

TEENS and TWENTIES

Being Human

by Md Atiquzzaman

NOT surprising Kallol added, I said, "can you tell me something more about this Arif? It might become useful for me, you know."

My request was warmly accepted. Kallol began with a high spirit. "Arif was sure crook in his childhood. Always took an advantage of his macho figure, and used to clobber us for no reason". Kallol continued overlooking Arif's still healthy profile. "He was a notorious too at that age. He would stand in front of the girls' school and pass comments. Funny thing about him was that he was totally shameless. Once our headmaster caught him red-handed, throwing papers at the girls; and then ... You know, but it didn't change his routine!"

The four-colour flashback had already become intolerable for Ahmed. He was about to protest. My cousin stopped him. Arif was rather enjoying.

"What about Arif's family? Didn't the parents teach the son any manners?" I asked Kallol inquisitively.

Not suspecting anything unusual from Ahmed's passive attitude, Kallol answered, "How come! Arif's father was double as much crook. And his mother ..."

Later, that day I learned from Ahmed, that this Kallol had been a flamboyant story teller in his childhood also. Only difference is, previously he would switch a real gun for a toy, or a burglar for mice or a CIA agent for an innocent passer-by.

It is eventually hard for me to accept the fact that behaviour rarely changes while only attitude might change. Many of us, young people, who lack of taste of professional life and hardship get driven by instinct, no matter what is the sequence. Just like, I go into a video library to borrow Batman and I come out with Basic Instincts. Though we tend to pose as immaculately rational beings, we get carried away too easily. It's inevitable for many of us.

The reader should be amused to find me left with a paradox like, "inevitability is, but a possibility too." My readers can otherwise criticise Maugham who puts inevitability this way. "The illusion which man has that his will is so deeply rooted that I am ready to accept it. I act-as though I were a free agent. But when an action is performed it is clear that all the forces of the universe from all eternity conspired to cause it, and nothing I could do could have prevented it. It was inevitable. If it was good I can claim no merit; if it was bad I can accept no censure."

I heard an interesting story from Guru Rajnish, about animality and rationality, the two aspects of human nature.

The story goes this way: A Greek painter had an insatiable desire for creation. Despite of his fame achieved, he remained in pursuit of novelty. Once, the painter decided to create an icon. So, he started wandering in search of a person. A saintly person, whose face would show no sign of vices, no sign of sins committed. A person who would always beam with virtue.

The painter strolled through cities, walked through villages, deserts and mountains. He met priests in churches, nurses in sanatoriums and teachers in schools, but all in vain. Then, the painter himself was surprised as the seemingly neverending search ended up with a simple shepherd. A happy and content young man; the shepherd passed most of his time with his sheep.

The painter started portraying the shepherd skillfully. All the while, the shepherd was very enthusiastic.

He had never felt so important before. Later the painter and the icon became extremely famous and the icon turned to be most valuable of all his works. Reaching the zenith of fame, the painter was then apparently gratified as well.

But, as the days would go by, the painter again became restless. Soon, he realized that, he has to portray another person. A completely insane person, with a devilish look and diabolical expression. So, clutching the icon in one hand and brushes and paints in the other hand, the painter once again stepped out.

More than a decade had passed, as the search would continue. This time, the search was more tiring, more tedious. Eventually, the painter found a prisoner with the most satanic and dreadful expression. Having killed six persons, including two children, the criminal was waiting to be hanged.

However, the painter placed open his icon on the floor and as he was to start portraying, the prisoner began walling in a bizarre grief. The painter was surprised.

"Why do you cry?" he said. The portrait makes me cry," answered the prisoner.

"But is there anything sad in it?", the painter grew more curious.

"No", the painter murmured remorsefully but it reminds me, that I had been the shepherd whom you painted ten years ago."

