



Those Early Days

I had always been labeled the 'notorious brat' of the family, who always demanded on getting things done her way. At home, I have never failed to get work done, as I enjoyed it.

Even at school, I had made it clear to my fellow mates that my 'wish was their command'. Rearing up five sons was not an easy task, and when I was born, my parents were less strict than they were with my brothers. But, I had tried their patience too long when I was expelled from the school for beating up a fellow student for the third time.

I was immediately packed and sent to a boarding school, against my will. The boarding school I had been sent to was only for girls and all the teachers were females too. Quite obviously I thoroughly detested this fact, for all my life I had been surrounded by males- my father, brothers and boyfriends. From the first day I hated the school and all the people in it. I was determined to create as much nuisance as I could so that I would be sent home.

After a week of attending the otherwise boring classes, almost all the teachers were horrified by my rude and impudent behavior-except the principal. I was rather amused to know that she actually thought I was a girl who had an untamed spirit. Again I decided to clarify her thoughts and exhibit her my worst manners, so that she would be compelled

to send me back home. However, no matter how hard I tried, she would always have a taste of my own medicine- almost as if I had met my mate. Once, I had intentionally broken a girl's mug and had sweetly smiled and said-

"Oh! I am so sorry."

What followed almost broke my heart. The principal came to my room and broke my favorite miniature china tea set and said the very same. All my efforts were of no avail.

For the next week, I stayed out of trouble in fear of another loss of my precious wealth. However, my restless mind never stopped to think of a way to extricate myself from this female boarding school. Finally I came up with a fantastic idea. The more I thought of it, the more satisfied I became. I thought that this time I would surely be sent home.

What I did was very simple- I introduced the "art" of smoking to my room-mates, though I stayed out of it myself. Soon, as I expected, they were caught and sent to the principal. It was the nature of any human being to try and put the blame on someone else when they were in the hot pot. The frightened girls were no exception either. When questioned, they said that it was me who supplied them with the forbidden things. I was, therefore, called too. As I saw the other two girls being expelled, I also waited patiently. I wore a somber mask on my face, but inside I was ebullient. But, to my horror, I was not expelled. What she did was worse!

For the next six months, I found myself in a predicament. I was made to stay with the principal. Those were the worst days of my life. I was granted no freedom and was compelled to do every kind of hard work, and excel in my studies, as if I was a bought slave, bound by harsh chains. I did not even dare to break them, for I feared the principal immensely after what happened. This woman's brains were ticking all the time! Just the thought of that punishment sent shivers down my spine. Even though I dreaded my stay there, years later, when I myself became a mother and a teacher, I had to admit that it taught me a great lesson. If it had not been for the principal, I would not have been the person I am today.

ROOM 2020

by Akash Reza (Lordi)

They don't make rooms like they used to anymore. The year is 2020 and I for one have become a lazy bum. The late 1990's is nothing like the world we live in today. Let's look at my world at a smaller scale....ummm....my room, yeah that is a good place to show the changes that have taken place.

For starters, the average teenager spends around 16 to 18 hours in his or her room because there is no such thing as "going outside". Personal computers and the Internet age have convinced people that it is unnecessary to go to school, office and even hanging out with your friends. We get use to it, so it's not really a huge problem. The walls are no longer the boring painted walls that they once were : they change colours and wallpapers just like the way people back in the 1990's use to change the desktop wallpapers of their computers. My favourite one is Mission Impossible 13 (M:I 13), my sisters say Tom Cruise looks a lot better when they use special graphics on his face.

Teenagers get their education on-line, right from playgroup to university. As far as sports is concerned, all the major soccer stars and cricket players now play from their computers and not at the stadium. One may ask, what went wrong? Computers, of course. They produced what is now known as the "Lazy Fever". It is amazing - players actually earn millions simply by playing on their computers. Employees work from their houses and there is no such thing as an office



anymore, I am glad I see my parents a lot more, had I been in the past I would have never have had that opportunity. Video Conference Cameras seem to keep the visual contact between teacher and student; employer and employee; cats and dogs....oops....that was an error those animals became extinct long time ago.

The teacher teaches from his or her house, the students are always at their rooms and they can interact with the teacher and friends in class. The World's Teachers Association (WTA) have in fact marked 9th of July as their official holiday, because it was on this date that teachers no longer had to go to real classes and confront the students, hence, they no longer had to tolerate students throwing chalks at them behind their backs during class. So much for the teacher-student relationship. As for friends, they usually hang out on-line too. They chat to each other using cameras and the Internet. Parents were undoubtedly relieved because teens no longer go to parties and from what I have read a lot of "undisciplined actions" used to take place at those parties.

As far as food is concerned, most people order food on-line and the Universe Health Organization (UHO) forced fast food on-line restaurants to include vegetables in their recipes - personally they are okay once in a while but it's usually better not to overdo it.

The traditional culture of sleeping on the bed has remained; the chairs and bathrooms have not changed much either. Except that the chairs can be converted into commodes at times of emergency (when nature calls) - it is one of the only indications that nature does exist in our lives today. People no longer read books, instead they read it once again on computers, the light bulbs are still there but it is rarely used because of the multicolored wallpapers which itself is a screen and produces ample light. Oh yeah, I almost forgot, there are no windows! I am not sure how people in the past lived, my daddy told me tales of his room and it sounded so dull, but my father says that the rooms of today are even duller. We still argue over it at the dinner table but I still think my room is a whole lot better than his ever was. I guess we have different views on the subject and try to avoid it as much as possible. However, at times I wonder - if this piece of writing was sent to the past and read, how would the teens there react to it?

