

THE DEFINITIVE
YOUTH
MAGAZINE

SHOUT

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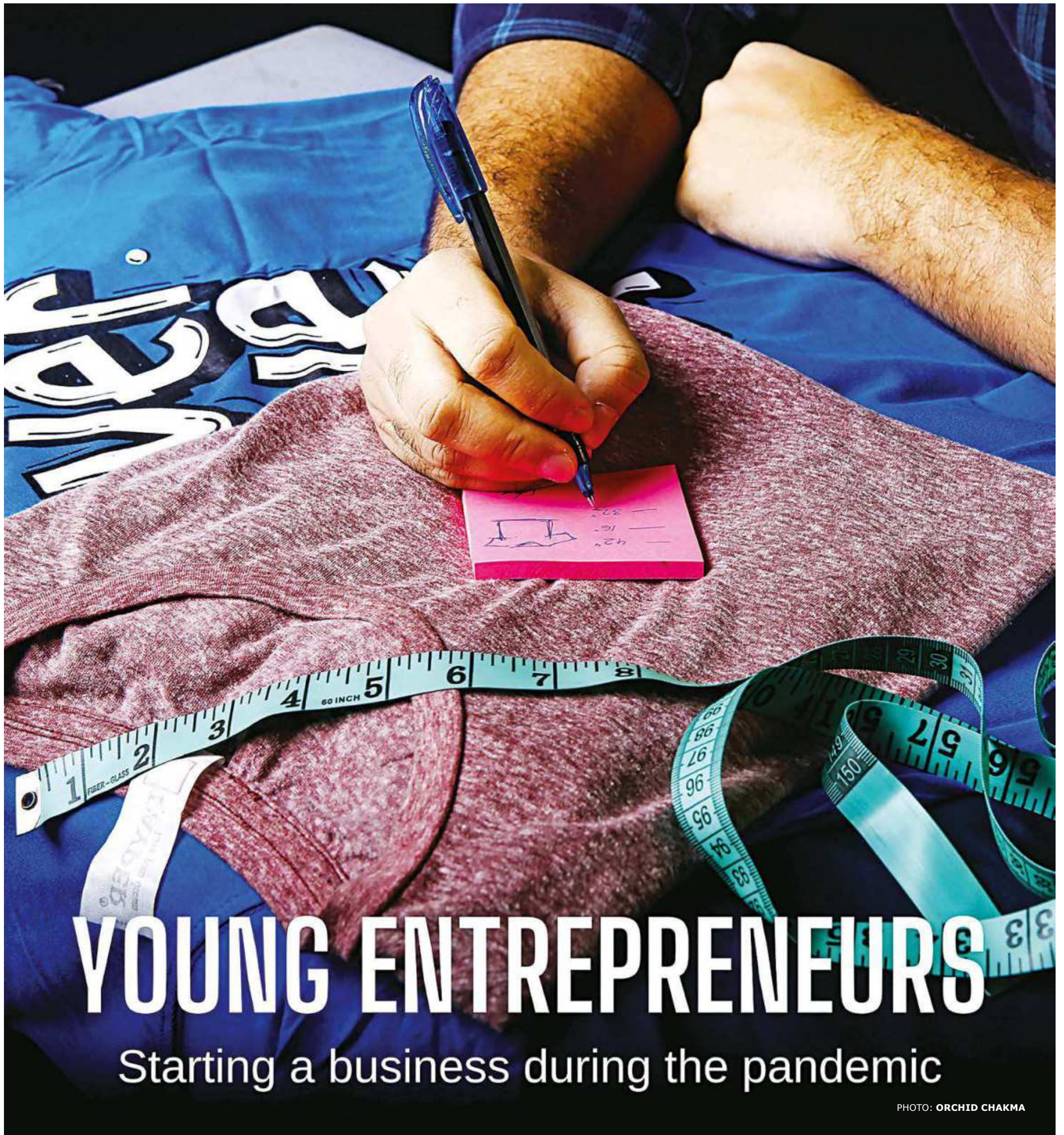


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YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS

Starting a business during the pandemic

PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

EDITORIAL

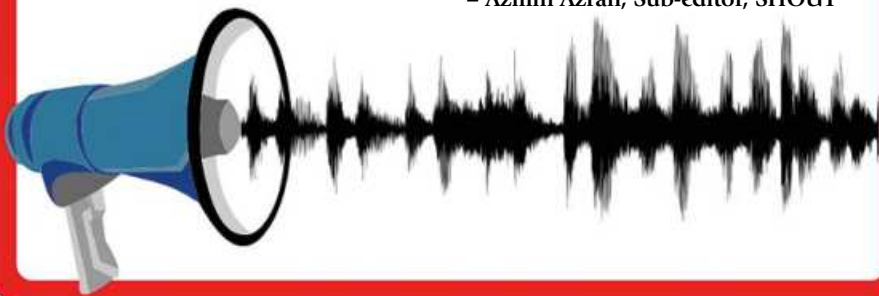
I walked out onto the balcony last night and felt a shiver down my spine. It was not simply because I am afraid of the dark. There was a different reason. It's getting cold, folks.

If *Game of Thrones* hadn't disappointed itself into oblivion with its last two seasons, this year might have been the most apt opportunity yet to properly use the famous words of House Stark. Winter is coming. Other than being literal, it would also serve the symbolic purpose as meant by George R. R. Martin. This winter carries with it not only the smell of *bhapa pitha*, but also the stench of a potential health crisis with Covid-19.

Many of us have stopped caring about the coronavirus. There have been worrying reports of tourist spots across the country getting booked out for winter. Young people must be itching to go out in their winter wear to make the most of what's possibly the nicest time of the year for us. Yet, there's no reason to think the third wave washing over much of the rest of the world isn't coming for us.

Let's not lose sight of the White Walkers, is what I'm saying.

– Azmin Azran, Sub-editor, SHOUT



PLAYWATCH

APP REVIEW



Finding Webtoon

UPOMA AZIZ

Webtoon is an app that lets you select from a myriad of web comics for free, unless you want to read an episode early. There are several genres you can select from and the app is easy to navigate. Among the webcomics I have been able to read, these are some I would suggest.

CURSED PRINCESS CLUB

This tale takes place in the pastel kingdom, where the king lives with his four children. The youngest daughter is not a typical Disney princess. She is unconventionally beautiful, and has the biggest heart. However, things change when she accidentally discovers the Cursed Princess Club, a safe haven for hexed princesses who don't meet the expectations of society, where they show her that it is not always necessary to fit in. What I love about this comic is that the humor is not forced, and highlights the faults in the widely accepted definition of beauty.

HOME SWEET HOME

After losing his family in an accident, Hyun moves to a small apartment with his scanty belongings and a little money. Shortly after, things go horribly wrong as monsters start taking over the world. Hyun now has to look for a way to save what is left of the world side to side with the unlikeliest heroes. Who can be trusted when everyone is looking for a way to survive? The storytelling of this thriller is nothing short of addictive. A total of 142 episodes seem almost too short for such a mesmerising story.

LORE OLYMPUS

This is classic Greek mythology reimagined into a romantic comic -- the love story of Hades and Persephone like never told before. There are the other beloved (or not) characters from Olympus and the Underworld as well. The storyline is unique but it has not lost all touch with the classic lore. The art style and the narrative are very cute. The characters are monochromatic but never boring. If you are going to read this, get ready for a rollercoaster of emotions.

WITCH CREEK ROAD

If you are a fan of blood and gore, you will love this horror comic. This begins like most horror movies, with a number of teens losing their way and ending up in the middle of the forest where witches live. But it is just the beginning of the end. The storyline is very intense and a bit bizarre. This, in no way, is something you can skim over, for you won't understand the plot if you do so. Warning: the artwork features graphic scenes.

GOURMET HOUND

Lucy is someone with an acute sense of smell, and after she senses a change of staff in her favourite restaurant, she is scared that she will lose the taste of home she has loved for years. She decides to track down the chefs, and the story begins to unfold. This is hands down my favorite Webtoon, and it is completely binge worthy. It might seem a bit slow at first but it does get better.

