

LITERATURE

An ancient manuscript of the Arabian Nights is found in Uzbekistan. Its legend is similar to the original book but the conclusion is completely different. Learned scholars say, this newly-discovered legend is more authentic, reliable and logical. To satisfy your curiosity that very Uzbek conclusion is narrated here. But before we go through this conclusion it is important to know the beginning and ending of the conventional story. In case, if you have forgotten, then, reminding you briefly.

Shahriyar was the king of Persia and his brother Shah-Zeman was the monarch of Samarkand, both of them miraculously discovered that their wives and mistresses all most all were unchaste. They beheaded the women of their Harem and being disgusted with the worldly life, they renounced their regal dignity and decided to travel.

They gather another testimony of women's deceptive character on the way. A genie carried his mistress off and put her in a box and placed the box in a chest and affixed to the chest seven locks. Sometimes he brought out his beautiful mistress from the chest to give her an airing and slept on her lap. During this time the 'Sundry' used to collect new lovers. Both the brothers became victims of her wiles.

Shahriyar said to the younger, "Brother look, this demon monster is unable to control his mistress even by imprisoning her in a chest with seven locks, whereas we fellow are nothing. There is no point in being wandering dervishes, we will marry again. But we should not believe 'womankind', after enjoying a single night new wives will be beheaded and the next day we will marry some one else. So, our women have no opportunity to felony." The two brothers agreed and went back to their respective kingdoms. They managed to enjoy unadulterated conjugal love by marrying everyday and beheading their wives at the end of the night.

Shahriyar's weezer had two daughters Scheherazade and Dunyazade. With the earnest request of Scheherazade, the weezer bestowed her to the king Shahriyar. At night Scheherazade told her husband that she was worried about her young sister. So Dunyazade was brought to the palace immediately. At the last watch of the night she said, "Sister this is our last meeting, if Your Majesty, permits please tell me a story."

Shahriyar said, "Well, you can carry on until the sun rises."

The King was delighted to hear Scheherazade's story and said, "I will hear the rest tomorrow night. Let us adjourn beheading for one day." The following night Scheherazade finished the story and started telling a new one. The king becomes curious to know the conclusion. So, Scheherazade got reprieve for one more day. And this is how Scheherazade continued her stories one after another for thousand and one nights and survived. At last Shahriyar was appeased and said, "I will not execute you, you will live as my first wife. I will arrange the marriage of your sister Dunyazade with my brother, Shah-Zeman."

Now begins the Uzbek Afterward to the Arabian Nights.

After one thousand and one nights Shahriyar said happily, "I am very satisfied to enjoy the most amazing stories you have told. You do not have to die."

Scheherazade expressed her gratitude to the King.

Dunyazade said, "Your majesty, so far you have heard about my sister's stories for so long and given her life as a reward. But you have heard none of my tales."

Shahriyar said, "What! you also known stories? Well tell me your stories."

Dunyazade said, "What I am telling is not fiction but fact. Your Majesty, you have seen many beauties do you know any one who is a peerless beauty?"

"Way! yes you and your sister."

"There are hundred times more beautiful women than us, whose description I have heard from my dear friend Gulbadan. Her country is far away. Six months ago a gang of Huns kidnaped her and brought her to the Ispahana Bazaar, my father bought her for a

100 Dinar. I understood after a little conversation with Gulbadan, she is not a mere slave, she is from a high society, a relative of Gulbulistan's Princesses."

"Gulbulistan! where is this? I had not heard this name before."

"The country where lots of roses grow is called Gulistan, and the country where the number of roses is equal to the number of Nightingale is Gulbulistan. The country is in the south of the Hindukush near the Balk valley. You might know, long ago the great hero Alexander conquered the Persian Empire and many countries in the East. He had stopped in Gulbulistan with his army for several days. At that time he himself and his 200 commanders married many local girls. The present Gulbulistanians are their descendants. Men of that country are very braves and women are very beautiful, with pink complexion, cheeks like apples, blue eyeballs and chins round like the statue of Greek goddesses. Alexander himself is the ancestor of that country. Now he is dead, his two princesses, Ulfutunnassa and Lutfunnassa are ruling that country."

