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# MY BRITISH COUNCIL TALE

The British Council Bangladesh's Tell Your Tale Contest

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Physicians prescribed me a total physical rest for six months when I fell very ill in Class Two. During that period I even did my schooling at home. Not having to get up early in the morning for school was like a pleasant holiday. As both my parents were in government jobs, my 'home schooling' was in the evenings and weekends. I enjoyed it for a while. But soon the shine of this endless holiday wore off. There wasn't much to do at home in those days as there was no daytime television, no mobile, no Internet!

My grandmother and two household-helps kept me company. It wasn't fun being with three grownups all day. All my playmates were at school. I was terribly bored by myself the whole day. There were wide open fields around our house. Before falling ill I used to play outdoors every afternoon. But now I wasn't allowed to go out to play as it would strain my health. I wanted desperately to run and play outdoors. My mother was worried I'd go out to play in her absence.

So to keep me engaged indoors my mother took me to the British Council Library at Fuller Road. I was amazed to see so many books in one place. The serenity of the place soothed my soul. In it I entered a dream world of words. I'd borrow books from the children's section, reading four books per week! My mother used to take me to the Library once a week. Time spent there would just fly by.

The beautifully illustrated story books would carry me off to another world. Fairy tales which I understood initially only partially, became familiar friends as I read them again and again. I became an avid reader. I was resting physically but my imagination took me across the seven continents and seas, to the stars and beyond. Boredom became a thing of the past forever!

With each story I was transported to a different time and place. My spirits soared up to the heavens and beyond. I despaired for Snow White, rejoiced for Cinderella, feared for Hansel and Gretel and cheered for Sindbad in each of their different stories! My vocabulary increased tremendously and my emotional repertoire grew beyond my tender years.

Soon I recovered and was back to normal schooling. But my world had changed forever. I'd found a lifelong friend in books and couldn't live without reading. I couldn't put down a book till I'd finished it. I became a bookworm for life. It was all because an illness had bound me to a sedentary life for a while.

My reading selection changed over the years due to necessity and choice. From fairy tales to adventure stories to romantic novels to historical epics, my taste evolved. My undergrad years were spent at Fuller Road browsing academic books. But one thing remained unchanged - my best friend! Because of the British Council, books became my lifelong friend, philosopher and guide.