

THE DEFINITIVE  
**YOUTH**  
MAGAZINE

# SHOUT

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DISSECTING THE  
RUMOUR MILL

PG 3

ANOTHER DAY,  
ANOTHER DOLLAR

PG 7



# A CRISIS IN COMMUNICATION



*Noor Us Safa Anik*

ILLUSTRATION: NOOR US SAFA ANIK

# EDITORIAL

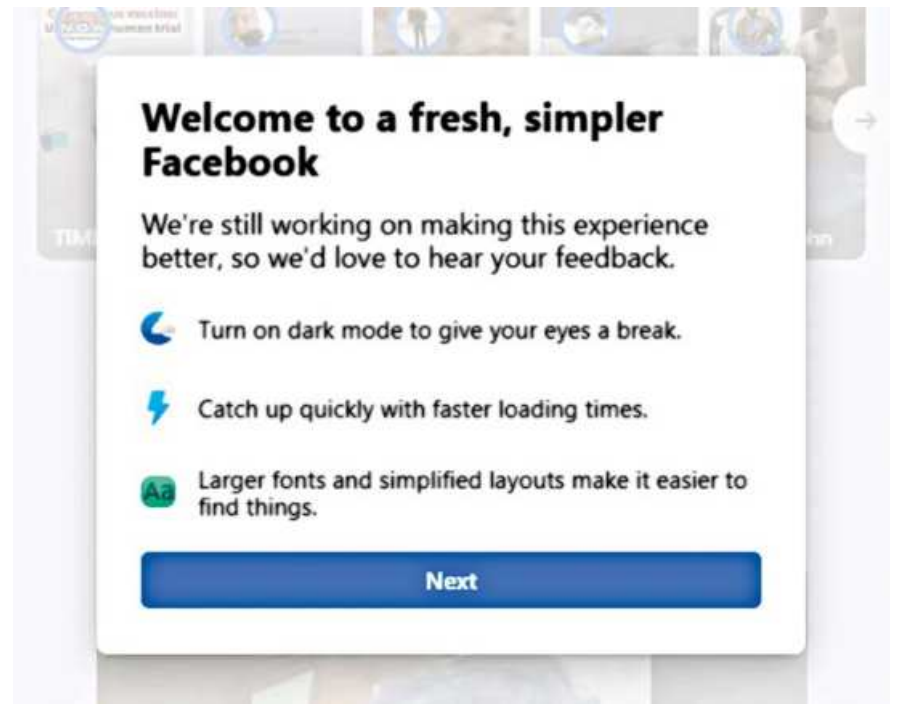
I love cities. I love finding out about all the different cities of the world, what makes a metropolis special and unique, I like thinking about what it is about the people living in a certain place that makes a place a certain way.

I think about Dhaka and its many problems quite a bit as well. The recent conversation around the relocation of street dogs from areas under the jurisdiction of the Dhaka South City Corporation has disheartened me. Cities need a personality, some character, and in my view, Dhaka's personality and character was made up of the unlikely and the strange. The fact that young people around the city have a special relationship with the animals that we share the city with is a great example of that. There are countless examples of young people who go to schools and colleges and universities, even the young underprivileged children who often don't have enough for themselves, being kind and taking responsibility for the dogs of Dhaka. The fact that dogs are still being relocated is emblematic of young people's voices being left unheard, and of authorities making decisions that only make sense to them.

– Azmin Azran, Sub-editor, SHOUT



## PLAYWATCH TECH REVIEW



# AS UNSETTLING AS 2020

## The new Facebook UI

**FAISAL BIN IQBAL**

Facebook has been going through a rough phase. From having major advertisers pull out ads from the platform, to being summoned by the US Congress every other week, the company is having to deal with a lot.

Basically, Facebook has 99 problems, and instead of dealing with them, they decided to reach for the 100-mark milestone, and introduced a new user interface (UI).

Facebook started rolling out the new FB5 design as an optional switch to its users sometime around March of this year. However, the platform has now made the new UI permanent for all its users starting September, killing off the old "classic" layout in the process.

And as expected, many users are not happy with this decision.

When you open the new design, you'll immediately realise that Facebook was going for a more minimalistic look. To do so, the platform had to make major changes to the design.

The new homepage has a three-column layout, ditching the old four-column look. Previously, the shortcut and explore bar were on the left of your screen, followed by your main newsfeed, the sponsored and suggestions section, and finally your chat or contacts section. In FB5, the sponsored and suggestions section is merged with the contacts bar. This puts the newsfeed right at the centre of your screen, and makes everything look a lot bigger than before, not to mention the rounded corners. Cringe.