Upoma Aziz is now a slouching, crouching, grouchy time bomb going off randomly. Send webcomic suggestions at www.fb.com/upoma.aziz

Are you doing self-care right?

MOMOTAZ RAHMAN MEGHA

Although the term self-care is familiar to most people, we usually end up defining it according to many misconceptions. Self-care is essentially the active effort to engage oneself into practices that contribute to one's happiness and wellbeing. This includes the expulsion of behaviour and thought processes that are detrimental to your self-development.

Self-care in its essence exists in a broad spectrum. People usually think self-care is mostly quenching your materialistic thirst by buying things that are tangible. But it is always more than that -- it's about finding inner peace and asking yourself what are the intentions of your actions, who you are undertaking them for, and what they reflect. It's imperative to feel connected to your actions and extract meaning out of them, mostly what they mean to you and not to the stakeholders surrounding you.

One can practice physical self-care by eating intermittent small meals, working out to be fit, having a consistent sleep cycle, or indulging oneself in actions that make one feel better like playing sports. Psychological self-care can be practiced by sitting down for 10 minutes after a long day at work just to appreciate yourself for your hard work and achievements. It includes practicing mindfulness which helps unleash your inner creativity. Take that



watercolour class that you always wanted to because learning new things can be the best way to keep yourself motivated.

Emotional self-care is often difficult for most people to understand. Our basic instincts provoke us to avoid our emotional needs and never accept them. Navigating through emotions by having internal conversations with yourself can help you discover where you want to reach. Being compassionate to yourself is what we al-

ways overlook so don't take that extra file of work home when the fight with your best friend is making you feel overwhelmed.

Social self-care involves maintaining healthy relationships with trusted friends and family members. You may take a break from social media when the 15 unread Messenger texts make you feel dizzy. Shopping sprees sound lucrative when it comes to self-care, but financial self-care also involves taking responsible financial

decisions so that you don't have a panic attack when your landlord calls you for yet another month of delayed rent. One can practise spiritual self-care by performing acts of faith, giving to charity or being helpful to people around them.

Being organised and having a well-maintained life structure is a form of environmental self-care. Dressing well, being clean, monitoring your schedule and sticking to it and not deviating for others is also a form of self-care. It is also important to practise professional self-care, which includes having a clear distinction in professional boundaries, acknowledging your professional skills and gifts, and having a healthy work lifestyle.

What stands between your self-care and you practising them are the myths surrounding it. The most common one is that it is selfish but what is forgotten is that your wellbeing translates to well-being for others around you too. Self-care isn't a one time experience as others would like you to believe. Cramming all types of self-care practices won't contribute to your well-being either. What you need to do is consistently make a small effort every day and you will see yourself change for the better.

Megha has run out of ways to take care of herself while in quarantine. You can reach her at megharahman26@gmail.com

WHY WRITERS WRITE

SYEDA ERUM NOOR

Everyone has an origin story, a euphoric moment where one realizes their dream. While not all of these moments may be fantastical, it can be a defining moment in one's life.

I found myself wondering what this moment would look like for writers. So I delved into the depths of finding the answer to a question that pestered me; why do writers write?

The answer however, wasn't as simple as I thought it would be.

Some writers are roped into this from birth in ways that they aren't fully aware of until much later. The way they were raised and certain exposure they got at a young age had them chasing their dreams before they even recognised it.

"My mom raised a bookworm," SHOUT's own Mrityika Anan Rahman explains. "I started reading at a very young age. I started maintaining a diary and it became my way of holding onto my memories."

At times, we recognise this desire to write early on. Aaqib Hasib, another one of SHOUT's writers, was inspired by a role model within his family -- his grandfather. "I watched him sit and read and write stories with a fountain pen on a manuscript," he recalls. "When he passed away, I wrote

more and more, in hopes of living up to his name. In the process, I fell in love with writing myself."

All it takes is a step in the right direction. An act as simple as watching someone read a book or hearing someone talk about a character in a way that touches one's heart. This was the case for American author David Foster Wallace. His euphoric moment was when he heard his college girlfriend say she would rather be a character in a book than a real person. Voila! The spark had been ignited.

