

TEENNS and TWENTIES

Oh! Those Wedding Horrors

by Trishna

I stepped down from the car to see the usual colourful lights tangled in the trees and hundreds of people wearing clothes which were a perfect competition for those lights.

Accompanied by my parents, I advanced towards the gate, which too, had been decorated with cloths and lights. As we entered, I saw more lights, brighter than the ones I saw before, the glittering sarees and jewellery of the ladies and shiny silk shirts of some gents.

My father got separated from us to join the male section of the wedding. Me and my mother sat in a corner of somewhere. Suddenly this effulgent figure appeared in front of me. She conceded my mother and then began their 'bhabi bhabi' chatter.

In the middle of nowhere of the conversation she seemed to have acknowledged me. 'Oh! This is your daughter, right?' she said in a high-pitched voice, opening her mouth through her triple-chin. 'She has grown!' Saying this she squeezed my cheeks in such a manner that I could guess that there would be no need for blush-on on that cheek ever in my life.

Then she patted me on the head, which spoiled the hairstyle, which took me an hour, within a fraction of a second. I refrained myself from bellowing out. I wondered what she does to infants if she does this to an almost full-grown 'child'? I felt pathetic towards them. But that wasn't the end, she had more of her preposterous acts to perform.

She threw on my face a number of questions the answers of which were already known to her. I guess, in spite of me staying aloof, she probably wanted to be my best

friend it seemed. Wait, wait, I'll introduce you to my daughter. Oh no, I didn't know doomsday would arrive so soon! She screamed out her daughter's name, Jyotsna, Jyotsna. I don't know why but I started shivering as she uttered her child's name.

The horrendous picture of Beder Meye Jyotsna appeared in front of my eyes. As her beloved daughter arrived, I was astounded to see how she resembled the heroine of the above mentioned movie! I wondered if she was a heroine. The girl inheriting her mother's corpulent figure and false eye-lashes which promised to fall off anytime, resting on her cheeks, appeared in front of me. We were introduced to each other and ignoring my demur, she, the girl who was bigger, fatter,

taller and older than me (at least she looked so) offered me to play! That too not ludo or scrabble, but *kanamachi!* I was taken aback. Imagine playing that game in a wedding!

Fortunately, favourably, auspiciously, propitiously and luckily, the food was served immediately, which brought out an excellent reason for me not playing with that asinine girl. For an instant, I was relieved!

Following my mother, I sat on a chair, those wooden ones with the comparatively narrow seats and took one glance at the served food. The mixture of rice, meat and oil or ghee whatever, was helpful in making me feel nausea, in this hot weather. Still, I took hardly a spoonful and wished I could digest it. Out of nowhere came a man and plunging his hand if

wonder if it was his right) in a dish, picked out a chicken leg and plated it on my plate.

At the moment, the meaning of appetite was unknown to me. With maximum reluctance, I took some in my hand and as I was about to drop it in my mouth, I saw the loathsome animal advance towards me. Step by step, as if getting ready to pounce on its prey, it advanced towards our table. What should I do? Shout, cry for help or keep my fears inside me? If it succeeded reaching under the table, it would definitely bring out the fool in me as I was sure that I wouldn't be able to help myself from shouting.

So I secretly picked up the chicken leg from my plate and threw it at the animal, intending to satisfy the slimy, terror-stricken cat. The rest had

already finished, which indeed was a relief for me. So I got up to wash my hand. There too, I had to confront trouble. First the queue and then finding myself washing my hand with only water and no soap, which left it still oily and sickening. As I stepped backward, my foot drowned in the puddle which seemed to have been invented for me to get furious.

Finally, after being able to recognise my mother from the crowd of hundreds, I pushed her to leave just like those little, annoying kids. I was least bothered about how I was behaving but all I wanted to do right at that moment was to leave that place. After a prolonged pleading, she was convinced but first I was to find my father.

I entered the place where the men were sitting separately, all the male eyes were on me. I bet they thought I was there to flirt. But the innocent me was only looking for her father — how was I to tell them? When I could at last make him out, I was delighted. But no, he commanded me to wait until he finished his cigarette. How heartless of him, but if he only knew what I had been going through. With a promise from him to meet me and mother as soon as he finished his beloved burning stick, I left that area.

