

# Growing UP

By Adnan R. Amin

The thought probably occurred to me as I was reading a 'English for Today' text (yes the very same, disgusting ones that they assign for the primary and secondary levels of schooling). The story started off with this young boy sitting dolefully on the stairs of his house, because his parents hadn't let him make a pretty long trip by himself. He complained that his parents would often say he was a big boy now and should do his homework and other tasks all by himself. But now they stopped him by saying he was young and wouldn't be allowed to make the trip on his own. The statements were contradictory.

No matter how rancid the opening few lines sound don't start sifting through the pages yet because you may find that the article has a point to make. Growing up is a part of life in all spheres. And coping with it may not be easy not for the growing ones, nor for the coping ones!

The fine line between grown-ups and young 'uns is developed very carefully. Come to think of it, what, in our society distinguishes the two? In reality it's a few acts that the former are permitted to perform.

In truth, a number of activities are specified for a certain age group. You are either already old enough to do something or simply still not old enough. But the question, 'how much is enough?' remains unanswered.

Responsibility and duty go hand in hand. Duties and subsequent expectations from you will not develop unless you are willing to take responsibility for your activities.

Two other important factors are resources and decision-making powers. These in fact denote money and deciding how it is spent. As I speculate more and more on the matter, I see that freedom was gained as individuals start to earn on



their own. That way, they get to decide how they wanted to spend their money and thus found emancipation from their shackles.

All about that some other time. Let's have a look at the process of growing up for now.

During the age of nine months and below, cuddling from mommy dear and the regular dosage of milk seemed good enough. But the next 12 months saw the development of a penchant for toys, non-stop TV and other kids to beat up and pick on.

At the second grade, going over to a friend's house was a red-letter day occasion. Excited phone calls blare the message all over the other house 'Adnan is coming over for lunch'. Mother dear seemed like an angel who granted every wish that came her way.

Of course the gross mistake was detected that very evening. 'mom why can't I go out and play? So what if I have an exam tomorrow and I haven't studied at all for it? ...m-o-m!' She never lets me do anything I want to do the lines echoed and echoed in the mind of the little one.

It was never long before the times

changed. Soon 'mother can I go over to omuk's house?' became 'what do you mean I can't go to the concert?'

That was quickly transformed to, '(laughs) are you actually asking me to come home before 12 (a.m.)? Huh...fat chance!'

Times changed very quickly. Gone were the days when we would sit on our cars in front of 'Candyfloss' and gape at the passing cars. 'Hot-hut' arrived to help us out.

It is amusing to recall, in my old school days, we, all the boys were terrified of the girls. The latter often chased us around the playground and eventually we'd hide in the ... toilet!

Then one day, we spotted a traitor. A boy playing with all the girls. It was he who divulged the information that it could quite good fun.

Nobody believed him...The first guy who actually started going out with a girl (obviously) was considered a pioneer, as was the one who dumped the first. Those were the days when dating a girl was considered a status symbol. All the guys who had a girlfriend, hung out together talking about things that we, the less fortunate ones never understood.

It took us a long while to understand what they meant when they said ... umm...never mind what they said. But the first encounter with an actual female in the fragment's true sense was absolutely electric.

I still remember my first date; it was during a debate competition, which we had gone to visit from the school. Otherwise we never found any time since her mother arrived 30 minutes before class was suspended.

Thus we slipped out from the debate and ate out together. It was simply wonderful! But the problem arose when we went back to the *Goethe Institut* and found her mother standing in front of the gate...But nothing lasts forever. This didn't either. I went my way she chose hers. She got married a few days back.

Hopefully she will have a beautiful family with lots of kids one-day. They will grow up gradually. With that will come new hope, new possibilities. And once again the cycle will start...



By Naomi Ahmad

## STOLEN SUNSHINE

Many years ago, I used to wake up to the cheerful melody of the birds. Twittering sparrow would bring the news of the sunny morning, the bright sky. The harmonious nightingale would sing about the blooming flowers and the green fields. The skipping butterflies would whisper news of the sweet scent of the yonder daisies and the light wind ruffling the rows of tall thistle. Soon one by one all the rabbits would wake up and pop out of their burrows to sniff at the fresh air.

