

THE DEFINITIVE  
**YOUTH**  
MAGAZINE

# SHOUT

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MAYBE OUR PARENTS  
AREN'T PERFECT

PG 4

A TIMELINE OF GIVING UP  
ON YOUR UNDERGRADUATE  
DEGREE

PG 6



# WHAT HAPPENS WHEN PARENTS FIGHT



ILLUSTRATION:  
RIDWAN NOOR NAFIS

# EDITORIAL

Does listening to music ever take you back in time or hit you with nostalgia? It certainly does for me.

In some cases, the music takes me back to the time when it was originally released. Green Day's "21 Guns" is one such song. As the opening notes hit my ears, I find myself back in 2009/10, when I was in Grade 7. The song makes me specifically recall the time I was caught bunking my Bangla class.

Then there's Tame Impala's "Let It Happen". The song's outro makes me feel things that very few substances in this world can make one feel or experience. It also takes me back to the time I was in high school and was trying to figure out what to do with my life after completing my HSC.

Of course, it's not always necessary that the song will take me back to the period it was released in. Joji's "Like You Do", for instance, takes me back to 2012 when I was in grade nine, although the song was only released in 2020.

It's beautiful how music can hit us with so many emotions and, at the same time, take us back in time.

– Faisal Bin Iqbal, Sub-editor & Digital Coordinator, SHOUT



## PLAYWATCH

### OPINION



# Should live-action anime adaptations exist?

**MYNUL KARIM**

Anime live-action adaptation announcements seldom excite fans these days. The cold reception to these projects is not uncalled for though, as the track record of these adaptations is questionable at best. Mediocre interpretations of beloved shows have given live adaptations an abominable reputation over the years, making us question if they should even be made in the first place.

Adapting a show from other forms of media has been a prevalent practice in the filmmaking industry for ages. We have gotten extraordinary content like *The Godfather*, *Dune*, *Game of Thrones*, and much more through novels. However, such success cannot be seen when it comes to anime live adaptations.

Despite the availability of incredible source materials, adaptations of *Dragon Ball*, *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, and *Death Note* (the Netflix one) have hugely flopped. And the list keeps getting bigger, with Netflix's *Cowboy Bebop* being the newest washout to join the ranks of these failed shows, having its second season cancelled shortly after its release.

However, not all adaptations are bad, as many tend to go under the radar ranging from being okay to wonderful. *Bleach*, *Saiki K*, *Death Note* had decent Japanese adaptations, while *Jojo's Bizarre Adventures*, *Gintama*, *Ruroni Kenshin*, and *Alita: Battle Angel* were a notch above due to their better production quality and faithfulness to the source material with *Alice in Borderland* being in a league of its own.

The common theme here is that most of the incompetent adaptations are lamentable due to the lack of respect

towards the source materials. Unnecessary changes to the plot and dialogues, barmy casting decisions, poor production quality, use of shabby special effects and horrendous 3D animation rendering are some of the key factors behind the failure of these projects. The lack of passion is clearly seen in these works, which is a hallmark sign for the failure of any project.

Tampering with the source material does not sit well with most fans of the respective franchises, which studios fail to understand even after all this time. Instead of learning from the better examples, they just keep on regurgitating the same format of mediocrity, showing that these big corporations only want to make a quick buck by exploiting the nostalgia of loyal fans. Not only does this tarnish the status of the studio, but it also creates a negative atmosphere around the original show or source material itself.

Anime live adaptations have huge potential, as they can bring in more viewers for a show from a demographic of non-anime watchers. Moreover, they can be a fun way for dedicated fans to re-experience their favourite shows. Nevertheless, it will be an uphill battle for these adaptations to remove the negative stigma around them. Whereas a well-made adaptation can boost an anime's popularity, a poorly made one can tarnish it and have other adverse implications. With both quality and dreadful adaptations being released simultaneously and the latter getting the most attention, it becomes a conundrum to choose whether more live adaptations should be made to promote the anime or be axed for damage control.



TITLE OF YOUR MIXTAPE

A	B
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# Understanding and enjoying critical pop culture analysis

**RAYA MEHNAZ**

It would not be amiss to say that popular culture is intrinsically present in every part of our life. Whether it is in the increasingly visual mediums that we define as entertainment or it is the messages hidden in media as a whole that reflect our collective subconscious, popular culture is inescapable.

