

THE DEFINITIVE
YOUTH
MAGAZINE

SHOUT

DHAKA THURSDAY JANUARY 20, 2022, MAGH 6, 1428 BS | A PUBLICATION OF *The Daily Star*



WHAT IT'S LIKE TO WORK AT
A BOOKSHOP

PG 3

INT'L COMMITTEE RENAMES
STOCKHOLM SYNDROME AS
"DHAKA SYNDROME"

PG 4



THE CONSEQUENCES OF AUTHORITARIAN PARENTING

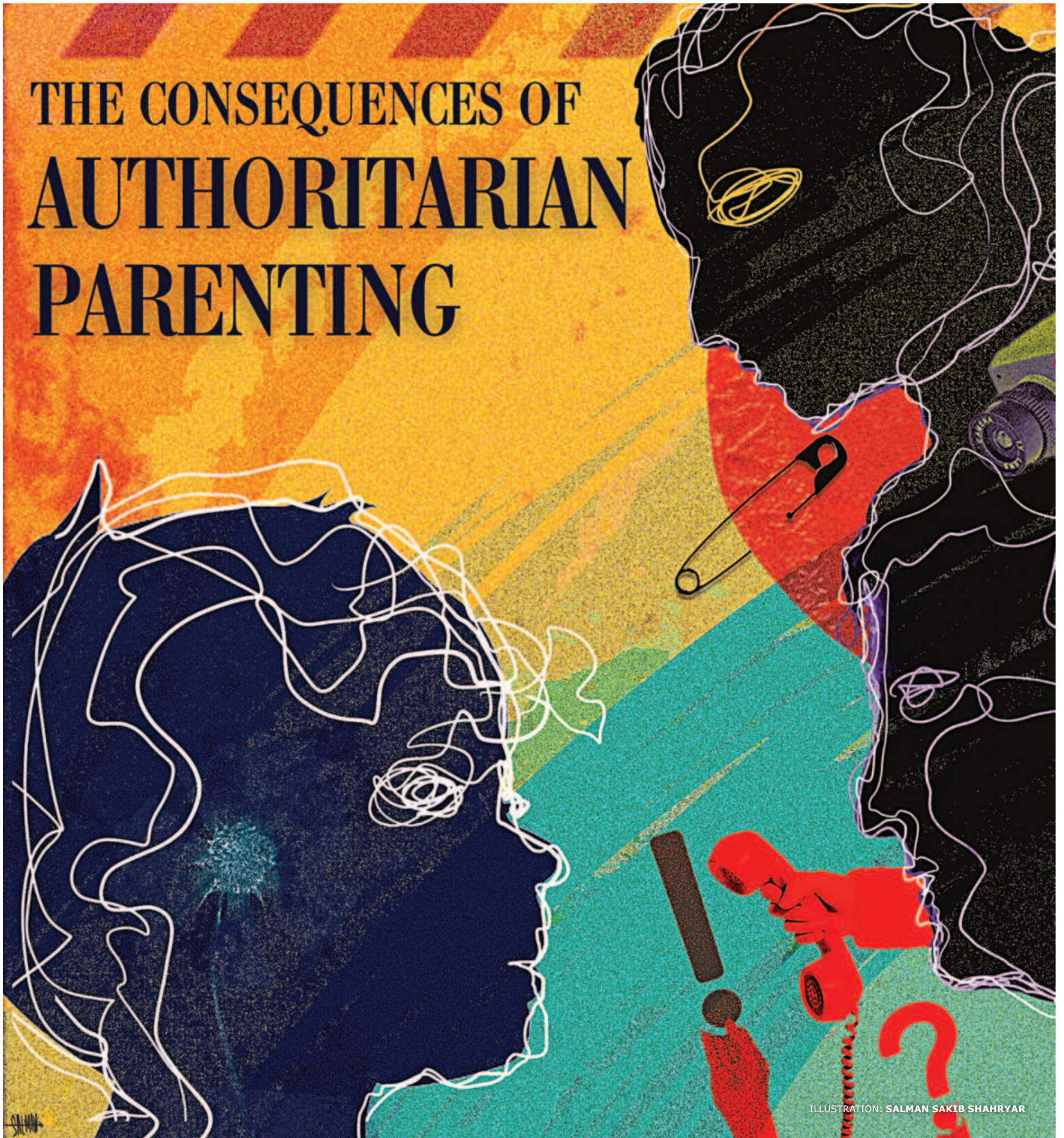


ILLUSTRATION: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR

EDITORIAL

Parenting must be so daunting. Imagine being in charge of an entire person, one who doesn't know how to do anything. As a parent, you have to teach a child to stand and walk and talk, to make decisions for themselves. As a parent, you then have to teach yourself to stand by as they make mistakes and hopefully learn from those, while you know for a fact that if only they listened to you, if only they did things exactly the way you told them to do, the children would be so much better off. Or so it may seem.

