



Excitement was getting on Mohon's nerves. Within minutes Zeba would come to fetch water. Like every other day he was sitting by the pond, but this time he was not singing. Mohon, five and twenty, bothered for nothing in this world but songs, before seeing Zeba that was his only obsession. Heaven knows from where he got that inherent quality to sing so nice.

Zeba had a singular sad face. She was so indifferent towards everything that Mohon thought he could never reach the least nearness of her heart. But it seemed she was waking slowly like unfolding of the night with the series of sun rays. And today he would insist on having an answer from her — yes or no.

At last Zeba came within Mohon's sight. It took his breath away. She looked at him and smiled. He felt giddiness. As if to sustain only, he caught hold of her hands. She sat by his side. He asked her, "do you love me? I want to marry you." A smile passed on her lips whose meaning Mohon could not make out.

Within a few days families on both sides decided upon the marriage. There would be no dowry. But where would go our social custom? a friend narrated to Mohon. "It's your right to get something since you will feed their daughter all through. At least you can have a harmonium as a presentation which you need so much." It struck him. How pitiful such a good singer like him did not possess a harmonium. So it

When Love is Defeated

by Fahmida Naz

was lifted to Zeba's father's ears who replied, "I'll be almost penniless to do the least arrangement of the occasion. Yet I promise to send it within two months of marriage."

One beautiful night the marriage was solemnized with a promise of happy tomorrows. Mohon whispered to Zeba on the bridal night, "Today I'm happy like anything! You see our love worked. True love never fails. If I could not get you in this life, I would love you till I die and find you in thousands of ways in my songs. You can never get away from me. You are the theme of my songs. And I'll be as steadfast as that star."

Days slipped by and Mohon sang the best in his life. It had been many days Zeba had seen her parents. So she decided to pay a visit to her father's house. While leaving, Mohon said to her, "by this time your father might have bought the harmonium. So you please take the trouble to bring it as I am so much in need of it."

But alas! Zeba found no harmonium in her house and no sign of purchasing it in near future. Her father was worried but she assured that her husband was so understanding and compassionate he would never take it to mind.

In Zeba's absence, Mohon's time would not pass. The day

was long and night cold and grey. He resolved not to allow Zeba to leave him alone again. But a seed of hope was budding in his mind and his eagerness and sureness watered and nurtured it into a reality. From now on he would sing with harmonium. He felt elated.

And one morning Zeba returned. He embraced her and got mad with caressing. Only Zeba would fill his thirst, his emptiness.

In the night, he suddenly remembered the harmonium. He asked her where she had kept it. Zeba faltered and managed to tell the truth. He could not believe his ears. He whispered only, "she didn't bring it, she didn't bring it..." He immediately released her hands which were in his and bolted out of the room. Zeba looked at the doors being slammed and broke down into tears. Mohon was no more seen on that night.

He walked and walked until he felt tired and sat under a tree. Which he took for dead sure suddenly broke into pieces and seemed like a dream of the last night. He looked up at the star and words came to him. "I'll be as steadfast as that star." He laughed, stars are so because they have no dreams to be shattered, no emotion to be overwhelmed with. Otherwise

they would not be so still.

He did not know when he got asleep and when in the morning he woke up, he was totally taken aback. What had he done? He did not return home last night? What dear Zeba might have thought of him!

And Zeba wept all night through. Her Mohon had left her for such a wordly thing! How could he do it?

Mohon, back home sheepishly, begged for forgiveness. Zeba's swollen face killed him inside. Zeba smiled and like many days before he found he could not understand her smile.

Days went by. Mohon learned no other means for livelihood except singing, which he in fact did for his own pleasure, but people would hire him on their occasions and happily pay him. With days, he got more busy and most of the nights he was hired somewhere. Money was pouring in and he had his own harmonium now.

Zeba would remain awake through the whole night and think why the hell life was so changed. Is it because Mohon never forgave her for the harmonium? Or is it because Mohon never really loved anyone but his songs? Oh no! she was getting more and more out of his life and more tragic as

that she deduced he never forgave her for being deprived of his promised dowry.

But in Mohon's heart there was no such vindication for his beloved, petite Zeba. He knew he had owned her and it never just dawned on him that she still might long for some of his previous worship — that love was to be practised everyday. He could not make out why Zeba was so cold these days. Why? He never got the answer.

But farther Zeba was drifting away from his heart's shore the more he was taking retreat to his own world of music. By now his was a group of five including two female.

His creative mind demanded some constant source to enlighten his heart, someone with full of love. It must have to be his queen Zeba. He searched and searched for her, but where was she? Nowhere, nowhere. She had shrunk and turned so cold. She was indifferent like many days before. He began to search for the enlightening source in other girls.

