

THE 100-YEAR RAIN

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Silence. That's what the pitter-patter of rain sounded like now. It had been so long, and there was no rainbow at the end of this nightmare.

The 100-year rain had come but never gone. It wasn't really a hundred years, probably closer to twenty, but you know how your grandparents love to hype things.

Anyway, we'll call it the hundred-year rain just for dramatic effect.

It began one uneventful day in the summer of 2020.

Green Leaf International (99%** English Medium) school was clogging up all the roads with all of its fifty branches. It was ironic how it needed so many buildings when half the boys spent their days at Abahani *maath* instead of class.

The rain began, but no one cared. It was July, and a downpour was common, but the faithful sun would always return the next day, to dry the streets and burn your skin. It was uneventful.

No one took notice that the rain never stopped. Not at 9 PM. Or even at 11. It wasn't until the rain had gone three consecutive days and drowned half of Dhanmondi did people begin to get concerned.

It started with people falling into potholes at Road No. 27 constantly, while little street kids stared on laughing. Pretty soon hundreds of rickshaws were stuck in place, with no pullers in sight. Not even the most outlandish of cars could make their way through this watery terrain.

Those little boats became quite popular, and people used them to get around town. I mean, sure, water had gone up to their waist, but they could still go and get gro-

ceries at Meethu bazaar, so it was all okay. And there were already talks of fixing the drainage system in Dhanmondi. Surely the situation was temporary.

That's what they thought, at least.

Twenty years later, here we are. The world is a different place, or at least Dhanmondi is. We don't know what's going on in the rest of Dhaka, ever since we had to give up charging our myPhones due to the absence of electricity.

Most of the people had left long ago, selling their property, rations and weapons for whatever price they could salvage. After all, what was the point of living in a concrete building filled with water till the fifth floor?

Have you ever seen the movie *Waterworld*? If you haven't, don't. It sucks, but that's the sort of situation we live in now. On boats, travelling around Dhanmondi. Our only purpose is to salvage rations from old supermarkets which are now underwater.

You might ask if that's a sustainable way of living, but guess what, the generation before us never thought about it, so why should we in this apocalyptic waterbody?

And if we could find a soggy bag of Cheetas every once in a while, it wasn't so bad consuming our version of a cheese shake.

There were many enemies in this world, one of them was the fish from the old Dhanmondi lake, which had eaten enough waste to finally mutate and adapt to this [insert something], growing in size enough so that we were finally the prey.

But it wasn't only giant fish out for vengeance against humanity that we had to worry about, there was also the threat of other humans. Those of us who did not live un-

der the dictatorship that existed now was termed as rebels.

Resident Green Leaf alumni Shaer Ali had seized control of the area. He and his goons were in charge of most of the inhabitable area and useful resources. And he made sure to run his town that way.

We, the rebels, had grown up learning limericks about him. And once that reached his ears, he issued a bounty in our name, and we finally earned the nickname of the rebels.

I believe it was the children's classic, "*Shaer Ali matha khali*" poem that finally broke him.

The furious Green Leaf alum placed his bounty on the rebels, 1000 Paan cakes --- peculiar flavour of cake, I know --- and the chase was on.

Men and fish alike were on the hunt for the secret base of the rebels. Did I mention that Shaer Ali was able to control the monstrous fish that now inhabited the waterbody that was Dhanmondi?

At the hands of Shaer, these monsters were more lethal than if they were left to their own devices.

But there was hope, maybe not a great one, but it existed. Against the tyranny of Shaer, only one man stood a chance --- if there was any --- and that was Zawad.

Armed with only a bottle of vinegar and his faithful spear (which he had lovingly nicknamed Fahar), only he could combat the perils of this sea, or whatever Dhanmondi was at this point.

Just like in the movies, the story will now cut to a scene of Zawad, spear and bottle in hand, standing on top of his little boat, ready to take back what was once his.

To be continued.