The thing with strict, overbearing parenting is that it makes complete sense from the parents' point of view. But weird as it may be to have to say this out loud, children are people. They have their own points of view, and the sad thing is that way too many parents don't want to respect this fact.

Parenting is a ridiculously important aspect of the human experience, it's a skill that is not looked at closely enough when people talk about families and the future. They really should.

-- Azmin Azran, Sub-editor, SHOUT



PLAYWATCH

MOVIE



5 sports movies that are clutch

SYED TAMJID TAZWAR

Sports movies are not always good. A lot can go wrong, especially when the story or direction tries to be more creative than necessary. Sometimes, however, things do work out, and we get something that is not just exciting to watch but can also motivate us to some extent.

Here are five such sports movies that have done enough to stay memorable and inspiring and are actually good.

WE ARE MARSHALL

We Are Marshall is based on the real-life Marshall University air disaster that killed the football team's students and coaches. The film shows how interconnected the people of Huntington were with the university football team, and follows a young, charismatic coach, Jack Lengyel, portrayed by Matthew McConaughey, who tries to rebuild the squad and mend relationships.

The movie shows how much sports mean to people. It also shows how they try to cope with grief through sports.

MONEYBALL

Moneyball is about the backroom staff of a baseball team who tried to revolutionise the sport by using sabermetrics for analysing and buying players.

The story follows Oakland manager Billy Beane and his protégé Peter Brand as they use maths and statistics to build a squad with their limited budget. *Moneyball* does a remarkable job in making people more interested in baseball administration. Also, you don't have to know how baseball works to enjoy the film.

FIELD OF DREAMS

Field of Dreams combines sports with fantasy, and the result is breath-taking.

Here, a farmer hears a voice telling

him to build a baseball diamond in his field and baseball legends will come and play in it if he makes it. The movie combines mysticism with the love of baseball.

Despite having a plot revolving around baseball legends, the stars of this movie are clearly the commoners. The film does a brilliant job at portraying people's love for sports and combines that with a healthy dose of fantasy.

GOAL!

The ultimate football movie or the only decent football movie for the masses, *Goal!*, tells the story of Santiago Muñoz, a young Mexican football player, who never gives up on his dreams and ends up playing for Newcastle United.

Despite having almost every single cliché of the sports movie genre, *Goal!* manages to be an excellent watch. The atmosphere paired with a fantastic soundtrack and cinematography does a good job emulating the environment surrounding a Premier League club.

THE ROCKY SERIES

There are nine movies in the Rocky series if you include the *Creed* movies. Some of them are great, some of them not so much. However, the tale of Rocky Balboa as he goes from an underdog facing Apollo Creed to becoming a world class boxer to training Apollo's son is worth experiencing.

The story of Rocky Balboa is inspiring, moving and unforgettable. The *Rocky* series has its flaws, but at the end of the day, the movies do more than enough to cement their place in history as one of the best movie franchises out there.

Syed Tamjid Tazwar likes *Spiderman*. Contact him at syedtazwartamjid@gmail.com

TITLE OF YOUR MIXTAPE



A	B
Prem Shomachar Recall	Bad Blood Bastille
I'm Just a Kid Simple Plan	Please Forgive Me Bryan Adams
Bored Billie Eilish	Maa Shankar Mahadevan
Misery Business Paramore	Ode to the Mets The Strokes

Email us at shoutds@gmail.com with feedback, comments, and reader submissions within 500 words.



PHOTO: BAATIGHAR DHAKA

What it's like to work at a bookshop

SHIMIN MUSHSHARAT

When my favourite bookshop in Dhaka asked me to join their team last year, I said yes in a heartbeat.

It took me a good few weeks to believe that my job was to find books for readers of all tastes. The happy readers, the melancholic ones, the productive readers, and the indecisive ones. Young readers, grumpy readers, and scary readers.

Each day, as I walked into the bookshop, I inhaled the smell of books – old and new. For the first time in 24 years, I felt a sense of belonging. Here, at a bookshop.

I stood in front of the shelves and perused through them — fiction, essays, art, architecture, film, self-help, and a personal favourite, new releases. I knew exactly who would love to read each book I looked at.

One day, I found a collection of short stories. Allow me to rephrase, the collection of short stories found me. It was old and precious. I took a picture of the book, held it close, and whispered, "Go make someone happy." A few minutes after I posted the photo, an order was placed for the book.

Ordinary magic is the best kind of magic, I realised.

I met a little boy whose mother was looking for the Bangla translation of *Living to Tell the Tale*. I happened to know exactly where it was, since the book happened to be one of my favourites. The shade of red from the cover was that of the boy's glasses. He asked if the person on the cover was Einstein. I smiled

and introduced him to Gabriel Garcia Marquez. Unimpressed, not knowing the magic this man was capable, the boy asked, "Who's that?"