However, there's a problem with this.

Turns out that the new layout will work fine on small, or normal-sized screens. Anything that's wider than 1200 pixels will end up leaving a gap around the main content.

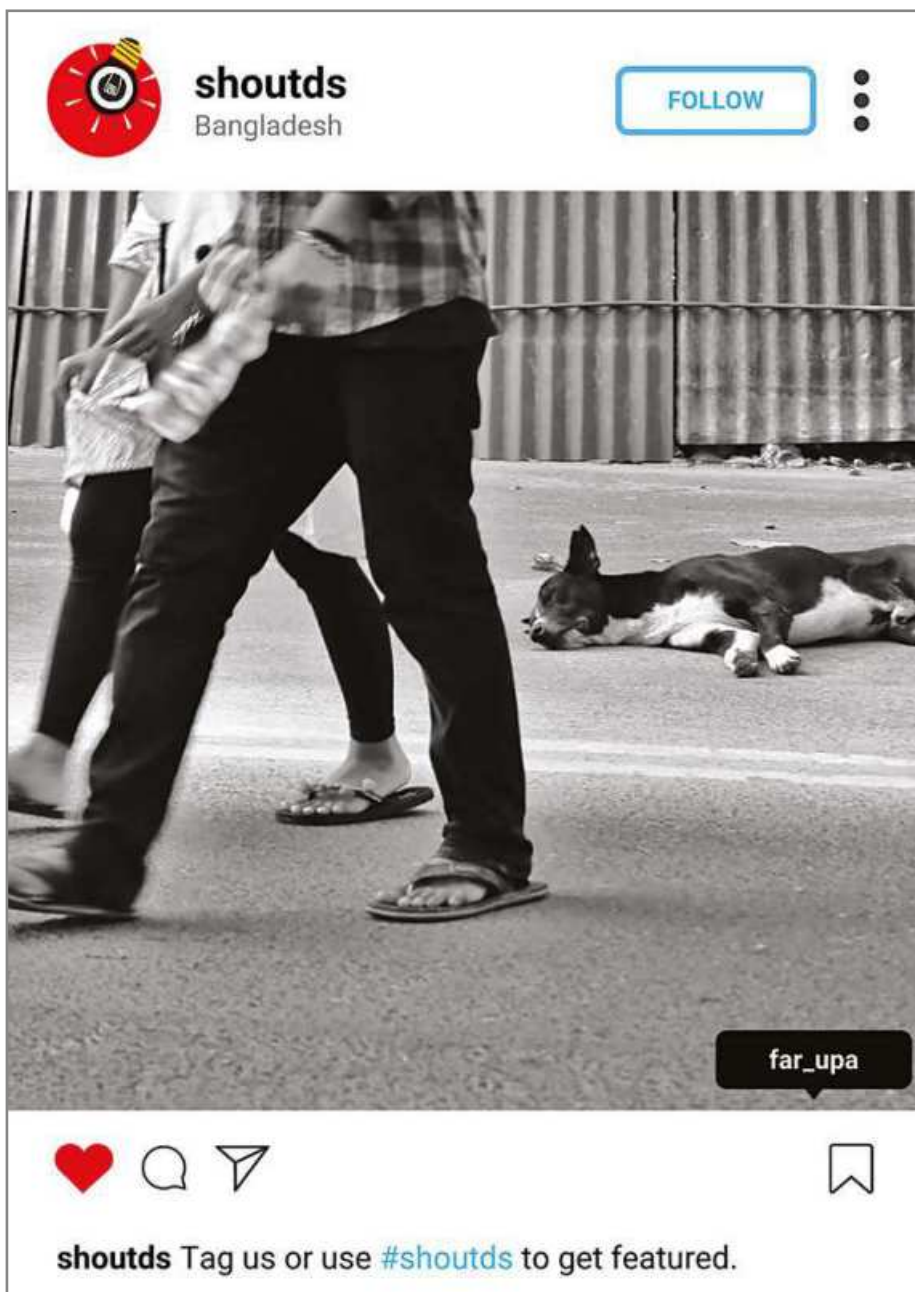
Then there's the issue with how everything's arranged in this new look. In an attempt to create a more compact view, Facebook seems to have made everything look more confusing, and yet couldn't manage to get rid of the redundancy that's still there.

Apart from visual flaws, the new design is disappointing in terms of functionality as well. Some of the previous features are missing in the new Facebook, or is yet to be implemented. One of the biggest features that seems to be missing is the option to prevent users from sending you invitations to join a particular Facebook group after you've declined it once, something that was available in the old version.