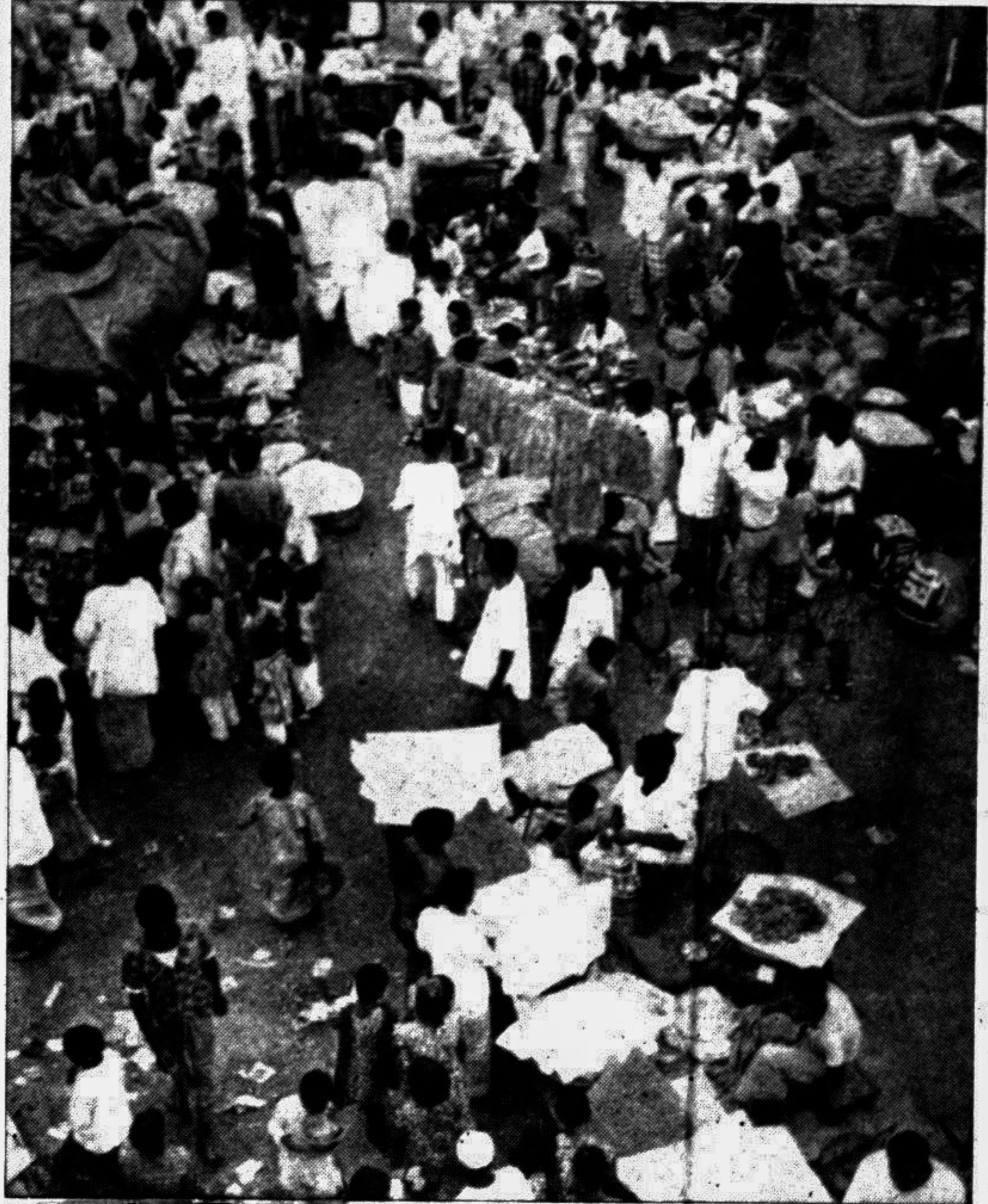
After spending a few minutes which seemed never-ending to me, he came. So, at last, after those slow hours, came the time for leaving that terrifying, glittering place. Glittering because, everything starting from the lights used in the decoration, to the clothes of the huge ladies and the men's shirts, to the oily food, all were glowing giving out a radiant glitter. After tight hand-shakes and sweet-sounding goodbyes I was able to relax in our car. Peace was there — at last!