One such morning, I met my favourite author in the cafe corner. Casually, and miraculously. I told him how much I loved his work. It did not even occur to me to ask for an autograph.

One of the fellow librarians started to call the place where I take photos my "studio". The name stuck. When I lost my favourite book, and therefore my heart, the bookshop held me together. And when I received an autographed copy of that same book as a gift, the broken heart began to heal.

I have lived and breathed stories since I was about six years old. Books have always been my saviour and my sanctuary. I was that child who was found reading in a corner at family functions, the friend who always had a book in her backpack, and the date who reads on rickshaws because she needs to know what happens next.

So, from mastering the art of carrying as many books as my hands can hold, dealing with papercuts regularly, getting new releases delivered to my desk fresh off the press to having the occasional impromptu conversations with readers browsing the shelves, working at a bookstore has been the most gratifying experience I have ever had.

Shimin reads everything she can find, talks to cats, and writes a lot of letters. Send her a book at shim.mush@gmail.com

Going out to play after a long time

TAMJIDUL HOQUE

For most young people, the only form of exercise usually comes from going out to play with friends as they often fail to save time for physical workout due to the nature of their hectic schedules. Thanks to the pandemic though, even that opportunity had been lost.

However, with the restrictions slowly easing up, many of us have started to go out and play more.

As I joyfully return to the field to play football after months, I was taken aback by how much I was struggling to keep playing.

As soon as I stepped on the pitch, I felt unprepared. I could feel a tight feeling of breathlessness in my chest after just one sprint. I still carried on.

Soon, my heart started beating rapidly, barely keeping up with the body's demands. My stamina soon started to run out and fatigue set in. Muscles began to ache, and any kind of movement became painful. Ultimately, I had to give up.

Much to my surprise, the effects didn't end there. The pain and the tiredness remained for days. I even lost the physical and mental energy to go about my daily activities. The question that immediately crossed my mind, and maybe many others like me was, "How do I change this?"

An effective but often ignored way to deal with this is to do warm-up exercises before one starts playing. While going out to play with friends, we almost never think about this, whereas, professionals always warm up before training or playing to get their bodies ready for the game, and avoid potential injuries.

One of the more obvious things we could do is play more. The change in one's fitness level is not going to happen overnight. Many of us get out to play once and then forget about playing again for a while. Thus, we never build up the stamina that is required to play. As a result, we keep struggling whenever we return to the field.

To reduce long term discomfort caused from playing, it's very effective to take a short nap after a game as your body releases growth hormones to repair your muscles and reduces overall fatigue.

A lesser-known yet important step for a quick recovery process is to jump into a cold shower after returning home after a game. Cold showers help remove the lactic acid that gets stored up in the muscles and cause pain, and may also reduce inflammation of the muscles.

With the new variants on the rise, we may have to resort to staying inside more. However, we can hope to return to the field regularly once things are better, and we shouldn't be discouraged by the struggle we face while playing. Instead, we could maybe put in a little more effort and planning into playing for the sake of better health and good times.

Tamjidul Hoque loves talking about football and watching anime. You can find him on twitter at twitter.com/TamjidulH24



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

satire.

Int'l committee renames Stockholm syndrome as "Dhaka syndrome"

HASIB UR RASHID IFTI

After careful observation of the behavioural dilemma that persists among natives of Dhaka and their love for this city, authorities finally decided to rename the psychological condition Stockholm syndrome as the more accurate "Dhaka syndrome".

In a press briefing held earlier today, the International Akika Committee's spokesperson reflected, "After nine chaotic hours of work every day, as Dhaka drains all the energy out of its inhabitants, it leaves a minuscule amount for its hopeless romantics to write TL;DR paragraphs on social media about their love for Dhaka. As our way of honouring its hostages'... my apologies, its residents' love for Dhaka, we have decided to rename the overused psychological term."

This development has sparked conversation all over the capital.

"This urban jungle has a place for everyone. A disease-ridden and detrimental place, but a place nonetheless," said Shadman, an avid Dhaka sympathiser.

"Last year, a picture of a sewer cleaner neck-deep inside a filthy manhole in Dhaka went viral. Where others saw the struggle of the proletariat and the dire consequences of poverty, I saw a beautiful city giving this poor man a chance to feed his family once



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

a day and provide them with a malnourished future," he added.

"During monsoon, as you drive from Dhaka North to Dhaka South, it feels like travelling through time from the 21st century to the 18th," Shadman reminisced. "While Gulshan people get a free car wash, Jatrabari residents get buses and boats riding the same waves."

Theories suggest Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "Water, water, everywhere, nor any drop to drink" and B. J. Thomas's classic "Raindrops Keep Fallin' on My Head" were both written as odes to Jatrabari during monsoon.

"Dhaka is a goldmine of opportunities," said the City Federation. "That's why we keep digging the roads all year long."