To some, writing comes in the form of a friend who is there in times of need, when it feels as though no one is listening. It is a release, as Anne Frank wrote in her diary, "I can shake off everything as I write; my sorrows disappear, my courage is reborn."

Sometimes, it is a way to express what one can't using their voice. The flitting of a hand across a page, brings out of them what they otherwise thought they were not capable of. Novelist Flannery O'Connor mentioned, "I write to discover what I know." She used writing as a window into her own soul, letting her see into a part of herself she may not otherwise have known.

Other times, writers find themselves clinging to the world of words by reading something that has them hooked. A beautiful story, a poem or an article that speaks



to them in a way nothing else does. It ignites something in them that's then difficult to diminish.

A want. A need. To write. To create. "You should write because you love the shape of stories and sentences and the creation of different words on a page. Writing comes from reading and reading is the finest teacher of how to write," said novelist Annie Proulx.

And essentially, that is why writers write. Because somewhere, at some point

in their lives, they fell in undeniable love with the process of writing. They became obsessed with the perfect order of words, with the way that they sound.

And that is why writers write.

Want to write for SHOUT? Send us your write-up to shoutds@gmail.com

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

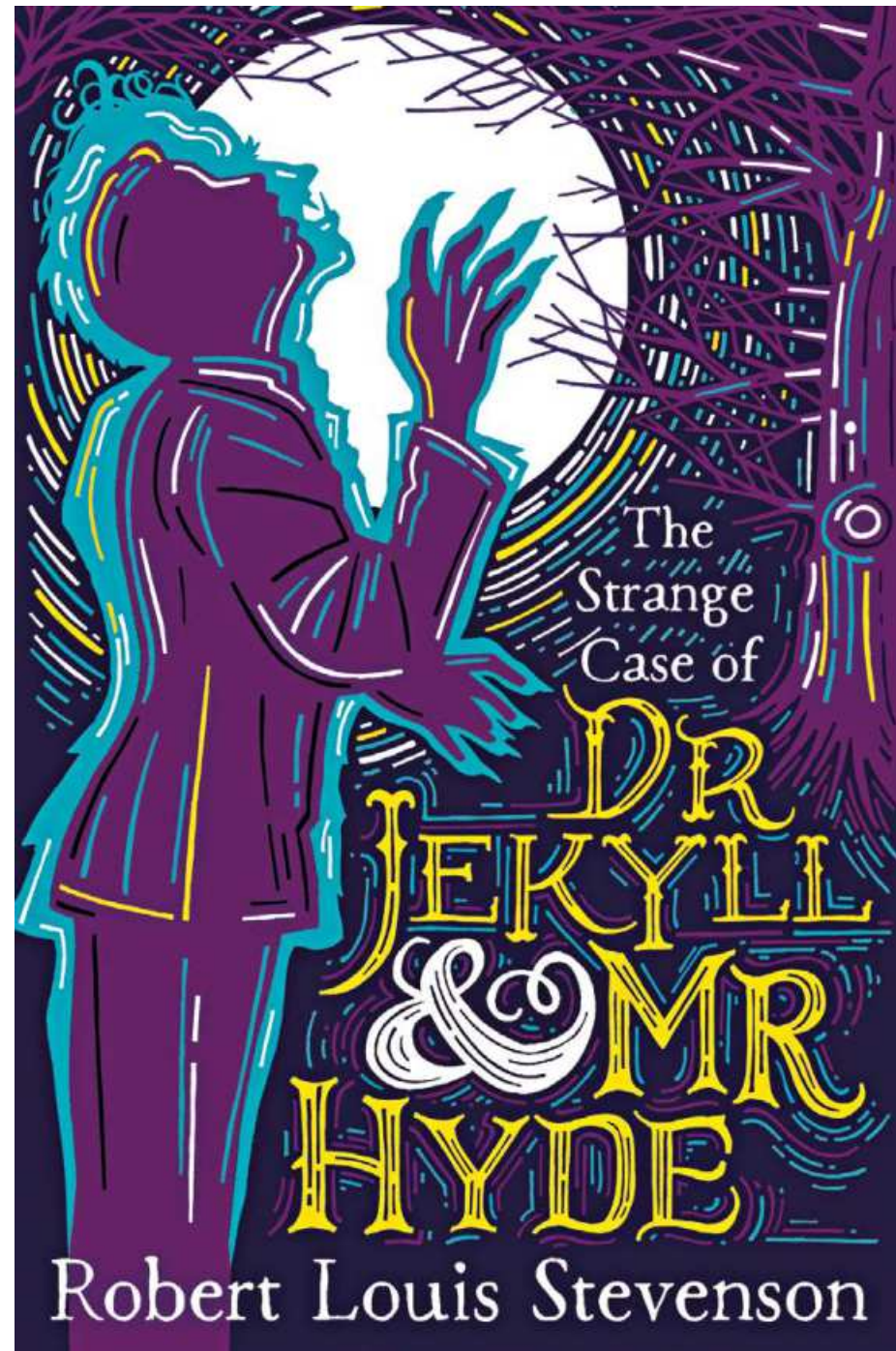
How Stigmatised Are Mental Health Issues in Fiction?