As a result of the wide-ranging impact of this culture in our lives, it becomes almost too necessary to look at it from a critical point of view. After all, our shared culture at this moment in time reflects not just what we're being shown, but the mass desire and collective consciousness that led to the production of that media, along with the values and ideologies of the consumers that engage in that media.

Now, there are questions of finding fake profundity within media that are simply "not that deep" or even "just there for the sake of entertainment" that speak to finding specific ways to criticise media that are pretty harmless. After all, why be a "hater" by delving too deep into media and its intended messages, when the said media was not created to be taken seriously?

However, the media we interact with regularly aren't created in vacuum, it was created with specific intentions, even if sometimes those intentions are dreadfully simple. So, critically analysing our choice movies or music are a way to engage with those intentions, to interact with the



DESIGN: SYEDA AFRIN TARANNUM

media we're routinely consuming.

Not to mention, in this capitalist society where people are more or less working every day and have very limited free time, most forms of entertainment, especially visual entertainment that we consume through television or streaming services, are generally consumed as a form of escapism.

However, critically evaluating a piece of media doesn't just mean needlessly poking at it, but, it means looking at the media we've consumed and not taking it at its often deceptive face value and understanding when specific stories do not reflect real life or falsely present a

questionable narrative. After all, engagement with the media is a lot like engagement with real life. They are both forms of surviving in this world. It is not hating on media or being a harbinger of "cancel culture." If we do not question, we do not grow or evolve.

So, what makes up a meaningful analysis of popular culture?

First, cultural criticism or analysis shouldn't be used as a tool to immediately cancel a piece of media. However, if one piece of media is branded with a problematic disposition, it is usually immediately considered cancelled in the eyes of the public. Critical analysis is a

nanced process that looks into the values of individual audiences and what they consider to be acceptable in the media they rightfully consume.

Second, it is important to understand the social and political responsibility of consuming media. Even though there are conversations about woke culture restricting our ability to enjoy all forms of media, it needs to be understood that individual liberty only goes so far in engaging with media that are harmful.

It matters because in all the ways fiction reflects reality, it also restricts the way we know life can be surprising or inhibited. Shoving the portrayal of people into certain boxes means, they cannot break out of those metaphorical boxes the way we know they can in real life.

Finally, it is necessary to acknowledge that analysis of popular culture doesn't mean intellectualising all forms of media to prod and evaluate. There can be shows or movies that genuinely do not have profound problematic intents and it is okay to take it as it is.

However, it is also alright to find deeper meaning in the media we're consuming that was not made with those meanings. Media, like all forms of art, are eventually open to our interpretations, and this form of liberty is what makes the media we enjoy so impactful to us.

*Raya Mehnaz enjoys being a hater. Talk to her about disappointing media in fb.com/raya.mehnaz*



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# Maybe our parents aren't perfect

HASIB UR RASHID IFTI

*I was once asked in kindergarten who my idol was. "My father," I had replied without a hint of hesitation.*

It might sound like a typical answer, but I was being absolutely honest. My father's impressive professional journey, his kindness, his knowledge about leg-spinners – it all allured me. I was awestruck by Abba's personality and when I said my father was my idol, I meant it. I use the past tense, for things have changed as our relationship with our parents often do when we age.

As we grow up, we meet more people. People who hold opinions different from our parents and do things differently than our parents did. So, naturally, we start questioning things. We compare our parents with others and, for once, we judge them not as our parents but as individuals. We find flaws and wonder, is it possible that my parents are not the perfect human



beings I considered them to be?

Of course, our parents have every right to be as flawed as we are. Maybe we're the ones who are having trouble understanding that people make mistakes. It's only fair that our moms and dads don't fit our made-up template of human perfection.

While many of us had to hear "Why can't you be more like him/her?" in our childhood, we grow up to do the same to our parents and say, "Why can't you

be more like their parents?" We put them behind bars for questioning, and more often than not, they don't bother answering. They analyse our anger as a lack of discipline and a form of revolt.

Even if we accept this inevitable realisation of the imperfections of our parents, the most difficult part is accepting their flaws as human beings and the problematic aspects in their mindset. When we see them being on the wrong side of a conflict, picking on

people or being misogynist or racist in their actions, it's difficult for us to stay quiet as individuals, especially as teenagers and young adults with our own perspectives. And if our parents aren't open enough to unlearn their past problematic habits or accept opinions different than their own, that too from their own children, we often have to learn to stay quiet and live with it.