Arko, a Facebook art group pioneer, shared his favourite Dhaka memory, saying, "Last year, after a month of scorching heat, it was finally the night of kalbaishakhi. After the dust settled, I stood on the 14th floor balcony of my tiny apartment, gazing at the beautiful chaos. I noticed the sparkling blue polythene houses of the homeless on the footpath, wrecked by the storm. In the still of the night, from the demolished ruins that were once a home, a skinny kid came out with his baby sister in his arms. I captured that beautiful moment with my camera, posted it on Facebook and appreciated how wholesome the moment was."

"Considering a capitalist dystopian tragedy to be wholesome is as 'Dhaka' as it gets," explained Arko's therapist Dr Sigma Fraud. "Following a restricted childhood, insufferable academic lives and toxic marriages, Dhaka's inhabitants are accustomed to abuse. So, the next time you claim to love a city that smells like urine two months following Qurbani Eid and human faeces the rest ten, know that you probably have a fixation with abuse and should get yourself medically checked."

Suggest Ifti post-war Japanese literature at hasiburrashidifti@gmail.com

How to write a generic dystopian YA novel

FATIN HAMAMA

The good thing about writing a low effort dystopian YA novel, is that you have a syllabus at hand.

If you're still in a fix about the perfect execution, several of which must also be a part of the plot, here's a step-by-step guide.

CREATING THE SIGNATURE EVIL GOVERNMENT

This part might seem a little tricky, but it's not. You see, in a standard dystopian plot, the totalitarian government has a corrupt purpose that oppresses the population in a very real way that sparks a meaningful revolution.

However, if a dystopian YA trilogy as fairly popular as *Matched* (2010) can have a government that's evil solely because it forcefully matchmakes 17 year-old kids, you don't even have to worry.

Just find something stupid that'll motivate a regime to throw a bunch of dumb teenagers into a survival game setting to prove a point, I guess.

FINDING THE CHOSEN ONE

No dystopian YA novel will be complete without a protagonist who's still not old enough to have a driver's license, but is somehow ready to fix the broken society by abolishing the totalitarian government. All this while they're constantly in denial about the role they play, and stressing about a nonsensical love triangle.

You may introduce them as an average teenager and then change their life by either making them discover a hidden power, or randomly getting them selected as a pawn in the government's schemes. Bonus

points if you can provide them with a vague tragic background and use that to explain their emotionless facade. That will save you from the effort of giving the protagonist a proper character arc.

QUESTS - THE BEGINNING OF THE END

Your government's obsession with plunging teenagers into survival quests is extremely vital to the progression of the plot. So, invent a grim purpose, handpick a few 15 to 16 year old misfits, and throw them together in a life or death situation in the most bizarre setting possible.

Have them do a bunch of brutal tasks around a dilapidated urban zone, or make them run around in a stupid maze in order to find something. In the process, they must come to very difficult realisations about the fundamental flaws of the society they live in.

From here on, it's smooth sailing! Elect the snobby protagonist that's been unwilling to do anything valuable the entire time as an eligible leader for the rebellion against the government. Include a few bouts of them stepping down, some drama to get them back on track, and a few betrayals and unlikely alliances within the rebel group to create the illusion of character growth. Finally, let the protagonist plan a heist that involves basic enemy infiltration tactics and a double ended plan

before the big win. And since you don't have the willpower to explore the aftermath of a war, have the protagonist retire to a quiet life with all their cottagecore fantasies. They deserve a break from carrying around the weight of yet another addition to an oversaturated genre.



THE DEFINITIVE YOUTH MAGAZINE SHOUT

The Consequences of Authoritarian Parenting

HASIB UR RASHID IFTI

"I have always been shut down [by my parents] for my ideas or even the smallest of my wishes, be it my career choice or going out with my friends. So, I developed a trait to not open up at all. This is something I carry in all my relationships. The bond that I always crave from them makes me emotionally weak in all aspects of my life," shares Afra Ibnat, a Viqarunnisa Noon School and College graduate, when asked if their parents are their "go-to" people.

Elsewhere, high school graduate Raisa Shams*, currently preparing for university, mentions, "Since I wasn't allowed to socialise much in childhood, I'm very socially awkward. The constant anxiety makes it extremely difficult for me to connect with people in real life. Even the bare minimum that's required to survive, like staying connected with classmates or co-workers, it's all very difficult for me."

As I interacted with more and more people of this age spectrum, I noticed a hint of anger and indignation in their story was obvious. However, this anger, induced by strict parenting, was shrouded by something subtle yet recurrent among this generation — a painful disappointment and resentment.

The style of authoritarian parenting insists on unquestionable obedience from the child, which is attained through psychological tools like shaming, threats or other modes of mental and physical punishment. Parents, who knowingly or unknowingly fall in this category, often tend to be extremely unresponsive and offer constant negative feedback to their kids' actions.