"What strange names! I had not heard of them before."

"Yes, this is because of the Greek language. Moreover the Kingdom of Hind is near to it, which has also helped to distort a bit. Gulbulistan is a very impassable place. On the way there is a mountain called 'Bab-al-Moimun', the Gate of the Monkeys. A very narrow passage goes through those two steep mountains which is guarded by hundreds and thousands of trained monkeys. They kill intruders by throwing stones at them. It is heard that one of the king of that country

"Listen, now this is the month of Ramadan, the Eid-ul-Fitr is only a few days away. The rich and the poor all drink jars of sherbet at this time. This is why a huge quantity of 'Tahkt-E-Khandersi', alkali of molasses imported through the Basra Port. Confiscate one thousand bags of those molasses to take with you and strew them on both sides of the Bab-al-Moimun. The monkeys will go mad and scramble for the molasses and you will easily enter."

Shahriyar said, "Excellent! You are really intelligent, if had you been a man I would have appointed you as my Weezer. I am sending message to Shah-Zeman today, you two sisters and your friend, Gulbadan get ready for the journey."

The journey was made in accordance to Dunyazade's suggestion. After some days Shahriyar, Shah-Zeman, Scheherazade, Dunyazade, and their two commanders and fifty servants reached Gulbulistan safely under the guidance of Gulbadan. Gulbadan took four bodyguards and went ahead to their princesses to inform them of their arrival. They accorded a warm reception to the guests.

After rest and dinner, the elder Princess said, "O! the Majesties of Persia and Samarkand, let us know the reason of your visit here."

Shahriyar replied, "Oh! the greatest of rosy bulbil, the Princesses of Gulbulistan, you are more beautiful than we heard. We are fascinated! you two sisters must become our wives."

Princess Ulfut answered, "That's fine, we do not have any objection, we are always ready to marry. By the by, who are these two

our mistresses, maid servants, sweepers or any other women with an evil eye, you will be beheaded."

Shahriyar flared up in anger. "InshaAllah! guard your tongue dear, I also am in the habit of beheading."

Ulfut said, "Come and let me explain to you, Maid, ask four torch bearers and ten body guards to go to the Beheading Mansion." Two princesses entered the Beheading Mansion with their two husbands. By the light of the torches two saw, with fear in their hearts, a lot of stakes fixed in walls and, rows of human heads hanging on them. They had different types of beards, white beards; black and white beards; massive beard covering the cheek and chin; goatbeards; long beards; moustacheless beards.

Ulfutunnassa said, "Listen, Your Majesties, all those heads belong to our previous husbands, the northern wall is for my husbands and the southern wall is for Lutful's. Each one of them looked at our maids with covetous eyes after marriage. We execute them according to our law. We punish lascivious husbands just as you punish your unfaithful wives. Oh! Shahriyar and Shah-Zeman, if you are not careful, you will have the same fate. Beware! don't touch your swords, or our guards will behead you with in no time."

Shahriyar said, "You demon, Rakshasi, devil, daughter of Satan, do not you have any compassion and affection in your heart?"

"We do far more than you. You married a new bride every day and executed her just after the expiration of the night. You did not care about to know whether she was good. We are not that cruel, we do not kill innocent husbands, only those we find coveting other women."

Shah-Zeman whispered, "Brother, are those heads real or are made of plastic?"

Shahriyar said, "I don't think so, then flies would not be sitting on them. However, a bit of molasses can attract flies, whatever it is, we should escape from these Satans. If we had enough soldiers with us we could have arrested them with their maids."

Then, Shahriyar said in a grave and calm voice, "Princesses we divorce you and we will go back our country immediately."

