



CHANGE

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An oddly decorated wooden recliner welcomed Shane as he sat down with a piping hot cup of tea in his hands, and a mind heavy with thoughts. The chair was African, a trinket his father bought on one of his travels, set beside a vast array of plants, ornaments and flowerpots his mother had arranged by the veranda.

Shane's mind was burdened with doubts, unable to decide whether or not his desire to study abroad was for the "right" reasons. Was it the education, or the need for a change?

Shane's world was one that consisted of a wild mixture of extremes and in-betweens, ranging from a large, often dysfunctional family, annoying friends and passionate lovers to a thirst for crowds, a knack for travel, a brazen and never-to-be fulfilled desire for extra-vehicular activity, and a crippling addiction to tea.

Born into a generation that hates to settle but is often pressured to do so, Shane was fortunate in a sense; he grew up travelling to, and living in several towns big and small, far and unheard of in Bangladesh, and even abroad. His father was a military man, posted to and

fro with the call of duty. This made Shane particularly nonchalant when it came to abandoning friendships. His family kept their suitcases ready-to-go, set to backpack their home to some place far away. New places, new faces, and new friends - nothing was permanent. The only constant was inevitable change.

But change is good, right? A life of change can be exciting, and to Shane, every change meant an incredible, brand new journey. Maybe people are too focused on reaching a particular point or destination in their life, never noticing the beauty or importance of the journey itself.

Beyond the lush, colonial-looking cantonments where his family would be stationed, and past the brief periods of stability, lay a land exquisitely beautiful, its rusticity charming and terribly atavistic at the same time. A change meant travelling right through the very heart of Bangladesh: over mounds of hills, past endless waves of forest green, over meandering rivers and picturesque shorelines with the sun sinking into the backdrop, past remote villages of mud houses with leaky thatched roofs, and through towns of varying sizes, all derelict yet lovable. He learned about his country and its

people first-hand: the Bengali dialects that changed every few hundred miles, the wondrous hospitality of villagers who he knew had hardly anything to offer. Life thrived everywhere.

Change is bilateral - either we're thrown into it or we make it ourselves. For Shane, his father's life was what drove change, and when that inconsistent life eventually ended, he found himself at a grand pit-stop, stagnant at last in Dhaka. He expected to only find monotony and dullness in this megacity with its huge masses of crowds, construction works that go unabated and blast noise into neighbourhoods, and finally, traffic jams that culminate into frustrating, standstill situations because there's not an inch of room left for cars to manoeuvre. And indeed he found all of this, and more.

As he continued to sip on his tea, he pondered over all the pleasant discoveries he had made in his time here. He realized he had discovered a city of lights and long power-cuts, massive glass towers and sprouting business centres that dominate the skyline, a city that millions of people from different corners of the country migrate to for a better life. In Dhaka he found a city that never really

goes to sleep and a city that loves food, regularly honoring it with new restaurants and food festivals that popped up every now and then. He found a city that is jubilant with celebration whenever the Bangladeshi cricket team scrapes home a victory, a city that comes alive during celebrations of spring, monsoon, Bengali New Year, Victory days - in narrow streets, on lonely summer rooftops, by the roadside makeshift saloons and tea-stalls that make special tea which linger on your taste buds long after your last sip. In recent years Dhaka has even become the hub of information technology, business, and education in Bangladesh, filled to the brim with opportunities Shane couldn't possibly get anywhere else. While all this made for enough preamble to compel him to stay, there was also the fact that this city was where he finally found friends he could keep forever, the love of his grandparents on a regular basis, and where he found, hopefully, the one.

A small realisation dawned upon him. Maybe change isn't simply a change in where you are, but even in how you perceive your surroundings.

For even in a still frame, life can be ever-changing.