

THE DEFINITIVE  
**YOUTH**  
MAGAZINE

# SHOUT

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YOUR GUIDE TO BUYING  
(ACTUALLY USEFUL)  
WEDDING PRESENTS

**PG 3**

THE TRAGEDY OF HAVING  
EXAMS DURING WEDDING  
SEASON

**PG 4**



## Do weddings need to be *extravagant?*



PHOTO: AYNA MAHAL

# EDITORIAL

The weather has gotten chilly, Cyclone Jawad blew over us and finally it's time to get to the weddings. Yes, take a seat and rub your hands (vigorously) because any moment now, an army of swarming servers will appear and before you know it, your senses will be tickled into oblivion.

While you're busy biting into that delicious bone, let me tell you that I, too, have a bone to pick. Big weddings or small weddings?

There are people who want big weddings, and those who want small weddings. Then there are those who want big, get small or want small but end up getting a grand affair. So you might call it... subjective? To each their own? Live and let live?

Big weddings are a spectacle on their own. The venue, the people, the music and all make it an event that will perhaps be trending on Twitter. On the other hand, homely weddings are beautiful, too. With closest friends and family around, many prefer an intimate occasion.

Whatever it may be, why worry about the size of the wedding? You're only going to remember the food anyway.

-- Kazi Akib Bin Asad, Editor In-charge, SHOUT



## PLAYWATCH

### MOVIES



# A Wedding Movie Playlist

#### ALIZA RAHMAN

A construct, an event, and a boiling pot of heightened emotions -- weddings are a permanent fixture, alluring despite the frequency with which they occur. However, every so often, a movie comes out that shows a truer picture of what weddings are really like, rather than the highly stylised photographs taken during the events.

#### MONSOON WEDDING (2001)

Mira Nair's film portrays an upper middle class Indian family preparing for their daughter's wedding. As relatives fill the house and characters both idiosyncratic and archetypal emerge on the screen, one is very likely to find at least one character reflecting a loved-or loathed-one in their own family.

A quintessentially South Asian movie that displays the anxieties, expectations, and fears different family members have in spite of each other or rather because of each other, *Monsoon Wedding* continues to be touching, poignant and relevant 20 years after it was made.

#### MY BIG FAT GREEK WEDDING (2002)

In this movie that helped launch a franchise, otherwise stress-inducing activities associated with weddings and large families in general become comical, with the chaos only making the movie more entertaining.

However, despite the hilarity that ensues throughout, courtesy of sweet, loud, and side-splitting characters, this is a movie that explores the gulf between the expectations of parents and the desires of children.

#### PALM SPRINGS (2020)

Forced to live the same day over and over again, Nyles and Sarah slip into a state of carefree joy as they accept their fate. Throughout, the movie is sprinkled with lines on weddings and marriages that

might seem cynical such as "Marriage is a seemingly bottomless pit of sorrow that makes you forget who you are".

The unique style of the film carries till the very end, where an ambiguous ending leaves viewers with a range of guesses as to the fate of the protagonists.

#### MURIEL'S WEDDING (1994)

A character who might actually be disliked, at least for a good portion of the movie, is the titular character played by Toni Collette. Seemingly without any useful skill, the ABBA-obsessed Muriel dreams of a big wedding to escape her bullying father who belittles her entire family. Despite the name, the movie comes with a whole lot more than weddings, dealing with issues of money, mean girls, and maturity (or the lack of it).