Ulfut said, "Your divorce is not acceptable here. Our 'Shariat' is different, if you do not divorce you, you can not leave from here."

"Then remove your maids from out of our eyesight otherwise, we will feel tempted."

"They will remain where they are, or how can we judge your characters."

Shahriyar struck his forehead and cried, "Alas! What will happen to our kingdoms of Persia and Samarkand?"

Ulfut said, "don't worry about that, your commander Shamsheer Jong will marry Scheherazade and ascend to the Persian throne and Naosher Jong will marry Dunyazade and rule the Samarkand Kingdom. Give the royal Seal on the 'forman' and on this deed of consents. Do not delay other wise you shall be in danger."

Helplessly Shahriyar and Shah-Zeman gave the Royal Seals on the the documents. Shahriyar said with folded hands, "Princess have mercy on us, if we see your maids all the time we will be tempted and loose our lives, let us leave to go some other place."

You can do that, in the northern part of Gulbulistan there are mountains with caves, you can live there happily. Supplies will be sent once a week from here and two Mollahs will visit you often to teach you religious ways. You will recite holy words and names of Allah perpetually for absolution."

Five years later, the Mollahs informed that by the grace of the Almighty the two brothers, had reformed a bit. The two Princesses freed them and then divorced their respective husbands.

Shahriyar and Shah-Zeman returned to their countries and found that they have lost everything — subject, soldiers, and treasures. Everything are disposed by Shamsheer Jong and Naosher Jong. They sat firmly in thrones and there was no way to get back the Kingdoms. Having no alternative they went to Baghdad and led their lives by telling varieties of stories of the Arabian Nights to the people at coffee houses and inns.

Gulbulistan

A Short Story by Rajshekar Basu

Translated by Badrul Hassan

imported those monkeys from the land of Bengal long ago. Your Majesty, I propose you and your brother to adventure into the empire of Gulbulistan and marry the princesses Ulfut and Lutful. My friend Gulbadan will guide you there, she will also be able to return her country safe as well."

Shahriyar said, "We cannot marry just anybody. How are those two princesses looked at? What are their characters like?"

Your Excellency they are the most beautiful women on earth, you will not find chaste women like them. They are beautiful and as well as wealthy, if you brothers marry those two princesses, you will get a lot of treasures along with wives who are somewhat like the virgins of Paradise."

"What does your sister say?"

Scheherazade replied, "Your Majesty, I am always ready to sacrifice my life for your happiness."

Shahriyar thought a while, then said, "Well Shah-Zeman and I will start for Gulbulistan soon. We will take ten thousand archers, ten thousand cavalry spearman, and thirty thousand hatchet soldiers with us."

Dunyazade said, "Don't do that Your Majesty! You will be killed with your troops even before you reach Gulbulistan. Monkeys of the 'Bab-Al-Moimun' mountain will finish all of you by throwing stones. Moreover, the princesses have five, thousand elephants, they will put your soldiers to flight. Better listen to me, take only fifty bodyguards, twenty-five for you and twenty-five for your younger brother. You have two youthful army commanders, Shamsheer Jong and Naosher Jong take them also."

"But how will we deal with those monkeys?"

beauties who have come with you!"

Shahriyar said, "She is my present wife Scheherazade and the other is my sister-in-law Dunyazade, my brother's betrothed. They do not have any objection to live with fellow wives."

Ulfut shook her head and said, "Then you cannot marry us. According to our laws of ethics, Kamila-O-Damna, it is forbidden to have more than one wife and more than one husband at a time."

"Princes, you are quoting antireligious Christian ethics, polygamy is prohibited for women, but not for men."

Your custom is invalid here. Our 'Shariat' is different from yours, if you do not abide by them you cannot marry us."

Shahriyar confirmed in a low voice with his younger Shah-Zeman for a while and said, "Well, we shall abide by your laws, Scheherazade, I divorce you, you are no longer my wife, I am really sorry for you. What should I say everything is in the hands of Allah. I will get another handsome husband for you." Shah-Zeman said, "Dunyazade, I also do not want you any longer, you better marry someone else."

