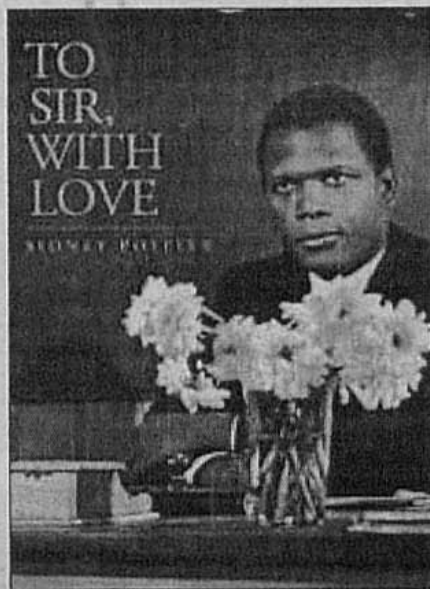


To sir, with love

THE Novel "To Sir, With Love" is a novel written by E.R. Braithwaite. The book basically portrays various human characteristics, of which, the idea that humans are able to adapt and change their way of thinking seems to be the most prominent one. In the novel, both, the teacher, Braithwaite, and his students end up going through many changes that ultimately result in their coming to change their way of thinking about each other. In life, as in this fictionalized account, the ability to adapt to the world around one's self is a very important trait.

It is an unbelievably inspiring story. E. R. Braithwaite captures the shame and hatred of prejudices and racism. The journey begins in the East End of London, during the 1940's. Mr. Braithwaite teaches at Greenslade Secondary School, which is surrounded by poor neighborhoods filled with social vermin. Rick Braithwaite is a young black man, born in South America, who just got out of the Air Force. Now in Britain, Braithwaite's looking for a career, mainly to pay for food, but things don't work out as planned. He came to know the virus of prejudice very well, as he was turned down from job after job. Teaching became the cure to set him free.



In the story, Braithwaite begins with a set of preconceived ideas about his students. He expects them to be unintelligent, rough, racially intolerant children with no future—hardly deserving of his respect. But, as he sees later, they are the total opposites of his initial

ideas. Mr. Braithwaite begins "learning from them as well as teaching them." The class may have problems in their home lives, but when they enter the classroom, Mr. Braithwaite joins them on a journey to adulthood. The students ask many questions, which allow them to acquire the knowledge they deserve. On occasion the questions touch upon people of different races, and Mr. Braithwaite gives mature answers, and speaks to them as adults. Braithwaite's theory is to treat his students older than they are so they will behave more grownup. With a teacher who respects his students, they, in return, accept him and honor him with the courtesy of "Sir".

Under his guidance the class also learns to respect each other as human beings and not be prejudiced against each other because of social status or skin colour. This is gradually shown through their actions, such as the students all going to visit the house of their black friend during his crisis, or their learning to address each other by their last names, in the case of the boys, and "Miss", for the girls.

Braithwaite helps them to break out of the pattern of intolerance and roughness into which society had placed them. They began to respect themselves and then to respect others. In short,

it was obvious that both the teacher and his students were able to change their way of thinking; they did not get stuck in their original set of preconceived notions about each other. This is a key point of the novel; this idea that people can change their ways.

The message that the writer tries to convey to his readers through this book is that the concept of man being able to alter his ways is a crucial element to his living in a society such as ours. And along with that, everyone must learn to accept individual hardships and adapt themselves to their ever-changing world.

I would recommend this book to all those readers who like to get different insights into life, and like reading deep, well-thought out books, because this book certainly qualifies in that category.

I think anyone who reads this story will walk away with a broader view on life and how he or she lives it. The quotes Braithwaite uses will really make you think, and his words will stay engraved in your mind. However, for those readers who do not enjoy books such as I have just described, then unfortunately this is not the book for you, so I would not recommend it to you all.

By Rohini Alamgir

Saving a stranger

THERE he was, lying covered with some blood-like fluid, God only knows what. It was 7:30 in the morning. The VIP road which leads to the airport was almost deserted. Only a few vehicles whizzing past at appreciable speeds. He lay on the third lane of the six lane highway. It seemed as if he was in extreme pain after being badly injured due to an accident. It might have been a hit and run case...or may be? I didn't get close to him. In fact, I slowed down a bit just to have a better view of him and find out whatever had happened to him. The scene evoked a lot of sympathies in me, just as it had happened two years ago. I would have taken the person into my car and immediately rushed him to the nearest hospital without a second thought. But today...today I am different. I am careful.

My parents always drilled ideas of good sense, love for human kind and help for the needy. They used to add extra food into my snacks box and reminded me to share the food with my friends. They used to admonish me if I ever got angry at our servants. I was brought up with good ideals which I really followed whenever and wherever I could. I tried to do whatever my parents advised me to. I still do.

Facing this situation presently, I recalled what had happened two years ago. I still remember very well, the unfortunate incident which had a tremendous impact on me. It was when I was in the tenth grade that I took a sympathetic step to help somebody in need. At least, I thought so. It was around 7:45 am on a foggy winter morning. I was proceeding towards my school. That day I had my English Language final exam. I had to reach the exam hall by 8 o'clock sharp or else I would get late. It was the same road that I took everyday and the same where the previous incident took place, but this day, only the position and situation were different. I saw a lady running frantically to and fro, trying to attract the attention of us in the car. I told my driver to stop. He stopped the car. I came out and enquired about what was wrong. Immediately the lady started wailing and got hysterical. With a choking voice, she told me that she had to reach the hospital with a blood bag. She showed me the bag of blood. She said that her husband was critically ill and immediately needed the blood for transfusion or else he might die. She begged me to give her a lift to the hospital which was a little further from my school. I, understanding the seriousness, told her to get into the car and ordered the driver to rush for the hospital.