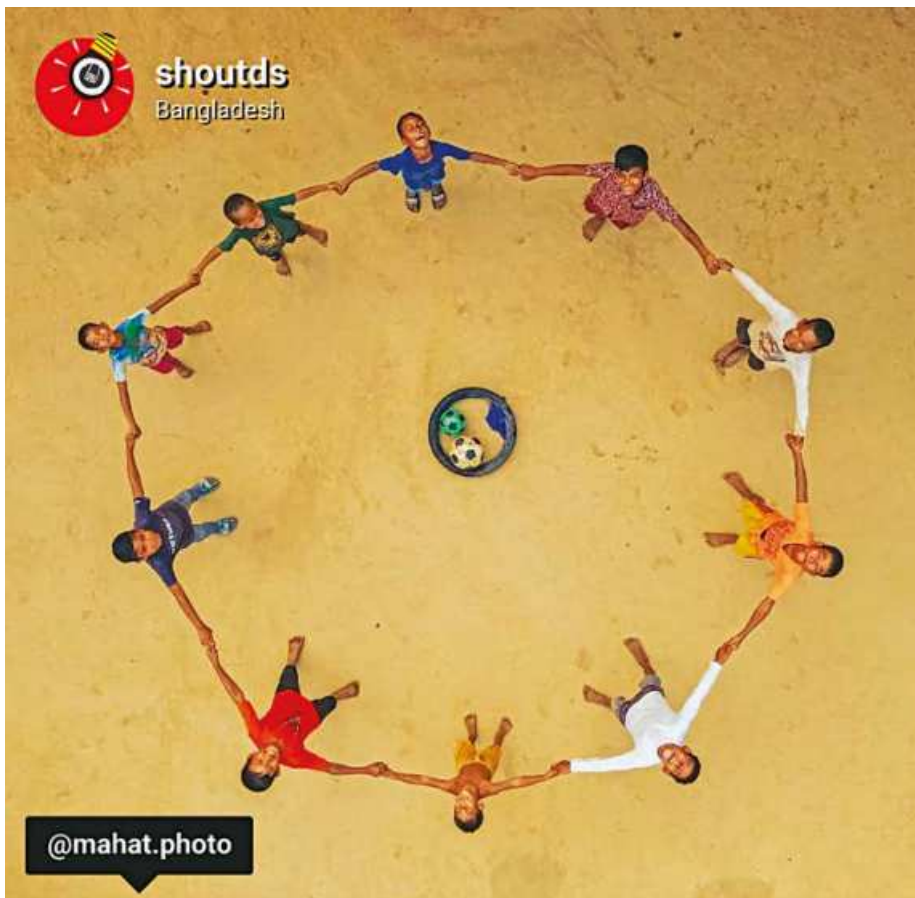
#### SABRINA (1954)

This movie has Audrey Hepburn playing a lovelorn woman yearning for the attention of a man who her father works for. Reminded of her social standing with lines such as "Don't reach for the moon child", Hepburn's Sabrina is unable to forget David Larabee.

Dreamlike, with the perfect music that feels like a mix of old Hollywood and Disney, the movie from the very beginning has an atmosphere of a time long gone. The exposition will remind one of a classic animated fairy tale being narrated.

#### THE FAREWELL (2019)

Lulu Wang's movie starring Awkwafina is more about the differences between cultures than it is about weddings. The movie which depicts an Asian American's internal strife as she tries to grapple with her family's decision to hide their grandmother's cancer diagnosis, also has a wedding as a crucial plot device. As everyone except the grandmother strains to maintain the charade of the wedding, the event continues despite cracks appearing in the facade.



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# Your Guide to Buying (Actually Useful) Wedding Presents

**FATIN HAMAMA**

'Tis the season to be jolly... about eating kacchi to your heart's fullest and donning gorgeous attires that stay quarantined inside your closet for most of the year. However, if you're going to be attending weddings, let's not forget about buying presents for the couple.

Your gifts should hold both sentimental and practical value. So, to make sure that you don't find yourself looking for a dinnerware set in Elephant Road or a flower vase from Aarong every time there's a wedding to attend, here's a small guide on finding better, and actually useful, wedding presents.

## GET CREATIVE WITH COMBOS

Weddings are as good as any other occasion for presents that align with the hobbies and interests of the receiver. The best thing about it is that you can usually customise a gift combo that can be special to the couple.

For instance, if they happen to be bookworms, you may get them a few good books from their respective favourite genres. But also, you can add in a tin or two of their favourite brands of coffee, and throw in a snuggly hand-knit blanket. That way, you'll be giving them a nice winter evening of buddy-reading in a box.

Simple as it might seem, these are gifts that contribute to beautiful moments of bonding for the couple. Such combos are also versatile and adjust according to your budget as long as you're creative enough.

## GO BIG, BUT ON A BUDGET

Despite the natural impulse of going all out while buying a present, your purse may not always permit this. But this is exactly where mutual friend groups or family come in! If you all agree to get the recipients a deluxe present that will surely mean something to them, invest in it together.

One person alone may not be able to afford a weekend booking at a nice resort as



## No. Please don't gift someone a rice cooker.

a gift, but a group of cousins can. You may not consider buying a semi-premium GPU by yourself for two of your gamer friends getting hitched, but it's possible if a few of your mutual friends chip in.

Trust me, even a small-scale weekend getaway or a few hours at a spa after the exhausting stretch of the ceremonies is far better for them than sitting around and unpacking the tenth photo frame from yet another relative. And if you can easily give that to them by chipping in with others, why not?