Thereafter, bands and drums were began to beat, flute played and the maids started to dance. The mollahs of Gulbulistan conducted the marriages of Shahriyar with Ulfut and Shah-Zeman with Lutful.

In the afternoon, Shahriyar was sitting beside a fountain in a beautiful garden adjacent to the palace. He said, "Dear Ulfut, your maids are very beautiful, some of them are even more beautiful than the two of you. We two brothers will divide them between us and keep them in our respective harems."

Ulfut said, "Beware, my lord! If you look at

MORE and more Egyptians, particularly those belonging to the lower middle class, are sidestepping traditional marital laws in favour of the less formal though equally binding orfi marriage.

More than anything else, the reason is financial. A great number of couples of marriageable age and their families are facing economic difficulties, foreign them to forget about a formal marriage which entails huge expenses. Also, a regular marriage carries "conditions" which modern-day Egyptians find onerous and too suffocating.

Orfi marriage is valid from the Shariah (Islamic law) point of view and was commonly practised in ancient times as the only known form of marriage, according to Sheikh Attia Saqr, head of the Fatwa Committee at Al-Azhar. Today the law requires a contract, which has to be drawn, notarized and signed by witnesses.

Sharia simply requires a proposal and acceptance by the two partners, a dowry and two witnesses to attest that the couple has honest intentions of marrying. This is all that is needed to make the marriage valid from the religious point of view, points out Fawzi Abdel-Sattar, head of the Legislative Committee at the People's Assembly.

However, while orfi marriage fulfills Shariah's requirements, the union does not satisfy the requirements of civil law. Thus, the courts refuse to hear any litigation connected with it. An example is the case of a man who had an orfi wedding but refused to acknowledge paternity of children from that union claiming he is not actually "married."

Asian diary BY ARJUNA

Marriage of Convenience

Twenty-four-year-old Sameh married Amal, 20, despite intense opposition from their parents. Amal agreed to an orfi marriage until Sameh could convince his parents. A year later Sameh said he noticed drastic changes in Amal's attitude. The couple separated after one child.

But four years later, Amal sent Sameh three birth certificates naming him father of three children. Sameh initiated a law suit denying paternity of two of the children. Years later the case is still in court while Sameh remains fully responsible for the three children.

The popularity of the orfi-style marriage is mainly due to the fact that the contract is not legally binding. The man is free from his traditional responsibilities, such as alimony and child support. Another advantage is that it can be performed in secret without parental consent.

Moreover, since the marriage is not acknowledged by civil law, it will not prevent widows, orphans and divorcees from continuing to receive government pensions and/or alimonies from previous husbands.

Orfi marriage also allows a woman to file for divorce simply without a fuss. Divorce simply entails tearing up the contract between the

Orfi contracts are often used against women. Twenty-four-year-old Samia married Maher Shaker who was 55 at the time. Samia kept the orfi contract. One day Shaker asked for it saying he wanted to legalize their marriage (it is very easy to have the contract notarized).

Samia readily gave her husband the document which he promptly tore to pieces before kicking her out of the house. The wife's claim for alimony was rejected by the court since there was no legal trace of her marriage. Samia insists she was not aware that she has no civil rights such as alimony, housing and inheritance for her children in an orfi marriage.

The orfi marriage is also often used as another way of denying women their legal rights. However, it is difficult to outlaw the practice since it is allowed by Shariah even if its misuse is not in the spirit of the religious law.

Hammad Makram, assistant counsellor at the State Council, attributes the spread of orfi marriages to several factors. Mr Makram points out that the absence of a muakhar, (amount allotted to the wife in case of divorce or death) is especially attractive.

According to the personal Status Law, if the wife discovers that her husband has remarried, she is entitled to receive her muakhar. The husband is required to provide a house for the wife and children as long as she has custody.

