

From gulli-danda to Nimbus Two Thousand

by Suchita Malik

SURABHI, my 14-year old, wants a Nimbus Two Thousand to go to school! "Nimbus Two Thousand, what is that, girlie?" asked I in utter bewilderment at such a funny term. "Oh, come on, Mama, why are you so archaic? Don't you know, it's that famous Harry Potter's magic broomstick? One can glide smoothly anywhere with it and can fly and shoot off like a Concorde and that too in fractions of seconds. How lucky, that Harry Potter..." swooned Surabhi, her eyes glued to the latest bestseller craze of J.K. Rowling. "A broomstick..." my eyes blinked in wonder, "but how will it help you dear, I fail to understand," I persisted with my queries marvelling at the capacity of a broomstick and its immense popularity with the kids.

"Oh, mom, it can do anything in the world. A broomstick is essential for Quidditch," she responded. I groaned out of utter ignorance. Not again! Quidditch? I muttered, wondering what in the world that was. "Yeah, you know, four balls, seven players on broomsticks... I know I can't have it. I wish I had a wand though, with phoenix hairs and unicorn tails," she rattled off leaving me completely non-plussed. By now I had grown suspicious about my knowledge. Or else, the girl was under some influence, I thought. "And, you know, mom," she almost said in a whisper, "it can help me put a memory charm on the history teacher when she gives us lots of facts and figures to memorise." "Memory charm, oh God! What is that nonsense," I

was beginning to lose my temper. "Oh, cool down, mom, that Nimbus is so cool... 1," she crooned, her eyes glinting mischievously, "you know, memory charm can even make you forget who you are — you completely go into oblivion and yet alive. Mom, only if I could put it on you for a little while, you could forget your nagging and pestering me to study and do my homework all the time. Oh, mom, what a treat it would be! It would be worth experimenting, isn't it..." she went twittering nonchalantly, completely missing a look of horror and disbelief on my face.

The conversation left my head in a dizzy and I was appalled at the audacity of the children these days whose minds were constantly occupied and fascinated by these extra-terrestrial

tricks and semblance of games they seem to be playing in their minds or whatever. Have we come a long way... Have we reached the Moon... Are we planning to go to Mars... I kept wondering and asking myself? Minds of the children of 21st century still fascinated by tales of wizardry and witchcraft — not only children but adults alike, the statistics confirm — unbelievable but true! The world of the *Unknown* and the *Mysterious* always held the human brain in a trance, in suspense, in fascination, gloating over the fact that the human curiosity was but a natural reflex. The unparalleled success and craze of the "Harry Potter" series has only confirmed this and given children an opportunity to let their imagination go haywire with devices like "broom-

sticks" and "magic wands" and goblets and azkaban and what not?

Gone are the days when we revelled in simpler games like *gulli-danda*, *kanche*, *pithoo*, *stapu*, *kho-kho*, *gitte* or even more ruddy games like football, volleyball, hockey or "*I spy you*." Playing outdoors in fields in the evenings was a ritual and a relaxation we looked forward to. Sweating profusely was a natural phenomenon and a cure for all the physical ailments. What do children of "*Our Age*" know or understand of all this, sitting in air-conditioned rooms and dreaming of Nimbus Two Thousands? For them, the journey from *Gulli-danda* to Nimbus Two Thousands? is indeed a smooth one. Long live the Nimbus Two Thousand!