

RTC LIBRARY E-NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2019



Welcome to the September 2019 issue of *RTC LIBRARY E-NEWSLETTER*

In this issue: Recommended Reads: *Why Can't I?*, *My Brilliant Friend* and *A Golden Age*.

Recommended Reads from the RTC community

Why can't I?

I will never stop asking why.

Why should I?

Why is being tall cool and short an insult?

Why do we judge people by the color of their skin,
the size of her back, the brand she wears,
or the way she keeps her hair?

Why do I have to wear cosmetics to look pretty?

Why can't we love a pretty soul?

Why can't I wear my sneakers and still fit in?

Why can't I wear my glasses and still be seen?

Why can't I read books and not be a nerd?

Why can't I wear the same tigo I wore last week?

Do I have to own an iPhone to belong?

All these judgment makes me sick.

I will never stop asking why!

Why should I?

Thank you

Tshering Dema

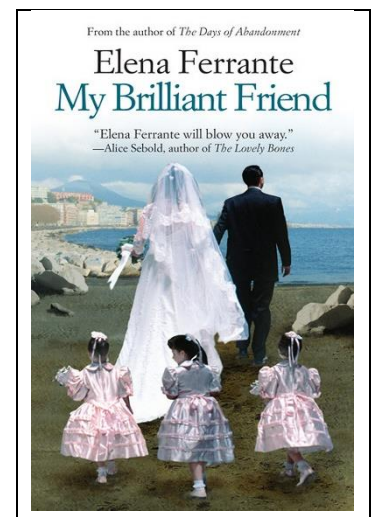
2nd semester, English Studies

My Brilliant Friend by Elena Ferrante.

The story revolves around two friends, Elena and Lila. The author gives a meticulous portrait of these two women and a touching meditation on the nature of friendship. Through the lives of these two women, the author tells the story of the transformation of a neighborhood, a city and a country, which ultimately also had an impact on the relationship between the two friends.

“Children don’t know the meaning of yesterday, of the day before yesterday, or even of tomorrow, everything is this, now: the street is this, the doorway is this, the stairs are this, this is Mamma, this is Papa, this is the day, this the night.”

-Elena Ferrante.



**Thank you
Swati Chakraborty,
Lecturer
Business Department.**

A Golden Age by Tahmima Anam.

Introduction: "A Golden Age" by Tahmima Anam is set during Bangladesh War of Independence, around 1971. Bangladesh at that time was known as East Pakistan and conjoined with West Pakistan together making up the country of Pakistan after the split from India. This story touches on themes like patriotism, love, sacrifice, loyalty, duties, and wars. However motherhood is its major theme through the eyes of Rehana Haque. Rehana Haque, a widowed mother, fights for her two children-Sohail and Maya, in this time of great political instability.

To get her children back into her life and away from her brother in law Faiz's custody, Rehana goes beyond her moral sense, finding the means to pay for judges and flight tickets to Lahore. At first, she sells her late husband's Vauxhall and her jewelry, carved teak mirror frame and an antique but it was not enough. Her neighbor Mrs. Chowdhury suggests Rehana take a loan and build a house. However, Rehana could not that because the bank rejected her request as she did not have any male guarantor. Mrs. Chowdhury even suggested Rehana take Mr. Quareishi, an old friend of her brother with her to bank, but he turns out to be a fraud. Seeing all her efforts to get a loan going in vain, Rehana decides to marry T. Ali, a blind, old, rich widower. When she visits his house, she breaks his late wife's mirror accidentally. In anger, he chases her out of his house as the mirror was very precious to him, a reminder of his late wife. On her way out, Rehana spots an open jewelry box. At that instant she want to run away with that box and bring her children back in her life. Her motherly love overshadows the unrighteousness of stealing. Rehana does not think of the consequences that she can face for the theft; it clearly shows the readers that she is willing to put herself in danger for her children.

Every year she celebrates the anniversary marking the day when she got back her children from Faiz's custody.. Her two children, Sohail and Maya are grown up university going students, nineteen and seventeen. Sohail is a handsome, music and a poetry lover, and Maya is wearing kurtas and white saris and getting actively involved into independence movement. "Ever since 1948, the Pakistani authorities had ruled the eastern wing of the country like a colony. First, they tried to force everyone to speak Urdu instead of Bengali. They took the jute money from Bengal and spent it on factories in Karachi and Islamabad. One generation after another made promises they had no intention of keeping".

It was very obvious that Sohail and Maya were into this pro-Bangla stance as Dhaka University students were involved from the very beginning. Sohail joins the guerrillas at the border, planning strategies to invade Pakistani armies and Maya moves to Calcutta, taking care of the injured refugees in the camp and writing articles about the war effort.

Rehana continues to prove that nothing else matter to her than her children. For example, "There was a part of her that wanted to allow her children anything – any whimsy, any zeal, any excess," while "another part of her wanted them to have nothing to do with it all, to keep them safe at home." Rehana full-heartedly supports her children's decisions. She is wise enough to understand their passion and interests and doesn't restrict their freedom of expressions but deep down she is afraid of losing them and always pray sfor their safeties. "Rehana could see the logic: what sense did it make to have a country into two halves".

She supports her children in her small waysfor example, she sacrifices her precious saris, the only remembrance of her late husband and sews blankets for the needy troops. Maya is shocked seeing her sacrifice her precious saris.

