

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.”

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THE DEFINITIVE YOUTH MAGAZINE SHOUT

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 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



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

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

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