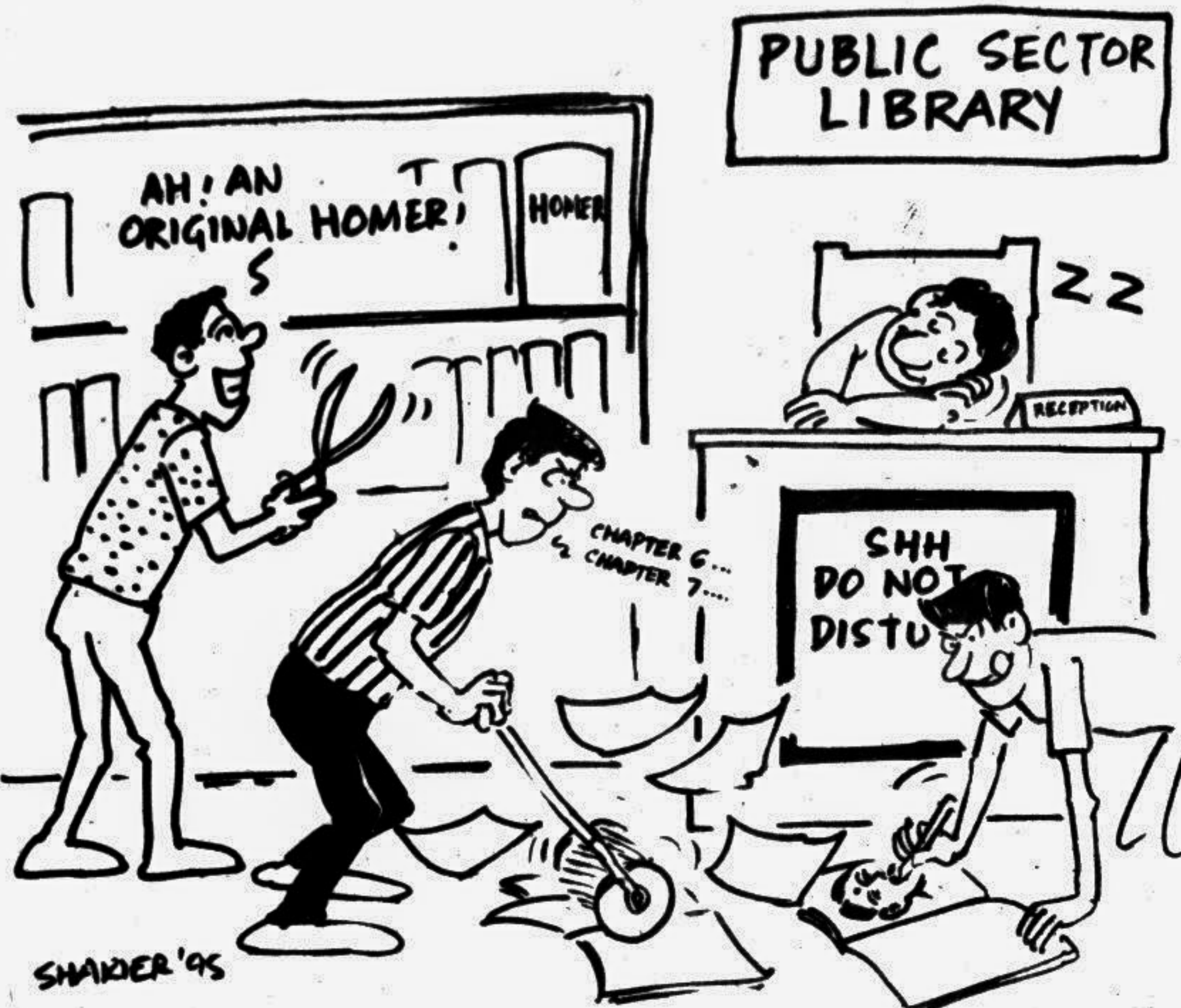


LIVING

Crying 'Hoa' to the Rampage

by Fayza Haq



minute, and are not ashamed of their vicious acts of rampant vandalism.