There are also a few glitches in this new design, and although I believe those are mostly due to a lack of cross-browser compatibility, I still think that a tech giant like Facebook should've done a better job at this. Even if they say that these issues will eventually be fixed, it simply means that they've released an unfinished product, and are trying to shove it down our throats.

Hence, it's easy to understand why people aren't that fond of Facebook's new look, and although we'll eventually get used to it, it's going to be a bit unsettling to use the platform for the time being.

Well, at least they have dark mode now.



# DISSECTING THE RUMOUR MILL

## How rumours affect our lives

### H. RAINAK KHAN REAL

Back when I was in fourth grade, my friends and I heard (and believed) rumours that an old *zamindar* house, located just beside our school, harboured the evil spirit of a dead woman. On every new moon, a white saree-clad woman could be seen walking in and around the house and the sound of footsteps and howling winds could be heard. Sometimes when playing cricket, when the ball would end up in that *zamindar* house, no one would dare to go to that house to fetch it.

According to psychologists Difonzo & Bordia (2007), a rumour consists of four qualities – information, circulation, unverifiability, and instrumental relevance. The aforementioned incident is an ideal example of rumour, in which *information* was the presence of an evil spirit in the house. That information *circulated* among the students of our school. Whether there actually was a spirit of a woman was *unverifiable*, because none of us ever dared to seek the truth. It was *instrumentally relevant*, because it impacted our lives as sometimes our tennis balls would end up in that house.

**How are rumours produced and how do rumours spread?**

The major reason behind the forma-



tion of a rumour is uncertainty. When people are doubtful of a particular situation, they tend to speculate in an attempt to understand the situation and to predict future outcomes. That is when the transmission of information through a succession of individuals results in the formation of a complex phenomenon termed as rumours. Deliberate lying and culpable carelessness also contribute in producing rumours.

Rumours circulate via discussion between people, especially when the uncertainty breeds anxiety among them. The rumours which tend to affect the social status of people or which are personally relevant to them spread like wildfires as these can boost self-esteem or serve the egos of people.

**So how do rumours affect our lives?**

Rumours can be both positive and negative. Negative rumours, especially

the ones intended to harm or sully a person or an organisation's reputation can impact our attitudes and behaviours towards them. On the other hand, positive rumours about a person inadvertently encourage us to focus on their positive values, which results in better impressions and we are quick to put our trust in that person, often to our own detriment.

**How should we deal with rumours?**

Rumours are to be responded to swiftly, firmly, and with honesty. Instead of blindly believing in rumours, we should always try to verify information before consuming or circulating it. Most importantly, we have to stop contributing to the spread of rumours, especially in this era of widespread use of social media.

### References

1. Difonzo, N., & Bordia, P. (2007). *Rumors influence: Toward a dynamic social impact theory of rumor.*
2. Hart, B. (1916). *The Psychology of Rumor.*
3. International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences. (August 11, 2020). *Rumors.*

*H. Rainak Khan Real wonders why his transmutation alchemy doesn't work. Will you send help at rainakkhanreal@gmail.com?*

# How to befriend an introvert

### AYSHA ZAHEEN

Introverts are their own kind of people. Their aloofness, need for privacy, and lack of verbose attempts might be off-putting for some. However, the mystique and enigma with which they tread along gets them attention they might not want. It can often be difficult to pierce through the invisible veil. Here are some tips to help you figure out how to respectfully win the friendship of an introvert, assuming you aren't one yourself.

### DON'T GENERALISE

It is easy to assume that all introverts are shy, standoffish nerds who awkwardly sit in the farthest corner of a room. Introversion itself is a spectrum and you can't expect all of them to have identical social frequencies. Keep in mind that the person you are trying to develop a bond with is more than the ruminating, quiet, distant image you have in your head.

### CREATE A COMFORT ZONE

Comfort zone is the headspace in which one is relaxed and does not feel anxious even slightly. Introverts are their true selves and they *flourish* in comforting company. It is necessary that you smile at them (not creepily, just the appropriate amount). Have an open body language and keep your posture pointed toward them. Listen as they speak and do not



try to be subtle about it. Tell them things about yourself, since it may help them ease into similar conversations, and let them know it is also okay if they do not want to share things in return.

**AVOID SITUATIONAL CONVERSATIONS**  
Of course, this will not perpetually destroy your chances of bonding with the

person, but it will also not make them remember you or seek out your company after that particular encounter. It may not be possible to always come up with intriguing topics, but you could merely ask for their suggestion on which movie to watch next, or make an unsolicited recommendation that you feel they might like.