A key tool for authoritarian parenting is fear. It is the fear of getting harsh punishment, reproof or the idea of letting the parents down. The cold and unresponsive behaviour ends up isolating the child from the parents. When parents are being unsupportive, children often cannot trust their parents enough to affiliate them into their personal lives, and consider them to be more of an "authority", rather than someone they can confide in.

"I don't try to be emotionally close to them anymore," comments *Raisa Zaman, when speaking of her parents. "I shut them off a long time ago, but it's hard. I feel like we are biologically engineered to crave for our parents' love and affection. I have mentally disowned my parents to some extent. I don't crave for their approval anymore."

Children with strict parents often live in a constant fixation of getting everything right and face difficulty dealing with failure in future.

"I always have to have everything in my life in control so that I don't fail. Unplanned endeavours make me panic badly. It has made me an over-thinker, to be honest. I'm always in fear of failing," adds Afra.

Children who have grown up in a household following authoritarian parenting face challenges regarding intimacy in other aspects of life as well. Fear of attachment, constant anxiety,

emotional desperation, and trust issues make their personal relationships very complex.

"The affection and attention that I'm supposed to get from my parents, I think I look for in other relationships. My expectations from those people get crushed sooner or later and I end up losing those relationships," explains Afra. "I realise that they're not obligated to show me the affection my parents won't, but it's hard for me to accept."

In unfortunate cases where parents are abusive, the situation can also get fatal. Raisa elaborates, "I have observed that I probably associate abuse with love. I have a hard time saying 'no', and I struggle to enforce boundaries. I don't know what a healthy relationship looks like. So, I end up in abusive relationships and



of authority and are habituated to being told what to do. Research also shows that such adolescents, especially females, are less capable of taking decisions when given the opportunity.

Irfat Sharmin, a recent BUET graduate working in a private firm, shares how this behaviour has affected her. She explains, "Ever since childhood, I had things done or chosen for me rather than getting to make the calls myself. Naturally, in university, I hesitated taking control over something or reaching a decision even when I'm pretty certain of it. Even at work, I struggled with making decisions confidently without assistance or guidance."

Clinical psychologist at Square Hospital, Dr Sharmin Haque suggests that authoritarian parenting often pushes a kid towards acute depression and other mental disorders.

"I've come across a lot of cases with authoritarian parents where the child considers their life to be meaningless. As the age approaches 16 to 17, the symptoms gradually grow into that of a borderline personality disorder," she mentions.

She also states that the suppressive anger among kids due to constant negative feedback, harsh discipline, and non-stop dominant behaviour from their parents may often lead to serious outbursts.

Rezwana Saima, an undergraduate student from

Dhaka University, feels that her anger originates from the repression she faces from her parents.

She says, "At times I feel an uncontrollable rage towards my parents, especially my mother. I think I deserve some freedom as an adult which my parents refuse to acknowledge, owing to their beliefs and general sense of over-protectiveness. I understand my mom's concern but I keep missing out on so many experiences, it just feels unfair."

However, "authoritative parenting" as opposed to authoritarian one, brings out the best in a child according to Dr Sharmin Haque.

"Authoritative parents approach parenting with warmth, sensitivity and consequently develop a sense of limit and precaution within the child. With healthy self-esteem and a positive sense of freedom, these kids have no trouble coping up with the outside world once they grow up," she explains.

As irrational and absurd a child's rebellious behaviour, outrage, and choked desolation might seem to some parents, it is vital they realise how excruciating it is for the kids to feel anger and resentment towards someone who is supposed to be their closest and most trusted allies.

*Names have been changed for privacy

Suggest Ifti depressing Japanese literature at hasiburrashidifti@gmail.com

I stay there no matter how scary it gets."

Strict parents expect unquestionable compliance from their kids. This results in kids having to conceal their actions from their parents constantly, which develops into a compulsive habit at one point.

Fearing their parents' unsupportive reactions, a lot of these kids consider lying to their parents about their plans outside home, rather than choosing to tell them the truth.

"Since I'm hiding stuff from them, being out of home means I'm panicking all the time," says Afra. "They'll constantly call me to check up on me and I have to pay attention to their tone and voice to understand their mood and what reaction to expect at home. This results in constant anxiety the entire time."

"When I was a child, I was always paranoid whenever I was out," continues Raisa. "Fearing how my parents would be like when I got home and whether I would get beaten up. I spent my entire childhood in fear and paranoia of what my parents would do to me. Now, I don't update my parents about my life anymore."

Multiple research papers on parenting styles suggest that adolescents with strict parents have a twisted sense



“When I started reading, I had no idea what to expect.”



A joint initiative of UNITED INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY The Daily Star

MD TANJIM HOSSAIN

“Read Books, Widen Your Horizon” is a joint initiative by The Daily Star and United International University (UIU) to familiarise the youth with the art of reading. This 10-month-long campaign asks the readers to delve themselves into a book each month, followed by a quiz on the selected books.