## BUY FROM SMALL BUSINESSES

Seriously, the perks of this are endless.

Not only will you be supporting small artists and entrepreneurs, but you can also avail a wide range of presents that are locally sourced, economical, mostly handmade, and unique. The best thing about purchasing from small businesses is that there's something for everyone within your budget.

You can get customised artwork for their home, decor items, handmade jewellery, accessories or apparel. On top of that, almost all of them have customisation options available which provides the scope for the best personalised gifts. Even the gift sets mentioned at the very beginning of this article can easily be custom-made from

small businesses.

If any of your family members or close friends are getting married, you may also offer to arrange for the wedding cake via a local baking business. Gestures like these go a long way.

## THINK OUTSIDE THE (GIFT) BOX

If you're not the best at picking out conventional gifts, this is your safety net. Give the couple a chance at experiencing things together!

You can consider giving them tickets to an upcoming concert they can attend, or maybe a pass for a couple's day at an art studio where they can explore fun hobbies together (Claystation Dhaka is perfect for something like this). Just a reservation at a nice little restaurant for dinner will be thoughtful, too.

However, if you don't know any of them too well, you can still get them gift cards or a paid yearly subscription of services such as Netflix or Spotify.

## CASH, SERIOUSLY

No, it's not impolite. Yes, it's better than impulse-buying them a rice cooker or an iron last minute.

More often than not, the primary concern of newlywed couples who are just starting a life together is finances. Building a home for a new family with brand new monetary responsibilities is no easy task, and even the smallest jump-starts help. Hence, if you can't find a good gift at the last minute and can afford this comfortably instead, do consider writing a cheque to the pair. It definitely doesn't have to be too grand a number, but it'll still be a helpful gift.

Last but not the least, if you're unsure about a present you bought, consider leaving the receipt with it and don't feel shy to add a note mentioning that they can totally swap it out for something they find more useful. After all, being a bit of a Rachel Green at heart is rather practical at times.

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## The Tragedy of Having Exams During Wedding Season

RAYA MEHNAZ

It was your mother who let you know of the wedding since the invitation came when you were outside doing “broke student” things. You take the invitation thrown haphazardly over your mountain of books and turn it over only to balk at the date. The wedding is right in the middle of your exams.

The wedding, in retrospect, was always meant to be around this time of the year. It doesn't matter that the wedding is of your favourite cousin, or your most beloved childhood friend, or your closest neighbourhood “apu/bhaiya”. It doesn't matter that this is going to be the event of the year, especially since the first half of the year was awful and to compensate for the misery, everyone would try to make this event even more fun than it would have been otherwise. You are, unfortunately, a student in this magical time of the year, and that is always going to have some consequences.

You console yourself with daydreams of you in your graduation cap, yet a part of you still longs to disregard all your academic responsibilities and just get into the fray of pre-wedding preparations. So what if you have your finals on, or that you are an HSC examinee, or this is a delicate time before your board exams?

It doesn't mean that you should be happy to miss out on spontaneous wedding shopping, *holuds* that go on till 4 in the morning, or countless impromptu hangout sessions to discuss the wedding. You sigh looking at the Instagram stories and then looking at your most recent post with the #studygram. You feel robbed, yet you understand that there's nothing to do.

There were a few moments where you almost called up the “man/woman of the hour”, begging them to change their wedding date. Thankfully, you had the last minute realisation that the world doesn't revolve around you, as much as you like to think of yourself as the “main character”. So, you carry onwards in your quest to finish this round of forsaken educational milestones.

You get very little studying done, mind you. Considering the unfortunate circumstances, you think that's good enough.

The wedding day comes and goes. If you are really lucky, you get to attend at least two programmes, and you truly have fun for however little time you could spare. After all, you are just really happy for the newlyweds, and the fact that you did not get to properly celebrate their wedding doesn't diminish that.

So, you congratulate them with your exhausted eyes that tried to cram two chapters worth of information the night before, and get yourself a celebratory glass of *borhani*.

On your way, you concur that you have shown remarkable restraint and maturity that you're surprised you had. You spent this wedding season with the least amount of drama and angry tears and even managed to study. You completed this wedding season with dignity and that is worthy of celebration.

Congratulate yourself on a job well done and get home to hit your books again because the wedding may be over, but your exam sure isn't.