### SHOW CARE

If you have come along this far in this article to befriend an introvert, it is safe to assume you care about their well-being. Thus, if you hear they are sick or have gotten themselves in a pickle, voice your concern unabashedly. Some of them may be inept at expressing the heartfelt gratitude they feel, but will definitely make a mental note to keep you around.

### EXPRESS GENUINE INTEREST

Most introverts appreciate active participation as they can have a hard time approaching and befriending people they want to be friends with themselves. Assuming you want to be their friend, there must be something that draws you to them. Be respectful of their boundaries and pay heed to aspects about them that made you go through this in the first place. Similar interests always establish a solid foundation.

Before you choose to fret yourself over this, do not forget that if a friendship is meant to happen, it will, irrespective of if you are following certain steps or not.

*Aysha's brain unclogs at the sight of a crown of raven curls. Don't ask her what it is because that is all she will talk about at zaheenaysha10@gmail.com*

# A CRISIS IN COMMUNICATION

**ROSHNI SHAMIM**

Lately I have developed a new, albeit exasperating, habit. Every time I am in conversation with other people where anything about big gatherings and people-populated parties come up, my instant response is to say, "That's so 2019."

Although this is really just my 99th attempt at suave humour, it has recently led me to think deeper into the matter of public speaking and our emerging changes in communication. The year is almost (or so we're counting) at a close with many new norms of lifestyle firmly being established across the world. We have revamped our outlook on social gatherings, academic experiences, the ups and downs of productivity and even our

own personal journeys. In the flux of staying cooped up and almost subconsciously making that rushed move to a new virtual reality right from our homes, it gives rise to the question: *are our communication skills lagging behind?*

Online courses were on the rise even during pre-pandemic times but this year alone has single-handedly brought about a massive demand on a global scale. In a way, the lockdown has actually provided people an opportunity to not only work from the leisure of their homes but also focus on their hobbies from a more professional lens. Career-oriented individuals have been able to

develop their Microsoft Excel skills, coding, management and much more while others have utilised this chance to try out Adobe's tools on video and graphic design. Yet, courses on public speaking or communication-building idle silently on the sidelines, left alone by the majority of online learners.

A strong argument can naturally be made here that holding exemplary communication skills is not exactly a priority at this point in time. After all, with everything being online currently, from work meetings and job interviews to online classes and even weddings, who is even going to bother focusing on honing their public speaking skills right now? However, the damage of leaving behind something as crucial as communication-building can entail significant harm for us in the long term. This deceptively small problem seems to be emerging already in both personal and professional rendezvous.

Earlier this week, I was discussing the potential issues that can appear from a lack of communication skills post-pandemic with my colleague. He

agreed and shared his own experience on how, due to not having met his friends for such a long while, he could relate with this issue personally. My colleague shared his thoughts that despite being excited at the prospect of meeting his old friends, the actual meeting had felt very foreign. Simply hearing his friend speak face-to-face, or mask-to-mask in this case, after so many months of online communication, had somehow left him feeling more unsettled; the sound of a supposedly "new" human voice making him unsure to react in a casual manner.

The problem of dwindling public communication is even making its appearance at professional aspects. For recent graduates, the significant shift from being a student to entering the job market has been a completely virtual experience.

Subah Shaheen, a management trainee at Robi Axiata Limited, shares similar views. "For many of us entering the job market in spring, the first meetings and interactions we have had with colleagues have been virtual. While this does not affect the output of work per se, it really does make work feel more mechanical and that can lead to a faster burnout. You really can't put a measure on the power of human interaction. A few sentences of small talk with a teammate or running into your favourite colleague in the elevator can really feel rejuvenating," says Subah.

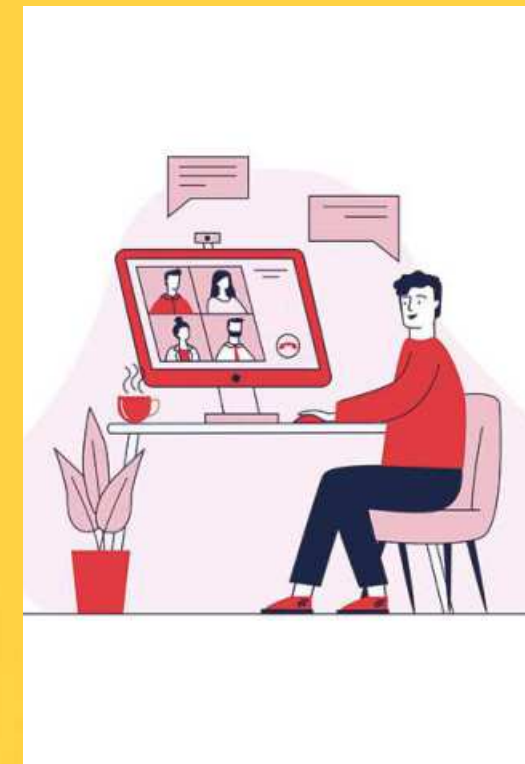
In the context of measuring human interaction, many individuals who have always managed to nail their office presentations with their excellent public speaking skills are now struggling to bring their previous influx of charisma and confidence from behind the virtual walls of a screen. Naturally, for many public speakers, reading the room as well as the body language of their audience is a