The campaign set off in November 2021, with the first read being *The Book Thief* by Marcus Zusak. The top scorers of the maiden quiz of the campaign are Affan Chowdhury from Academia, Zaheen Sadia from Mohammadpur Preparatory School and College, Raiyan Quadri from Sunbeams, Wajiha Rahman from Sir John Wilson School, and Afroz Sultana from International Hope School Bangladesh.

To celebrate the winners, a virtual ceremony was held on January 9 with author Kingkor Ahsan, alongside Dr. Swakkhar Shatabda, Associate Professor of CSE at UIU.

Dr. Shatabda mentioned, “Students often want to imagine things outside of the classroom, which brought us the idea. Outside textbooks, books like these are ones that allow them to go through these imagery ideas.”

He also described the contrasting thought of the reader’s exploration from Munich to Stuttgart to Stalingrad through the pages of *The Book Thief*, while in reality sitting in Bangladesh during the pandemic.

Kingkor Ahsan, with his brilliant knowledge of books, films, and media, rated *The Book Thief* very high primarily due to its re-readability that he believes will provide new perceptions after every read. He also talked about



the well-thought-out character and plot development throughout the book and the importance of these elements in any literature or film as a whole.

Speaking of characters, Dr. Shatabda mentioned one of the main characters, Rudy Steiner, the typical golden hair boy appreciated by German dictator Adolf Hitler.

Rudy laid himself in mud to imitate the dark complexion of Jesse Owens, who bagged four gold medals at the 1936 Summer Olympics in Berlin but was discriminated against by Hitler. He also painted the contrasting dimension of the story through the character Walter and his love for his Jewish friend Max, while his own battalion was causing a catastrophe throughout the world.

One of the winners, Afwan, brought up the casual perspective throughout the book of the Jewish struggle during Second

World War; Afwan also encouraged others to read the book as he believes it’s important to know about the struggling groups during these historical catastrophes.

Zaheen talked about the immersive writing, and that engaging with Death, the narrator, was surprisingly fun within the book. She mentioned one of her favourite moments from the book was when Rudy handed a Teddy bear to a pilot right after a plane crash. Heart touching, indeed!

Rayhan, who happens to watch a lot of World War movies and documentaries, said, “Usually WWII movies are either held from the Nazi perspective or the Allies’ perspective. But the perspective here was more through the German people themselves.”

When asked about his

favourite character, Rayhan gave an interesting answer: Death, and how he thinks the character of Death was rather neutral and sympathetic, and he liked to think of it that way.

“When I started reading, I had no idea what to expect,” said Wajiha. “I like it because, despite hard-hitting topics like xenophobia or the war itself, many light elements mingled alongside like stealing apples, and the light and heavy topics seemed to hold the story together.”

Having read the book, Wajiha now thinks about many of these topics in different manners than she did before, thus relating to Kingkor Ahsan’s earlier words on how the book changes at least some form of thinking within the readers.

To Afroz, the power of words came displayed in front of her with the book, not only through the writing but the plot that saved three characters solely through words at different stages.

Overall, it was a brilliant conversation about literature, characters, and *The Book Thief*, among five young readers and two great guests whose multi-dimensional insights definitely encouraged more readers to join the campaign, and more people to read.



The Book Thief is a 2005 award-winning historical fiction written by Markus Zusak, published by Picador.

The novel is set in Molching, Germany, during World War II and follows the story of Liesel and the relationships she makes in a war-torn country. *The Book Thief* is narrated by Death during this time of war and tragedy, who is fascinated by Liesel and thus, tells her story.

Liesel Meminger’s mother drops her off at Hans and Rosa Hubermann’s house, her new foster parents. Along the journey to her foster parents’ house, Lisa’s brother passes away. While her brother is buried in the snow, Liesel steals her first book, *The Gravedigger’s Handbook*, even though she does not know how to read.

After arriving at Himmel Street, Molching, she befriends Rudy, a young boy who loves Jesse Owens and flirts

with Liesel. Rudy and Liesel form a strong bond of friendship filled with adventures, shared secrets, and lots of bickering.

Furthermore, Liesel finds a father figure in Hans as he takes up the responsibility of teaching her how to read and write. On the other hand, Rosa is harsh and strict woman, and yet she holds a soft spot for Liesel.

Things begin to change when the Hubermanns risk their own safety and give shelter to a Jew, Max, in their basement. As he takes refuge in their home, new challenges to keep Max a secret arise.

However, amongst all the tension and danger, Max and Liesel become friends and he writes a story as a gift for Liesel, painting it over the pages of *Mein Kampf*.

Liesel’s days of stealing books do not end with *The Gravedigger’s Handbook*. Liesel goes on to steal a book from a

book-burning celebration from a fire. When her foster family struggles to survive, she begins stealing books from Frau Hermann, one of Rosa’s well-off customers.

As the terrors of the war begin to rattle the people of Himmel Street with bombings, Liesel comforts the people in a bunker with stories. With the power of stories and with the ability to read, Liesel is able to help the people forget the death and disaster that awaits them all in a warzone.