But overlooking peoples' flaws day after day isn't always an option. And so we fight, we cry, hearts break and relationships crack. We become too impatient with our parents. Before you know it, you haven't talked to your mother in two days and somehow going to the next room and telling her about your day feels unwanted.

For us to rebuild our broken relationships, we need to identify what broke them in the first place. While our parents need to accept that conflicts between parents and children are only natural, maybe we need to be brave enough to take the first step and open up to our own parents.

Remind Ifiti to be quieter at hasibur-rashidifti@gmail.com

# Why are football clubs hiring young, inexperienced managers?

TAMJIDUL HOQUE

*"The only reason I can understand is that they look through the CVs and see guys with more defeats and guys with less defeats, so guys with less defeats are given the job. I cannot find another reason."*

That's what Jose Mourinho said on Mikel Arteta's appointment as Arsenal's manager back in 2019. Since then, Arteta has gone on to win two trophies, has a strong command over Arsenal's project, and is putting up a good fight for a top four spot in the Premier League.

Similar to Arteta's appointment, there are many other instances where betting on less experienced managers has worked wonders for football clubs. Like Hoffenheim when they hired a 28-year old Julian Nagelsmann, or Rangers when they hired Steven Gerrard and later went on to win their first league title in a decade. Likes of Ruben Amorim, Marcelo Gallardo and a few others also achieved many managerial successes by the time they were 40.

This isn't something new. However, the trend has gained more popularity in recent years. In the ever-changing game of football, hiring a proven manager with his proven tactics doesn't always guarantee good results anymore.

That's why more clubs are opting for relatively younger managers. For instance, Everton had hired Carlo Ancelotti, and then Rafael Benitez, two UCL winning managers to turn their fortune around, but eventually failed. They're now working with Frank Lampard, hoping to improve.

One reason is the reluctance of experienced man-

agers to change their gameplan when the club is not doing well. From Mourinho's "park the bus" to Bielsa's philosophy of constant pressing, many experienced managers push their own ideals over adapting to challenges.

In a similar situation, a younger manager is more likely to accept their shortcomings and change their ways to introduce new tactics that suit the team.

Young managers often have a history with the clubs that hire them. Even though they lack experience, they know what the club and fans demand. Hiring a popular figure as a manager also helps the club keep its fans happy.

Another influential factor is a manager's approach towards individual development of their players. Experienced managers often ignore working on such details or delegate that job to assistant managers and focus on the system overall. In this regard, a younger manager seems to give more effort. Working on the players and maximising the output from each player can make all the difference between winning and losing.

It seems like the ability to adapt, innovate, making use of modern football data



and statistics, relating to the demands of fans and clubs while following a set philosophy is why clubs are being more attracted to the idea of hiring new, younger managers. It remains to be seen whether younger managers continue to deliver and impress clubs in the future. Only time will tell.

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



PHOTO: AP

# What happens when parents fight

INQIAD BIN ALI & TAZREEN JAHAN BARI

Life has hardly been straightforward for Rahat Rahman\*, the only son of a government officer, studying at a prominent English medium school in Dhaka. Contrary to his typically nonchalant attitude, Rahat is an emotional trainwreck – devastated by regularly witnessing violent arguments and even fighting between his parents. Much of his time is spent trying to defuse quarrels, picking sides, or just sitting helplessly as things unravelled.

"All I ever wanted was to be happy," he says, voice cracking. "I see my friends, so cheerful with their families. Is it so difficult to be that ideal family, full of peace and happiness? I look back on the most trivial of matters and think just what could have been. I am never content with the reality, even when it is positive."

For those who grew up in healthy family environments, growing up is cakewalk. In contrast, those who grew up in high-conflict families, for them, the picture is not so rosy.

The instability instils fear and yearning for the fighting to stop at any cost. The trauma of being faced with domestic violence is echoed in Isfar Alam, a primary school student's experience as well. Isfar confesses, "I was terrified and even though I didn't understand the topic before, the intensity of the fights made me plead for them to end. It has left a big scar within me."

Parents fighting has serious repercussions on a child's life, especially in Bangladesh, where domestic violence is a common phenomenon. A Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics study shows 72 percent of married women face psychological, physical, and economic abuse. To put that in context, children from more than two-thirds of our households go through the trauma of seeing their parents oftentimes violently fight over a myriad of issues.