Hearing the story my cousin Arif, elaborates the theme in a rather subtle manner. He suggests that, we should tolerate the co-existence of animality and rationality in others' character. When you are chiefly driven by the animal inside, and consequently there is an imbalance in your personal or social life, you can at best be forced to seclusion. Arif would disputably consider any sort of punishment, on a grown-up, as a sadist attitude as he simplifies his point, he says, don't get mad when your teacher preaches. You don't need nothing but education; don't get mad when your mother pokes her nose into your private life just like your neighbour does; don't get mad when your girl friend confuses your father for you (on the phone, specially) and your father flashes his blazing Omreshpuri eyes.

But then, it is still hard to believe Arif when the events are merely ... tragic.

Arif had been lying on hospital bed, senseless for nearly eighteen hours. The doctors have almost given up all hopes of his survival. The boy had previously purchased a large bottle of rectified spirit, a few files of sedatives, some sweets (his favourite), and then he locked himself up in a room. We had to break open the door, to rescue him.

These were the consequences of a critical love life, when there was rarely anyone to stand by the boy and the girl. Then came the well-wisher, our dear aunt. When Arif was desperately trying to contact the girl, our aunt confidentially informed him that, the girl has got married and is out of town.

As he regained conscience on the hospital bed, he looked embarrassed. He would blame only himself for the occurrences. And then, I could not believe my eyes when I saw the extremely apologetic aunt babying him. It was known by then, that the dear aunt's precious information was made up.

However, the young boy was not so prudent and prophetic when he fell for drugs.

[To be continued]

Time Zones: - The Past

by Asrarul Islam Chowdhury

MEMORY — who are you? Nothing but emotion and passion Recollected at the bottom of the sea; Where only the brave dare to go What lies there, only you & I know.

Memory — why is it, you know so much of me? No matter, how hard I try to flee You're always there to say "Hi Ronnie!" So, it's better, with you I compromise For, you think you're extremely wise.

Memory — you think, you're too clever and fast? Why, just now you've become the past! No matter how hard you try "I" will pass you by So memory, all the best — I guess, it's goodbye.

Time Zones: — The Present

I and I, we've been the best of friends and the worst of enemies

It is I who has been with me From the past to now and, also will be, to eternity No matter how I've tried or shall try to get rid of I I shall be my friend, enemy and my guide.

Memory was with me, just like eternity shall be But I is the person, the visible of all time zones The only person my eyes see: The only person who knows What goes inside the inner "Ronnie".

I, although we'll be together from here to our destiny I guess, we both want to know eternity For she's the only time zone We can influence, but never create totally So I, let's dream, about how eternity may be like.

Time Zones: — The Future

Eternity is my ultimate destiny, the place I dream to be To vision creation, and no hypocrisy To see no wars, no hatred, and no man die To vision a circle as a line and see mankind as one class Where knowledge has never been, but wisdom has.

Eternity is the place where I shall take you One day in my dreams — if not in reality A place, where we shall rest in peace With our heads looking up to the blue sky Where all the heavens meet to see, mankind's disgrace and glory.

Eternity is the zone of all time zones, where time zones stop to see — Creation & chaos and — the past, the present and the future.

That is where yours and my destiny hides. However, we have to wait, to see our fate Which of the two we'll have — love or hate ...

MORGUE

by Md Karimuddin



LIFE might have been easier if I had deceived my friend's family into believing that their only son Debashish was not dead But I couldn't do that. I had to go and tell them that he had died in a car accident. His dead body was in Rajshahi, kept in a morgue. His family was in no condition to go and bring back the body. So, I along with some friends set out for the hospital. Just after midnight we reached the hospital.

The man behind the desk had a large moustache and the dark appearance of one who smokes cigarette in large quantities. He made a vowelless sound of irritation as he got up and left the room. So we waited in, until the doctor presently returned, bringing a boy with him. He took out a paper from the drawer. "Sign this paper, please!" he said. To the boy he added "Take them to the morgue."