crucial step in making and also breaking down their points correctly.

Furthermore, the issues of distorted static, dropped calls and an unsteady internet connection can in fact impose severe obstacles during online team assessments.

Zaid Karim\*, a senior officer at a large NGO, recently took part in a renowned MNC's assessment round and felt the "virtual" pressure massively.

"I had to undertake various stages such as group discussions, role-play sessions and individual presentations virtually. Right after the group discussion, two of the candidates (including myself) were



asked to leave the video call. The other candidate and I were left confused about the next step. Did we get eliminated already? I kept questioning whether I was still part of the assessment. Half an hour later, I got a call to do my next set of exercises. This experience made me realise how the shift from physical work spaces to online assessments has really made us overlook the importance of communication," Zaid explains.

The impact of minimal communication practices in the field of academics can also potentially lead to extremely strong setbacks. This complication goes up a notch for students studying in fields that require more practical usage than theoretical, in technical fields such as engineering, medical or architecture students.

Tasnia Noor, studying to become a doctor, explains the difficulties in experiencing the same flow of communication that normally takes place between medical students and patients in a virtual setting. She states, "We are looking at screens and learning case histories. But the truth is, no two patients are the same; learning this way will

never be enough. We need to see the patients, in a way they are our teachers too."

Students who are preparing to apply abroad for higher studies will also now have a much harder time giving their verbal interviews and in maintaining a balanced and coherent conversation with their IELTS instructors. With the opportunities from workplaces, physical classes, and even social hangouts all basically coming to a standstill, it can become extremely difficult for aspiring students to excel their interviews and attain the scores that they need in their admission requirements.

Our resources to practice public speaking on a daily basis really diminished overnight due to the pandemic, and most of us did not even realise that it was slipping away. Although it can feel frustrating to identify the problem without a guaranteed solution in sight, there are always loopholes one can work around. If the issue is addressed, it can even become a blessing in disguise.

Mahbub Hossain, a senior associate at JP-

Morgan Chase & Co., admits the lockdown has actually helped many employees to come out of their comfort zones. He shares, "Many people are coming out of their shells due to being forced in becoming better communicators. Now, we need to be a lot more vocal and that is no longer just a choice."

One effective start can be to identify the merits of having exceptional soft skills, and therefore working on developing them just as much as our technical skills. A great platform to practice public speaking is YouTube, where one can find a wide variety of content to choose from and practice their communication skills alongside the on-screen tutor. Listening to TED Talks can also be extremely helpful, where one can pick up the styles and form of effective communication on public platforms. Subah, who recently completed an online course titled "Communication Strategies for a Virtual Age" under the University of Toronto, recommends bringing creativity into the learning process.

"Maybe through doing live polls or questions on tools such as Mentimeter, we can make the sessions more interactive. Though it is a challenge, there is no end to creativity, given there is now an app or website for just about anything, if we really look for it," mentions Subah.

If none of the above suggestions reap any fruitful result, then the easiest recommendation is to try increasing your daily frequency of social communication with your colleagues, peers, friends, and family. Despite also taking place through a screen, regularly holding candid and free-flowing conversations can still build your confidence and prepare you better in being a well-rounded public speaker. There is no doubt that each phase of our lives will bring different changes requiring demands of different skills. However, the skill of effective communication will never go out of style.

*Roshni spends her time dreaming about cakes and scenic waterfalls. Send her your thoughts at roshni.shamim@gmail.com*





**ECHOES BY**  
 ASRAR CHOWDHURY

# IT WAS EASY THEN, BUT NOT NOW

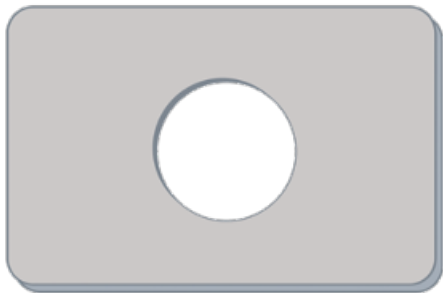
*Hindsight bias in learning*

I  
 “Anything seems commonplace once explained,” Dr Watson once said to Sherlock Holmes. After an event happens, it seems more inevitable we had always known its outcome. This is the *hindsight bias*. The bias has many dimensions, but we’ll look at how it affects learning. Let’s start with a principle from physics.