Raya Mehnaz had to miss her brother's *holud* for her finals. Send condolences at [fb.com/raya.mehnaz](http://fb.com/raya.mehnaz)

## Your Best Friend's Wedding (Not Starring Julia Roberts)

RASHA JAMEEL

There's loud music being blasted from massive speakers, the smell of fresh *kacchi* in the air, and elaborate floral displays left and right.

Your best friend is getting married. Disclaimer: This is not Julianne Potter's story.

The thing about your best friend's wedding is that the reality of it doesn't sink in right away. Not when they show you the engagement ring, or hand you the wedding invite card, or when you're three weeks into dance rehearsals for the *holud* ceremony. Even as you're helping your best friend sort through the logistics of a *deshi* wedding, you can't help but wonder about how it was just yesterday that you two copied from each other's Math homework and exchanged rants while munching on *fuchka* by the sidewalk. Your concept of time grows increasingly blurry by the minute as nostalgia takes over you.

Wedding preparations are always hectic. There are dance rehearsals to plan, venues to be booked ahead, caterers to be consulted, festive attire to be selected, and wedding invites to be sent out. You gradually find your excitement beginning to mirror that of your friend's. After all, it is a new phase in life much like high school graduation, completion of undergrad degrees, job promotions, et cetera.

As you lend some of your assistance in planning your friend's wedding, you become even more acquainted with the action behind the scenes, and in time, recognise your role as your bestie's go-to emotional support system at such a time. Having gotten over your initial sense of disbelief towards the whole event, you

stand by your friend as they take their time to clear their head or look for the occasional breather amid all the wedding frenzy.

You've had conflicted thoughts about your friend's wedding this whole time. There's been ample fun and excitement throughout the festivities, but they ultimately did little to dissipate the insecurity creeping up at the back of your mind: “Will our friendship ever be the same again?” Now you're well and truly anxious about the status of your friendship with your oldest friend.

There have always been ups and downs with all the struggles in preserving the friendship over a long distance and being there for each other through thick and thin. Demanding your friend's constant attention in your matters at all times will only introduce toxicity to the bond... and you and your friend deserve better.

It's the day of, and you get just a little teary-eyed seeing your friend next to their significant other. Happy tears, laughs, and giggles are exchanged over stories of the couple's courtship and successive plates of *kacchi*. As the wedding event draws to a close, both you and your best friend already know that your friendship is no longer what it used to be in high school or college, but that's the best part. It's been growing and maturing through changes, the different phases of both of your lives.

You can see your wedding festivities unfold from your best friend's perspective already.

Rasha Jameel's calendar begins at 'Deadline 001' and ends at 'Deadline 7634872354'. Help her locate the month of July in all this mess at [rasha.jameel@outlook.com](mailto:rasha.jameel@outlook.com)



PHOTO: AYNA MAHAL

THE DEFINITIVE YOUTH MAGAZINE SHOUT

## Do weddings need to be extravagant?



PHOTO: HILL VALLEY PRODUCTION

FARNAZ FAWAD HASAN

The wedding bells are ringing for Neha and Samin.

As I write this, the couple is wrapping up all the arrangements for their big day. Like most other girls, Neha has been planning for the picture perfect wedding for as long as she can remember. For her, a grand wedding is a perfect start to the new sacred verse of her life. And for Samin, the smile on his bride's face is all that counts.

Weddings are one of the most significant events in a person's lifetime. In Bangladesh, big fat weddings evade all definitions. These are not just full of jaw-dropping extravagance, but also emotionally charged with an awful lot of hope, dreams, and desires.

“Nothing is more important to me than family. The idea of everyone celebrating and being happy for me on my big day is exhilarating. I want a big wedding where I am surrounded by love and positivity,” said Syeda Samiha\*, a student from a reputed private university in the capital.

Anindita Bose, an undergraduate at Brac University, revealed, “I want a big wedding because I want to have the time of my life. I would love to entertain a large number of guests and get their blessings. From a religious perspective, Hindu weddings have many rituals and I want to have a traditional wedding following them all.”

One person, who wished to remain anonymous, shared her wedding desires. She commented, “To me, a wedding is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity so it should be filled with excitement and bliss. The way brides and grooms dress in movies takes my breath away. The marriage scenes are straight out of fairytales, and I would love all that for myself.” Many, like her, take inspiration from movies and TV shows, and

personally, I think it contributes colossally to the idea of having an exorbitant affair.

However, there is the other side of the coin. Not everyone is down to sticking to the glitz and glamour.

