

# TEENS and TWENTIES

## Against The Tides

by Usaila Alam (Udita)

A gentle knock came at the door. "Bhabhi, bhabhi, get up. It's six o'clock." Mitali opened her eyes reluctantly. Yet another day of chores, children, cooking, cleaning and tending. This daily routine was beginning to get her down, but nevertheless they had to be tended to.

Going to the kitchen Mitali began to knead the flour to make the bread and put a kettle on the other stove. She could not think of starting a day without a cup of tea. She still remembered her school days when she would have a bad temper all day if it started with a headache. But now-a-days she could not have such luxuries - for that was exactly what it seemed to her. After six years of marriage, two children and a demanding husband she couldn't even dream of having a temper. Now she was at the receiving end - taking in all that life had to throw at her side.

"Bhabhi, the tea is falling," Banu, the maid who was cutting the vegetables, reminded her.

Mitali made the tea and took it back to her bedroom where she began to take out her husband's clothes, for he wanted everything to be perfect when he woke up. Mitali had a vague idea about marriage before, but of what she had seen of Asad, she did not like much. In the worldly sense Asad had everything that her parents wanted for her husband. He was well educated, working in a foreign firm with a good salary, a house in a posh area and a car. So what could have been better? So much, thought Mitali, so much more. In the first few months of their marriage Asad was like any other love-lorn husband, attentive and kind and considerate and loving. But as time wore on so did Asad's attentions and now the only thing they had in common was the two lovely children, who were Mitati's whole life.

As the morning progressed Asad got up while Mitati helped to make the five year old Shithi ready for school. Running about the house was making her extremely exhausted, so she was glad when Asad left with Shithi. Meanwhile, Mitati began to clean the room as Banu cooked the day's meals. As she was busy with her work the phone rang. Mitati looked at the clock instantly - exactly eleven o'clock. "Hello," she spoke

timidly. "Why so quiet little bird?" said the voice on the other end.

It was him again! Mitati's heart began to pound and she started twisting the telephone wires.

"Don't you have any work to do?" she said.

"Why, are you busy?" he asked.

"What did you expect," she retorted.



"I expected that you would be expecting my call. Infact, I was really hoping."

"I am not a teenager, I am a busy housewife and a mother of two."

"Is that a reminder?" he asked.

"No just a warning." With that Mitati kept the phone down. Slowly a tender smile touched her lips, as she mused over the absurdity of the whole situation. There she was a

thirty year old woman with two children and he was a twenty-five year old man calling her up to profess his love for her. This had been going on for six months. At first the thought of talking to some other man horrified her and she avoided his calls for months. But for the last two months something inside her urged to talk to someone, to unburden her soul and she had found Rohit a willing listener. From then on,

"As usual, I guess."

"Mitati, don't you ever want to get away from the usual?"

"My wants and wishes are nobody's concern."

"Is that a yes?"

"Rohit, from the time we are little girls we are taught not to express our desires. We are taught to keep our mouths shut. We are taught to sacrifice our happiness for that of our dear ones. We are taught to think that way."

"But those people are so few."

"Mitati, I don't think that way."

"You are not the whole society, Rohit."

"But I am a man who cares deeply for you. Your so called husband does not know what wealth he has."

There was a pause as each was lost in his/her own thoughts.

Tears began to trickle down Mitati's cheeks as she kept on holding the phone. Useless, it was so useless, she thought.

"Rohit, I have to go now. I have work." "OK," he said softly. "I'll call back." With these words the line went dead. He was so damn gentle, so irritatingly understanding. Why couldn't she meet him before her marriage.

Marriage - the word sounded like a sham. If it meant being imprisoned in a trap then she did not want such fate. She wanted to be loved not by a cold, calculating man like Asad, but by a loving Rohit. At times she wanted to break free, but something would always stop her. Perhaps it was the fear of facing the world. But was the society more important than her happiness? It was society who taught her to educate herself, it was society which told her to keep quiet, it was society which made marriages and invented ways of breaking it. Such hypocrisy appalled her, as Mitati sat crying her eyes out. Her heart was breaking as she desperately wanted to be comforted by the warm arms of Rohit. Hell with society, she thought. If the first woman did not break the norms, the world would not have reached the present state of progress. This very thought strengthened her being as she rubbed away her tears. She would not let society get away with everything. She would fight for her right to be happy - she would fight against the tides.

he would call regularly and she would spend these wonderful moments - away from everything just being herself again.

"The phone rang again."

"Hello, why did you keep the phone down?" he asked.

"I don't know."

"So tell me how you started the day."

"As usual with a cup of tea."

"And what will you do, the rest of the day."