A 2013 study published in the Psychological Science journal shows that even infants, only 6 months old, can be affected by parents who fight a lot, as they respond to negative tones in conversation. It also states that being constantly exposed to such a stressful environment can cause long-term cognitive damage. Another study, in 2012, shows that kindergartners who grew up in conflict-ridden households experienced mental disorders and behavioural problems as they became adolescents.

Unfortunately, the plight of these children is something that is almost always ignored. The ordeal they face, and trying to prevent this by any means, has an extensive impact on their innocent minds and more often than not, end up defining their lives. Watching parents quarrel, these children go through radical changes – psychologically, emotionally, and behaviourally.

"Children from disturbed family backgrounds develop a sense of dogma – resulting in great difficulty in thinking and deciding for themselves," says Rumana Akter, clinical psychologist at Inter Services Selection Board (ISSB). "With time, they become low on self-confidence, becoming fearful and resentful about their company, exhibiting more delinquency in their adolescence."

The psychological effects don't stop there. According to Akter, cases of phobias, lopsided daily routines, depression, anxiety, and nightmares are common in these children. They consider themselves to be inferior, and never think of the consequences of their potential actions. "As a result, they feel extreme emotions – guilt, shame, fear, and anger – depending on what they have done. They almost always blame themselves," she adds.

Furthermore, the psychological problems growing up result in these children developing behavioural setbacks causing them to face long-term interpersonal issues. They, sometimes, become arrogant and stop caring about their own good in general, with their tendency towards self-harm pushing them towards bad company and harmful activities.

become evident in adolescence when teens hit puberty and start experiencing more than a few hiccups in their budding romantic relationships.

A 2001 research reveals that, due to the trust issues instilled in them early on, children from high-conflict families experience commitment issues, abandonment issues and infidelity in their romantic relationships. When they get married, this becomes a bigger problem as often, violent behaviour witnessed early on is repeated.

"I started to develop feelings for a girl from my class. Even though we chatted and talked like normal, it was very tough for me as I don't actually know how to talk to a girl," Rahat comments. "Witnessing my parents fight, a sense of paranoia worked within me. I overdid things. To

no role to play – they are the ones to sow the seeds in the long road to recovery.

Psychologist Rumana Akter mentions that family members need to cultivate healthy interpersonal relationships through communication, collaborative activities, and display of affection. Parents should assert their authority, but not become "authoritarian".

"To cope with behavioural malfunction, managing misbehaviour and praising positive behaviour might bring good results. Teaching children how to deal with high-stress situations, navigate negative emotions and develop personal coping statements will also prepare them for familial conflicts if they arise," she suggests.

Despite the damage control, some scars are too deep to heal. This is why parents



Akter points out, "These children are more likely to go into substance abuse, criminal activities or committing suicide." Additionally, she reports that they can be impulsive, judgemental, develop habitual lying tendencies and also tend to overreact regarding situations they have no control over.

Rahat's mother confesses having witnessed such changes in her son, saying, "My son even fainted seeing our fights. His personality and behaviour transformed too."

Terrified by seeing his parents violently fight, Isfar Alam\* was influenced by his mother and developed resentment for his father. He stopped caring about his studies and spent more time with friends.

"As I later found out, it was a really bad company. They never helped me as they claim to do. Their actions only turned me away from everything good, even my parents," Isfar says.

Growing up witnessing violence in a family environment that is not built on trusting relationships, these children face interpersonal issues as grown-ups. They encounter difficulty in trusting others, and are more likely to abuse their own children physically and mentally, adds Akter.

The problems in intimate relationships

me, the girl was the light, whose warm, cheerful illumination helped me get over my domestic demons. So, when she stopped talking to me, I blamed everything on myself."

A puppy-love-gone-wrong may look insignificant. The reality, though, couldn't be starker. Witnessing a dysfunctional relationship between parents makes teenagers like Rahat crave perfection, an extreme "ideal" which does not exist. This makes them hesitant about intimate relationships in the end, having far-reaching impacts in their conjugal lives.

Luckily, awareness is building among parents. While talking, we found that even though some parents get carried away by their jealousy, others were fully aware of the impacts of their violence on their children.

Rahat's mother shares, "I try my very best to help him overcome his distress – I give him a lot of time and we talk about my own childhood and his favourite things. Whenever he tries something new, I support and encourage him to the fullest."