In the words of Dhaka-based web developer and content creator Fahim Ahamed\*, a simple and homely wedding makes for the best occasion. He confessed, “I don't want to spend on lavish and over-the-top ceremonies when I can perhaps use the money for a better cause. I would rather invest it in something fruitful.”

“I'm a very introverted person. A big and loud wedding would just make me feel like a spectacle, and I don't want that,” said another person.

Newly-wed Rafia Atkia Rafa precisely sums up her wedding experience as such: “The guest list is an ‘endless chain of acquaintances’, as I like to call it. The chain always gets longer, and one should know where to cut it.”

She further said, “After planning a simple wedding, I was able to keep the event within my financial capacity, invited my closest ones, spent a good time together and made many cherishable memories. Another good thing was that there was no extra pressure which could hamper the first day of my conjugal life.”

She also mentioned why she preferred having a tastefully sumptuous yet simple ceremony with her husband, adhering to their religious beliefs.

Those who go all out at their weddings, from elaborate decorations and sensational attires to gourmet foods, leave no stone unturned. Sad but true, many dream of such lavish weddings but only a handful can afford it. As reported in an article on *The Daily Star*, the wedding industry is a 2000

crore taka market, according to the Event Management and Marketing Association of Bangladesh. The industry feeds on this “once-in-a-lifetime” attitude; no wonder why weddings have become such an expensive ordeal.

Many parents and couples take loans to afford this luxury. Amirah Hossain, a junior at Brac University, commented, “Yes, it is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity but that doesn't mean it has to be a big, extravagant one. You can have an elegant wedding with minimal costs where you can enjoy it without putting a burden on your family and yourself.”

Parents paint a picture of their beloved child's “happily ever after”. In reality, painting this picture doesn't always go smoothly. Weddings are, unfortunately at times, seen as a display of how far you've come in life and how well-off you are.

In our society, many measure the success of the whole family based on the gold hanging from the bride's neck. The vermilion-red draped, gold-laden bride sitting in the middle of a gaudily decorated hall room is an indicator of how much the parents love their child. Not always do these ideals align with those of the bride and groom, but such disagreements often draw a wedge between the family.

“My husband and I wanted a cosy wedding with the blessings and presence of our close relatives. But my parents had their own guest lists. So, we compromised and settled for a moderately big ceremony,” said Dr. Afrida Tasneem, who serves as an assistant surgeon. Squabbles are inescapable when it comes to wedding planning. Compromise is the key to avoiding a rift between the parents and the soon-to-be wedded couple.

Entrepreneur and father of two, Feroz Alam Bhuiyan, shared why he wants his daughters to have their dream wedding. “I married late and could not have a big event. I don't want my daughters to have a wedding like mine. I want the best for them, and I will do the best in my ability to give them the wedding they deserve,” he explained. For many parents like Feroz, footing the bill for their children's weddings is very crucial, even if it costs an arm and a leg.

Many young individuals also believe in contributing to their wedding expenses. “No matter how small your arrangements are, the peace in knowing that you're contributing/being able to afford this is enough to bring joy,” proclaims Ishrat Nova, an undergraduate student of North South University.

“As it was the marriage of the eldest daughter, both my parents and my sister wanted it to be a pompous affair. I don't think that my family, especially my mother, would've settled for a small, intimate wedding because she had been saving up for quite some time now. My parents and I believe that having a smaller wedding is financially beneficial, however, there is a lot of emotion involved in the wedding of the eldest daughter. Hence, they chose to do it to their best capability,” expressed Neha's sister.

Big, small or somewhere in between, what matters the most on a wedding day is that everyone is happy.

\*Names have been changed for privacy

Farnaz Fawad Hasan is a disintegrating pool noodle wanting to stay afloat. Reach her at [farnazfawadhasan@gmail.com](mailto:farnazfawadhasan@gmail.com)

# Why should you study in Malaysia?



**Manzuma Murshed**  
Managing Partner  
Winning Magnitude Bangladesh

## Ekraz Alim

Malaysia is known as one of the world's most popular tourist destinations – but did you know it is also one of the top countries for a brilliant international student experience? The country has a unique combination of ancient and modern architecture, inspired by its mix of cultures and ethnicities. It is the perfect destination for any student looking for a new experience for their studies. Malaysia has more than 100,000 international students from over 150 countries around the globe and top-grade education standards, including institutions that are among the top 200 universities in the world. It is no surprise that many students from Bangladesh aspire to study here.