More and more university students are also using the orfi marriage as a means of alleviating their feelings of guilt about their sexual relationships.

—Depthnews Asia

Disneyland

Continued from page 9
mist screens bring a cavalcade of animated characters to life amidst crashing waves and shooting stars. This Fantasmic Show is really an unforgettable event which captured everybody's imagination.

ToonTown

ToonTown is a new addition of entertainment in the Fantasyland. It is a small world where Mickey Mouse lives with his lover Minnie Mouse, and all their pals live and play. There all the visitors get a chance to meet favourite Disney characters in their own wacky Cartoon world. At the steps of the ToonTown City Hall, Mayor Mickey Mouse welcomes visitors inside the small world. Going inside we visited every details of Mickey's Tree House & strolled through his backyard. There children were climbing the trees to play with Goofy and to enjoy sliding fun. Goofy's garden was outside with a variety of delights, including watery water melons, squashed squashes and goofy grapes.

Next door to Mickey's is the dream home of his life long co-star and sweet heart, Minnie Mouse. Always a perfect hostess, Minnie provided her guests with an array of activities, from baking a cake in the kitchen to sampling her perfume in her dressing room. There everything has 3-D cartoon environment. Everything is exaggerated to convey cartoonish elements. There are no straight lines or conventional architecture in the houses. A crazy Trolley Ride took all the children to the "downtown" to play with Mickey's pals and friends. Then we took a Roger Rabbits Cartoon-Spin-Ride. It was the longest and most unusually dark ride. It thrilled us with an action-packed trip through some of the wildly comical and more sinister corners of Mickey's ToonTown. We were menaced at every turn by the villainous weasels and their friends. The Spin Ride then took us on a thrill-packed tour of some of classic cartoon gag situations enabling us to personally experience many cartoon films.

A Gamble

by Nazim Mahmood

Call it a game or a gamble. I win you must, I know you are my destiny cast. Like an epic hero I will shoot an arrow And hit the heart of a flying sparrow. None but the brave deserves the prize: Just a loving look of your flashing eyes. It's more a gamble than a game. The flight of a mind who can tame? If love is a poem, who has read it Sans tears to his credit?

The Global Village : My Home

by Abul Ashraf Noor

Mysteries of life and death call for divine ideals No computer or clever robots can meet them I wish to recall my helplessness to rescue But the evils of prejudice on earth Explode over my own world Of ignorance and backwardness With the culture of my uncultured home I try to reach Into the depth of humanity At the service of mankind.

Now I'm more than just a human link Making my endeavour acceptable to all Specially treated to impart divine shine To be a most worthy achievement In my valueless life To protect and defend it I need actions Of humanity beyond the geographical boundaries And the solar horizon This feeling is a feeling of oneness in its totality Let the global village be my sweet home With a touchstone of world conscience.

