

Struggles of being a Bangladeshi nerdfighter

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"Nerdfighteria" is an online community where you can embrace your love for all things nerdy without feeling the least bit self-consciousness. It is a community that grew out of a YouTube channel known as Vlogbrothers, created by brothers Hank and John Green, when they began referring to their audience as "nerdfighters". They are the creators of multiple other educational YouTube channels including Crash Course and Sci Show, and are also the founders of the online video conference, VidCon. According to John Green, "A nerdfighter is a person, who instead of being made out of skin and bones and tissues, is made entirely of awesome."

On their channel, the Vlogbrothers talk about anything and everything, starting from world politics to science, to rants about everyday lives. Their videos can be informative, inspiring, silly, and downright hilarious. As you can see, these guys can brighten up any nerd's day. However, being a nerdfighter in Bangladesh comes with its own set of challenges, and here they are:

Although most of their videos are short and easily available on YouTube, some of their content includes live streams and Reddit AMA that go on for a much longer time. The live streams allow nerdfighters to directly engage with Hank and John as well as communicate with other nerdfighters in real time. But streaming them is really difficult, given our "outstanding" internet speed. Moreover, the difference in time zone means, one almost always ends up missing the live streams or AMAs.

As a passionate nerdfighter, one would want to support the creators in every possible way so they can keep making amazing content. And just like fans of other communities, nerdfighters also want to sport logos and quirky inside jokes on their clothing or accessories. The urge becomes much stronger during Pizzamas, which is a 12-day long annual celebration. This is when exclusive Nerdfighteria merchandise is available for only a limited amount of time until they go out of stock - forever. But due to the lack of online payment and shipping services in Bangladesh, nerdfighters are unable to support their favourite YouTubers by donating through Patreon or buying merch from their website, DFTBA Records. To make things worse, there are no local stores or creative boutiques that import or make their own versions of Nerdfighteria merch, like there are for other fandoms such as books, games and anime.



For a nerdfighter, owning a signed copy of John's new book is a dream come true. But thanks to the aforementioned shipping and payment barriers, the dream does not turn into reality for most people. As it happens, a valiant nerdfighter (yours truly) decides to change her fate. She asks a friend living abroad to pre-order a signed copy on her behalf -

only to realise that the friend needs to pay more than double the price of the book to ship it to Bangladesh via courier services. Even then, it seems worth it to her, as long as she gets to lay her hands on the book before anyone she knows. That is until the said nerdfighter bumps into a street vendor waving a battered photocopy of that same book not too long after

it gets released and way before her pre-ordered copy reaches Bangladesh. Nothing could be more tragic than that.

In addition, it is nearly impossible for a Bangladeshi nerdfighter to attend Nerdfighteria events such as VidCon, NerdCon, etc. And even when the Vlogbrothers go on tours, this part of the world is never on their list, which is absolutely understandable, but painful regardless. So that means one has to live with only the online aspect of Nerdfighteria.

Last but not the least, finding fellow nerdfighters in Bangladesh is an extremely difficult task. Even though a lot of young people have heard of or read *The Fault in our Stars*, most are not even aware of the existence of the Vlogbrothers, and Nerdfighteria. When you come across someone who says, "Oh, I love John Green!" your spirits are momentarily lifted. When you ask them, "So, are you a Nerdfighter?" they almost always reply, "No, what's that?" Disappointed, you put on your earphones and go back to listening to the "Dear Hank and John" podcast, and that instantly brings a smile upon your lips.

Despite all these struggles, you realise being a Bangladeshi nerdfighter is not so bad after all. Even within your limitations, you can still be connected online and be a member of a community that imparts so much knowledge and value to your life, while simultaneously inspiring you to reduce "world suck" through your own small endeavours.

So if you aren't a nerdfighter already, hurry up and join the club.

And as they say in our hometown, "Don't forget to be awesome."

Farah Masud is a humanbean and that is all you need to know about her. Please don't try to contact her anywhere, especially not in person; unless, you're a nerdfighter.