Moving out and studying in a faraway land can be challenging, once one weighs the pros and cons. But it is a decision that can shape your future. Studying abroad exposes you to a variety of cultures from around the world, enhancing your communication and social skills, while opening up a world of improved career prospects from all around the globe for you. All of that can provide a remarkable resume and knowledge for your business down the line. But

these days, it is hard to find an organisation one can trust.

Fortunately, there are organisations like Winning Magnitude Bangladesh, a one-stop centre for higher education and placement for Bangladeshi students, established in 2001. It is a renowned organisation for student recruitment based in Kuala Lumpur that has partnerships with top universities in Malaysia and a network spread across five countries. They have expertise in providing several services such as Student Counseling, University Selection, Document Verification, Admission, Scholarship, Visa Processing, Pre-departure Briefing and most importantly, excellent moral support. Their 20 years of experience of successfully delivering on their promises, vouched by the innumerable testaments of past students, makes them the evident choice for students who are interested in studying in Malaysia.

As for top-ranking universities this year, the one to look out for is Taylor's University, positioned as Malaysia's leading private university in the QS Graduate Employability Rankings 2022 alongside internationally renowned universities. It ranked 16th in the world for the Graduate Employment Rate indicator.

Additionally, the university retained its

Top 20 world ranking in Hospitality and Leisure Management in the QS World University Rankings by Subject earlier this year, making it the only university in Malaysia, and Southeast Asia, to be in the Top 20 ranking. The same rankings also denoted Taylor's Business School as the top private business school in Malaysia. Professor Michael Driscoll, Taylor's University Vice-Chancellor and President remarked, "The results of the QS survey show that we have made great strides in the Employer Reputation and Employer Partnerships indicators, which demonstrates the trust that our industry partners place in us. It is a testament to the quality of our graduates."

Taylor's is also one of few Asian universities to receive the QS 5 Stars rating for Online Learning. This award demonstrates the direction in teaching and learning approaches of the institution, where e-learning has taken centre stage. Moreover, the current unprecedented pandemic has accelerated the university's latest approach in its new 'Taylor's Curriculum Framework'. The university is also curating their 'Taylor's Sphere Ecosystem' for honing multiple intelligences and encouraging multidisciplinary learning.

Malaysia is known for its long history of welcoming International students to study at top-ranked universities with affordable tuition fees, offering a great blend of world-class education, vibrant student life and diverse culture.

With the emergence of Covid-19, the universities have taken strict measures to maintain the safety of the students and faculty. They have enabled students to attend classes from all around the world by successfully switching to online classes. Fortunately, as the world slowly heals and international borders are being opened, Malaysia has started welcoming international students for offline classes.

Regardless of a student's field of interest, we are proud to say that our organisation can help them find a suitable programme, as we have been striving to provide Bangladeshi students with their desired higher education, for the last 20 years, with the aid of partnerships with top-ranked public and private Malaysian universities.

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## THE GREY CLOUD

**NUZHAT HASSAN CHOWDHURY**

The grey cloud over my head  
Accompanied me like a guardian.  
One that didn't protect, but instead,  
Rained all over my parade.

When my mind stopped being my friend,  
I forgot what sunshine felt like.  
Sometimes it rained,  
And sometimes it felt like I was trapped in a snowstorm.

Yes, I felt warmth now and then,  
But its fleeting nature made sure  
To bring the rain and the cold back into my life  
As soon as the moment had passed.

This warmth felt like snowflakes.  
So beautiful as long as it lasted,  
Only to melt into nothing moments after it appeared,  
As if it never existed.

However, it's different now.  
Today, the sun shines in my life brighter than ever before  
And my mind is finally my friend.  
There are times when it's dim, but never fully dark.  
The seasons change like they're supposed to  
And I know no monsoon rain will overstay its welcome.  
Even when the grey cloud reappears,  
I know the skies will eventually clear.

*Nuzhat has finally fixed her sleeping schedule. Congratulate her at nuzhatchowdhury07@gmail.com*

## Descent to Rise

**FAIRUZ FAIZA**

Eyes groggy from the cold wind,  
Prophecies of your past stare into oblivion.  
You knew the body was a vessel of frailty  
Bones merely the rock candy of the ground.

But you embraced the city lights  
When they sung in patterns  
You sipped the nectar from geraniums,  
And listened to the orchestra of crickets  
As autumn leaves befell  
Onto the break of dusk.

Yet like a silly junebug,  
You threw yourself into the light.  
It burned you, but couldn't tear your drive.  
You rose as courage dotted your being.

