

# Twinkle, twinkle, Rising Stars!

ADNAN M. S. FAKIR

When the night is shadowed by an eerie fog nibbling on your candy coochy-coochy land of chocolate fudge and cheesecakes, and your thoughts waver in and out of dreams and urges to run to the loo; then, and only then comes the rising ghost of the star-ry past. Do not mistake her for an ordinary apparition. Nay! For she is beauty defined! Her hair may now flow as white silk but her fingers still wield the elder pen of many dreams of children. She commands the omnipresent peeing-dog, Boo, and the memoirs of Hamdu Mia, The Girl Next Door and Dr. Lovelove amongst many others. She is the final and most lucrative ghost of the past, yearning for the days of childhood spent in the pages of the Rising Stars; and she comes to only those who have drank its infectious elixir and survived.

It was one such night when she appeared to me, drooling and thirsty for tales. I couldn't move; only heed her commands, and the night was spent in endless lore and legends of what was once the Thursday supplement of The Daily Star. I named her, the immortal Gnisir Rats. She turned my nails into faces of Justin Beaver for it; but it was worth it.

Gnisir Rats:  
*Faa, Faa, Fakir boy,  
Have you any lore?  
One for Thursday mornings,  
And one for my soul?*

Fakir: [Imagine all of this in a black and White tone, with grain and a sepia filter; Bangla cinema slow motion as appropriate.] "Remember those days when you threw away your *lal shag* infested breakfast, pushed over your glass of *shakti doi*, ran through the obstacle course of toys thrown all over the living room, just to grab the Rising Stars (RS) to read and laugh at parodies and fictions of *Beshi Pure Halims*, *Ajaira Pechal* and *The Language Revolution*, and *The Millennium Regression Goals of Bangladesh*; and anything and



everything that mocked the evils of society and sucked you into a land that pushed your imaginary boundaries. Don't remember? Well neither do I; I was tiny. But that is the lore of Thursday mornings when Rising Stars used to invade the young minds of Bangladesh. There were even rumours of parents protesting against the power of this piece of newspaper in expanding kids' imagination, causing them to stop taking prescribed anti-depressant drugs because they believed RS *was* the drug!"

Gnisir Rats:  
*Row, row, row your life  
Gently back the stream;  
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,  
Tell me your RS dreams.*

Fakir: [Visualise this in colour and with chirpy piano music in the background; here's a little bit to help your imagination: 'Chirp chirp, chirp chirp.'] "I was then but a wee-little-toddler, barely able to tie my

own shoe laces, trying to act cool with my shirt tucked out in school (no I did not wear my pants below my waist to show off my oh-so-sexy under garments). It was class 9, otherwise dubbed as the 'teenagers hitting second puberty' class, when I joined RS. I went to the first meeting, the first official meeting of my life, all properly dressed, excited to enter a new stage of my life, all ready to grow up.

"I never grew up; and that is the magic of Rising Stars. Every Thursday meeting was a bar brawl throwing knives of logic and vomits of stupidity into a cauldron which was brewed on and on until the perfect mixture of an idea for the next issue was concocted with just the right amount of lethal sanity with an overdose of wit and brilliant (almost) healthy humour. It was at times the Onion of Bangladesh; in other times burlesque as Colbert and often the Reader's Digest for the young.

"E R Ronny and Sabrina F Ahmed carried the whip back then while luring us

in with promises of tang and condensed milk never kept; but we loved it and we wrote. Oh boy, we wrote! We formed tag team partners in writing, challenged and (very British-ly) cursed others all while playing DOTA in slow office computers. It was a modern family. As much as RS pushed the readers' funny bone, it pushed us to hunt for new ways to prepare writing potions. Often there were times when we would write for hours, only to feel them as a flicker in time. I can confidently bestow my score in IELTS to RS; please take my certificate."

Gnisir Rats:  
*Ring around the rosy,  
A pocket full of pride,  
Tell me! Tell me!  
How RS changed your life!*

Fakir: [Imagine lucid violin here with a downward crescendo; oh and rain please because that always make it seem more thoughtful and reminiscence-ish. Tears are also good.] "Honestly, being a part of RS defined me and every other writer in the crew. It is an identity that we all still carry. One of the articles I wrote was the brain-child to 'Finding Bangladesh', a documentary series exploring histories, legends and mythologies of Bangladesh that I presently work on. Had I never been a part of RS, I do not know whether I would ever be me, as I am now. Many of my fond memories are here. Thank you The Daily Star, for the brilliant days and for the birth of such a fantastic supplement of stories; stories that are now etched in many hearts and lives being lived."

With that I sobbed into silent tears of musing; yearning the yonder days of old. My homage of silent tears satisfied the thirst of Gnisir Rats; and as sandman slowly took me to his realm, I saw her fade away ushering a last rhyme from her wrinkly lips:  
*Twinkle, twinkle, Rising Stars,  
How I wonder where you are!  
Up above the world so high?  
Like a diamond in the sky.*

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- ◆ Mainly focuses on undergraduate students with 60% being female.
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- ◆ Best subjects: Business/Commerce, Psychology and Education.
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