

# EDITORIAL

This Sunday is International Women's Day all across the globe, and while it ranges from being a public holiday in some countries to a more active approach in others, this week's issue of SHOUT is focusing in on just the tip of the iceberg of issues women face in our country on a day-to-day basis. For socially just and gender equal responses to these challenges, solidarity among people from all walks of life in Bangladesh is essential. Hopefully this issue will shed a light on some of the obstacle courses women - young and old - must deal with everyday in the country to prove that they deserve proper healthcare, personal space, and privacy, just to name a few.

- Talat Ahmed, Sub-editor, SHOUT



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## PLAYWATCH

### MOVIE REVIEW

## THE ACTUAL PARASITE



SHOUNAK REZA

*Disclaimer: Contains spoilers. But then again why haven't you watched it already?*

*Parasite*, the South Korean film that won four Oscars this year—including the awards for Best Picture and Best Director—is probably one of the most talked about cinematic works from the 2010s. As I watched the film, I realised how universal the theme is, how believable and realistic it would be even if it were set in Bangladesh, the country I was born and brought up in.

At the centre of the film are two families: four members of a family barely managing to make their ends meet successfully pretend to be unrelated, efficient people and, thanks to their luck and the tricks they use, get employed in the household of a wealthy family. There are unpredictable twists and turns, culminating in unexpected revelations and shocking outcomes.

While the storyline is very intriguing and the themes of social inequality and its catastrophic effects are extremely thought provoking, I spent a lot of time pondering over something else after I finished watching the film: the *title*.

Who are the titular parasites? Some people might choose to not focus on

things that do not meet the eye and come to the conclusion that the four working class people faking their identities and blatantly lying to be employed by a well-off family are the parasites; that they are leeching off the rich. But why should the REASONS they choose to lie be ignored?

How much equality is being established by the economic development taking place all over the world? Why should there be so much income, wealth and social inequalities in countries being constantly considered the models of economic development? How flawed should social structures be to compel people to lie, fake their identities and risk legal repercussions just to make their ends meet?

The thing that compelled the family in question to risk everything is the structural flaw that allows the rich to get richer and live off the sweat of the working class who risk being drowned in floods caused by downpours that the rich enjoy sitting in their mansions and air-conditioned cars. The relationship between the privileged and the underprivileged, contrary to what many people might suggest, is not symbiotic by any means. It is deeply parasitic, with the rich being the parasites, the exploiters, the oppressors—and not the other way around.