## A Poem For S

Someone the Great

Words that've lost their meanings  
Would still be clearly said  
If the words etched in our hearts  
Matched the pockets and the heads.

Don't be a hammer to my cardiac -  
Instead, S, be the glue  
Cuz my life's a jigsaw puzzle  
And the missing piece is you.

If I could I'd give you the skies  
With a readymade rainbow from above;  
But I'm just a screwed & screw human being

And all I can give,  
All that I have,  
Is love.

## Quiz Club

Answers (16th August 1996)

1. Arthur Halley
  2. A real number joined with an imaginary number.
  3. When x-rays are scattered by light chemical element, their wave lengths become longer, this shows that x-rays behave like particles.
  4. Liquid through which an electric current can pass
  5. Lake superior.
  6. Malaysia.
  7. 166
  8. People inhabiting S Mesopotamia between 4th and 2nd Millennia BC.
  9. 1968.
  10. 2 billion.
- This week's ten quizzes are right here! crack them, send the answer to us by the end of the week and win away the Special Quiz Club Prize (if all the answers are correct!)
1. Sucrose consists of --- and --- joined together in single molecule.
  2. What is an IC?
  3. The functional group of alcohols is ---.
  4. When did Magellan discover Philippines?
  5. Einstein was awarded the prestigious Nobel Prize for ---.
  6. What is the capital of Cambodia (Kampuchea)?
  7. Recently which country's former president was sentenced to 25 years of imprisonment?
  8. Who is the writer of the book, 'The Resurrection'?
  9. What is leukaemia?
  10. Who was the previous VC of Dhaka University?

## Quotable Quotes

A healthy conscience is like a wall of brass.

Latin Proverb

An evil conscience breaks many a man's neck.

John Ray

Thus conscience makes cowards of us all.

Hamlet Act 3 Sc.1

In early days the Conscience has in most,

A quickness which in later life is lost.

William Cowper

Nobody planned the confounded constitution. It came about.

H G Wells

The principles of a free constitution are irrecoverably lost when the legislative power is nominated by the executive.

Edward Gibbon

Doth the wild ass bray when he hath grass? or loweth the ox over his fodder?

Job 65

The three basic requirements for a tolerably satisfying life are someone to care, somewhere to live and something worthwhile to do.

J B Priestley

Sweet are the thoughts that savour of content

The quiet mind if richer than a crown.

Robert Greene

Him, who desires what is enough, neither the raging sea disturbs, nor the vineyards smitten with hail, nor a disappointing farm.

Horace

Courage is the thin. All goes if courage goes.

James Barrie

The brave man is not he who feels no fear.

For that were stupid and irrational;

But he, whose noble soul its fear subdues.

And bravely dares the danger nature shrinks from.

Joanna Baillie

It is difficult, I confess, but courage exerts itself in difficulties.

Ovid

Courage respects courage.

RL Stevenson

True courage scorns

To vent her prowess in a storm of words;

And, to the valiant, actions speak alone.

George Smollet

All doors are open to courtesy.

Thomas Fuller

To speak kindly does not hurt the tongue.

French Proverb

Courtesy on one side only lasts not long.

George Herbert

If a man be gracious and courteous to strangers, it shows he is a citizen of the world.

Francis Bacon

Too much courtesy is discourtesy.

Japanese Proverb

## Private Tutors

### The Other Side of the Story

by Muneera Parbeen

PRIVATE tutors are the victims of the wrath of the public these days, they are depicted as the BAD guys in any situation. They are greedy, expensive and even cheat to a certain extent, according to many.

Actually its rather funny is a way for its quite the public who create private tutors (isn't it?) If one doesn't buy the product/pack offered in the market, as demand falls it might ultimately be all pushed out of the market - that's simple economics for all. Yet how people like to blame others!

However for all the bad name of private tutors such as the money they generate for example, the view from the other side is not so pleasant either. One only has to be a private tutor in order to understand so, or by being acquainted with one who is so that would definitely enlighten one on the life on the OTHER LANE.

Allegations of students never pay properly or on time are very, very common. Then the number of students who take undue advantage of their teachers' arrest very few either. Then of course we forget the PARENTS of children who literally HAUNT their kids tutors. The list, believe me, is almost as long as the great wall of China.

Going into more details, let me just mention a few small incidents that have crossed the path of some of my teachers or acquaintances who are teachers.

There was the student who never paid his fees on time and ultimately when his parents were contacted when a bit too much was accrued, it was discovered that he did collect the money from home, only it never quite reached his teachers' doors but vanished on the way. This was the same reason

Frankly speaking, the concept of "Tutors" and "tutoring" is very much misunderstood in our country. Some think that tutors are like rented video cassettes to be played the way one wants them too. Some think that tutors simply have to be lured for they are around. Many also take the advantage of the situation (of this high demand for tutors) and try to be tutors, themselves however in competent they may be.

why one of my teachers always charged double is usual rate for boys - the reason he said was a precaution against the months they would ultimately not pay.

