



The Welcome Change

A sudden gust of wind rustled the leaves of the mango trees in our yard. Several small green mangoes scattered onto the yard. I left my needlework and moved over to the open doorway to feel the cool breeze on my flushed face.

It had been another humid summer day. By dawn, the sun had begun to send its scorching rays to bake the fields. Father had stood at the doorway — looking up at the sky in the hopes of spying a trace of cloud to bring us the first rain of the season. Sighing, and shaking his head in disappointment, he had finally left to work in his field.

It had been a hard time for everyone in the village. Last year, rainfall had been pretty scanty. Most of the time the parched soil was far too dry to yield a good harvest of crops. As winter set in, the men worked on the fields with renewed vigour — hoping to get a good yield of winter crops. An untimely rainfall had, however, washed away their hopes along with most of the crops. Now the summer was once again too dry and warm. Everyone in the village was expectantly waiting for the rain — already quite late.

Yet the sky had remained stubbornly clear. There had not even been a hint of breeze in the air. The trees had stood absolutely still, with their dusty, withered foliage. The parched soil had been cracked and dry. Even the children had not gathered to play hopscotch or hide-and-seek — the heat was unbearable. In the field, the men had lugged buckets of water to keep the crop alive. Even the river had dried up and finding water to irrigate the fields was almost impossible. The women went about their housework; often discussing in a worried whisper with the next door neighbour of the impending draught.

In the afternoon, the first right breeze had begun to blow. The men looked up from their

Change

by Naina Shehzeen Ahmed

work in the fields — maybe it would rain after all. Soon the breeze strengthened to a gusty wind. Women looked out of their windows, smiling, and hurriedly gathered their washing from the clothesline in their yards. The farmers picked up their ploughs and turned homewards. Little children came running out of their huts and squealed in delight, playing in the cool wind.

Suddenly big black clouds came rolling onto the sky. The clear sky was now overcast. The blazing sun was now shrouded by heavy ominous clouds. A flock of birds flew away overhead, assuming that the sun had set. Yet it was only four o'clock.

The wind had now become stormy. Even the stout trees were bent almost double. Leaves, little broken branches and dust were whirled away by the gale. Little children ran home, their pockets overflowing with little green mangoes. The bamboo trees seemed to be waltzing in rhythm with the might of the wind. The wind whistled angrily through the crops in the field. A flash of lightning streaked across the sky — followed closely by the ominous road of thunder. A splitting sound followed the deafening roar — somewhere a tree had been struck.

The children covered at the corners of the hut — afraid of the rage of the storm, and the men began worrying about their

crops. Suddenly it began to rain. It began a faint drizzle but immediately intensified to a torrential downpour. The stormy wind somewhat abated but a gale remained. It blew the raindrops away before they could touch the parched soil. It looked like a shimmering curtain of raindrops blown by the gale.

The rain washed away the grime from the trees making the bush green leaves look refreshed and lively. The children rushed outside to get soaked in the first rain of the season. The heady aroma of "hal khichuri" and other delicacies wafted out from the doorway of the huts. Father stood just outside the door to our hut — his plan extended outward — as if to feel the raindrops before he rejoiced. His face glowed — maybe the harvest this year would not be too bad.

I sat by the window, marveling at the dramatic weather change. Only this morning, the sky had been clear and the sun bright and blazing. People were worried and exhausted. Yet now the sky was overcast and it was raining in torrents. The rain had rekindled hope among us. The sultry warmth of the day had been blown over and the air was cool and refreshing what a change!

The rain gradually ceased and the clouds parted. It was past sunset and a full moon had come out. Everywhere there was a refreshed look. The leaves were clean and fresh — the trees no longer had a withered look about them. Even the stary sky looked clean and fresh — as if it had just come from the laundries. The air was filled with the merry laughter of children, eating their sour mangoes, and with the fresh aroma of cooking food. The change in weather had been truly dramatic — a change that signified the end of the draught and our struggles and the beginning of a prosperous farming season.

"An Owl Or A Lark?"

by Muneera Parbeen

ARE you a night owl or a morning lark? Think hard before you answer. It shouldn't be too hard to find out. Just a simple look at your life pattern should tell you the right answer!

