

THE DARK SIDE OF FANDOMS

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I have spent a very large part of my 19 years in this world fangirling over many different things. People who know me well have learnt to deal with my obsession with all things fandom – from highly expensive original merchandise to DIY fandom toilet paper rolls; I've lived the fandom life to the fullest. But now that I am slowly turning into an irate, bitter adult, I have finally started noticing the many faults in our fandoms.

Let me start off with the most popular fandom in Bangladesh these days, Game of Thrones. This critically-acclaimed masterpiece of a show probably deserved better fans than people who upload statuses such as "Watching GOT ~ game of thronex, woo denaris iz so smokin' hot – with 49 others" every time a new episode comes out. But the one thing *all* GoT fans have in common, regardless of their spelling capabilities is their complete and utter inability to talk about anything other than this show when a new season is released. I know this is a tendency in all fandoms but GoT fans have taken this to a pathological level, for I have tried very hard to converse with them about several pressing issues during "that time of the year," only to be shut out completely because of my inability to love this show more than I love my own life.

Now, I should warn you that I won't say very pleasant things about the anime fandom so read at your own discretion. This disclaimer was necessary because anime fans are easier to offend than your average SJW commenting on crude humour pages in Facebook. I once used the term "Japanese cartoon" in an article; one of my friends was so offended that she hasn't talked to me since. These guys also seem to be hell bent on taking over the already

abysmal comic-con scene of this country, and that is why I have stopped attending these overly hyped *melas*.

The only other people as obsessive as anime fans are probably Whovians. Doctor Who fans are known for their absolute dedication to the art of cult worshipping – they spend a lot of time making and buying merchandise, and they will stop at nothing to preach the greatness of Doctor Who to other mortals. Seriously, their sole reason for being is to convert each and every person around them into a Whovian. These guys are so deeply obsessed that this one kid even chose a Whovian pseudonym for herself which she uses to write in a national daily. As if entertaining the stupidest, craziest fan theories wasn't enough, much like the other great fandom originating in Britain.

This is the one thing that's wrong with Potterheads,



they're too much in love with fan theories.

These days I feel like they have transcended above the normal dimension of fandoms since J. K. Rowling herself

seems to have joined in on this madness. Some Tumblr posts are beautiful takes on the Marauders' lives, then there are those that claim Dumbledore to be a time-travelling Ron Weasley, and then there are those people who share 87930024 of these text posts every day tagging half the people on their friend lists.

As much as I, the oxymoronic writer with a fandom related pseudonym may hate on certain aspects of this fandom life that so many of us have adopted, I can never claim to hate it altogether. This world would not have any magic left in it if it

wasn't for us nerds. We're the ones that provide the much needed madness in your life, after all.

When You're Not a Math Person

SALMA MOHAMMAD ALI

"I love math and I'm great at it" said no one ever. Okay, maybe a lot of people did but I'm just not one of them and there are many other unfortunate souls like myself. Math and I simply don't get along and the worst part is it's something you can't escape in everyday life - like that creepy neighbour you run into almost every day.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT: Whether it's riding the local bus or opting for a relaxing rickshaw ride, when it's time to pay up you find yourself channelling all your concentration into calculating how much change you're supposed to get back. At this point your turtle-like speed is probably causing a backlog of traffic behind you so you just rely on the mama's math skills. Have you received the right amount? Why is the mama grinning as he puts the fare away? You don't know.

SHOPPING IS A DISASTER: When shopping involves a receipt that tells you how much you paid and subsequently how much change you'll receive, you sigh with relief. On the other hand when you're at the *kacha bazaar* or a smaller *mudi'r doka* and they tell you the price of 1kg potatoes and you want something slightly more or less, say 1250gm - bringing out a calculator, crunching numbers to figure out how

much 1gm will cost, realising that 1250gm will cost 1250 times that amount then feeling slightly successful thinking you've finally got the hang of the unitary method doesn't help. The shopkeeper bursts your bubble and is silently judging you, murmuring the answer (as a matter of fact-ly) before you can calculate it yourself.

SPLITTING BILLS AT HANGOUTS: Oh yes. You and your friends have enjoyed a nice meal and the waiter appears with the bill. Spontaneously, each of your friends fishes out the right amount correct to the *poisha* for what they've eaten because 235 Taka for that burger and 180 Taka for that shake and another 250 Taka for that cheesecake plus 15% VAT is a calculation

some unearthly beings seem to carry out within seconds. After scratching your head trying to add up prices you can barely remember, you give up, handing over a 500 Taka note even though all you had was sandwich.

TO USE A CALCULATOR OR NOT: This doesn't just happen in Math exams, a small side calculation such as 15 minus 9 can be a part of your answer in many other subjects. Feeling confident, for once you decide to mentally calculate $15 - 9 = 6$ because time is of the essence and using a calculator would take up so much precious time and of course who does that? But as you write down the answer anxiety creeps up to you, reminding you that you're just about as good at mental Math as Donald Trump being nice to people. Frantically you search for your calculator and punch the numbers in, cursing yourself for wasting time in not doing so in the first place.

If you can relate with these situations then the calculator app is probably the most visited app on your phone and you probably have that one friend whose math skills always put you to shame but hey, cheer up. You're probably better than them at something else.

Salma Mohammad Ali fears she is becoming a crazy cat lady and uses writing as a means to grasp on to sanity. Send her your views/hate/love at fb.com/salma.ali209