Few people were about, except for one or two chatting pairs. A single nurse in-sight who was certainly bored with her job. Finally we reached the morgue. But there was one problem nobody wanted to go inside, even the boy ran away saying that he had something else to do. So I decided to go inside alone.

When I was inside I wasn't exactly scared, it was pretty weird. I wanted to go straight back to the safety of the outside world, but I knew I had to do it. I was filled with nausea at the sight of so many dead bodies lying on the floor. There was a disgusting smell of rotting flesh. I ran my eyes quickly around the room and there was the dead body of Debashish lying at the far corner. He stared up at me with wide lifeless eyes, his mouth slack. The flesh on his cheeks were hanging sideways revealing white teeth. His shirt was coloured with a brownish redstain. His

chest completely covered with blood.

It must have been an illusion but as I started walking towards the corpse, the floor seemed to be swaying and a deep groaning noise began to shake the place.

I felt as if a sudden gust of confusion and weakness were sweeping through me. Then in the room there was a moan like magnified echo, and mingled with it was a threnody of voices weeping. I could feel my scalp prickling, and my hair began to rise. The sound came again, and bellowing of many voices blended in pain, what I saw then almost caused me to believe that I was going crazy.

A strange cloudiness began to form in the corner of the room. In the cloud I could see a fierce, feral face. At one moment it was just a twisting cloud-then it became a horribly leering face. I felt cold, numb to the end of my fingers. I tried to shout. Nothing came, not even a whimper.

I am not clear about the next few minutes. I knew my head was spinning and my heart was trying to force its way up through my throat. I staggered through the gate, still groggy, and straight into the arms of my friends who were waiting outside. "Steady on," Shahed said. "What's the matter with you? You're as white as a sheet....What happened? Then it all came back to me. I wanted to tell them what I had seen but I couldn't. I fainted almost pulling my friend to the ground with me.

Later I tried to convince myself that what I had seen that day in the morgue was just a trick of the light. I had seen nothing-it was a mixture of moonlight and shadow-an illusion brought on by tiredness. But what about the noises that I heard in the morgue. Maybe I'll visit the morgue again. Maybe.

Talk About Facts, Not Dreams

by Tasin Ahmed

SHE woke up at seven in the morning and having her bed-tea, she again went to deep sleep. When she woke for the second time, she could hear the horns played by the cars plying in the streets and she also could smell the fragrance of parata and egg in the kitchen. She finally released herself from the comfortable bed to the bathroom for a mouth-wash.

It took her twenty minutes, she brushed her teeth as well as hair and then changed herself in a new set

prepared fried lady finger, smashed the potato and made the pine-apple juice. Then finally at two o'clock he went to have a bath.

During the cooking hours, the husband also had to look after the baby. He changed dypers for three times, gave the baby Cerelac and also gave the baby milk for two times. He had to confront him when he cried and at around 1 o'clock the baby finally slept.

The wife returned at two thirty and after washing her hands went straight away to

sleep. he took the day's newspaper and read about the important news occurred in the country. All of a sudden he felt asleep and woke up again at six in the morning — with the burden of regular work to do. The baby has already started crying.

The story is over. Won't it be great for women to live in such a situation? But the other side of the coin tells a different story and talks about the fact — not dreams. Unfortunately women's themselves have to wake up six in the morning, look after



DINER'S READY? LET ME FINISH MY STAR TREK FIRST!

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of dresses, properly ironed and washed. Then she went to the dining table where breakfast was served. She ate the breakfast had another cup of tea, kept the plates and dishes where they were and then again returned to her dressing table.

Now she started preparing herself for her office. She runs an advertising firm and it is one of the biggest in the country. While she was preparing herself, her husband was washing the dirty plates and dishes used for breakfast.

Her husband woke up at six in the morning and after doing necessary personal things went to make tea for his wife who was still in bed and who would burst into anger if she didn't find her bed-tea in time.

