



THE OLDEN TIMES OF 2019

ARAF MOMEN AKA

Cowsar sat there, looking outside his garden at the Red Planet's artificial-earthen beauty. The red earth looked surprisingly pretty in the blinding light of the sun. He should probably get his implanted visors checked.

Whether it was the contrasting hue of the earth's colour, or Cowsar's retinas getting burned from the excessive red light, he couldn't tell. It was still pretty to stare at. Plus, he knew his eyes were safe behind the photochromic windows.

Cowsar looked to the left to check the time on his visor. To his horror, it was 24:50, just 10 minutes away from the 34th of Putinber, 0048. Cowsar had to make sure he would wish his father exactly at 00:00. It was his father's 125th birthday after all. Big day ahead for his old man.

Suddenly, a thought hit Cowsar. Aside from all the photochrome visor implants, life extension juice, and the whole shift from the Earth to Mars that led to the existence of all the things he gets to enjoy today, he suddenly felt an urge to think about the lives that were led by his parents in their 'old times'. All the adventures and misadventures started to seem interesting to him all of a sudden.

He would hear his father blabber on and on about how life on Earth was like back when Earth was the only planet humanity inhabited. His father would love telling stories about Bangladesh, his motherland. His father would always end his stories about his younger days by cursing at the Penguins of Antarctica that had conquered Bangladesh by the Earth year of 2030.

Cowsar's father would always tell him tales of how they used to have these devices they used to call 'smartphones', or 'phones' as they'd like to call them in short. Apparently, these devices were revolutionary back then. These 'phones' used to have actual physical screens that you had to touch to interact with the device. Cowsar was told many tales of how his father used to access social media websites through these devices. Many battles were fought online by his old man, and his determination always won him the arguments, apparently.

He would also thank the 'phones' for helping him woo Cowsar's mother in their times. The late-night texting, the hour-long of conversation, and what not. Cowsar would always think of these to be silly, as kids of his age would now use their neural implants to interact with each other through telepathy.

Speed of light had been achieved years ago. People nowadays teleport to places they want to be in. But, according to the words of his father, people actually had to commute physically back in his time. They actually had to wait hours after hours in traffic just to commute through a road as long as 20 kilometres. Funnier still, people wouldn't let emergency vehicles like ambulances or fire trucks through traffic. But who was Cowsar to judge? He himself doesn't let the sick and the elderly pass through public teleporters first.

However, not everything has changed. Electricity prices are still high as they were back on Earth. It's amazing that even after harnessing the seemingly limitless power of the sun with the Dyson Spheres, the prices of energy sources are still as high as they used to be when humans were

using non-renewable energy sources like fossil fuels. Cowsar also believes that if people of Bangladeshi descent were to take part in the Martial Olympics for the title of the 'Fastest Polluters', those descendants would surely win a gold medal in it. And hey, if esports became part of the Olympics, why can't polluting be a sport as well?

Cowsar always found it interesting how much manual work had to be done back in the Earth year 2019.

Interestingly enough, the earliest forms of neural implants were invented just 10 years after that year. Oddly enough, his father would always mention that year whenever he would sit down to tell them about their past. Was it something special about that year, or was monotonous recollection of memory a side-effect of the life extender juice? Cowsar didn't care. This juice would completely halt ageing and keep the body and mind perfectly young. This repetitive memory was merely a small price to pay for an endless life.

Cowsar suddenly remembered something. He looked to the left again and saw that it was 00:20. 20 minutes past the 25th hour! Cowsar thought for a while if he should just leave his father a telepathic message wishing him on his birthday or not. But it was a special day for his father in Earth years. Cowsar checked if his wife was ready to go to his father's house. She wasn't. Cowsar set the coordinates to his old man's house and told Xorina to step in when she was ready.

And with that, Cowsar stepped into the teleporter.

Aka is a tiny bleep on the world's radar, and he finds peace in knowing it. Ruin his peace by poking him onakaaraf@hotmail.com