Bosnia

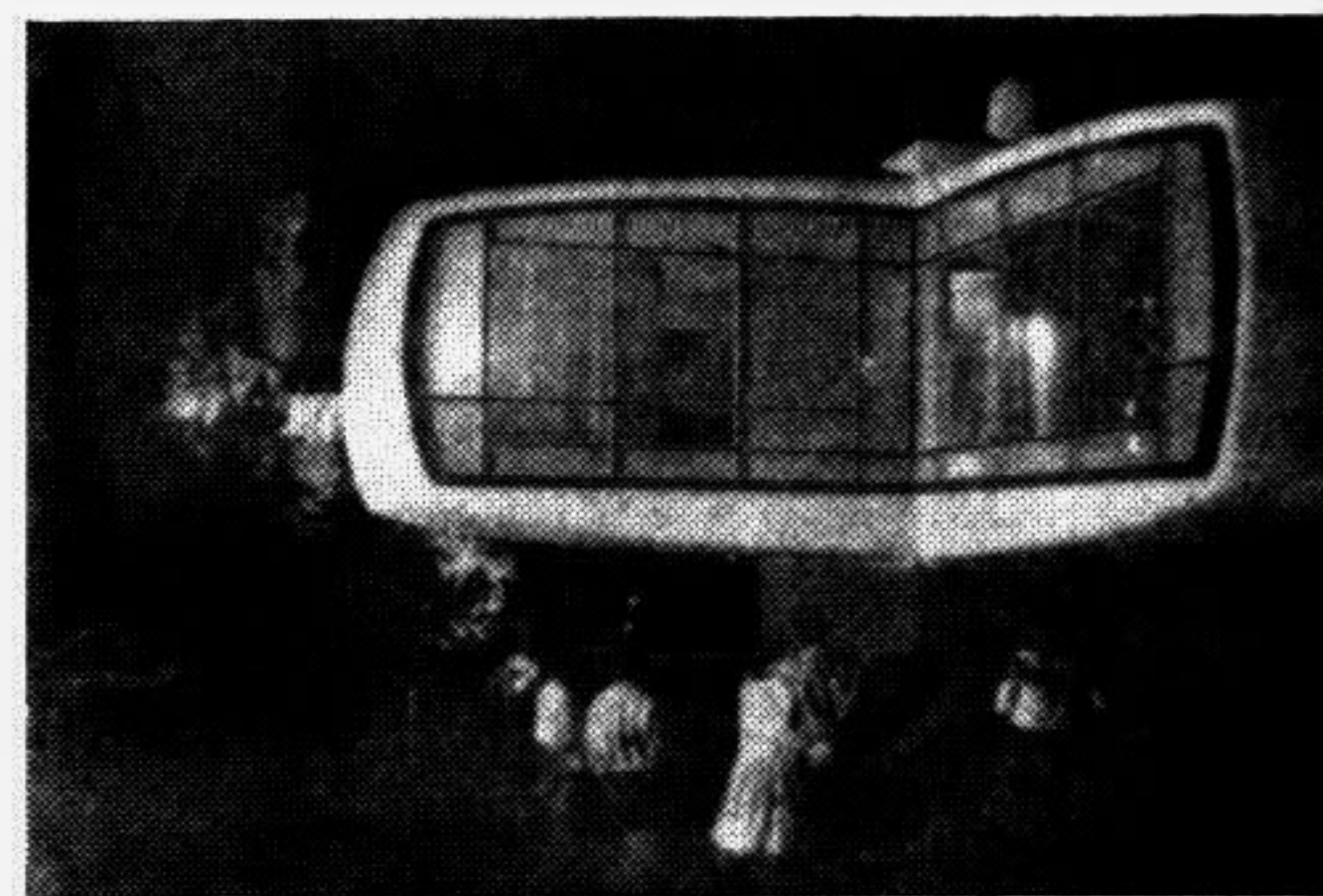
by Faruquddin Ahmed

It's a story of hypocrisy of the highest order It's an endless episode of assault and murder The world community in the name of protection Only helps the Serbs in their annihilation Of the Muslims, because they are a helpless group — Neither Christians nor Jews; so they have to stoop Before the murderous Serbs and surrender life, honour. The Muslims have no right to live but to suffer! The UN assures them help but lets the Serbs kill Them by millions as if it mattered little! What an awful lot of naked, shameless hypocrisy The world witnesses like it were but a legacy!