RASHA JAMEEL

Watching *Gossip Girl* (2007) in middle school was sort of a formative experience for me. The wildly-popular CW series shaped the way I saw high school and adolescent teens. Like many oblivious teenagers during that time period, I thought the series

offered me the kind of relatability that my other favourite TV shows couldn't: the emotional baggage that came with being a teen. One of the series' lead characters, Blair Waldorf suffered from an eating disorder called bulimia nervosa. I thought that was bold and progressive of the show -- until



I began experiencing the disorder myself at age 16, and realised firsthand how problematic *Gossip Girl's* depiction of the disorder really was.

Mental health issues have been pivotal aspects in books and cinema for a long time, from Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886) to John Green's *Turtles All The Way Down* (2017), Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960) to Brad Anderson's *The Machinist* (2004). The accuracy with which mental health issues are portrayed is a different story.

When they're not being passed off as another trope to further the "sad girl culture", where a woman's depressive episodes make her all the more endearing, mental health disorders are insensitively used as the primary motivation behind an individual's criminal proclivities. Take Jonathan Demmes' *The Silence of The Lambs* (1991) for example, where there are two antagonistic characters presented in the movie, Dr. Hannibal Lecter and Jame Gumb/Buffalo Bill, both of whose violent urges are fueled by their psychologically disturbed minds.

Netflix's *Bulbbul* (2020) received criticism for its out-of-place and unnecessary portrayal of an autistic man as a predator, with seemingly no proper explanation behind the mentally handicapped man being capable of the horrifying act. The *Batman* franchise's supervillains Two-Face and Joker upped the ante on mentally unstable people being violent. Psychological disturbance forms the crux of both the fictional individuals' character arcs and backstories through countless issues and adaptations of one of the most beloved comic book franchises of all time. Two-Face is either sane and good, or mentally unsound and evil. The Joker's sadistic behaviour mimics his chaotic state of mind in the most destructive ways possible. Director Todd Phillips' take on the character in *Joker* (2019), sealed in the stereotype that all mentally unstable people want to watch the world burn.

Another problematic stereotype that's seemingly on the rise is the one where depressed individuals chose to take their own lives, caught up in some delusion of heroism. Netflix original *13 Reasons Why* (2017) was heavily criticised for exploiting the aforementioned stereotype by popularising this trope through its female lead Hannah Baker. Similar sentiments were found to be

echoed in Iain Reid's *I'm Thinking Of Ending Things* (2016), where the protagonist meets his tragic demise in a very graphic plot twist.

Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper* (1892) is a rare exception from the "mentally unsound = homicidal" stereotype. Gilman's literary work was probably one of the earliest ones with a sensitive and feminist tone that drew attention to the mental health difficulties that can arise in women, particularly in 19th century America. The figures that moved in her wallpaper represented the plight of women suffering in a patriarchal society and therefore her "mental illness" was a means of exploring what society really does to a woman. Susanna Kaysen's memoir, *Girl, Interrupted* (1993), gave its readers a deeply insightful look into the lives of women receiving treatment in psychiatric hospitals in the 1960s, with real people instead of a monochromatic world consisting only of heroes and villains.