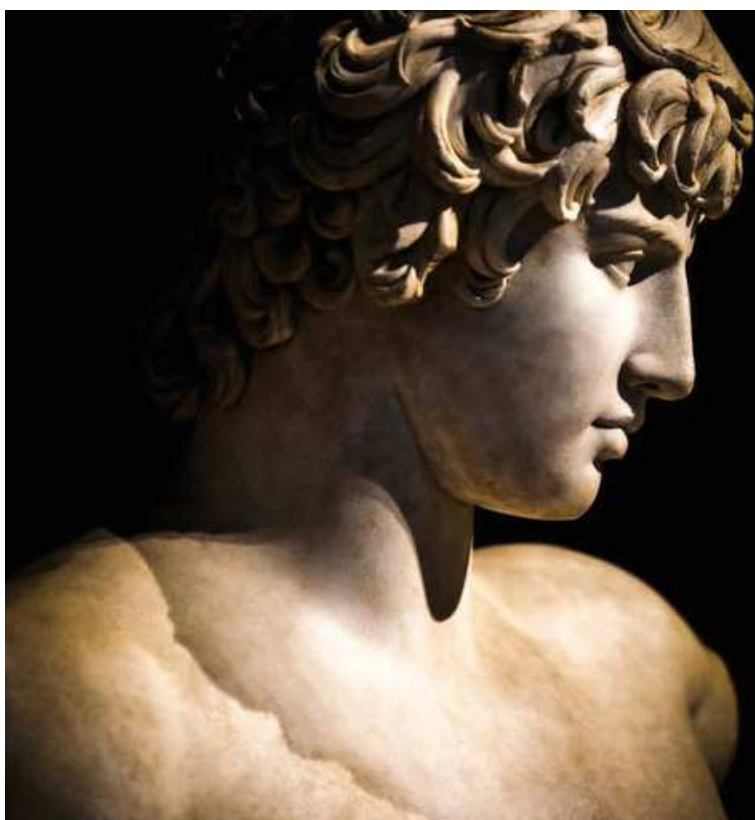
Wading through the painted desert,  
You freed the wraiths  
Enfolded in your breast bones.  
The same tears that wrung you out,  
Became your spears  
Each for a different enemy.

You hold on to the light  
For it birthed you anew.  
Voices inside your head turn monastery-quiet  
No longer wistful for chaos, nor rue.

*The writer is a student at Bangladesh University of Professionals.*



# Encountering a modern Greek god



**NUJHAT ASLAM**

Last spring, I came across a guy who was sculpted out of the same marble stones that were used to sculpt the Greek gods back in the 5th century. He didn't have the aura of an idle, wine-loving, lavish god. Instead, he had a slender, modern structure with a depressed face. What actually related him to the sculpture of a Greek god was his cold-toned skin, sky-high ego and an ancient stone heart.

I called him "Labyrinth", as he always chased me in the maze of my messed up emotions with his never expiring, sculpted youth. To avoid the crisis, I tactfully locked him away in the dewy orbs of memories, at the deepest recess of my mind and kept those unattended. However, every now and then, those caught my attention like spotlights.

Back in the 5th century, I wonder if the faithful hearts would stop short and cease to pace in front of the enormous sculpted gods, the way I felt an overwhelmed exhilaration every time I neared him. It was the same way anyone would feel if they tried to hold a conversation with a streetlight, standing in front of its pole. A one-sided conversation with pure submission.

Some Greek gods were musical as far as I know. He was no different. He sang sweetly while the shattering sound of heartbreaks resonated as a background melody. He had an innate ability to be selfish like the nature of any other typical Greek god. A worthy descendant who hardly cared before throwing away any sweetness intended to be offered.

Fools and devotees worshipping Greek gods understood ages ago that it was impossible to keep pace with their idols. Unlike the Greek gods, they had reasons to focus on, rather than emotions. So, they slowly wiped their existence. However, as a sensible mere mortal, I decided to step down from the Parthenon and went pagan instead.



ECHOES BY  
ASRAR CHOWDHURY

# Marriage, through the lens of an economist

**I** How a girl and a boy decide to marry is a topic that is relevant to today's generation. Love may be blind, but marriages are not. Extended family no longer matches a couple. Your better half may have been fixed in the heavens, but the two of you have to find each other on earth.

**II** Ever since the first marriage, it has been viewed as a formal or informal contract, approved by some authority. This approval separates marriages from meeting a person for a short or even long time. It also makes formal recognition of children possible and ensures distribution and transfer of resources.