II

The Charles’ Law (1787) states: the volume of matter is directly proportional to its absolute temperature. This means, when heated, molecules in matter will expand. Simple. Let’s see a practical example of Eric Mazur, physicist and educator at Harvard.

Look at the image provided with the ar-



ticle. A rectangular metal plate with a circle cut in the centre. The metal plate is heated up. What will happen to the circle? Read the choices and think.

- A. The circle gets larger
- B. The circle gets smaller
- C. The circle stays the same size

If you’re guessing, the correct answer is Option A. The entire plate and the circle gets larger because the molecules of the circle and the plate expand when heated. Are you telling yourself, now that it’s explained, it seemed commonplace from the beginning like Dr Watson’s statement?

III

What has hindsight bias got to do with learning?

When we learn a new subject, we learn many new concepts. When you watch your professor explain, you think, that was easy. When you sit for homework, how many times do you knock your friends in Messenger asking, “Did you understand what the professor said today? I forgot everything.”

You didn’t forget. You overestimated what you learned. That’s the essence of the hindsight bias. We tend to overestimate

the outcome of an event or the validity of a statement only after the event happens, or we know the facts. Look at the following.

IV

In an election, candidate X is the incumbent. Candidate Y is the challenger and the underdog. The media is tilted towards X. Just before the election, X makes a mistake; candidate Y is the victor. The same pundits who had no idea that Y may win, now see with a perfect 20-20 eyesight looking back, where X made mistakes. Everything becomes clear now. These pundits overestimate the past only after they know the outcome of the event.

Coming back to learning. When you face trouble doing homework although you thought you understood in class, you overestimated what you learned in the class. If you think you tend to overestimate what you learn in class after it ends, what do you do?

This time, Sherlock Holmes comes to the rescue. “Elementary, my dear Watson.”

V

If overestimation is the bottleneck, be skeptical about learning. We forget a first impression not because we can’t remem-

ber. We forget because our brain is wired not to perfectly remember an initial judgement. Underestimate what you learned saying, “Let me read the topic again” or “Let me ask my friends what they think.” When you see the same thing a second time, you start with the knowledge of what you gained the first time and build on it. Thus, second time round, chances are high, you see the same concept with more clarity. This is where “revision” and “practice” come in.

Remember the men’s 2019 Cricket World Cup Final between England and New Zealand? Before Archer’s last delivery, it was impossible to predict what the outcome would be. Now that the game is over, doesn’t the plot England was destined to win, seem more inevitable?

However, by now, you should have appreciated, it’s easy to explain something once it happens or we know the facts.

*Asrar Chowdhury teaches economics in classrooms. Outside, he watches Test cricket, plays the flute and listens to music and radio podcasts. Email: asrarul@juniv.edu or asrarul@gmail.com*

## What it’s like being the teacher’s kid

**SYEDA ERUM NOOR**

Do you know what it feels like to be yelled at by your teacher? Do you know how it feels if that teacher also happens to be your mom?

Growing up, either you or your friend has had their mom or dad teach at the same school that you are enrolled in. And sometimes, that results in them teaching one of your classes. Our friends think that this is the dream and us, well, we have a different take.

**YOU ARE ALL-KNOWING**

You’re the first of your friends to know of all decisions made by the school. For you, it’s as easy as having a nice chat with your mom after a day of work. It’ll all come tumbling out as she tells you of the discussion at work. And bam! You know about the holidays and you can let your friends know before the notice is out.

The best part is, you also tend to overhear a lot of the gossip about the other teachers which you can then share with your friends. Don’t lie, you’ve done it. **MOM’S FRIEND GROUP IS A NIGHTMARE**

This can be both an advantage and a disadvantage. The benefit is that any confusion you have about homework or tests can be



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

sorted out with a phone call from your mom to your teacher. Where, among all the gossip and laughter, she can expertly extract the information you need.

It also means that whenever mom’s friends are over, you have to hide out in your room because let’s face it, it’s horribly awkward to meet your teacher

outside of school.

**NO CREDIT**

For those who work hard to earn a good grade, then have to face this cheeky comment, “Well, of course you did well. She’s your mom!”