And such is the tragic end of a love and for no one's fault. Is it for Mohon never really loved anyone but his songs? He once loved, hold Zeba only for his songs' sake? To compose, tune all those best songs. And now he was after someone else only to create more melodies. Can such people love none else? Then they are utterly selfish. Heaven knows why the love did not last. But in her heart, Zeba knows — her love was defeated by something stronger, more powerful.

Halloween — the French Style

by Adeeb Z Mahmud

WHERE would you find Tinin and Little Red Riding Hood enjoying the same party? If your answer is a Halloween Party then you've guessed correctly.

The students of Ecole Francaise, a French school in Dhaka were invited to a Halloween Party at the residence of Mr Jean — Michel Lacombe, the French Ambassador in Bangladesh on October 27th. Children aged between 4 to 13 were invited to the party which lasted from 3 to 7 PM. They were asked to dress up as whomever they wished and among them were a young bride and groom, a boy dressed in the traditional Bangladeshi attire and even a Japanese Ninja warrior.

Cakes, sweets, music, games, colorful and funny march around the lawn and above all, attractive presents thrilled the young participants. This is, in fact, a traditional French festival which is being organized by the French Embassy for the Students of Ecole Francaise since last year.

Unlike France, in most other western countries including Britain and America, Halloween is observed, basically, as a religious festival. In ancient Britain and Ireland, Halloween, observed on the eve of All Saints' Day, October 31, was the day the souls of the dead were supposed to revisit their homes.

The Autumnal festival acquired a sinister significance with ghosts, witches, hobgoblins, black cats, fairies and demons of all kinds said to be roaming about. It was the time to placate supernatural powers controlling the processes of nature.

Immigrants to the U.S., particularly the Irish, introduced Halloween customs that became popular in the late 19th century. Mischief-making on this occasion by boys and young men included breaking windows and damage to property was sometimes severe.

In modern times, Halloween is the occasion for pranks and for children requesting treats or threatening tricks. The occasion has come to be observed mainly by small children, who go from house to house, often in costume, demanding "trick or treat". The treat, often candy, is generally given and the trick rarely played. A common symbol of Halloween is the Jack-o-lantern (the name was derived probably from that of a night watchman). It is a hollowed out pumpkin carved in the appearance of a demonic face and with a lighted candle inside.

The French version of Halloween, however, is not nearly so sinister. "In France, we have mainly two forms of educational systems," informs Mr Jerome Laurentin, the Deputy Cultural Attache at the French Embassy in Dhaka, the Catholic colleges

and the Laïq colleges or non clerical institutions. Unlike other schools, these colleges do not have religion as a subject. Students irrespective of religion or sect are taught here and all are free to observe their own traditional beliefs.

This educational structure was established after France became a republic and many people observe Halloween as an occasion to commemorate the birth of this system, rather than a religious festival," explains Mr Laurentin.

Halloween is generally observed on the last week of October and at the last day of the week, all the students with their teachers participate in the event. Of the students invited, most attended the party. Although the party was basically for the young people, parents also helped their children to organize making it a family event.

Apart from the games, a horse back ride around the lawn was arranged for the children and at the end of the day, Mrs Lacombe gave out prizes among the enthusiastic participants. "At Ecole Francaise, students are taught in the same manner as in the Laïq colleges back in France," says Mr Laurentin. "So we decided to do what we could to enable them to participate and enjoy the festivals children in France enjoy every year."



A scene from the children fancy dress party organised by Mr Jean-Michel Lacombe, Ambassador of France, and his wife Myriam Lacombe at their residence in Gulshan, on Thursday October 27.

Cakes, sweets, music, games, horse riding, colorful and funny march around the lawn and above all, attractive presents, thrilled the children. This is, in fact, a French traditional event organised, just as the Christmas child's party, at the residence of the French Ambassador to entertain the children at the end of the year.

My Friend — the Serial Killer

by Shahed Latif

SUDDENLY my bedside phone rang. I got irritated, looked at the watch, it was 3:30 in the morning, who could it be I thought as I picked up the phone.

"You have to report to the headquarter right now," the voice from the other side said.

"Why?" I asked.

"You have no time to waste, you will ask nothing report to the office, for your next assignment."

"OK! OK! I will be there in an hour," I cursed myself for being an investigator, then I cursed the boss for calling me at this hour of the morning. I cursed everything around me as I began to wash myself to get ready.

Arriving at the office I found everybody was there except me, all of them were talking with each other. As soon as I entered the room the boss said "Come Opu we were waiting for you." As I sat down he said "there is a serial killer roaming around the streets of Chittagong city and we need to catch him."

"So, what can I do, what has it got to do with me," I thought.

Your job is to find this killer and nail him down," I sat there for sometime thought what to do, then I asked for a picture of this man.