Following in suit with a more realistic and heartfelt portrayal of mental health issues in the 20th century are the films *Adam* (2009) and *Silver Linings Playbook* (2012), and the Netflix original *Atypical* (2017). In Gavin O'Connor's *The Accountant* (2016), actor Ben Affleck played an autistic vigilante of sorts in an attempt to break out of the "bad guy" mold usually reserved for mentally handicapped people.

Fictional characters like Blair Waldorf showcase how an eating disorder such as bulimia nervosa can be part of a delusional "fitness" ideal. What they don't tell you is how the disease is neither -- how it's all about a constant state of fatigue, damaged teeth, aching joints, and extreme hair fall. Not everyone struggling with bipolar disorder is a maniacal killer; they can also be an erratic person discovering love with another erratic person. Evil people don't necessarily have to fail their psychiatric evaluation to be proven evil, they just are.

Mental health disorders aren't meant to be treated as anything outside of what they really are: an impairment of the mind. Please handle these subjects with care, and with utmost caution.

The author accidentally poured Savlon on her head instead of her favourite essential oil. Teach her to properly differentiate between the two at rasha.jameel@outlook.com

YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS

Starting a business during the pandemic

AYSHA ZAHEEN & TASNIM ODRIKA

The ongoing coronavirus pandemic has resulted in the closure of multiple small businesses all over the country, along with a significant drop in profits for the existing ones. Keeping this dreadful scenario in the backdrop, some youths have dared to embark into the land of entrepreneurship in the midst of all this chaos. Today, we delve into what led these people to start their first venture in the middle of a pandemic and how they are managing to hold their own.

For Syeda Afrin Tarannum, a student of North South University, her love for baking led her to open her business Whiskers (@whiskersinc), an Instagram-based bakery which sells cakes, cupcakes and doughnuts.

"I have always wanted to have a small Parisian café where I serve all sorts of desserts and cakes along with some good coffee," she recounts. Whiskers stands as

the stepping stone towards her dream. For others, a lack of quality products in the markets led them to make their own.

Sanjida Rahman, a soon to be graduate and one of the co-founders of Eliza Ayurved, started her own brand after using a particular overpriced and overhyped hair oil. Her store now sells hair oils made with various types of natural ingredients that promote healthy hair and they are all manufactured at home.

Similar to these stories, a lot of these youth-led ventures started mainly due to their love for a particular craft and their willingness to share it with the world. The pandemic just provided them with the missing piece of the puzzle. With the educational institutes closed, they finally had the time to sit down and actually make a detailed plan for business operations. These ventures also provided them with an extra income as the lockdown had hampered



Sanjida recounts, "All well-known delivery companies refused to deliver our products as they are packaged in glass vials." However, they all managed to strike balance, some by hiring their own delivery men and others by finding their own friend's company coming to their aid.

There also remained the struggle of delivering products with the circulation of misinformation that Covid-19 can spread through packages. Entrepreneurs like Jafna Chowdhury from Sweet Theory, an online-based dessert shop, took it upon themselves to educate their customers, "There's no evidence of the disease being transmitted via food or packaging to date. Plus, we have fully trained our staff to properly acknowledge basic hygiene protocols."

Another problem that the entrepreneurs mentioned was the lack of mobility due to the pandemic and how it did not allow them to buy the required ingredients and products on their own. Such entrepreneurs, apart from pertaining quality in their products, were also wary of not availing goods to their customers that they could easily find elsewhere. Whilst clothing businesses struggled with not being able to first-hand witness the quality of their raw materials and fabrics, many other ventures struggled with buying ingredients at competitive prices.

Afrin tells us, "Since this is a solo venture, I have to collect all the ingredients myself while ensuring proper pricing. To add to that, going outside during a pandemic is not preferable." Although she struggled with this in the beginning, soon she was able to find a way to do what needed to be done.