The novel captivated the hearts of many people as it reflects on the horrors of Nazi Germany through the lens of the innocence of a young girl and her family that does not agree with the Nazi’s cruel treatment of Jews. In a time of death,

loss, and struggles, Liesel is able to find her family among Hans, Rosa, Rudy, and Max.

Despite the simple narration, the novel is fit to be loved by people of all ages due to the way it handles complex topics.

Written by Eshadi Sharif, Freelance Contributor, *The Daily Star Books*.

Imperfect Am I

DIHAAN KHAN

Problems come and go, opinions differ,
 Sunsets dive and sunrises revive, tell me what you prefer.
 The truth, which is so sweet and sour,
 Or a lie, which gains more power.
 Do tell, where'd you get your heart?
 So virtued and merited but so torn apart,
 Talent can't be much good for you
 Since it gives, but it takes back too
 Do tell, where'd you get your mind?
 So practical and acerbic but yet so kind,
 Choices are not arbitrary but decided
 Since your reward is surely not undivided.
 Human nature can't be good for you
 Since you give much, but more it wants too.
 Do tell, where'd you get your sense?
 You're the everyone for everything, yet without pretense.
 The world is cruel, I know, its inhabitants make it.
 You toil and turmoil but still you don't deem fit,
 Kind people are not made for this world.
 For at them most obstacles are hurled.
 To keep your head high, you have to keep your doubts nigh,
 Difficult it is, but bear you must,
 Because now the hunt begins for people you can trust.
 Do tell, where'd you get your resilience
 Since with it you shine with brilliance.
 Most envy you, most love you not,
 Since they live in your shadow, since next to you they're unsought,
 You're everything they want to be, so they despise you so.
 This rhyme came out of oblivion, so I'm leaving it her.
 Remember to love those you adore, and those you fear.

The writer is a student of grade 6 at Maple Leaf International School.



STRAY

SUBAH NUZHAT HUSSAIN

A gaunt figure emerged from the shadows wielding a hefty cane. The man walked with a slight limp, favouring his left side. As he moved, the occasional street lamp revealed suspicious dark brown stains on the ferrule of his cane.

The figure lumbered towards a tall lank man wearing a coat with sleeves that were too short for him. As he saw the figure approach, the tall man sidled into a nearby alley, shrouded in darkness. The figure followed.

Away from prying eyes, the figure stood with his back straight and his shoulder squared as if he hadn't been limping a few seconds ago.

"What's that Ravi, picking up strays again?" drawled the figure, as he lazily inspected his cane.

Ravi picked at a thread on his sleeves, before replying, "Found him near the construction site, starved and an inch away from death..."

He continued to pick at the thread, looking left and right, silently praying that he didn't may the wrong decision, "... I gave him some bread and he's been following me around since then. I couldn't leave him behind so..."

"You brought the kid with you," the figure cut him short.

Sweat prickled at the back of his neck. Ravi could sense the displeasure coursing through the other man. He knew that the man standing in front of him disapproved of such shallow generosity. Ravi couldn't keep the wretched little thing with him. He could barely make ends meet.

"Why did you bring him here?"

"Asir..." began Ravi. "I thought that you could,

umm, use some company, and I mean, umm..." Ravi stammered while wringing his hands, sweat pooling at the base of his neck.

Asir shifted his attention from Ravi to the solemn brown eyes peering up at him. He slammed the end of his cane into the ground. Startled, Ravi lost his footing and fell. The brown eyes didn't waver.

Asir sat down on his haunches and stared into the deep reflective pools of brown. In its depths, he could not see sorrow or fear. The browns didn't falter. He could see that this one was resilient. There was promise in this little one, he could sense it.

He stood up, brushed off his coat, and went to Ravi.

As he saw Asir approach, Ravi felt his blood run cold, he quivered, drew his knees closer to his body, closed his eyes, and began to pray again. He felt the cold touch of the ferrule on his cheek. Ravi gritted his teeth and braced himself.

"I'll take him."

"What?"

Ravi opened his eyes in disbelief, as Asir withdrew the cane from his face. "I said that I'd take him. You can hardly fend for yourself. You won't be able to take care of him."

Asir gave Ravi a wry smirk, looked back, and whistled. He disguised his gait and ambled out of the alley.

It trotted after the figure, out of the alley, wagging its tail, with a little more sprint in its steps.

Subah has all the time in the world, yet she has none at all. Reach out to her on Twitter @hussain_subah



What we learn from watching European football

INQIAD BIN ALI

For many, watching European football constitutes of “extreme recreation.” They have their reasons to think so, too – all-nighters regularly to passionately support their heroes on the pitch.

Amidst their search for breathers, it is easy to forget one intriguing aspect. Watching European football is actually a nice way for young people to acquaint themselves with the culture of a far-flung continent.