"The problem is that we don't have a picture of this man, we just know his name." That's all you know and you want me to catch him without even having the slightest idea how he looks like, you must be joking.

"This man leaves his mark at the side of the neck of his victims, last time he killed three people, one child, all at one night. Among them there was a secretary of so the government is determined to find him."

"Yes, I understand everything sir, but..."

There is no but here Opu, you are going to find the man and that is final. He leaves marks that's it. As if I am a miracle maker. Shurlock Holmes. I packed my bag hoping that the case would be as easy as it sounds I just did not know what to do, where to start from. Suddenly I remembered Rehan, my good old pal in Chittagong. So, I dialed his number and had a long chat with him. Between the talks he informed me that he has left his job and is now into business. He was my school friend, we grew up together in the same neighbourhood, we went to the same school, fell in love almost with the same girl.

I remembered one particular incident when we were in class VI or VII, we decided to teach our maths sir a lesson (instead). So we came up with a plan, we bought some batasha (kind of a sweet) for taka two slowly entered our class-room deceiving the watch man and rubbed each and everyone of the batasha in the blackboard with the help of other syrups. It dried throughout the night, and the next morning, when Krishna Rai Babu (our maths teacher) came in the class and tried to explain problem he found that the board, well you know what!

Then came our professional life, we even selected the same profession but were posted in different departments, then by fate once again, we were teamed up. We were posted in Chittagong. We caught many criminals, did many successful assignments (and bad ones too) then once again I was transferred to Dhaka and he remained in Chittagong.

Then long ten years passed by many things changed. In this ten years time we met only once or twice because at that time we were both were busy building up our careers. I never knew until to day we were great friends and rivals as

well, as far as profession was concern, I have moved away from my topic, after talking to him over the phone we arranged to meet, as soon as I reach the city. I asked him to help me in this case and he said that "he would do anything for me." But things were quite different when we met as soon as I gave him the name of the killer, a dark shadow veiled his face I didn't know why.

When you meet an old (and best) friend after nearly a decade you naturally become happy and want to continue with the catching up but Rehan was not the Rehan I knew, he was different now. Any way I gave him the name I asked him how he would find the man with just a name, he said "it takes a genius to know a genius, it takes a criminal to know a criminal." I asked him what he meant, he said nothing. Suddenly I felt he was hiding something from me, I did not ask him what it was.

Next day the newspapers carried big headlines, describing the murder of a seven years old. I just could not take it any more, so I rang to our local office asked them to get a car so that I could go there. I saw that there was a red mark at the side of the neck, and I

at once realized it was him all right. The murder was so brutal I just could not stay there any more and I left distressed. I came back to the hotel and phoned Rehan, asked him whether he had read the news, he answered in the affirmative and hurried, he was going out, he would contact me later. Then after two weeks there was another murder, a newly married couple. They were in Chittagong for their honeymoon but they could not celebrate as both of them were killed. After that murder Rehan called me up, and said he would use all his resources to catch the man for me but when I asked him to take me with him, he said no. "I don't need you now, but very soon I will need your help them you can help me." In the mean time I was trying all the resources I know but nothing happened, this was the first time even I was totally a failure and was feeling like a stupid for being so ignorant.

Days passed by and I have made no progress in this case. Rehan he also was not contacting me anymore, his phone was left unanswered, in the mean time the murders did not stop and every time it occurred, Rehan was the first one to inform me. My boss was becoming irritated with me, he even handed me a warning note that stern measures would be taken against me if I fail to catch this maniac.

The next day I read in the newspaper that a woman was brutally murdered in her bedroom, as I was reading the paper the phone suddenly rang, it was Rehan, he said that he had found the address where the killer is at present, he asked me to go there at once and do the necessary. I asked how I would know, that he is the man I'm looking for? He said "you will find out." So, hurriedly I got dressed and with two van full of plain clothed police man I went to that place. What I saw left me shattered and in tears it was my friend Rehan. At first I thought he was joking but it was not a joke. Rehan was the killer. He himself said, that he changed his name he killed all these people, where I asked him "why," he said "revenge Opu."

So, finally Rehan the serial killer who killed many people was caught and also my friend was arrested. He was kept in Chittagong jail for six months, where his physical condition was checked it was found that he, was mentally ill and had some abnormal complications and the doctors suggested that this was, may be because of his childhood turmoils that was deprived and sad.

Rehan is now in the mental hospital being treated for his abnormality and then his trial would begin ultimately he would be convicted. After catching Rehan, the serial killer I became the Director General of the intelligence but I have decided to resign from the job.

I had enough of this cut throat race to the top and now that I am almost there, I don't like the view any more.

