



A PEEK INTO THE LIFE OF AN ALIENATED YOUTH

FAIYAZ HUSSAIN

Set within and on the outskirts of Dhaka City, *Like A Diamond In The Sky* (Shazia Omar, Penguin 2009), is a novel that addresses the alienation of Bangladeshi youth through the struggles of a 21 year old drug addict, Deen, and his 'khor' friends. Dealing with the pain of having let down his mother to trying to hide his addiction from his girlfriend to not jeopardize their relationship, all of this while making sure the next 'hit' is managed in time to satisfy a body that screams for heroin, this is a story that tells the tale of the mental demons that an addict goes through. This is a dark, depressing book that grasps the reader with a sense of harsh reality and brings a fast growing problem in Bangladesh to light.

What captivated me most was how Deen, regardless of his own problems, was always trying to help others. He was trapped within not only his own addiction, but also this desire to work for the greater good thus leading to a bigger problem where his addiction was hindering him from making a positive contribution to the community. Even though Deen knew that

the best solution to his problems would be to quit drugs, he was simply incapable of doing so, his body having reached the point of no return. The positive characteristics of Deen's personality is also enjoyable to read about as it paints a different picture to that of the stereotypical drug addict one tends to think about.

This book also reminded me of the movie *Trainspotting*. The obvious common theme between the book and the movie being heroin addiction but there is a lot more that the book and the movie have in common. They both feature a group of addicted friends who struggle to get their social lives in check due to their addiction. Furthermore similarities between the two would be severe reactions experienced due to an attempt to come out of addiction, broken relationships with families and deaths that occur due to the addiction leaching the life out of them. Moreover, both the book and the movie send out a very strong message in relation to drug addiction.

Like A Diamond in the Sky is a great book to read for young adults living in Dhaka

city. Most of us are disappointed by many aspects of our young, independent nation – the lack of positive role models, the corruption at all levels of institutions and government, the lack of opportunities for many of our people. These factors slowly lead to the alienation of youth which can lead to problems such as addictions or, as we have seen recently, vulnerability to terrorist organizations that target disenfranchised youths. At the very least, we all know someone or the other who has been affected. This book helps us understand what youths go through and provides a very detailed description of our city. Though published 7 years ago, the problems highlighted in the book are still prevalent in Bangladesh today, keeping the book fresh. The book serves as a warning to us to examine our patterns to make sure their lives don't end up like those of the characters in the book.

Faiyaz Hussain is going to start his undergraduate studies at the University of Southern Mississippi this August.



Ode to July

SYED BADRUL HAQUE

In the yearly cycle of months, we are now well into July. In season's swinging mood, it weaves magic alternating in sunshine, dark clouds, drizzle and heavy shower. Summer's Searing heat over, and the rich soil now besotted, rain rejuvenates life to the parched earth. A refreshing odour reinforces the intimacy between man and nature.

And Pamela Gray so lovingly pens:

The lillies tall and lean
Over the wall,
To bow to the butterfly
It is July.

LOST

SAMINA AHSAN SHAHRUKH

I have a feeling of unease,
That has snatched away restful sleep
And planted doom in my mind.
It is at the pit of my being,
Refusing to leave me.
It has grown and spread
Its tentacles around my mind
Like a cobweb that entangles an insect;
Ready for the spider to devour.
Bewilderment, dread and all shades of unease
Are swirling around.
And I find that I had not envisioned
The new black shade
The green fields or the blue sky now wears.
The music of the rain I cannot hear.
I hear a noise that is foreboding,
fearsome.
I cannot recognise the sunshine or the shadows;
Where is this place?
This is not the place where I have been living.
This is not the place where I would want to live.
Where am I now?
Where am I?



“ব্যঙ্গ-সৃষ্টিতে অসাধারণ প্রতিভার প্রয়োজন। ... বন্ধু আবুল মনসুরের হাত-সাফাই দেখে বিস্মিত হলাম। ভাষার কান মলে রস সৃষ্টির ক্ষমতা আবুল মনসুরের অসাধারণ। এ যেন পাকা ওস্তাদী হাত।”

-কাজী নজরুল ইসলাম



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