CHARIE '95

Time in Frame

'Time in Frame' is for those interested in photography. Send us your best photograph with a caption (if required) and a small technical detail of the shot taken. Show the others what you see through the lens. Your coloured or black and white photographs could be on campus politics, every day Dhaka, of course beauty and anything different that your creative mind captures which others hardly notice. Every week the best entry would be published in this new column — introduced just for you. Send us your work in time for the next issue.



Traditional Pairs — Courtesy Bangladesh by Ahmed and Ahmed

You Don't Know What You are Losing!

by Shibrum Chakraborty

Translated by Aminul Haque Shantu

THE learned lawyer stared at her, mesmerised by her charming beauty, once again. She was sitting in front of him against the table.

'Are you listening to me Mr Pakrashi?'

'Oh yes, yes. And what is your name Miss —?'

'Enakshi, Miss Enakshi Roy.'

'Yes, Miss Enakshi Roy, you want to put him on trial. And you came to me for suggestions I understood so far. Didn't I? Exactly. He lives next door to me along with his dog. As bad as a man could be...' she became hot again, hot as steam. 'I want to put him in jail, that's the right place for him. If I can't throw him away from there...'

The lawyer felt helpless and uneasy. 'Look Miss Roy, though it's not easy for you, you got to tell me every thing. Every details without any hesitation. Just a moment — he brought out his pen and note book. 'I'll ask you questions, one after another, you will answer me. You claim that was an intrusion...of privacy?' 'Obviously, what would you call it then, if I had a gun...'

'Right, right.' He felt sorry and didn't like that part. Instead he thought that our women are all capable; the princes, in the ancient times went to the battle field with sword in their hands, and as for women, their eyes have enough gun power or might. 'Right you are.' Coming back from his thoughts he said, 'But why that gun? Tell me where and exactly how did it happen? Describe it just as it happened.'

'I was just going to tell you that. His flat and mine are very close, just a small balcony in between. I live in one side...'

'You live alone. I mean all alone?' asked the lawyer. 'Don't you have any relatives here? What do you do in Calcutta?' he asked a number of questions.

'I work in the govt office. My parents live in the village... I send them money every month...'

'I see, but living in this city all alone...' he didn't like that. 'Not all alone, my maid servant lives with me. But she couldn't stay all the time, she has to go out for shopping and other things; you know. But at night she stays with me.'

'And your next door neighbour? Does he live alone too? Or he lives with his family?'

'No, he lives all by himself. He is as bad a man can be, who will marry him? Who wants to give his daughter to him?'

'take place?'

'Yesterday in the afternoon, after I got back from the office. My maid wasn't at home and I was in the bathroom taking a shower. As you know there is a little space in between the two flats? Just a small railing, but that's not an obstacle for that animal, he could cross that any time.'

'That's right. What happened then?'

'I heard someone entering my bedroom. I got out of the bathroom covering my body in a big towel, thinking that the door might have been open or the wind parted it. I must have forgotten to lock the door and then — I saw that monster.'

'Well, what happened next?'

'We looked at each other for a minute or so and then I shouted, 'Go away from here, but that monster didn't even listen to me.'

'Seeing a total stranger and sensing the vulnerability, his animal instinct surfaced out,' he explained. 'That's why we are here to serve you, otherwise we would have been out of business long before.'

'What to tell you Mr Pakrashi, I became so scared. That hungry look — I covered my body as far as I could with that towel.'

'It's scary indeed, you were helpless in that situation.'

'And that animal was even showing its teeth!'

'He laughed at you! How daring!'

'Laughed? May be, they might laugh like that. But that was horrible. I threw away my towel at its face...'

'And you —? I mean, what about your cover?'

'Nothing, there was, there was — she didn't find the right word to express herself for a while. 'I was naked.'

'I understood. Then what?'

'He jumped aside.'