Morning larks are easy to find out. You can see them in the early hours of the day jogging down the street or practising their tolerable or intolerable SA-Re-Ga-Ma at their open windows. You will find them at their desks preparing their lessons in hymn-like chants. [The older ones usually spend their early hours torturing their yet sleeping 'uns but that's another story altogether.] They are the earliest ones to arrive at school, hence the ones to take up the front seats. They are also often seen to retire by 9 to 10 at night and perhaps for a rare occasion, they can stretch-up to 11pm. And finally, they are the apples of the eyes of all those who love to reach that golden old saying:

"Early to bed and early to rise
Makes a man healthy wealthy and wise"
(meaning nice)

It is also easy to identify night owls. Take a walk down the block and see how many lights are on at windows — they all belong to our owls. I myself am a Night Owl. You see, life is so much interesting in this part of the day! The best hours of my day (in that sense I mean) are in my nights, of course. I can concentrate better, am full of vigorous energy and ready to take on the world. I study more efficiently at night as my mind is more receptive to everything. I even complete gigantic tasks as tidying up my untidy room. The best programs on TV can also be found to be mostly at late night slots (cable TV I mean), and so I can also enjoy myself better then. I am also, most creative at night as my mind can concentrate and work without much effort — you see, I am, even writing this article at late night. I can also talk to my friends on the phone, coz they all are night owls like myself! And music, believe me, is most enchanting when listened in the deep hours of the darkness.

You see, the night owls like us, the darkness is total beauty. Much as a morning lark may patronize the charm of the early morning to me, too, I can show him the beauty of these wee hours of the night. When life becomes almost still, when calmness takes over the otherwise horrendously noisy world, when serenity envelopes us like a silky, smooth velvet blanket, who can ignore such peace of soul. Why, all sleep best in the hours of the night — that's universal proof for you. Who can deny that peace becomes us, even if it is for a short while. There are no open disputes.

There are no tons of black sooty clouds of pollution on the streets (compared to hectic day time hours) which threatens to choke out the light from our lives, there is no hazy scum on the part of the population who literally battle a race against time all through the day time. Have you ever stood still before an open window in the stillness of the night and tried to take in the serenity that wants to engulf our lives? You should, for it is quite an experience. It helps you to space out yourself, to put in order all that work that has accumulated on your desk, and to clear out the mists of confusion that clouds up your head. You are able to sit down undisturbed, and face so many things.

May be for many, it's not the ideal time, but for others, it is the time they function their best. In fact I remember once a teacher being so infuriated with our lack of concentration in class that he asked us to tell when we would be attentive enough for him to put some things into our head.

"Why, night after 12 pm," one of us replied, "for that's when we are at our best, all alive and kicking."

That reflected our sentiments all too well and poor sir joined us in our laughter.

Of course, late nights would mean early mornings inevitably, but who cares (except your parents perhaps!) if you have completed the bulk of your duties in the night. You can actually afford to do so while away a few hours, as the rest of the world gets busy to their tasks.

Obviously it wouldn't help at all if all the people in the world slept at in the day and kept awake at night. That would force off a fraction of us into the solitude of the day then and the story would basically be the same.

You see, the real beauty that we night owls enjoy, is the solitude of the nighttime, when time stands almost so still that you can hear the leaves fluttering in the wind or a pin dropping somewhere or the wind brushing against your window. You can take your time and enjoy the tranquillity all by yourself. Ooh... the thought of seclusion, of the aloneness and the opportunity to enjoy it as well, wow, how it beckons me!!

Just now, I feel as lively as anything alive and kicking. I will now be off to fix myself a thick sandwich — after completing all this file work — and settle myself in front of the TV set, with no one to run a race for the channels! Then I will write a letters, read that book I got from the library and perhaps even take a hot shower before calling it a day — oops sorry — a Night!! the chams of the early morning don't really suit me. I just enjoy being a Night Owl!

Eid Special Toons

Prediction of the EGGZ

EGGS HATCHED BY SHARIEF KHAN

source: chicken

When competition rules the market, you don't know what idea traders might generate to attract their customers.

coming years:

- Pure Eggs from Azar in small, medium, large & XL sizes
- Free Hammer

Now in 1997, eggs sell like this

1998: the year of Scientific EggZ!

you mean you still use the floor to break an egg in this era of science? Oh No!

buy a HALI of EggZ Co. premium eggs and get your scientific tool to break egg.

email us at: eggz@hali.com

1999: Researchers' Choice-EggZ with Saw

brush aside the ridiculous hammers! its high time you don't waste a single drop of egg by hammering. Buy our EggZ and get your rezor sharp SAW for free to cut eggs with Japanese precision. (electric saw available for a moderate additional cost)

2001: an eggz story

No more silly Saw. We've got the real thing FOR FREE.

Now buy One Egg and get one egg blaster with lighter!

How to use Egg Blaster Pro.