Barely had the car moved about five hundred

metres, that the woman brandished a gun and pointed it at my forehead. I was shell shocked! She ordered me to hand over to her my cell phone, all the cash which my driver and I had, and also our wristwatches. She calmly said that if we try anything funny, she would seriously injured both of us. We did as she ordered. I was shivering and sweating with fear. I saw my driver too, sweating profusely. After about thirty seconds, the woman ordered the driver to stop the car. He did as she ordered. She got out and threatened us with a warning. She ordered us to get out of sight as soon as possible or else she would take a drastic step. We had no choice. We somehow reached my school with a lot of confusion and disgust in us. I was so affected by the incident that I had to wait for about half an hour to concentrate and read the question paper properly. The incident kept haunting me while I tried to settle down with my English exam. The thought simply would not get out of me. I was so badly affected that day. But I sincerely wanted to help her out. Why did she do it to me?

The incident which occurred two years back, is still fresh in my mind. I have a big question in my head now. Should I try to find out what was the problem with this man? Was it safe to help? This time I should be careful not to be impulsive, even though it looks to be a serious accident.

My sub-conscience nudged me to give it a try. It told me that every time it need not be the same. I gathered enough courage to stop my car, moved forward, got a closer look and finally examined the person with a keen eye. After a good look, I decided to take a risk and help this person. I took him to the nearest hospital and came to know from the on-duty doctor that there was a serious injury to his skull and brain. I asked the doctor to take care of him and left the hospital after the surgery. Later on, when I visited him the next day to see his condition, the unfortunate man, on regaining conscious, thanked me a lot with tears in his eyes. Even his relatives praised my effort of helping him when his was fighting with life.

I have grown up. I exercised 'caution' and took a positive step to serve a misfortunate person. I learnt that one negative experience in life is not powerful enough to stop a person from taking positive steps in future. One must grow out of restricting forces within oneself, and try to face adversities with courage and a clear mind. I did the same, and am growing up with this ideal in my life.

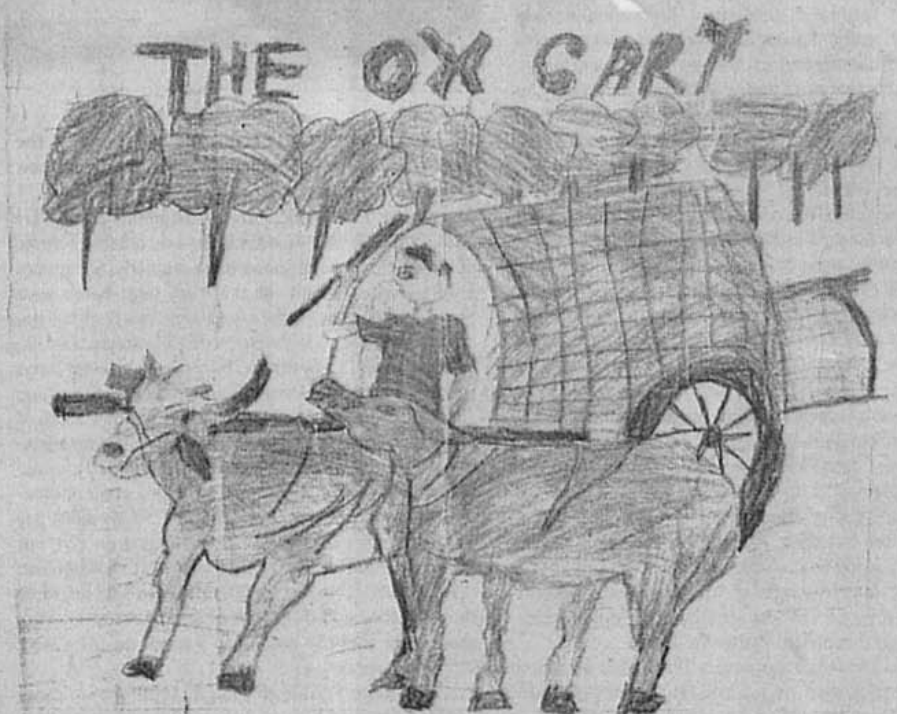
By Fahim Chowdhury

A little bit of winter break

Faraway places, seasons gone by,
Strange events made you laugh, made you cry
From playing to reading and back again
To spending time with a great friend
Sitting on my bed
Tall mountains I have scaled
In the pages I have read, seven oceans I have sailed
In just two weeks, no school included
Imagination ran wild, I never felt secluded
Mind's mystery solved, truth seen with great visibility
Never a match for mine, or anyone's abilities
Also in my world, there are no possible

failures
For, everyone is a winner in their own wonderful way.
With no school no borders, no one to rein you away,
To let your imagination run free
No homework, no gym clothes to worry about
No need to follow a certain route
To putting the feet up and let your mind go free
No studies, science, and math you see!
A time for relaxing, and drinking Kool-aid
Winter vacation is great!

By Shanzeh Rafika Ameen



The Ox Cart

Ox cart, Ox cart
where are you going,
ringing your bell
ting, ting, ting.
You carry people

in your cart,
also you take goods
to the mart,
you little ox cart.

By Madhubanti Anashua