'Very clever! see!'

'Exactly. Such a man's — then I threw the water bottle at him.'

'Did it hit him?'

'Absolutely not, instead of that I was chased.'

'And what did you do?'

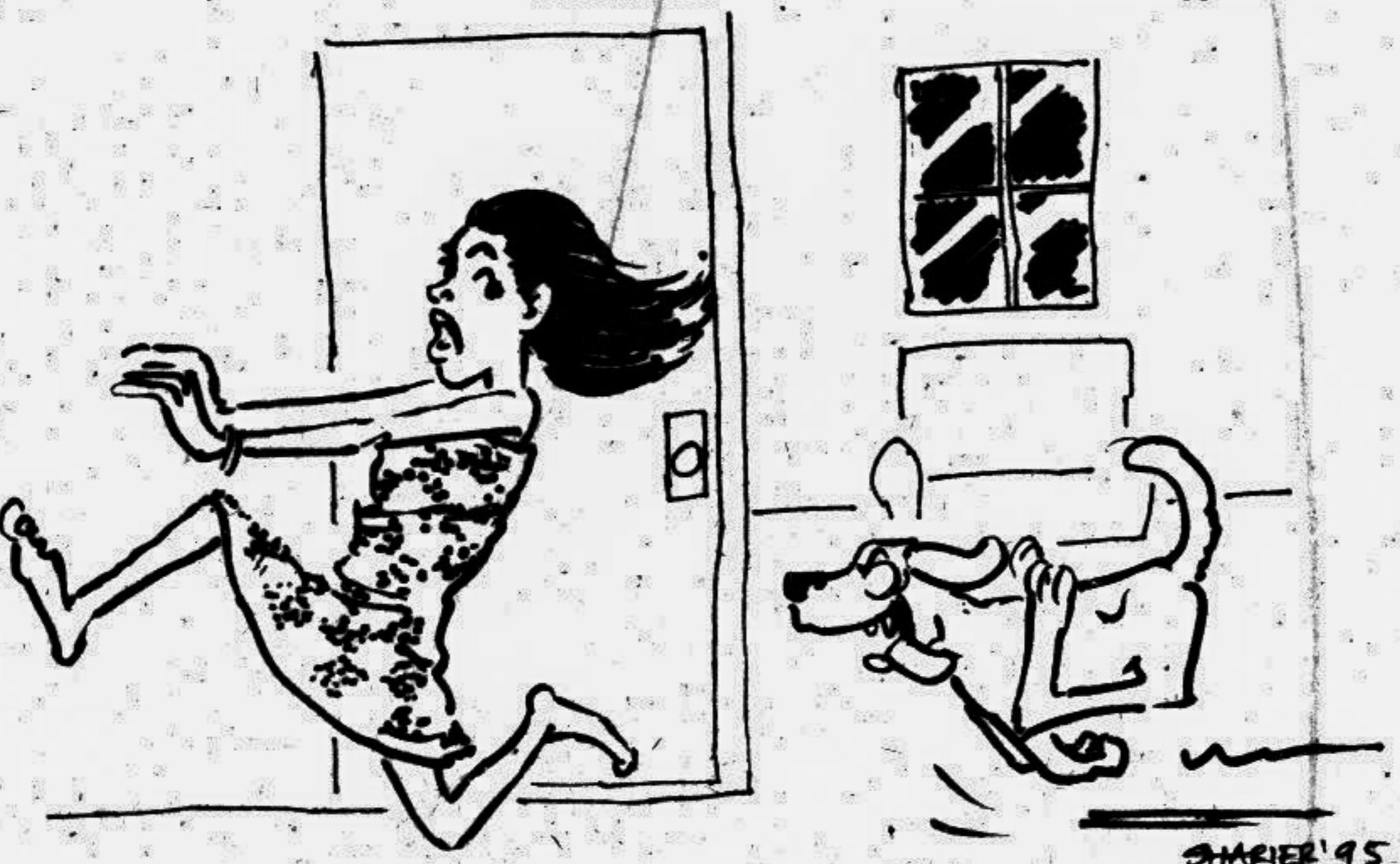
'I started to run too, from one room to another and it was just behind me.'