Modern societies have evolved from family and community ownership of wealth to individuals having ownership and access to more resources. This gives them more power and freedom to choose their own partner. The decision for young people to marry today, therefore, is more complex than ever.

**III** In marriage markets, people are constantly searching and matching for a partner. There is a limit to searching, though. One expects



to see results or else, it is time wasted. Because there is a cost in search and a risk in matching, people tend to match from familiar environments (education institute, workplace, through friends).

Supply can be reduced for men and for women. When there are wars, the male population falls. Girls marry men whom they would not normally have. After World War II, this happened in Europe. Today, more women go to university. They also tend to be academically better than their male cohorts. Factors like these have influenced marriage decisions over time.

**IV** Marriage makes economic sense. There are benefits from "economies of scale". Couples share resources, e.g., a home. They share the cost of bringing up children. Countries have favourable loans, insurance and tax benefits for married couples and families.

Shared resources and shared responsibilities can also create tension when marriages break up. Who walks away with what? How are assets divided? Who takes responsibility for the children? And the tricky one: how are debts split?

**V** Millennials (those born between 1981 and 1995) redefined marriage. They focused on careers. They broke away or loosened their ties from their extended family. Financial security and stability became a necessity. Marriage, for the first time, became a choice, rather than a social convention. Marrying at an older age meant less children. Tensions started when one spouse would relocate to another city, or would have to take time out from earning to have a child.

Marriage as a social institution is probably not dying, yet. Millennials are looking at marriage strategically. They are searching and matching themselves, calculating each other's needs and expectations. They are also setting up premarital agreements regarding assets and other responsibilities.

Millennials (and Gen Z) are more careful than their elders. That's what makes them different and special. What will happen, may end up happening for the good over time.

*Asrar Chowdhury is a professor of economics. He follows Test cricket, listens to music, and spins Vinyls when he has free time. Email: asrarul@juniv.edu; or asrarul@gmail.com*

## A responsible approach to organising weddings

**TAMJIDUL HOQUE**

With winter at the doorstep and year-end vacations around the corner, wedding season has officially begun. This makes it a good time to address how we often tend to get carried away by the festivities and ignore some major issues that come with it.

### NOISE POLLUTION

With people gathering on the streets and screaming in joy to cars honking loudly to indicate that the groom has arrived, and playing loud music in residential areas till very late, noise pollution is common in our local weddings.

While it seems inevitable, there are steps one can take to avoid this, such as taking permission from the local authority in residential areas and letting neighbours know beforehand about the event, especially if it goes on till late at night. We should also refrain from using fireworks. The sudden loud noise of the explosion can disturb people, especially those with children and pets living nearby and may lead to bigger accidents.

### GOING BEYOND OUR FINANCIAL CAPABILITIES

Bangladeshi weddings are typically grand in scale, and you must spend a lot of money to organise an event that will

impress hundreds of people. Something people commonly do is exceed their financial capacity. We get so fixated on giving our all to an event that we sometimes overlook the long-term financial consequences.

There are many instances where people take out loans and are unable to repay them. It's very crucial that we reconsider how financially viable our spending is and if there are other more practical areas of our life we would be better off directing our funds at.

### FOOD WASTE

Weddings generate a lot of food waste, and while the organisers are frantically trying to deal with the problems that arise while pulling off a wedding, it is common for a considerable amount of food to be simply thrown away.

If we implement a system of RSVP-ing properly, we can make a better estimate of the number of guests dining, and not prepare food in excess. With some

effort, any leftovers can also be packed and brought home to be eaten later or collected and be given to people who are in dire need of it instead of throwing it away. If your budget permits, doing charity around this time could be a noble idea too.

### MANAGING TRANSPORTATION

Vehicles transporting guests to the wedding are frequently mismanaged. In many cases, the convention center itself lacks sufficient parking

space to accommodate the vehicles that arrive. As a result, the roads in front of the venue get blocked, causing traffic congestion for others trying to pass.

To avoid causing inconvenience, we should assign people from the organisers to direct the vehicles so that they move smoothly and do not block the road. In this way, the guests will face less problems trying to arrive at the wedding and people trying to use the roads can move freely.

With wedding fever sweeping the country, lots of people will be busy organising or preparing for the special occasion of their loved ones. Amidst all the preparations, let's try to be socially responsible and focus on creating a better experience for everyone around.



*Tamjidul Hoque likes spicy food and wants to watch a new anime now that his exams are finished. Give him anime suggestions at tamjidulh@gmail.com*