Whilst one of the main targets of conducting businesses is extracting profit, these young entrepreneurs are more concerned with building their own clientele first. Some of these businesses are only a few months old and are yet to break even. There are also ventures that made profit in a few weeks. Despite all this, their main concern now is to give the best possible service with minimum profit, since the market is growing and is very competitive.

"I did not expect my venture to be profitable in just two months. I will allow myself more time to make profit. For now

satisfying clients with honest business is the goal," acknowledges Ramisa Farhana, who runs Artsy Closet (@artsy_closet_by_ramisa), an Instagram-based service selling handcrafted niche jewellery.

With decisions like these, oftentimes the outcome may lead to regret, given it can be rather taxing and time-consuming. However, these young entrepreneurs have a very positive outlook. Even though they recognise the struggles and initial mishaps, they very much look forward to conducting their businesses post-pandemic, despite the changes that will come about. Whilst some plan to put up fliers when their university reopens, others plan to expand their product line and stock quantity. Events and pop-up shops to ensure better reach amongst the mass are being considered by the apparel brands. Some of them even expressed their desire to open their own outlet in the future, however, others relayed that they would rather maintain their businesses online and prioritise their education first, willing to go as far as putting things on hold during semester finals.

Farhan Farabi, 22-year old sophomore from Brac University and one of the owners of Sable, an online-based clothing brand, exclaims, "We are actually feeling quite ecstatic. We got to interact with a lot of people and learned about how to market our products, how to engage with customers, and also how to make and close deals."

With increases in unemployment rates, disruptions in education, and fears of not having enough skilled graduates in the country after the pandemic is over, watching the youths conquer their ventures with vigour and optimism for the future provides the rest of us with hope too. We can be certain that these young individuals will be able to adapt to any changes in the future and hold their own well.

Aysha thinks good things take time, at least a year and a half. Tell her all about how your good things took time, too, at zaheenaysha10@gmail.com

Tasnim Odrika has only one personality trait and that is cats. Share ideas for new personality traits with her at odrika_02@yahoo.com

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their tutoring jobs, which is the major source of income for most of the youths of our country.

However, even with time on their side, running a business in the middle of a pandemic has its multitudes of challenges.

"I cried my lungs out that day, for the issue in delivery led to a very negative review on a public group and our business was just starting out," Shababa Suzana Hossain, a 21-year old business student and the owner of Womplings, mentioned when asked to recount that one time the delivery man remorselessly spilled all the sauces and let the box slip off the bag.

Shababa was not the only one who faced problems with their products getting delivered. Finding a reliable delivery company has proven to be one of the biggest challenges these young entrepreneurs had to face. Starting from their hesitance regarding the companies and their precautionary measures during the pandemic, they all faced multifarious issues when it came to securing a delivery service that would not only deliver their products in proper conditions but also refrain from scamming them.

TEASCAPE



RIFAH TASHFIA

In the movie *The Shine of Your Eyes*, Lyn was roaming around the city, hopeless, when she stumbled upon a grumpy old grandmother, who owned *Wayfarers*, a close-knit group of people who almost lost themselves to the society and its expectations.

In *Stairway to Beyond*, Eliot had taken upon the secret passageways of the city to travel; until he found *The Dregs*, who found a way to bring themselves to light.

In both cases, the protagonists had fallen rock-bottom; falling into circles of abnegation. Until they found something or someone who cared who helped.

As Zainab roamed around the graveled roads of Neldsor, a tiny town in the middle of forests and mountains, she found herself in front of *Teascape*. She was immediately reminded of her favourite two movies, and thought this must be it.

Some say the lady who owns it was a fortune-teller. Some say she's preposterous. But no one denied that she was always right.

The small store was wedged between two other local businesses. Ivy hung on its red bricked walls from above, and rectangular pots lined up with different flowers in the front. Zainab peered through the windows, finding her own worn out self staring back. She couldn't help it, for a great few seconds she stared at the messy bun on her head, her loose worn sweatshirt and wondered, how did I end up like this?

This will be another waste of time. Again.

Just as Zainab decided against entering and stepped back onto the pavement, the door of the store creaked open. Goosebumps erupted across her skin as she

turned back to meet the kindest almond eyes and saccharine smile.