The Business of Lies

by Badrul Hassan

LIES are thoroughly mixed up with our life. We can not but lie, because lies will not leave us, even if we try to abandon them. Many people say, in today's world the great liars are regarded as the most truthful. So, one may be suspicious about the value of truth, but it is true that lies have endless power. Either they can be negative of affirmative. It is not necessary to plead innocence concerning lies, as all of us are well informed about 'lying'. The latest information about lying is that, there are three categories:

- General lies
- Arant lies
- Government press releases and BTV news

Anyway, let us see if we can tell you some more lies about 'lying'.

Father and son: Rashed reads in class nine. He went out with the excuse of playing football in the afternoon and returned home when it was 9.30 pm. His father came chasing after him, 'you vagabond'. Where have you been? Tell me truly, if you lie it will be a bad dream for you, I will strip off your skin', he enquired with a cane in his right hand. Rashed answered with a scared voice that he went to enjoy the cinema. His father yelled out, 'How dare you? Having been to cinema and telling me! Whip... Whip...'

Student and teacher: Ill-tempered aged teacher Mr Khan entered the class room. Turning to erase the blackboard, he found a caricature of an owl bearing his name at the bottom. He flared up in anger and searched for the little miscreant, but no one dared to reply. Then he changed his tack and told the students with a soft voice, 'whoever did this, if he is truthful and brave, please stand up'. Suddenly the courageous truthful boy stood up to win some cheap applause. The teacher Mr Khan told the boy, 'I admire your honesty, but now get ready for the punishment, my dear child!'

Capital punishment and the guillotine: In ancient Greece three persons were sentenced to death in the guillotine for the same crime. The first person advanced, put his head on the platform of the guillotine, but the blade was interrupted on its



way and stopped just over his shoulder. The same thing happened to the second criminal. As a result both of them escaped from certain death in accordance with the law of the state. But the truthful third man found the fault with the guillotine and informed the public executioner. The executioner removed the small piece of wood from the path of the blade which the third accused showed him and then set the man's head under the sharp-edged blade and his head was cut off from his body.

The lying tiger and the cowboy:

There was a lying tiger in a jungle. He used to shout every day, 'A cowboy! A cowboy!' consequently, the other tigers of the jungle came greedily to try the human flesh and being deceived by a liar they returned with disgust. Hence the tiger lost his trust from the others and none responded any more to his shouts. In fact one day a cowboy came into the forest and the wicked tiger cried out in joy, 'a cowboy! a cowboy! But no one responded. As a result, the lying tiger consumed the whole cowboy with complete satisfaction.

An ethical note:

Do not speak the truth all ways. There is great gain in lying. The truthful endures his father's caning and teacher's punishment. He who speaks the truth loses his head under the blade of the guillotine. In contrast, a liar takes his desired food delightedly and satisfactorily.

And the final message: Having read this, if someone is inspired to tell a lie and involve himself in any danger, then only he will be responsible for the outcome.

Note: This article was published in a Bangla daily (Bhorer Kago) on 25 November, 1993, by the same writer.

Fad Fever

by Sasheen

Hey Everybody the fad of wearing a friendship band (colourful woven bracelet) is now Passe! A new fad has made its comeback — Hindi songs.

Everywhere you go, you can hear people singing loud hindi songs in off-beat voices. No, no, it's not Choli K Pecche Kya Hai but songs like Tu Cheez badi had mast mast, Kuch na Kaho, Ole Ole, Amma dekho and Chura ki dil mera. People are willing to stop their lives, just to watch Philips Top 10 (Top 10 Hindi Songs) on Zee TV and BPL OYE on Channel V.

A lot of quarrelling goes on in a number of households (like mine) over the number one song. People expectantly wait to catch a glimpse of Gaane Anjaane (Songs of latest hindi movies) and Ek Nazaar (clippings of the latest films). These programmes have boosted Zee TV's ratings tremendously and teeny boppers eagerly wait the release of the movies of their latest heartthrobs — Saif Khan, Akshay Kumar, Sunil Shetty, Amir Khan and Salman Khan.

Forgotten are the movie stars of the yester years — Rishi Kapoor (who is still acting, but without much success). But the Big B's songs can be heard everywhere and his popularity is still at its peak.

But according to most parents, hindi songs are disrupting the youth of today and are creating a diversion in their studies. The new fad of listening to hindi songs are definitely bignifying the mundas of all the Ammas.

Jokes

"Hey, teacher. Leave the kids alone."

My Pink Floydian urge blazoned on the door of our faculty. None seemed to care except one, perhaps!

Mr X, one young lecturer once asked, "Whose work is it?"

I rose up silently. "Do you really believe in such ideas?"

I don't recall my reply but I sure do remember the first day when I went to take class on that very class-room. The graffiti was still there — mocking me from the wooden door.