Despite the parents' efforts to help their children overcome the trauma, the best solution is to seek professional help. However, that doesn't mean parents have

should think twice, if not a thousand time, before letting their dysfunctional relationship hinder their child's development.

\*Names have been changed for privacy

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*Inqiad wants his own 'light' to forgive him and show him the light like the good old times. To his light especially, and everyone, find him at inqiadali007@gmail.com*

*Tazreen is your typical angry liberal arts student who likes to blame it all on capitalism. Send her anger management tips at tazreen-zahan@gmail.com*



ECHOES BY  
ASRAR CHOWDHURY

# THE DAY THE MUSIC DIED

**I**  
My student Monir, a Lecturer in Economics at Bangladesh University of Professionals, dropped me a line, “Sir, did you see the news? Shane Warne died.”

All deaths are unexpected. Some are so unexpected, they are unacceptable. Warnie, as he was fondly called, was one such death.

That same day, March 4, 2022, Rodney Marsh of Australia passed away. He was 74. I started actively following cricket in 1985/86. Rod Marsh played his last Test in 1984. I also missed Dennis Lillee and Jeff Thomson, who retired near to Rod Marsh.

Rod Marsh took 343 catches and made 12 stumps in Tests. Dennis Lillee also took 355 wickets in Tests. I can tell more stories about the Australian sides that included the trio, but that would be an academic exercise, not one that I experienced. Warnie was different, though.

**II**  
I was born in 1970. This makes Saeed Anwar (1968), Michael Atherton (1968), Brian Lara (1969), Shane Warne (1969), Waqar Younis (1971), Muttiah Muralitharan (1972), Sachin Tendulkar (1973), and Shivnarine Chanderpaul (1974) special to me. This generation is my generation.

Every individual has a chauvinism to their own generation. I am no exception.



PHOTO: CRICKET.COM.AU

I have a chauvinism to these players from my generation because I grew up with them. Still, Warnie was different.

**III**  
When it comes to the Ashes, I support England. I spent my childhood and a part of my youth in the UK. Supporting the team that the Aussies call POM (Prisoners of His/Her Majesty) comes natural to me.

In my generation of Ashes, all England supporters have a love-hate relationship with Warnie. From the “ball of the century” bowled to Mike Gatting in the 1993 Ashes at Old Trafford to his forty wickets in the 2005 Ashes that England ultimately won, Warnie was always the threat. Still, Warnie was different.

West Indies is my ultimate Test team. And Warnie was the only Aussie with

whom I could identify. I still do not find a parallel to this day with Aussies. Warnie had that West Indies spirit. Fierce on the field, carefree off it. Yes, some of his carefree experiences did land him into trouble, but that was Warnie. Love him or hate him, you could never but be amazed with him.

**IV**  
I missed Warnie’s stint in the IPL. I do not follow franchise cricket. However, in commentary is where I will miss Warnie the most. I grew up listening to the commentary of Henry Blofeld, Tony Cozier, and Richie Benaud in the days of radio. Warnie, to me, came closest to that commentary, adding to it his honesty to call a spade a spade.

If there is one Aussie England supporters would have loved were theirs, it was Warnie. Ask the Barmy Army, they will tell you. Warnie’s untimely departure makes Dylan’s lines “Life is so easy to look at; hard to define” shine. Warnie is now in a good place. May he rest in peace.

Note: The “chauvinism” quote is from Ramachandra Guha, a leading writer on cricket from India.

*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 timeline of giving up on your undergraduate degree

### HASIB UR RASHID IFTI

Sigh if this sounds familiar – a hyperactive, over-enthusiastic university junior knocks you with a query and along the conversation, you get an idea about his anticipations and premature aspirations regarding the bait he paid for.

Yet, as you look past your inner cyber-bully, you recognise this gullible fresher as a shadow of your own past, full of expectations and ignorant of the foil-wrapped depression that awaits.

Your relationship with your university is much like Bangladeshis’ relationship with road safety. You can’t pinpoint exactly when you gave up on it, but now it’s too late.

Here’s looking back at your juvenile days as a university student.

#### BOOKS, A RELIC OF THE PAST

Going to Nilkhet, and buying academic books thicker than your brain that made you buy all of them in the first place. Sounds familiar? If so, here’s something else that should ring a bell as well – not even touching 70 percent of them by the semester’s end.