The people certainly left out how suave the lady in front of her was. Her dark hair pulled into an elegant bun behind her head, a few strands falling on the sides. Dark plum lips, and high-necked blouse, with a long skirt that gathered at the bottom. She was quite shorter than Zainab, her voice soft-spoken as she said, "Come in, dear."

Was this how fortune-tellers brought customers?

Zainab didn't feel like refusing. What was there to lose with some fortune-telling anyway?

She nodded, and the woman pulled the door open wider for her to enter.

The store on the inside was lit from the daylight, and a few spotlights over the counter. It smelled like flowers and herbs in here surely from the ingredients she used for her fortune-telling. The tables were little wooden and circular; the chairs shaped small. The walls were filled with dark, designed wallpapers. A chandelier hung above the counter, where lay dainty cups and saucers, jars full of... herbs, dried flowers, and whatnot.

"Sit," the woman's voice broke her from her trance. She motioned to a cushioned stool as she placed herself on the other side of the counter. Zainab obliged, and asked politely, "May I know your name?"

The owner's eyes perked up. *Surely, people must've asked her name before?*

"You can call me Isobel." She flashed her a disarming smile. "And you are...?"

"Z-Zainab." Zainab answered, smiling weakly.

"What a beautiful name."

"Thank you."

Isobel clasped her hands in front of her and arched an eyebrow. "Tell me about yourself, Zainab." The way her name rolled off her tongue felt like... home, to Zainab. People called her Zee nowadays.

"About myself," Zainab repeated. She bit the inside of her cheek thinking of where to start.

"How has life been treating you lately?" Isobel asked. "No sleep?"

Zainab shook her head. The people were correct she was spot on.

"I've been stressed recently. About a lot of things. Whether what I'm doing is the right thing to do, how can I fit in here," the words escaped her mouth in a hurry, like they were begging to be released.

"You're afraid that you might be wasting your time. That has led you to lose your sleep. It's normal to find it hard to sleep when you have a lot of things in your mind."

Is she a fortune-teller or a therapist? Or perhaps, a mind reader?

"Yes," Zainab nodded, and watched as Isobel set an empty cup in front of her. Then she reached out to a jar with tea leaves and dried flowers, before putting one white flower in and poured steaming hot water into it. Zainab hadn't even realised when she'd boiled that water.

"Drink this," Isobel said, turning the handle towards her.

She read tea leaves, then.

"What is this... tea?" Zainab asked, voice hoarse. She didn't want to sound rude.

"Chamomile tea."

Chamomile. Why did it sound so familiar?

Zainab took the cup in her hands and flinched when the heat burned into her fingers. She brought it to her lips, tasting the flavor. Isobel watched her the entire time, until she finished the tea to the last drop and set the cup down. But not before she spared a glance at the bottom of the cup herself.

It didn't look anything special to her.

Isobel took the cup in her hands and set it down.

"You're not going to read that?" Zainab blurted out.

Isobel quirked an eyebrow at her. "No. I actually think my work here is done."

"What?"

"You could stay for another cup if you'd like.."

"You're not gonna... do fortune-telling for me?"

"I am not a fortune-teller, Zainab."

Zainab appalled her for a few moments, before spluttering, "H-how much do I owe you?"

"I always offer the first cup free. Go home and get some sleep."

A quick glance at the clock said it was close to eight; sunset happened quite late in this place.

Later that night, Zainab slept soundly. But not before she went through every part of the internet to find out about Chamomile tea.

Isobel wasn't a fortune-teller.

Chamomile tea: From the chamomile flower, chamomile tea is good for the mind, promotes sleep and treats insomnia.

The writer is a student in class 10 at Viqarunisa Noon School & College.



LONELINESS

From the start of this year we started using veils on our faces to protect ourselves from the deadly coronavirus.

Locked alone in our homes, we have become detached from the rest of the world. The adults adapted to the unwanted situation, but the children are bored, isolated, feeling the hard reality.

I observe the loneliness of my daughter. Anxious, she does not know what to do to get some relief.

PHOTOS & WORDS:
ANINDITA ROY