After being carefully groomed by my mother's loving nose, I would creep out to nibble at the dewy grass. With a mouth full of the juicy grass I would lift my head to watch the whole herd come forward. Dotty would come tripping and flung a whole bunch of dry leaves on me and we would chase each other in and out of the trees and stop panting to grab another mouth full of the sweet grass. All the while, the timid rabbits would jump nimbly about our feet. The field dotted with cowslips and daisy would become alive again with skipping animals and twittering birds. The joyful bustling of a new day would begin.

Now many years have passed and I am now an adult deer. I proudly sport an excellent pair of horns and my perfect coat with its oval white spots makes me stand out. I run ahead of my herd and lead them to safe grounds when in danger. But whenever I think of my childhood home, a sort of trembling takes hold of me. Unshed tears fill up my eyes as the painful memory replay in my mind... over and over again...it all happened during spring. One day, the Sparrows came fluttering by to tell us that they had spotted humans on the field opposite to the woods. On our field. We peeped through the leaves of the jungle and saw many people on the field adjacent to the resort far away. The humans were there and so were their machines. The terrified rabbits shot down their burrows as they approached nearer. Dire silence settled on us as we watched.

Within a few days the rumors of the field being chosen as a building site spread like a forest fire. Our worst fears were confirmed by the high spiked fence between the meadow and the woods. The menacing mesh stood between our ground and us. Some gullible rabbits trapped on the fields tried to come across the steel barrier. The next day no one could look at the blackened bodies beside the electrocuted fence.

The fence stood there, ominous, oblivious to our frantic effort to get across, a symbol of worse things to come.

Gradually all the animals were pushed back and the humans managed to drive us away. They snatched away our home and a part of us. For days no animals dared to go near the field for fear of the cruel jaws of the waiting traps. Any animals caught nibbling the grass on the field was immediately shot to death.

The peaceful rhythms of our lives were shattered by these fiends. Everything changed drastically; our mind being plagued by the fear. Humans instilled fear in us and invaded our harmonious lives. Desperate for hard to find food, we were forced to make way for them and move away to another side of the jungle.

Now, I wake up to see the dull grey forest. The dampness hangs heavy. No joyous birds. Just the lone nightingale, singing of the lost meadow and the warm sunshine and the succulent grass. Only drab, dead leaves. Everything is gone...all is lost...

## LIVING AMIDST FWD MAILS

By Nazia Hussein

Make 1-4 more people read this article: Your life will improve slightly.

5-9 people: Your life will improve to your liking.

9-14 people: You will have at least 5 surprises in the next 3 weeks.

15 people and above: Your life will improve drastically and everything you ever dreamed of will begin to take shape.

So what do you say? What do you think is going to happen to your life in the next 3 weeks? Even if you don't make anyone else read this article you will still get a surprise. Which is that everyone you know will lose all interest in you and soon your friends list will be vacant!

FWD (Forwarded) mails are a nuisance that every Internet user has to go through whether one likes it or not. These letter come in different forms and with a variety of rules. If you are a victim of a few geeks in the town whose only mission is to send such mail to people they don't even know, then you are in the same position if have been in. I don't know what these guys get from sending Chain Letters to strangers but I think they must realize that this DOES NOT amuse people

The topics of these mails are all pretty similar. A few of them tell a story, a very touching one indeed. You are asked to send it to those about whom you care. And after you read the story you cannot but continue feeling a little awkward until you have sent them some people. Some chain letters are about a young girl or boy who has a noxious disease but still manages to comfort others with extra care and all. She grasps someone's feelings and starts making them see the light of joy, and after that she bluntly expires. And only then the person who was benefited by her gets to know that she was dying. And then the person remembers how he misbehaved with the poor girl but by then there's nothing he can do about it. Then there are the stories, which are slightly different but have similar results. There was this poem I received a long time ago. It was about this girl who moved into a new place with her family. She gets to meet new people at school who are not so nice. So her parents did not allow her to go out with them. She makes a story and manages to escape with the best looking guy around. And then realizes that he is not worth it. She demands to be taken home immediately. While the guy drives violently on the way back she thinks about how concerned her parents were for her and what she did to them. And then they hit another car. At the hospital, when she is dying, she asks the nurse to disclose to her parents how sorry she was for not listening to them and to be responsible for so many peoples death (the people on the other car and her boyfriend died too). But only after her death the nurse reveals to a guy, as she was asked why she didn't fulfill the girl's