The number of books bought being inversely proportional to the number



of semesters is a basic thumb rule of higher studies. Around 3 AM before your semester finals, once you’re done dealing with panic attacks, and halfway through your hunt for those precious slides your lecturer provided months back, you look at those sooty and grimy relics and loathe the person you’ve become.

#### FALL OF THE FUTURE FACULTY MEMBERS

Sure, your seniors have laughed at you (and everyone else in your department) about your ambitions of being a faculty member. But being the certified Golden

A+ boy you are, you’re delusively confident about your capabilities based on the Bangladeshi education system. Hey, if English for Today didn’t make you give up on English as a language, your university possible can’t make you give up on your degree.

Thirty minutes into staring at the first semester lab quiz, you realise being a university lecturer is not your cup of tea. After the quiz ends, once you go to your section’s group chat, you see people conveniently nailing problems you didn’t dare attempt and yet have the audaci-

ty to whine about it. Maybe you really should’ve reconsidered that “buying you a rickshaw” threat by your father when you had the chance.

#### NOTES, TO TAKE OR NOT TO TAKE

The first thing a university student gets introduced to is the notes of previous batches. Nobody knows who took those notes in the first place or when they were taken. Yet, generations of engineers, doctors and corporate slaves stand on the shoulder of that one person and their legacy.

However, a fresher might not always comprehend the gravity of said notes and make the bold attempt of actually considering taking lecture notes. Mid-semester, with the date and course code written on top of a blank page and 30 minutes into the lecture, the fresher realises he’s not the NCTB-sealed good student anymore. Yet, he doesn’t care, knowing that the topper’s probably going to take the notes for the entire class.

Only when the fresher gets a notification of his topper friend reacting to a meme he shared, does he realise that it’s time to give up.

*Remind Ifiti to be quieter at hasiburrashidifti@gmail.com*

# CLOSED DOOR

RAMISHA NOOR

The door that got closed forever,  
No one has its key.  
No hammer will do.  
No quirky tools either.

When you walked in,  
You didn't know you'd have to walk out, too.  
And so that cold hard door stands still,  
On that high mountain peak,  
With little trace of life ever walking past it.

Oh, what could it have looked like,  
Back in its lively days?  
Full of laughter and cries,  
Of wrongs and rights.

Such little doors get closed every now and then  
On every snowy mountain peak.

*The writer is a student at Scholars' School and College.*



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

# Hephaestus

UPOMA AZIZ

I was not Hephaestus, Hephaestus was not I.

If I were so, I would have forged a rose out of the purest of Golds found in the treasuries of Hades, with my own hands – just to watch him twirl it around his fingers.

And since I was not Hephaestus, I had to settle for a rose born out of dirt, very mortal, with fragile petals, in the colour of sunlight caught in glass. The way he delicately held the rose reminded me of you.

What reminds me of you are always the wrong things. Do you remember? The flower I gave you, one born out of mud. You took one look at it, like a deity would, with all the conviction in the world and beyond that, there was simply no doubt about you being deserving of the flower. And then, in true deity fashion, you dropped it into my hands – my offering shrivelled, shrunk and died in my own arms. I sent you the dried flowers in a box with several other silicone-dried emotions, that did not stink, but didn't age well either. You forgot the box under a stranger's bed where it fed on dust thrice a day with miles upon miles of russet potatoes, and old musty textbooks that smelled the way nervousness felt.

When I looked at you with all the admiration in the world, I couldn't see it reflected back because of what I thought was the radiance of your divinity. Truth be told, it was my own naivety that blinded me, not your eminence.

By the dirt-laced pavements of the city, we walked on the onyx road that glowed like amber in the late-morning sun. He kept looking down at the flower with all the marvel of a three-year-old, like the wonders of the world had been bestowed upon his palm. He doesn't know, but I've seen him look at me the same way. Did you ever stop to look at me, or anything I ever gifted you? At anything other than yourself? Or did you scan them with your eyes of a prospector to estimate whether they were good

enough to keep or were they to be thrown away?

He didn't let go, not even to wipe the moisture off of his hands. As he held the rose in one hand, and me in the other, the February sun seeped into my skin, my heart, and coloured me yellow. I wore the sun like a shawl, and the sun cradled me like a mother, and at that moment, I felt like a yellow rose.