When the stake is a student's future career or a girl's worth at the marriage market, in terms of degrees and diplomas, or the prospect of being independent or, being able to support one's family which maybe stranded without only a male earning member, the desperate young ones plunge ahead and hesitate not more than a few minutes before going ahead with the cold-blooded cutting of pages with razors, or heavily underlining, to summarise

or catch up with the missed time, spent in part-time jobs.

At times books are borrowed and just not returned on the pretext of having misplaced them. These will lie safely on the desks of the student, who will cram up with contentment, and the question of pricking of the consciences will not arise — as in matters of marks it is every one for himself.

Teachers, sometimes, do little to do some thing constructive to remove the hurdle of the non-existent books. They will, at times, roll out the names of the recom-

mended books and relevant chapters after the lecture and walk away feeling content about having done their duty. Little do they realise that there is a mad scramble for the books after the lectures — leading to annoyance, jealousy and constant bickering among the classmates — one trying to jostle the other for getting the better division or the best position.

Even if the learned lectures and professors do stop to realise the dearth of books, they coolly comment that more and more competition is only

more stimulating for the students.

Even if the teachers make a resolution of stocking up text books for the separate department or field of study, the decision is seldom implemented with one excuse or another.

While the one has one's eyes out of focus with trying to read between the scribbles and doodles, the ticks and crosses of the previous readers, one's patience comes to an end, when one finds that the book that was so important in the course as there but the necessary chapters have been torn out. Yet the youth has little recourse but to wait for long hours at the libraries, far from waiting for his/her turn as he/she skims impatiently through others not so relevant books.

The lack of text books, reference matters and periodicals necessary for examination or research or dirth of them lead to "ganging" up of students who see to it that the precious "booty" remains within the close circle of friends. Unlike some schools and colleges, here in cities, the teachers, sometimes, encourage quotations from authorities rather than the opinion and conclusion of the student himself, in which case, the student would try to study the text book itself thoroughly rather than run amuck trying to put together a chain of hunks of passage from authorities — as he/she finds fit — going through the so called treasures in the libraries.

Before giving assignments, a lecturer himself should check upto the availability of the books and journals which he feels are essential for the student to have digested. The authorities connected with education should try to obtain more books so that there is a fair ratio of supply and demand of reading matter. Perhaps only then can the reckless rampage for library books be brought to a halt or even checked to an extent.

Suffering from Cat Phobia?

by Farhana Ahmad

ARE you obsessed with fear to a point of obsession over some silly irrational thing or other that makes others laugh or worse irritates them? Well, I am! I am petrified of cats. Do you say how can a grown woman be frightened of something so cute, so cuddly? I say easily! I get the creeps whenever I see a member of the feline species. Sometimes even the thought of one gives my nervous system a high voltage jolt. They have a role in every nightmare that I have ever dreamt so far. The worst part is when a person is as scared of any particular thing she or he somehow or other has to have a daily encounter with it. That is what happened to me. I study medicine and cats cohabit with us in the hostel that I live in. You can imagine my torment when I first went there.

I lived in daily dread. Everyday I heard different stories. Such as how cats liked to creep in under the quilts when the girls were sleeping. I was getting paranoid. The strange fact was that my roommate happened to be an ardent animal lover. She was crazy about cats. She had a couple of them back home and the cats at the hostel made her feel less homesick. I believe animals can sense these things. She always had cats coming to her begging for food. As that meant their coming to my room you can guess how I felt. In fact I even got to a point where I started studying in bed so that my feet were up and not at a risk of being rubbed by the four legged furry creatures. However, my other roommate was pretty supportive and she always tried to shoo the cats away before they came anywhere near me. One night, after we had both gone to sleep, she suddenly woke up to find me standing erect on the bed in a trance. After she got up to see what was wrong with me, she saw that a cat had entered our room through the open window. Even my subconscious mind was alerted to its presence! I still cannot bear to leave the window open for the fear of the cat jumping in.