last wish-

"Because the people of the other car were her own Mom and Dad."

The poem still hangs snobbishly with many other precious legendary items on my door! But that's because it was a very well written epic. At least that's what I thought at that time. But I don't plan to take it with me when I move to a new house. Cause, like all other FWD mails (no matter how high quality they seem at first) it has lost its charm.

Then there was this mail where you are asked to answer a few questions. I should rather be more specific there were actually about 88/89 questions and everybody was free to add as many as they thought would make the query more fun! I still have that one too since it took up quite a long time to fill the whole thing up (how stupid of me to even try!).

Another popular kind is the one's associated with religious matters. An example is, there's this guy in Arab who sees the prophet every day in his dreams and he tells him what to do or not. A few other chain letters might prove to be a little more absorbing. Once some guy gave me an address of this web site where the 10 most notable people of the last few centuries (before the 20<sup>th</sup> one that is) were listed. His point was that the list had Bill Gates name and not our prophet's. So all you had to do was to visit the site and vote for him (a divine principle indeed).

Different web sites create such FWD mails for advertisement. And if the web site is good enough then people do send the addresses to other people so that they can try them too (like the digital photo one printed on RS few weeks back). Now this is understandable. But then again there are mail, which contain moral lessons. Recently I received a FWD mail on mothers. It was pretty noble, but I've had better!

No matter how vexed you are by these FWD mails, you have to admit a few of them are quite nice too. Despite how plagued you are by them, I'm sure that sometime or the other they did actually entertain you. But that doesn't mean one will allow these to get on their nerves forever. When you are expecting an important mail its them that you seem to get all those junk mail. So naturally it's more irritating at the time.

I'd like to end the write-up with the hope that all the FWD mail makers will renounce and will let us leave a relaxed life where we won't have to worry about getting at least 5/6 FWD mails per day. If you remove my name from your list, I'd be ever grateful to you.

## DIE AND LET DIE

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Leave the highway and enter the city limits. There are many poignant sources of danger here too. The "tempo" is a popular mode of transport in the city. Many of the "tempo" drivers are young daredevils. If you are looking for thrills, riding a tempo surpasses many of the rides in popular theme parks. To add a little more thrill for tempo riders, there was a documentary program on BTV which showed that the tempo driver was drugged while driving.

Baby taxis (or scooters) and tempo carry passengers in the front seat with driver. This is a very unsafe position to seat in. Firstly, it interferes with the driving. Secondly, in case of accidents the front seat passenger is most vulnerable to serious injury. There is a law against this, but it is rarely enforced. Often the police officers seat themselves in that position to take a free ride to their destination.

The pedestrians can often pose as sources of danger. There is only few zebra crossings where the pedestrians can cross the road. So they cross the roads at all points frustrating the drivers and making life very difficult for them. They have to be constantly wary of pedestrians with suicidal disposition who appear out of the blue in way of the vehicle. The sudden appearance of a pedestrian in the middle of the road can lead to accidents. The people never seem to learn. The hazards of crossing a road only become apparent to them in the moment before dying.

Majority of the drivers in our country do not have a license to drive. Are the law enforcing agencies doing anything to stop them? They take this opportunity to earn some extra tax-free money. Most of the vehicles lack proper fitness, yet they seem to have the fitness certificates. Many ply the roads without any road permit or certificates. The consequence is that our roads are full of inexperienced, unskilled and uninformed drivers, and vehicles without proper fitness, resulting in more road accidents and deaths.