

Evolution of a Slob to a Neat Freak

ZIBA MAHDI

There's nothing wrong with being a slob. As long as you can find your stuff in your dumpster of a room, who is your messiness actually hurting? (Your mom doesn't count). Besides, with a pandemic going strong, it's not like you have to worry about someone coming over and witnessing the pigsty you live in.

Research has actually found that there are some advantages to being messy (look it up yourself, I'm not enabling your laziness). However, for the sake of personal development, here's how my somewhat unwilling transformation from slob to neat freak went.

Day 15 of Quarantine: The desk could do with some cleaning. After all, HSC will take place soon. A clean desk might prepare me for the boatloads of studying I'm about to do (ha, ha). Three hours later, the desk actually resembled a desk and I felt like a new person. Sounds hard to believe but I actually found exam scripts from Class 8 in there. Throwing them out was pretty satisfying, I'll admit.

Day 32: My designated clutter space, a.k.a the top of the cupboard, is starting to overflow with random items. I should probably keep the clothes inside the cupboard instead of on top of it. Might free up some space to keep other junk in. So, the designated clutter space turned into an organised clutter space full of neat piles of books, papers and art supplies. All the clothes obscuring the furniture have been unceremoniously stuffed where they belong.

Day 41: There's no point in doing things half-way. Might as well organise the inside of the cupboard. Thanks to Pinterest, I already had a couple of organisation tricks up my sleeve. No more losing my mind trying to find a specific



article of clothing. On closer inspection of the room, the bookshelf would look much nicer, arranged according to colour and size. It still wouldn't be Instagram-worthy, but much better than its current set-up.

Day 65: The messy cables near the TV are starting to look like the electric poles that glamourise the Dhaka skyline. Better tie 'em up. It seems like a good time to experiment with minimalism. Anything that hasn't been used in the last 5 years goes in the trash and anything unused in the

last 5 months will go to the storage room. It would be tough for a hoarder like me, but there is no success without sacrifice.

Day 73: There's a pen on the desk. On. The. Desk. Not in the pen-holder where it's supposed to be. It's ruined my day.

Ziba Mahdi is your resident pessimist. Cheer her up at www.facebook.com/ziba.mahdi.735

Looking for a YA Protagonist

FATIN HAMAMA

BookKaren was waiting impatiently at her desk when she finally saw Othergirl rushing through the entrance of the YA Literature Agency. She was relieved at the fact that the girl seemed to indeed have brown hair and green eyes, a prerequisite for female candidates for a YA protagonist role.

BookKaren: Good morning! I'll be interviewing you today for the role of the protagonist in our upcoming young adult book. Please take a seat.

OtherGirl: Thanks! However, just to clarify, I'm NOT like other girls.

BookKaren: Perfect. Now, to start off, we're looking for a high schooler who's an outcast amidst peers and can be singled out as the weird kid. How can you contribute to those criteria?

OtherGirl: In most cases, I like being unnecessarily mean with people, because it makes me look "savage" and strong headed. Also, I strongly believe that no other person my age can relate to the things I do, as in watching art films and listening to niche indie bands. Couple these up with a lousy backstory as an excuse for my behaviour, and boom! I'll be the face of your new bestseller.

BookKaren: Mmhmm, okay. I think you'll make a wonderful one-dimensional Manic Pixie Dream Girl in that case. Mr. John Green would love to collaborate with you!

OtherGirl: That'll be really nice. However, I'm really interested in playing a part in the YA Dystopian genre. Are there any



Michael
@mike_booklion

YA protagonist:

you like

my hair

gee thanks

I just just chopped it all off myself in a moment of angst

openings right now?

BookKaren: It all comes down to your consent to being part of a supposed love triangle that contributes nothing to the plot, and only prolongs it.

OtherGirl: Of course! I'm in as long as one of the other two is a childhood best friend who's a sensible, sweet person and another is an idiot, which is okay because they're pretty and popular.

BookKaren: Let's see, we'll also need to choose a proper sidekick for you. Would

you be okay with it if we choose someone who only ever acts as a prop to your vapid personality and has no character arc to themselves at all?

OtherGirl: Absolutely. The more their lack of character development shifts the limelight to me, the better. It doesn't really matter if the readers think they should've been the protagonist instead, what with all their unexplored potential.

BookKaren: Great! Now, do you think you can cope with being the *Chosen One*

if we decide to feature you in a YA fantasy fandom? It's not like you'll have to struggle to be on a pedestal. We'll make sure to shape your destiny way before you're even born.

OtherGirl: If all other characters can constantly keep cleaning up after the mess I make every time I make a questionable decision without asking for anyone else's opinion, I totally can.

BookKaren: Now, the most important part. No matter how trivial it might be, it's compulsory that you give us full permission to profit off of romanticising your mental health issues — if you have any.

OtherGirl: Uh...

BookKaren: Look, it's absolutely necessary that we glamourise such serious issues in a way that always gives off the wrong message to our target demographic. What's more, we can even assign you an aesthetic based on that!

OtherGirl: No... I think that'll be crossing a line.

BookKaren: Oh.

OtherGirl: I think it'll be far better if we just—BookKaren: Get out.