Premier League (PL) enthusiasts are very much familiar with Boxing Day matches, which have subsequently made Bangladeshi fans conscious about the

holiday season, and its many customs. Fans might have also noticed players and coaching staff wearing embroidered poppies on their shirts during early November. This gesture is hugely significant. It honours Armistice Day during the First World War Remembrance Week, a reference to the poem “In Flanders Fields” by John McCrae.

It’s not limited to the PL only. Followers of Bundesliga should be familiar with the Munich Oktoberfest, the grand Bavarian festival that is celebrated from mid-September to early-October. On the other hand, La Liga fans get to learn about the rich folklores and rituals spread all over Spain.

A deeper observation of El Clasico lays bare an opulent tale of traditions, struggles and zeal between the Royalist Madrid and the Catalan symbol of self-sufficiency, Barcelona. It gives us an extensive historical context of the world’s leading club rivalry, starting from the partisan, pro-Madrid dictatorship of General Franco to the modern days.

PHOTO: REUTERS



Footballers’ goal celebrations also convey important messages. The leading European leagues are hugely diverse in playing squads. Players from different countries pull off their native country’s flagship traditional celebrations in front of the cameras, making their moments of joy a vital cog in the cultural variety of the game.

Brazilian players pulling off breath-taking *samba* dance has made the youth more informed about Brazilian culture. African players showing off their mesmerising, unique foot dance has been adding a uniquely rich cultural stardust to goal celebrations for years now.

The impact of football isn’t limited to the pitch only. The beautiful game now has an increasingly influential role in making the world a better place. The anti-racism and anti-discrimination campaigns have created a much more inclusive environment, while different programmes have raised awareness on a myriad of social issues.

Serie A’s campaign against domestic violence, where players put a red-spot on their cheek for a game-week, and the PL’s auctions for poppy shirts to support war veterans is exemplary in those regards.

The influence of football is immense. Europe is considered to be football’s hub, but it is also equally important as a cultural nucleus too. In this ever-evolving world, European football is a centre of fascination for a huge portion of the youth, and it has the potential to make them more socially responsible, cultured and better informed against the various stigmas which plague us even today.

Inqiad Bin Ali has ‘got a pain in his heart and a love in his soul’ to put it in an artistic way. He is found deep in thoughts at inqiadali007@gmail.com

Let it rip!

Playing with Beyblades in 2022

SYED TAMJID TAZWAR

Hundreds of years ago, Beyblades were sacred weapons used by warriors of the old, to defend the world against the ancient evil. Fast forward to the 21st century, they are used to settle feuds between poorly supervised kids with inexplicable hair.

When the *Beyblade* hype took over, I was one of the lucky few kids to take part. They were everywhere. The show used to air on Toonami right after *Dragon Ball Z*. Everyone was playing with Beyblades, up until the point when we all grew up and lost complete interest in them.

Now, almost a decade later, I have decided to take out my metallic spinning toys.

THE ASSEMBLY

When I opened that dust-shrouded box, I was welcomed by a cluster of disordered spinning goodness. Beyblades and spare parts from different renditions of the series in a bundled up disarray – a state where it’s tough to realise what’s from what. That’s the brilliance of Beyblades; I could assemble whatever I want, mismatching parts from different tops, and it would still work effortlessly.

I decided to assemble one. I started with the most important part, the “blade”. While assembling, I realised the older, simpler Beyblades stood the test of time superbly and were in great condition. The newer, more complex ones were in terrible shape. The dual-bladed Fang Leone looked like grains of sand glued together and could fall apart at any moment.

The seemingly less important, smaller parts actually modify how the Beyblades work. There is an attack-type, defence type, balanced equation going on here. If I manage to correctly put together the parts of one specific Beyblade, it’s going to work close to the TV version (minus the flying horses and laser dragons), which is a big reason why these things were so awesome.

THE DUEL

After some tinkering, my Beyblades were ready, and it was time for a Beybattle. Sadly, I couldn’t find my stadium, but no worries, I managed to slip away with a rusty old korai from the kitchen.

Without further ado, I let it rip, trying to launch two Beyblades as fast as I could. The Beyblades started moving towards the centre, striking each other after ages in some old cupboard. I kept

rooting for my decaying Fang Leone, even if it looked like it would fall apart any moment. It kept holding on against my Phoenix’s barrage of attacks as I kept praying for the metal to not fall apart and come out flying.

Thankfully, the Fang Leone stopped spinning before that, and I decided to pack everything up and call it a day.

The hype surrounding Beyblades has diminished, and it might not even return anytime soon. As an adult, seeing metallic tops spin around may not even make much sense. However, what we have are memories of the good times with friends, spending hours doing Beybattles, and arguing about which Beyblade is the best.

Perhaps the real Beyblade was the friends we made along the way.

Syed Tamjid Tazwar likes Beyblades, clearly. Contact him at syedtazwartamjid@gmail.com