The worst of all incidents took place when I was taking history from a patient at the gynae ward. All the patients have a bowl under their beds to throw their waste in. Often they throw a lot of uneaten food there. So a cat ambled by to see if there was anything edible. As soon as I saw it coming towards the bed where I was standing, I pushed my patient almost off the bed and was up on the bed before you could count to three and gave a piercing scream. I don't know

who was more frightened me, the cat, the poor sick lady or the rest of the patients in the ward!

The psychiatrists have a fancy name for this kind of fear. They term it as phobic neurosis. The definition they give being "a neurotic disorder characterized by the presence of irrational or exaggerated fear of objects, situations or bodily functions not inherently dangerous or the appropriate source of the anxiety."

There is usually some sort of history behind it. Maybe something had happened to you when you were very young and left its impact on you. In my case, when I was four years old, a pet cat at my grandfather's house lodged itself to the front of my dress by its claws and would not be dis-

a small household spider?

The cure for these particular problems? Is there one? Believe me, I have tried time and again to rid myself of my obsession. I would say that I am a little better. I have learnt to live by avoiding the obstacle created by it.

The psychiatrists suggest therapy, behavioural therapy and insight psychotherapy. These techniques condition or desensitize the patient to the phobic stimulus by requiring him to confront the stimulus while using relaxation techniques including hypnosis to combat the anxiety aroused by the stimulus.

There are no pills that you can take to alleviate the fear. But your doctor will probably prescribe a minor tranquilizer or a tricyclic antidepressant to



lodged. Even now, two decades after the incident, I keep thinking that a cat is going to jump on me whenever I see one coming.

Sometimes fear of certain objects run in certain families. I know a family where all the members are petrified of spiders. Maybe you can understand the 10-year-old little girl's fright but will you look kindly on her 20-year-old, 6 feet 3 inches burly brother's irrational fear of a small thing like a spider? Maybe you can understand his being wary of a tarantula but how do you explain his obsessive phobia over

reduce the anxiety and the panic attacks and of course to soothe your nerves.

One word of caution to friends, family and well-wishers of the people overcome with fear over irrational objects is don't try to rid him of his fear by confronting him with that object. Remember you are not a psychiatrist. You are not equipped to deal with a person on a high emotional level as one obsessed with fear. All you will be doing is scaring him out of his wits, making him lose all faith and confidence in you. Making him feel insecure when you are around.

Sweet Sweating

by Nico den Tuinder

I was born on Christmas Day, the 25th of December. This was probably the very first mistake I made in my life. I had to celebrate my birthday when everybody wanted to stay at home, having sumptuous Christmas dinners. It was a tradition in my family to let children have their favourite meal on their birthday, and mine was red beets with potatoes and fried bacon. I always saw long faces when greeting my birthday guests. They had a different idea about Christmas dinners.

My birthday should have been three weeks earlier. That is what the nurse had calculated. Why did I stay so long in my mother's tummy? Well, it was pretty cold outside, but I guess I wanted to stay because of the womb liquids. They allowed me to dip and dive before I could even set my eyes on a swimming pool.

Swimming, canoeing, showering, crossing rivers and seas by ferries: I relish it. I find nothing as refreshing as a glass of cold water.

Nature must have considered my coming to the country when it created Bangladesh. It is full of water. I only have to walk in one straight line for one kilometre, and there is sure to be a river, a stream, a pond or a lake, or just any inundated area.

When I want to go to Sylhet, I can spend a wonderful time waiting for the ferry, while two more of those up-and-down boats are lying idle. I have all the time of the world to enjoy the riverscape. When I want to go the other way, to Rajshahi and its cheap mangoes, the barrier of water allows me to indulge in my boy-scouting skills of trying to locate the ticket office and then the ferry ghat itself. I

may test my charming and bribing skills while trying to jump the queue of cars waiting for the ferry to depart. Some weeks ago I nearly got a chance to practice my canoeing skills again. Motiheel was pretty much getting inundated, and I was getting ready to send a fax to my head office requesting a dinghy. I almost sent a letter to this newspaper proposing to rebaptise Shantinagar to Sagornagar. I cursed when the rains stopped. I consider myself lucky though, that the construction of the Dhaka drainage system is not making any progress. With great relish I see that it is getting blocked before it is even completed. More flooding!