HARVARD IN BANGLADESH

By NARMIN TARTILA BANU

I am sure that every A' level candidate in this country has thought about taking, or has taken SATs and TOEFL. The reason undoubtedly is to gain eligibility to apply to US universities in the hope of ultimately getting accepted to a good one. It's a huge ordeal indeed. Run to and from USIS, collect books, brochures, choose and pick, go for help, apply and blah, blah. On the other hand if one chooses to stick to 'bongo amar, jononi amar' then such ordeals are unnecessary. Hence, - "What crap? What's the use of going through such jhamelas?" - one might say. For instance - me! Then again, saying is not believing so I may not mean it.

When a friend of mine passed me the news of a seminar being held at Hotel Sheraton by some visiting colleges, I rushed there, to check out what was cooking, despite deadly threats from mom. She knows that I'm not going anywhere before my A's, and has every intention that I do the same after my A's. But right now, my going to a seminar had her in hysterics. It was as if I was packing up for boarding a Boeing 747 parked in our back garden!

There were several universities present and about 500 spectators. A mini lecture gave information on general conditions of living in the States. The structure of the seminar is something like this - on the 1st day each university introduces itself - with brief background of what programs it has to offer, where it is situated, climate conditions, fees information, etc. On the second day, interested candidates are asked to come and fill out the application form and submit all the documents, along with application fees. DHL or FedEx would then mail the stack to the respective colleges; and if chosen an I-20 will be sent within 5 days to the lucky applicant. So "Who knows, by the end of the next couple of

weeks you might be in the US", as the presenter had said! It was followed by a brief presentation of each university, among which were Hartwick, Albertson, Savannah, Wilson, Seton Hill, Bethel, Doane and Kansas Wesleyan.

On my way home I reflected that fighting with my mom had been worth it. Certain little confusions that had been nagging me before were now evacuated from my little brain cells.

I wondered what it really is about those US universities that attract so many Bangladeshi teenagers, despite disagreements from parents, in cases of girls especially. I can name 10 other friends and cousins (girls) who are having 8 fights per week with parents. The topic being "I wanna go there (US) after my A's" vs "No, definitely not. Not as an undergraduate anyway!" Maybe it is the prospect of completing undergraduate in exactly 4 years, without worries of session jams, suspended classes and clashes in the campus. Or is it? Maybe it is the frustration of not being able to choose one's own field of interest that drives these young people to thousands of miles away from home. Or is it simply in their genes to be a 'hoojooge Bangalee'? Whatever the case these people are die-hard fanatics to set sail to that country.

Now it's not like only we are interested to go. They are equally interested to take us. The only reason can be that they have seen performances of previous Bangladeshi and liked it. And why not? The performance is good. Why not again? We don't have any malls here and going out in school life is mostly a no-no. What instead we do have are strict regulations to go to school, come home, eat on time, say prayers, do homework, go to private tutors, study more and finally sleep. This is a system set by parents and is being updated every

generation.

Excuse me friends. I am letting my imagination take a wild gallop, and totally omitting schools like Harvard, MIT, and Princeton. Those dudes would never come to Bangladesh to seek brilliance. They'll just proudly stay put and smirk at all the idiots from all over the world working their heads off to secure a place in them - only to receive a heart breaking letter saying, "Soooooory." Snobs I call 'em.

But hey! You don't have to support me. (Who says you are?). Colleges like these are necessary for that small part of the population who have the right caliber and are the budding Stephen Hawkings or Isaac Newtons. Dumping these kids in a B-category college would be like throwing water on a spark that is yet to flare up.

Anyway, my main sentiment lies elsewhere, and you're not even anywhere close! I wonder and worry about my country. I construct dreams in my mind, which I know I will not be able to see. But won't my future generation be lucky either?

Maybe, just maybe.... one day.... there will be a famous BIT or Bang-tech (Bangladesh Institute of Technology), or some equivalent of Stanford, Princeton or Yale right here in my country. I don't know how, or when or by whom. But we have the right kind of serious students here who want an uninterrupted period of unperturbed college life with a vast field of subjects to choose from. So if by any chance this Bang-tech or BIT or whatever you want to call it, does fall here from heaven, it will in no time beat any other universities in the whole world.

I know that it's a far-fetched fantasy from Mars....but can't it ever come true?

MAILBOX

Dear Editor,

My favorite activity is reading "The Rising Stars". My elder brother, Mahmud Zahid used to write to the Rising Star. Unfortunately, he passed away at the age of 21 in a plane crash in Oklahoma, USA. I have written a letter to him after his death. I shall be happy and grateful to you if you publish the letter in The Rising Stars.

Mahmud Nasif (Rubaiyat)

Class: p-6

School: Willes Little Flower School

Dear bhaiya,

How are you? Hope you are fine? I think you were hurt when Cessna- 182 hit your plane. Please let me know how you felt, in my dream, Ok! You can't talk to me or write to me or send any emails or meet me. So every Thursday please come to me in my dreams and let me know how you are doing in the house of God. I will write a letter to you every Friday and I will leave it on your grave as long as I live. Please come to me every Thursday in my dream. Mother and father are also crying. Everyone is. I heard that there was a head to head collision between your plane and that plane. Give that pain you felt to me in my dream. Make sure that I can feel it. This year (as you said in your last conversation to me) Baba is making me study less, that's why I'm not giving my half-yearly exam. I think you already know that you will be brought to Dhaka on Thursday 5:00 a.m. Bhaiya, I will never see you again after you are buried. If you want something I can do for you as your brother, let me know in my dream on Thursday. I will write a letter to you at any cost. Don't worry I will take care of everything.

Bye-Bye

LOVE

Rubaiyat