Then there is the story of a particular student who on account of having transportation problem, never went to a tutor regularly. She only came for the month before exams and then in order to complete her whole semester syllabus, she would come twice the number of days allotted to regular students and for almost twice the duration.

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tion of time. At the end of her months exams (& good results no doubt) she would day the REGULAR fee of regular students? Very clever indeed!

Then one teacher told me about a particular student who would go to different teachers pay the first months tuition, find an excuse (as father being ill or away) to accrue a few months fees before moving on to another teacher without clearing her dues. This story was them repeated with the next

victim.

This one is even more interesting. This particular student went to a tutor for 3 months. She paid her first two months fees on time. In the 3rd month, she missed a few classes for personal reasons (party and a wedding of an aunt etc) and the teacher also missed 2 classes (he went out of town). Then she fell ill and missed yet more classes. At the end of the months, her father wanted the actual number of days she studied which amounted to 4 and

paid for that many days only to her astonished tutor! Its of course true, that one should have a pre-enrollment contract drawn up for tutors of students to settle any future disputes.

Incidents like the above are far and varied, and no doubt entertaining for a 3rd party to hear. But sad was the incident when this particular gentleman went to his sons tutor. This tutor was well reputed in town and at the end of the student's

first month, his father walked into the tutor's house and in full view of the other students, extracted his wallet, opened it and said "Okay, so how much do you want?" Its extremely unfortunate that this ever occurred and one only wonders whether people of this order should ever be called a "Gentle" man at all.

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Their only intention is to make easy money and THEY are the ones who give tutors a bad name is doing so. Then of course, there are the parents who hire a tutor, expecting that this action itself should guarantee the good results of their ward (whether or not he is a bird-brain or simply an ingeniously lazy creature). No sir, do forget these silly conventional thoughts.

Private tutors were invented to give extra care to students who needed that extra help. Much as we may blame the schools for not doing enough, a tutor is not the one to take all the blame to. It's a two-way process, and to explain it, all would take pages now but basically no one (one either side) should be taken for granted. Only mutual respect for each other (other than all that an ordinary relationship as such would ask for) can help to improve the situation. Or else we will remain exactly in this present situation of "helplessness" & continue to hate each other and sow the seeds for more hatred.

## A Mother's Fatal Embrace

TORMENTED by their crying, Waneta Hoyt killed five children, one by one.

For more than 25 years, Waneta Nixon Hoyt would drive each Memorial Day to the small cemetery beside her childhood home in Richmond, N. Y., to lay flowers on the graves of her babies. Over a 65-year period, from 1965 to 1971, five of them, Eric, Julie, James, Molly and Noah, ranging in age from just 48 days to 28 months, had died one by one, victims of what doctors classified as sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).

Scratching out a modest living in the farming community of Newark Valley, some 70 miles south of Syracuse, Waneta, a home-maker, and her husband, Tim, for many years a security guard at Cornell University's art museum in Ithaca, were regarded as a quiet couple who bore stoically their unfathomable loss, though Waneta occasionally betrayed a flicker of guilt. "She'd say, 'I don't know what I did wrong,'" recalls former neighbor Georgia Garray. "We used to tell her, 'You're not a bad mother.'"

Little did they know. On Sept. 11, Tioga County Judge Vincent Sgueglia sentenced Hoyt, 49, to 75 years-to-life in prison for "depraved indifference to human life," in this case a devastatingly apt euphemism for murder. In April an Owego, N. Y., jury ruled that Hoyt had suffocated each of her children with pillows, a towel, even her shoulder. "Five young people aren't here today because of her," Tioga County prosecutor Robert Simpson told the jury in closing arguments during the four-week trial. "They would have had families, jobs. But they don't get that opportunity because their mother couldn't stand their crying."

Last month, as she contemplated a life behind bars, it was Waneta Hoyt's turn to weep. Claiming her statement to police - in which she confessed to the murders - was coerced, she declared after her conviction. "I didn't kill my babies. I never did nothing in my life, and now to have this happen?" Suffering from a variety of ailments including high blood pressure and osteoporosis, and looking far older than her years, she was comforted by the supportive arm of husband Tim, 52, and the presence of their surviving, adopted son, Jay, 19. "Despite the cruelty of her acts," said William Fitzpatrick, district attorney of neighboring Onondaga County, after viewing Hoyt's broken - down appearance, "you'd be less than human not to have some degree of sympathy for her."