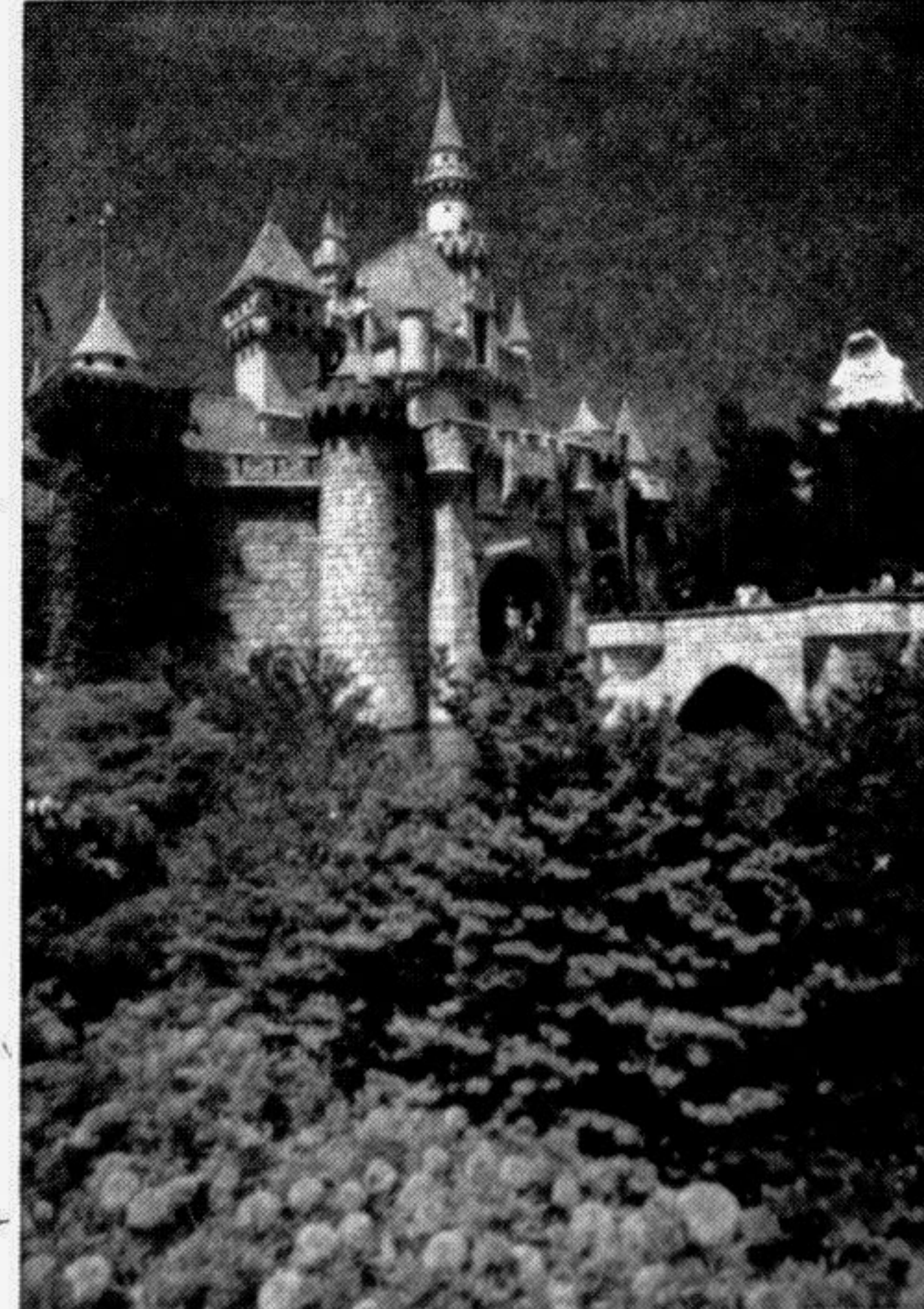
Come September

by Shakib Ahsan

... that was the shortest day phone was ringing meek a cold feet called — "treat or trick" a dreary close, shadowed the day capturing that summer evening behind my door kept me listening I say, had you put down your feet by the fire place that goes unlit we could watch the stars ... share my seat Every piece of log pines for the sun I have dissentions lately visiting by come September whose phone will cry where I tread only the friendless dares you have with you my silent prayers so shy were my hands on your crispy hair...



At 1997, Tomorrow's House of the Future opened in the Fantasyland



The Fantasyland