one day, Salman went to his brother's house with a strange proposition.

"Ruhail," he said, "I have decided to go abroad. I need some money so I have decided to sell off the business. I've talked to some people..." "Wait a minute! What makes you think that I want to sell the business?"

"Oh, you have to, because I'm going to..." "Stop! If you sell the business and go abroad, what will I do?"

"You," said his brother, "can start a new business from the beginning."

And they went on arguing. Finally, in the heat of the argument, Salman said, "Fine, say what you want, but nobody is going to stop me from doing what I want to!" With that, he left, slamming the door behind him.

Sitting back, Ruhail tried to calm down. He thought, He wandered what could have happened to his brother.

The more he thought of it, the more he thought of his wife's words, "Your brother is evil!"

Speaking of his wife, she was visiting a friend of hers. Thank God she hadn't witnessed the argument. When Rukeya returned, Ruhail mentioned nothing about the incident. But, as he soon found out, he needn't have to.

As soon as she entered, she stopped dead at the doorway. Immediately she said, "Your brother was here, wasn't he?"

Ruhail was taken aback. How did she know? As if reading his mind, she said, "I told you once before. No matter where your brother be, evil is not far behind."

That night Rukeya could not sleep. There was an eerie silence all around. She got up and walked to the front room of the hut, making sure not to wake her husband. It was dark, very dark.

"Clang!" something dropped behind her. She turned and saw water pouring out of the over-turned kalshi; someone was in the house! Echoes of the clang seemed to be vibrating all over the room as her eyes fell on him. It was then that three expressions came across her face in rapid succession. Satisfaction, as she knew who it would be. Terror, as she saw him approaching with a dagger in his hand. Vengeance, as she lay dying in a pool of blood.

By now, Ruhail had awoken. Someone was calling his name from the front room. He got up. Rukeya wasn't there. Some how he sensed that something was amiss.

What he saw when he walked into the room literally tore him to pieces. "No," he screamed, "No!"

As he was about to move to his wife, someone laughed out from behind. He turned around and there he saw Salman looking deliriously at him.

The last words Salman heard his brother say before he killed him were, "My God, she was right. You really are evil!"

As Salman left he didn't notice that he had dropped a red handkerchief with a bottle wrapped in it. Luckily (or should I say disastrously) for him, those were never found.

To be continued



other events has been a complete disaster. Kabaddi is the only sport, we have done well and has fetched the only medal. But this sport might be dropped from the next Asian Games to be held in Malaysia.

the heats. Bimal started very confidently for the first 40 m but after that he fell back too. But a sudden burst of speed enabled him to overtake three other athletes. With a little more luck and confidence he