It was Fitzpatrick, 48, who first began investigating Waneta Hoyt. In 1985, while prosecuting a case of murder originally diagnosed as SIDS, he consulted forensic pathologist Linda Norton of Dallas. In the course of their conversa-

tion, Fitzpatrick recalls, Norton made an offhand remark: "You know, you have a serial killer right there in Syracuse."

Norton had read a 1972 medical-journal article by pediatrician Alfred Steinschneider - Hoyt's physician - describing the five children had succumbed to SIDS. Norton, an expert on SIDS, told Fitzpatrick the odds against five such deaths in one family were incalculably high. She also found it suspicious that the

In fact, as one Hoyt baby, after another died, some health - care professionals did grow suspicious at the time. Four nurses who testified at Hoyt's trial said that Waneta showed little interest in the babies. There was no bonding at all," said Thelma Schneider. "Most of us went to Dr. Steinschneider and expressed our fears - we had a gut feeling that something was going on. Either he was in total denial or not being very objective," Ambulance worker Robert Vanek,

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Waneta Hoyt (being led into court in March) insists that she's innocent. "I did the best I could," she says.

mother was always alone with the babies when they died.

Shortly thereafter, Fitzpatrick left the prosecutor's office, but Norton's comments still gnawed at him. And in 1992, when he was sworn in as DA, he immediately began tracking down the H family, soon identified as the Hoyts. Fitzpatrick pulled the autopsy records on the Hoyt children and sent them to New York State Police forensic expert Michael Baden for review. In each case, Baden told him, the records did not support the stated cause of death. "They were all healthy children," says Baden. "They had no natural cause for death. The only reasonable cause is homicidal suffocation."

who went to the Hoyt residence when Julie, James and Noah died, recalled being stunned by the coroner's conclusion that all had died of SIDS. Says Vanek: "I thought, three in a row. It bothered me." As for the faulty SIDS postmortem diagnoses, Baden says the children's bodies were examined not by dispassionate forensic pathologists but by family physicians. "Doctors," he says, "don't want to think parents harm children."

Because the Hoyts lived outside his jurisdiction, Fitzpatrick turned the case over to Tioga County DA Simpson. In March 1994, New York State Cooper Bobby Black, a family friend of the Hoyts, approached Waneta at a local



At her sentencing, Hoyt was comforted by her husband, Tim. "She's scared stiff," he says.

post office, and asked for her help with research he was doing on SIDS. At the station house, Black, with police investigators Susan Mulvey and Robert Courtwright, took Hoyt, step by step, over the official version of her babies' deaths. After about an hour, Mulvey gently clasped Hoyt's hand and told her they didn't believe her.

Fifteen minutes later, Waneta Hoyt confessed to having killed all five children. Her candor was chilling. "I suffocated Eric in the living room," she began. "He was crying all the time, and I wanted to stop him. Julie was the next one to die. I cradled her to my shoulder... when she quit crying I released her, and she wasn't breathing." In September 1968, Hoyt said, she was dressing in the bathroom when a tearful, agitated James tried to break in on her. "He kept screaming, 'Mommy, Mommy,'" she recalled. "I used a bath towel to smother him. He got a bloody nose from fighting against the towel." Molly was next, suffocated with a pillow, at age 2.5 months, as was Noah one year later. "I didn't want them to die," their mother told police. "I wanted them to quiet down."

Hoyt's life history yields few clues to her murderous bent. She was the sixth of eight children born to Arthur Nixon, a Richmond, N. Y., laborer, and his wife, Dorothy, a seamstress. Waneta met Tim Hoyt on a school bus in ninth grade. Two years later, at 17, she dropped out of high school to marry him, and within nine months she gave birth to Eric. Forty-eight days later, confessed Waneta, she killed him. "I asked God to forgive me over and over and over," said Hoyt, who had sought counseling after the last death.

Despite the explicitness of her confession, Hoyt's family staunchly supports her claim that police twisted her description of the deaths into a confession. "She was used like an old tire," says Tim, now a factory worker. Adds Jay, whom the Hoyts adopted when he was 7 weeks old and whose crying apparently didn't bother Hoyt the same way. "I love her, and she shouldn't be here. The system sucks."

Waneta Hoyt would seem to agree. In the cavernous Tioga County courthouse last month, she told the court in a barely audible voice, "God forgive all of you who done this to me." Judge Sgueglia was not so inclined. He stared at her for a time, then handed down his sentence. "I only have one thing to say to you," he advised, "and that is to consider your sixth child. Whatever you tell this court your husband, your God, you owe it to that boy to tell him the truth." With that, four deputies escorted Hoyt from the courtroom, and her only surviving child bowed his head and wept.

Courtesy: People Magazine