'You surely were shouting then? Didn't you?'

'Sure, but nobody was around at that hour.'

'There is only two flat in that building. But then —'

'Yes, what happened then?'



CHARIE '95

Why Doesn't Super Glue Stick to the Inside of the Tube?

WHAT makes Super Glue turn from a liquid to a solid is not, as all you needs reflexively shouted out, air. That's for other glues. They just dry. But aliphaticacrylate — that's Super Glue — is triggered by minute traces of moisture. Your basic humidity will do the trick. Super Glue works better in Miami than in Phoenix.

When exposed to moisture, the glue molecules start crystallizing, linking-up like a daisy chain. That's why you can't swallow it like ordinary classroom paste; Super Glue solidifies before it reaches the throat. ('But Super Glue is already wet!' our puerile friends tell us, thinking that anything liquid must necessarily contain H₂O. Not true.) Because of this moisture sensitivity, the people at Super Glue headquarters, the Loctite Corporation,

have to assemble the tubes as though handling the deep-space virus from The Andromeda Strain. Water molecules are rigidly policed.

Loctite wouldn't give details of this process except to say that years ago some of the human workers were found to be contaminating the tubes and had to be replaced by robots.

Bonus medical fact: If you accidentally Super Glue your eyelids shut (note use of trademarked name as a verb), wash with warm water, apply a gauze patch, and sit tight. Don't try to pry it. The eyelid will open in one to four days undamaged. According to the Loctite Corporation.

Courtesy — Why Things Are?

there was a touch of excitement in his voice.

'I entered into the kitchen and locked the door from inside.'

Pakrashi seemed to be disappointed a little. 'Oh! I see, then what happened Miss Roy?'

'We were standing there, me on one side of the door and that dog on the other. I told whatever came to my mind but he didn't go away. After a while somebody knocked at the door and I saw him leaving my flat. I got out from there and opened the door.'

'In that position?'

'Yes, I was out of my mind you know.'

'That's right, that friend of yours. I mean that gentleman —?' Pakrashi was excited again, there might have been another attack, but he was disappointed again.

'It was a she. One of my girl friends. She suggested me to come here.'

'That's good, you have done the right thing.' He thought for a while, how much to charge for the fees. 'Now, lets come to the right point, we need a witness for the case and there is only your statement against him. Oath against oath.'

'But he is not denying.'

'He is not!'

'Absolutely not, moreover he is proud of it. We went to him just after that, my friend and myself.'

'He opened the door by himself and when I told him that I was going to the thana he started to laugh.'

'Wait a minute... he admitted everything in front of your friend?'

'Everything. He thought it was nothing but a funny incident. As if it was very funny!'

'Okay, then the case is strong, you've got a clear case.'

'We can catch him then?'

'Obviously. He admitted everything, moreover your friend's statement is there. He has to pay a lot of compensation.'

'Who wants compensation? I want to shoot him. I want to get rid of that.'

'Miss Enakshi Roy, what you have told me so far and if nothing more had happened, you can't ask for anything more than compensation. As the man had only chased you from the bedroom to the kitchen, no matter how bad the man is, no court is going to accuse him for more than that. No matter how much hurt you are, nobody is going to hang the man for that.'

'The man?'

'Enakshi got confused — 'Who wants to hang the man? I want to shoot his dog.'

Cousins of the Bride and the Groom

by Gemini Wahhaj

THE principal actors of a Bangladeshi wedding are the young people. They are the ones in charge of all the lowly but indispensable responsibilities. For example:

The Shopping:

Any wedding shopping expedition requires a party of at least 6 cousins. 'I have to buy a safety pin,' says one. 'Will you come with me, Jhantu?' 'Oh yes,' says Jhantu, 'and so will Rina, Meena, Rana, Mantu, Rintu, and Muna.' The seven (or eight) cousins will then pile into a 1960s volkswagon with a newly-hired maniac driver, or perhaps a big-sized baby taxi.

The journey itself is quite exciting. Important discussions take place on issues that may not be discussed at the *biye bari* — for example, back-biting about the one snooty cousin purposely left behind.