WASA: I love it. Months ago I complained to it that my water pipe had a leak. Nothing happened. A pretty lake is now developing right in front of my house. Also, the open drain is stuck. Great. WASA has provided me with another lake, with jolly little fish in it. After some months I will not have to buy any fish any more. I will just catch it in one of the WASA lakes.

The Electricity Board is equally helpful. Dhaka is so dirty I should take a shower or a bath two times per day. Should, as the electricity supply fails regularly, especially when it is very hot. I start sweating, rivers of water run down my body, and I feel as in a sauna. After ten electricity-free minutes, all the pores in my body have sweated out the dirt of the day. I can define my territory by dropping some water faster than a dog. I do not have to apply any body lotion anymore to get a nice smell. I can find public and other toilets in Bangladesh with my nose, and people can locate me with theirs. H₂O: I love it.



A Garden of Inspiration

Beautiful surroundings seem to aid the creative process — judging by the houses and gardens of famous people who once lived in the south of England. Here, a visitor to Lamb House in Rye, Sussex, southern England, reads from a novel by American writer Henry James as she enjoys the garden. The author himself would often look out from a small room onto the garden whilst busy on a novel. He lived at the house for much of the time from 1899 to his death in 1916. Most of the English literary establishment, including H G Wells, Rudyard Kipling and Max Beerbohm visited him there. A fine town house, built in 1724, it was first the home of James Lamb, Mayor of Rye, who once entertained King George I there for three days. The house is now owned and run by the National Trust, a charitable organisation that helps to conserve historic houses and parklands all over Britain.

Gajrela
1 lb carrots
1 pint milk
1 tablespoonful rice
Sugar to taste
Almonds, pistachios and angelica for decoration
Peel, wash and grate the carrots, cook with the rice in a pint of milk slowly until thick. Add sugar, decorate and serve ice-cold.

COOKERY

Pakoras
4 oz gram flour (Basan Atta)
Chilli powder to taste
1 teaspoonful cummin grey
Fat for frying
1 cupful water

Pinch of salt
Spinach or lettuce leaves or potatoes sliced as for chips

Make a batter, using the flour, chilli powder, salt, cummin grey and water, and beating well. Take separate leaves of spinach or lettuce, or a slice of potato, dip in the batter and fry indeep, very hotfat. Serve piping hot, with chilli sauce if desired.

Caring for Your Jewellery

by Sylvia Salim

HOWEVER good the stone, however fine the setting, your jewellery cannot look its best if it isn't in sparkling form. Even costume jewellery looks twice as good if it is kept spanking clean.

Pearls

Pearls, for instance, should never be soaked, it simply rots the thread upon which they are strung. If they turn yellow, start wearing them against the skin, night and day — the body warmth usually brings back the milky glow.

Watches

Watches, too, need expert attention. Many reputable jewellers will decline to handle a watch which has been tampered with by an amateur, and rightly so. Unskilled treatment can easily cause permanent damage to a delicate mechanism.

Opals and Turquoises

Opals and Turquoises should never be washed. The stones are simply not hard enough to stand up to it.

Almost all Other Jewellery

Almost all other jewellery reacts well to cleaning. To put on a quick shine, you can dip it in alcohol. Merely swirl rings and brooches around in a little gin — it's not particularly extravagant, as you don't use much! But it is extremely effective, and quickly loosens dirt and grease behind the stones.

The most practical and effective way to clean all precious stones in a metal setting is to immerse them in a bowl of soap suds. Most liquid or power detergents are perfectly safe to use; add just a few drops of ammonia if the water is hard. Soak the jewellery for

a few minutes only, then brush gently round all the crevices at the front and back of the setting with a soft-bristled brush. A child's toothbrush or an eyebrow brush is

excellent, but any kind will do, so long as it is soft.

Next, rinse your jewellery well in clear, hot water, and then dry on a soft linen towel or chamois leather.



Planning for holiday in hill stations? Courtesy: Elle.



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