Serving her bed-tea he went to the cot where their one year boy laid and changed his dypers. The baby woke up and started crying. The husband took him in his arms and tried to clam him down. He holding the baby in one hand had to prepare milk for the little one and finished the job by the means of one hand. After doing this, he rushed to the kitchen to prepare breakfast for them. Their only house-keeper was enjoying a brief holiday in her village and he had to do all the job. He prepared parata, fried two eggs, again made tea and than laid the dining table with these foods. Than they had the breakfast and he went to wash the dishes.

The other side of the story, that is the wife finally finished her dress-up and prepared herself for her office. There is one excellent joke about these kinds of ladies who take a lot of time to dress-up. One asked what is the difference between a woman and a soldier? The other replied that one powder the face and one faces the powder.

Anyhow the wife ordered his driver to take out the car and eventually went out at eleven o'clock. The poor husband than organised the bedroom, took the clothes to the washing room and washed them. He than started thinking about what the menu would be for lunch. His wife told him to prepare chicken curry, along with fried lady's finger, smashed potato with eggs, and many more. She also told him to make pine-apple juice which she regularly drinks after her lunch.

The husband cut the chicken into piece washed it and than using cooking method which he had learned from a cook book, prepared the curry. He also

the dining table. She had her lunch and complained that the potato smash was too hot and the chicken was not soft. However she finished her lunch and than went to her room. She changed, and than went straight to bed after having a cold bath. The husband on the contrary washed all the plates and than went to the baby's room. The baby was playing with some dolls which was bought by his mother and found pleasure. The husband didn't disturb and returned to his bedrooms finding his wife in profound sleep. He himself took an hour's rest and than suddenly jumped up to prepare evening tea, hearing his wife arguing.

Again he made tea, washed the tea-pots, made arrangements for dinner, cooked food and after dinner, again washed the dishes and bowls. In the meantime he sat for a while to watch the interesting package drama which his wife was enjoying but suddenly remembered that he has to iron his wife's dress for the next day's office, has to make milk for the baby, change his dypers, get the baby to sleep, lock the rooms, spray to prevent mosquitos and do more necessary household works.

He finished all those things and finally went to bed. But his wife is watching an English movie and she watches it with high sound. The poor husband, couldn't

their husbands, do washing, cooking, ironing clothes for their husbands, looking after the babies, feeding them, taking care of them and do all the works talked about in the absurd story I had drawn.

Husbands will never do the work this husband of the story did, as our society hasn't changed and our society doesn't approve it. No man will ever tolerate such discrimination and such tire some work. They only know things that are comfortable, they wake whenever they want (except the officers who work nine to five), order things whenever and whatever they wish, they want their bed-tea ready and on the whole even if their wives serve them everything, they still criticises their work and finds fault in everything.

Looking and caring after the baby is only limited in buying them dolls and chocolates, perhaps sometimes giving them a kiss. In our society, there are very few family where both husband and wife work untiedly and does the household work cooperatively. It is always the mothers who have to look after the whole house.

As long as this discrimination will not change I think women of our country will not enjoy the true essence of women liberty and the true scent of women rights.

Their rights will only be in the cot, where the baby cries, but seldom laughs.



Supreme

by Farhana Yusuf

BENEATH the darkness, hidden far away Lies the lustrous light waiting to arise and arouse. It sparks and shines in the shallow world, But finds no way to mount.

The pleasure of love cannot reach it and feel the beauty. The hatred and hassles of life shatters peace. It calls and craves for the glory, utterly sumptuous. And waits patiently for the days of unhappiness to cease.

Away, arise, it must and it will! Painful efforts are wanted to reach the sublime sky. Drown the misery, damn the devil, delay not to kill. For the darkness will evaporate and disappear by and by.

O for a breath of fresh air, the sweet fragrance of dew! To rest in nature's bosom and repose. It will surely radiate and emerge from darkness to empower all. And reach the sovereign part, where all the sad-chapters of life close.



Boatmen in the river.

— Star photo