Important purchases, like the *bor's punjabi* or the *bor's* hand-bag, require many opinions. 'What do you think, Jhantu, a silk punjabi or cotton?'

'Silk of course,' says a confident Jhantu. 'Whoever heard of cotton at a wedding.'

'I personally think cotton is much more comfortable,' says Meena. 'Buy cotton.'

'Are there Grameen check punjabis?' Rintu asks. 'We must be patriotic in every sphere of our lives.'

'Shut up,' says Jhantu. 'Get the purple silk punjabi with red and yellow flowers.'

And thus an important decision is made very democratically.

Just as the Jhantu party gets to the cash register with their proud purchase, they run into another party of eight — the *bar pakkha!*

'Oh look, it's Shelly, Shanta, Lisa, Seema, Pinky, Putul, Tinku, and Minky! Quick, hide the *punjabi!*'

At the tailor's, Rina says, 'Look, we need these blouses made as fast as possible. How soon can you do the job?'

'When is the wedding?' asks the master tailor plus chain smoker as he smokes up the materials.

This is a most important question. If the wedding is in five days, the blouses will be ready in seven. Rina knows this, so she says, 'Three days.' Jhantu says, 'Two days.' Rintu finishes the chorus with, 'four days.'

The Alpans:

The paint and paint brush purchasing team returns with the three principal colors (red, white, and yellow) stinky turpentine, and four different size brushes. The artist team, who had hitherto been gossip-

ing over *cha* and *samosas*, gets up importantly. The real artists must deal very diplomatically with the enthusiastic non-artists.

'Let me do all the principal floor designs,' says Jhantu, whose people drawings look like bamboo sticks (he also likes purple punjabis with yellow flowers, if you remember).

'Aah,' says the very diplomatic non-artist, 'why don't you shut up and just watch?'

The Wedding:

The Jhantu *biye bari* are very polished. They don't believe in *gate dhora* (extolling money from the *bor* party at the gate). Therefore, we can't go into too many details on this most exciting topic. Nor do the Jhantus steal shoes or pin the *bor* to his dias with safety pins. They are very busy shouldering another very important task. They have been advised (by the adults) to dev-

ote all the guests to the roof, so that the actual *biye bari* remains crowd-free.

'Hello, auntie, come this way please,' says Jhantu, pulling along a seventy year-old.

'But my son,' she protests, 'I have a weak heart.'

'But auntie,' says Jhantu, 'all the food will be served upstairs.'

'Oh, in that case, let's go,' says the seventy year-old, whose prime attraction of the all wedding is the feast.

The cousins have also been given charge of receiving the *bor* party at the gate, with flower garlands and this silvery paste to dot the guests' foreheads.

'Mmm, one more minute,' says Rintu (one of the alpans) as he draws a perfectly round dot on a stooping guest.

'Wait, let me draw some petals around it. There, there.'

on the side facing the sun, you wouldn't last long enough to enjoy it. At about 700 F, it's hot enough to melt lead.

No. You'd be weighed down by 300 pounds of beauty. Because of surface gravity, a person on Jupiter weighs about two and a half times as much as on Earth.

Yes. The sun's light striking Earth is reflected back into space. When the moon is at a new quarter, we see the rest of it dimly, because it is illuminated by this 'earthlight.'

Interplanetary Quiz

Planning a vacation tour of the solar system? Try this quiz. A score of 0 to 4 means you'd better stay home. Five to 9 you might make it to the moon. Get all 10 right and you're all set for blast-off.

Does the 'Man in the Moon' ever turn his back on us?

On what planet would a one-year jail sentence be longest?

On which planet could you get the quickest sun tan?

Would you let Goldie Hawn sit on your lap on Jupiter?

Is there such a thing as 'earthlight,' similar to moon light?

Where in the solar system would lovers be moonstruck the hardest?

Where was atomic energy in use long before World War II?

Do you move faster in the tropics than in Chicago?

When is the Earth closest to the Sun?

Answer

No. The moon revolving around Earth rotates just enough to keep the same side towards us.

Pluto. On this farthest planet, the year is equal to 248 of ours.

Mercury. But if you landed