1. put tape on Egg Blaster
2. paste EBP on egg and lit it. allow 3 seconds for a Ka-BOOM!
3. see? you might also get an instant omlette!

2005: EggZ Bonanza

Eggz Inc Research Unit now offers you FREE aristocratic gold hammer, a dynamite, a Tokai lighter and Scotch tape with each egg! Have your egg and blast 'em all!

2110: No kidding!

Bangu Eggs Inc now offers you Building Blaster Bomb and g'iant hammer with each egg. FREE

2115: the Ultimate

Eggz Inc is now giving a platoon of soldiers to break eggs with each eggs you purchase... FOR FREE... hurry, our offer is limited as there is a shortfall in the number of soldiers against each egg...

Never Seen, Never felt

by Scarface

THOUGH you probably don't know who I am, baby, you've made me happy just as you've made me sad at times. But still — I love you.

Night after night, I have shed my tears, only because you're happy. I've paced the cruel cold floor, burdened with unbearable grief, only because you're sad, my darling.

I've bloodied myself, inflicted agony upon myself. You ask why? — for a rosethorn managed to pierce your sacred skin on a careless moment.

I have tried to pave your way with rosepetals, I can vow to kill for your love, I would dedicate my life to you.

Only if you say you love me, just once baby. Times see me so close to you — Yet invisible walls shut out the real me. I feel like a stranger-an outsider.

Even though I'll always be beside you, you'll probably never really see me. Yet I will go on loving you forever, for eternity.

Source: National Geographic



LORD OF THE MONGOLS



GENGHIS

Temujin's Rise as The Strong Ruler

There was once a blue-gray wolf who was born with his destiny preordained by Heaven Above. His wife was a fallow doe.

Legend of the Origin of Genghis Khan, from Secret History

WHEN Temujin is born, in the 1160s, Mongolia is a realm of perhaps 30 nomadic tribes, with a total population between 1.5 million and 3 million. Roughly half are Turkic-speaking peoples who predate the Mongols themselves. From this same territory an even earlier people, the Xiongnu, raided China for centuries; they may have been the same people as the Huns, who scourged Europe in the fourth and fifth centuries.

The Secret History offers a wealth of detail on Temujin's rise to power. At first, life is difficult. When Temujin is nine, his father, Yisugei, a minor chieftain, is poisoned by Tatar tribesmen. It is revenge, for Yisugei once robbed them. To survive, Temujin and his brothers catch fish and snare marmots and their mother gathers berries.

As a young man he makes allies. One is Jamuqa, who becomes his anda, or blood brother. Another is Toghril, a leader of the Kereyit tribe. When the Merkit tribe kidnaps Temujin's teenage bride, Borte, in a raid, these friends muster warriors to rescue her. In adulthood, Temujin gradually brings several tribes under his control by conquest or bestowal of booty. Defeating the Tatars, who killed his father, he is merciless. All but the smallest males are killed; children and women are enslaved. The Tatar tribe ceases to be. (In Europe, however, a variation of the name, "Tatars", was for centuries used to refer to the Mongols.)

Alliances shift. Temujin's friends Jamuqa and Toghril oppose his growing power. Temujin crushes Toghril's army in a fierce three-day clash. Then, in 1205, he defeats the Naiman, his last powerful enemy tribe. With them is Jamuqa, who is captured. "Let me die quickly," he asks. Temujin grants his blood brother's wish.

In 1206, at a kuriltai, or great assembly, Temujin is enthroned as Genghis Khan — "strong ruler" or perhaps "oceanic ruler", hence ruler of the world. He is about 40.

In August 1227, somewhere south of Yinchuan, Genghis died. He was probably 60. Accounts say his body was borne to Mongolia for burial near a mountain called Burkan Khal-dun. Forty "moonlike virgins" and 40 horses were killed and buried with him, as if for his pleasure in the next world. To discourage grave robbers, a thousand horsemen are said to have trampled the site until it could not be found. It eludes searchers still.

Genghis was, wrote one of the Persian historians, "possessed of great energy, discernment, genius, and understanding, awe-inspiring, a butcher, just, resolute, an overthrower of enemies, intrepid, sanguinary, and cruel." A more comprehensive epitaph could not be written, except to add that he bequeathed to his clan a unified Mongolia and the most powerful army in the world.

His sons and grandsons would send that army surging anew into Russia and China, and even farther, while Mongolia creased the firmament of nations like a shooting star. Awash in power and wealth, the Mongols would find they had only one dangerous foe: one another.

Source: National Geographic