At Sohail's request, she lets Sohailand his rebellion friends set up a base camp filled with guns, ammunition, food, medical supplies in the vacant house after her Hindu tenants fled the persecution by the Pakistani army. ." At first, Rehana is motivated less by nationalist fervor and more by a desire to make her son happy" Rehana is a brave woman who could allow her rebellion son and his friends to hide their weapons in her backyard. Sohail is so dear to her, she struggled hard to selli her husband's car and her jewellery in setting Shona free. If West Pakistan armies come to know about this, they will destroy all of them as well Shona. More than this, she was happy that her son is asking favors from her so that she can prove her love towards him. In addition, Sohail brings home the injured major of their rebel group home. That the West Pakistani armies think that the major had died after they saw him in a building that collapsed. So the rebels wanted to take thisas their advantage and hide him. Yet, again, Rehana proves that nothing is more valuable to her than her children. She can see in Sohail's eyes how much he wants Bangladesh's independence. Her own life is less valuable than being a strong pillar for her children's decisions and actions.

Rehana also has to cope with internal factor's like Sohail's love for Silvi. Silvi and Sohail had been growing up together. Sohail was in love with Silvi but after the political instability in East Pakistan and Sohail getting involved into it, he was totally engrossed in politics. So Silvi got married to Sabeer, an ex-soldier from West Pakistan and later joined the pro-Bangla stance fighters. However, Sabeer gets captured by West Pakistan armies and they imprison him in Dhaka. Sohail doesn't want Silvi to be a widow. "There is also the moving secondary story of Sohail, Rehana's son, a poetry-spouting pacifist who joins the guerrillas and starts talking of the dead as "casualties", his motivations a mixture of love for his nation and love for a married woman. For her happiness, he wants Rehana to talk with Faiz, her brother in law, who has contact with the military. Sohail says, "Please, Ma, for me, just once, I will never ask you for anything, just please, go and get Sabeer, get him out of there. Ammi, amar jaan, please".

So she goes to Faiz and asks for release of Sabeer can imprison Rehana herself. Despite this danger, she takes the risk of getting her head chopped. With Faiz, she had to pretend that she still feels for West Pakistan as Faiz and Parveen see no good in the creation of new nation, East Pakistan. She lies to them by saying that Sabeer will change his young mind from being rebellious to being a simple citizen as he got brain washed by other elderly people in the rebell group. Ultimately, Rehana again proves her love for her children by freeing Sabeer from the prison.

Rehana can be a perfect example of a brave mother who wants to protect her children at any cost through her actions and she wants to see such behaviors in other women as well. During Maya's visit to Calcutta, Rehana also accompanies her like a shadow. She fears that Maya is vulnerable to many abuses like rape and molestation. During her stay in Calcutta, Maya asks her to help in the camp. "They really need help. You could do what you did at Shona-just talk to the refugees". Rehana thought she would not be any help to the camp. However as per Maya's request, Rehana helps Dr. Rao by going with him to the ward, jotting down notes for every new patients, and doing prescriptions as well. By chance, she meets Mrs. Sengupta, an old friend from Dhaka. Mrs. Sengupta was admitted to the camp as a patient, injured. Mrs. Sengupta tries to talk with Rehana by writing on paper as she is unable to talk.

Rehana finds out that Mrs. Sengupta's son Mithun, was shot dead by the West Pakistanis and that Mrs. Sengupta escaped by running down to the pond and not looking back at what they were doing to her son. At this thought, Rehana felt angry at Mrs. Sengupta for cowardly running away and not doing anything to help her son escape. Rehana is a woman of action.

What she feels as a mother, she would dare to pass all the obstacles and form a protective shield around her children even if she has to risk her life. Rehana avoids visiting Mrs. Sengupta for weeks and only returns to her when her mind calms down. But she still felt that there could have been some way that Mrs. Sengupta could have saved her son if only she tried.

For her children's safety, she sacrifices. The day Sohail brought an injured major home; it was Rehana who took care of him. She cooked food for him, washed his cloths and gave him every service that he needed. They fell in love as Rehana could tell her every secret to him that she never shared with anyone else, like stealing jewelry box from T. Ali's house for, Sohail falling in love with a married woman. The major was a really good listener. However, Colonel Jabeen and his troops enter to the house much to Rehana and Maya's surprise. He coerces Rehana to tell whereabouts of Sohail and his rebel group. They even take Maya to another separate room. To her surprise, they dragged the major in front of her and asked whether he was her son or not. At first, she denies it but later on news reaches to them that other two friends with Sohail were caught but Sohail was not.

"It was her choice, not his. Take my affliction. The rest could only follow as it did. One love that swallowed another" (264). To save her son from being hunted like a dog, she lies to Colonel Jabeen that the major is her son, Sohail and they take him away.

Rehana can forgive those who harmed her but she cannot forgive those who caused pain to her children. In 1971, after nine months of war s, Faiz was caught and imprisoned prison for being a traitor and leaking secret information about war ammunitions in Rehana's backyard,. When she visits Faiz in prison, he asks her to get him out of the prison. She wanted to forgive him as her brother in law and set him free but she could for the sake of her of Maya, the pain she saw in her eyes when her friend Shabeen was raped and for Sohail's friends who were killed during rebellion times. "Rehana emerges from the war not only with an identity of her own, but also with her family intact and closer than ever").Rehana can heal her wound but she does not spare the ones who caused pain to her children.

**Thank you
Ugyen Tshomo
Former Assistant Librarian
Royal Thimphu College.**

Wanted! Book reviews from Faculty, Staff, and Students

If you have read a good book and would like to contribute a review to the Library Newsletter, we would love to receive one from you. Tell us a little about the book and why you liked it in 250-500 words. If interested, send your review to gyanupradhan@rtc.bt or come by the library and see the library staff.

Thanks!!

YOU MUST TELL YOURSELF, "NO MATTER HOW HARD IT IS, OR HOW HARD IT GETS, I AM GOING TO MAKE IT..."-Les Brown.