This is by far the biggest disadvantage, because no matter how hard you study,

you rarely get credit for doing well. People always think you had the upper hand, whereas you were held up in your room studying just as hard as everyone else.

**THERE IS NO ESCAPE**

Since your mom is your teacher, this means lectures and corrections are all done right at home. The fine line between being a teacher and a mother often blurs when the teacher lives with you. You’ll be called to her room on the weekends so she can point out your mistake on the test you sat for last week.

**DOUBLE TROUBLE**

Your friends keep secrets from you because you’re the teacher’s kid. And you have to play both the roles. Your life becomes a revolving door of when to act like your mom’s kid and when to act like a friend. You create two versions of yourselves to deal with different circumstances.

There’s a lot to learn from being the teacher’s kid. You learn how to balance two sides to your life and maintain drastically different relationships. This will come in handy when you’re older. Until then, enjoy the perks!

*Syeda Erum Noor is dangerously oblivious and has no sense of time. Send help at erum.noor1998@gmail.com*

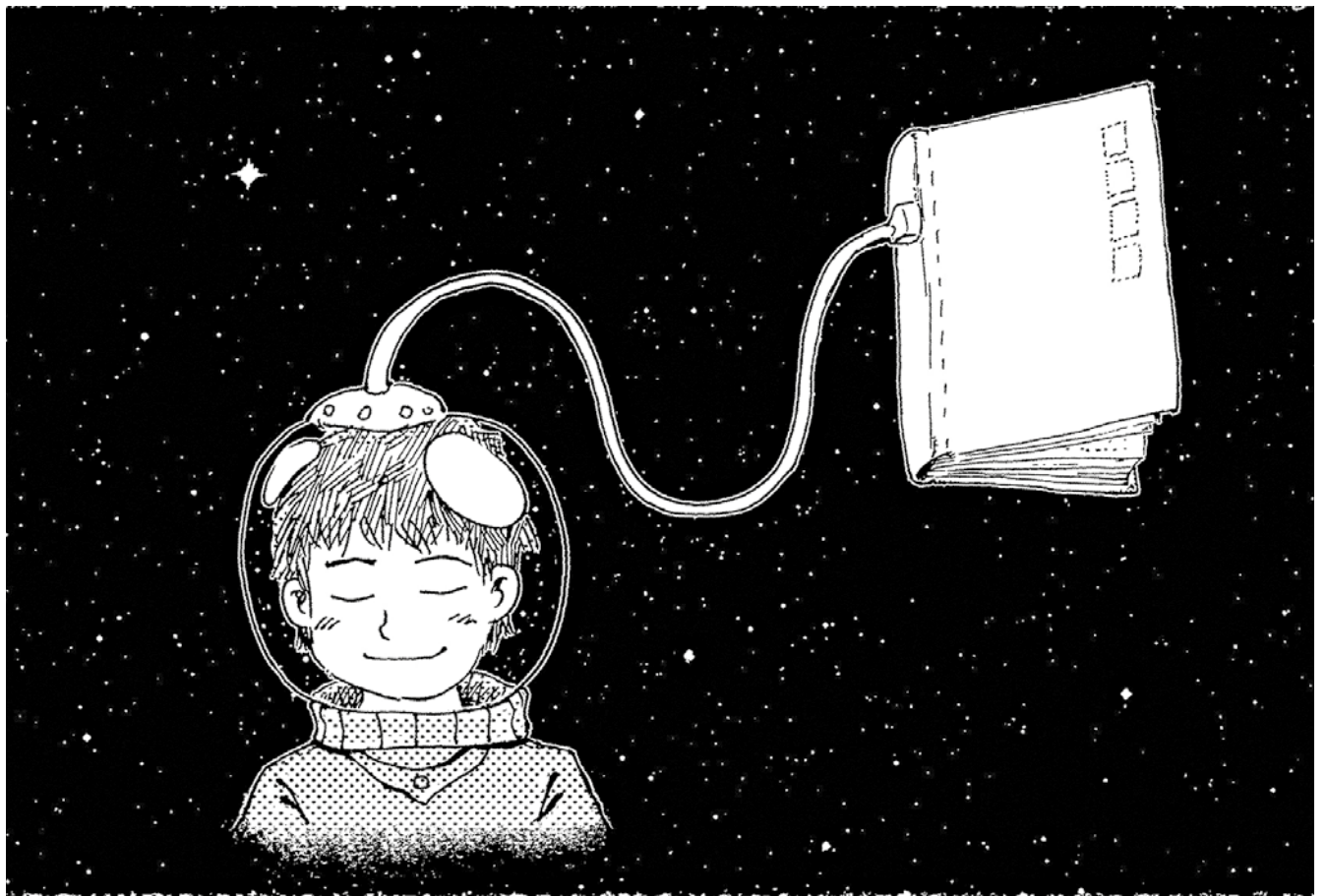
**FABLE FACTORY**

# ABOUT TIME

**LILIA HASSAN**

She saw something one moment  
 And nothing the next,  
 Although she knew  
 For hours she had slept.  
 That something she saw  
 Felt like it lasted only a moment,  
 No less.  
 That something she saw  
 Felt like an ecstatic memory,  
 She never knew she had.  
 As the sun washed her face in golden light,  
 She felt oddly calm and blithe  
 Only to realise,  
 She had woken up.  
 It was about time, she thought  
 Bits of her dream should start fading away now,  
 To a place called who knows where;  
 A room with a locked door  
 And the key thrown away  
 Never to be found again.  
 But these dreams may come back  
 Later in life, at arduous times,  
 Reminding her of the dreams she used to dream,  
 Back when everything was simply fine.

*The writer is a class 8 student at Dhanmondi Tutorial.*



# ANOTHER DAY, ANOTHER DOLLAR

**SAMIN SABAH ISLAM**

Munni bit her nails as she awaited her next appointment. Bare feet dangling from the concrete slab, she prayed a silent prayer to be able to grow as tall as the other girls in the compound.

*The day my feet touch the ground from here, she decided at that instant, is the day I finally become a woman.*

In the world of dingy alleys and darkened gazes, being young was nothing short of a curse. But this maze-like world was the only one Munni had ever known. It was the only one she knew she'd ever know.

She didn't have time to recover from the reverie before

Dili *apa* surged towards her like a tsunami without a warning, ready to devour her whole. How she managed to move as stealthily as a mouse with the frame of a gorilla was beyond Munni's comprehension. Years of practise meant Munni could easily dodge her. Once she had retreated to a safe distance, Munni blurted out a string of apologies for mistakes she didn't know she committed, but must have done so if that was what Dili *apa* believed, because Dili *apa*'s words were law in these streets. With a slap and a shove Munni's offence was revealed – she had not reported to Dili *apa* when her customer was an hour late, and was idling around like her majesty, instead of working to earn her dinner.

"We are working women," Dili *apa* said, picking up Munni from the ground and smoothing her dress. At fleeting instances like this, Dili *apa* looked almost approachable, almost tender, almost considerate. Almost. If not a mother, she could be passed for at least a distant aunt. Yes, that's who she was to the girls here – an aunt who found them work, two servings of dry *rooti* a day and a pillow to lay their heads and dream on.

"We work for every grain we eat," she explained. "I can't take money from someone else's work to feed you, can I?"

Munni nodded, obediently, anxiously. She was then instructed to take over Pushpo's appointment. Pushpo, one of the choleric middle aged older *apas*, was taken to the doctor this morning after complaining about stomach ache for the past week.

Munni headed towards Pushpo's 4 PM appointment and found the man of the hour casually leaning against a wall. Munni cleared her throat to declare her arrival.

The burly man with a thick moustache eyed her intently. For a moment he seemed taken aback, perhaps at her immaturity, perhaps in indecision. If he felt any remorse, it didn't haunt his features for too long. He dropped the half burned cigarette and stomped out its flame.

Munni decided he was in his late forties, at best early fifties – the same age she had assigned to her hypothetical father, wherever he was and if indeed, he still existed. This could be her father, she mused. He wouldn't know, she wouldn't know. The walls of the dimly lit, pungent smelling, eggshell-walled room wouldn't know. The tragedy of it would diffuse into the thin July air, unnoticed and unacknowledged. The cruelty of this notion didn't trouble Munni much, at least not as much as it once did. It was one of those things that came with both the nature and time spent doing this job.

She quietly followed the man through the ragged greenish curtains.

Before she entered, Munni closed her eyes and prayed another silent prayer.

*Please let this end before darkness falls, so I can play bou-chee with the girls today.*

*Samin Sabah Islam is currently torn between starting a new book and starting a new anime series. Suggest both at [sabah-samin11@gmail.com](mailto:sabah-samin11@gmail.com)*



ILLUSTRATION: RIDWAN NOOR NAFIS



# HIGHFLYER

Step forth, jump, go high  
Nothing is there that can deny  
The life in your dreams  
The beauty in your smiles  
The power in your soul as you touch the sky

PHOTOS BY NAYEM SHAAN  
CURATED BY ORCHID CHAKMA  
TEXT BY KAZI AKIB BIN ASAD