The yellowest thing I saw that day, however, wasn't the rose, or my own reflection basking in the sun, as reflected in his irises. It was small piles of yellow khichuri someone left on the sidewalks deliberately, to feed the birds and the animals. The brightness lit up the entire road, dimming everything else in the process.

We walk filling our pockets with everything beautiful, all our lives. We take more than we need, we take useless artefacts and stuff our pockets with them. Our pockets overflow and we lose things. We lose what we were looking for, we lose what we already had; we lose sight of who we wanted to be, we lose sight of what's important.

At the end of the line, as we compare among ourselves, we realise we completed the wrong assignment, and it was never about what we collected. It was meant to be about the journey all along, and that's what we left out.

With him, I think I can make this journey. He doesn't regret being human, he shows me exactly why it's the most beautiful thing instead. He is not my deity, nor am I his. I don't need someone to worship, just someone of my standing by my side.

It took me long enough to say this, but I don't want your Olympus. I'd rather walk the world with all its sorrows and symmetry with someone the same as I. This is purely a work of fiction.

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# The cost of failed athletic dreams

ABIR HOSSAIN

*Drenched in the glory of the floodlights, you gallop forward to score a goal in the dying seconds or charge in to take the wicket in the last over. It's the adrenaline and the rush that jolts you forward, and for those truly passionate, they devote their lives in pursuit of that adrenaline.*

Almost everyone has dreamt of becoming an athlete, at least once in their lives. It is universal but only some truly follow up on it and continue to push through.

However, the odds are stacked against young people. With a culture that continues to discourage an unorthodox career pursuit, it becomes even harder for those with the dream of making it to the top.

Daheer Farsim, 17, a cricket academy player, reflects on the beginning of his journey, "Watching the national team, imagining myself in their shoes and making my nation proud spurred me on. My fascination soon turned to passion when I bought myself a full cricket gear with my savings and enrolled in a nearby academy."

Ashreen Mridha, national basketball player and co-founder of Deshi Ballers, recalls, "When I started playing basketball, a national team did not even exist. Although I was eventually part of the country's first national basketball team, I never pursued sports for that title."

Everyone finds their calling a little differently. Some find it on the TV, others uncover it through playing in alleys and rugged fields. Regardless of wherever the dream ensues, there is no doubt that to fully adopt the mindset and the lifestyle, one must be under the guidance of a professional.

Amit Hasan, coach and technical director at Next Level Sports Management (NLSM) and Brac University, comments, "What really holds our players back is that the early stages of development start a little too late. To integrate discipline and fully grasp the foundations of the game, they should start really young. There is a lot of raw talent all around the scene but no structure to cultivate it. The biggest clubs in the country don't have the accommodations of a proper home ground, let alone an academy for young players."

In addition to a lack of resources for young individuals, the dream starts to wane further when academic commitments creep in. This involves coaching classes in addition to school, which snatches away important practise hours and even the need to be physically active.

"It wasn't easy having to cope with a drop in my average grades. I was out and about, going to practise, attending camps, and playing matches," Daheer says. "This was right around the time when my parents expressed their concerns and so, I had very little time to devote to cricket. Practises were replaced with exams, and matches with classes."

There is no way around for most young folks to manoeuvre around their academic commitments, which have to take priority over their passion. They need to practise regularly, build up their athletic muscles and gain enough attention from the coaches to be given a chance. The process is arduous, to say the least.



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

Ashreen says workplaces should also strive to implement a friendlier work schedule, where employees can have the opportunity to devote time to some physical activity and overcome lethargy.

Gulnazar Mahbub Monika, national basketball team player and co-founder at Deshi Ballers, emphasises the importance of daily practice, "To reach a certain level in-game one needs to be consistent. Without regular practice, an athlete or a coach can never improve."

She adds, "As we grow older, we have to take on academic responsibilities, work on our careers, and give back to society. This forces some to take a step back and shy away from their dreams"

Gulnazar further illustrates the fragile nature of it all. She says, athletes must train their minds alongside their bodies. The need to be prepared for the worst is imperative. The monetary issue coupled with a cultural one breeds an outlook that trickles down to fear and concern over the child's future.

"Female players are often criticised and ridiculed by friends and family. The only thing that holds players back is their willpower. Sure, an athlete should aspire to reach the highest level but that should never be the main goal," says Ashreen.

Nonetheless, Amit and his team at NLSM have sought out to change the landscape. "We strive to give young

players a taste of what it's like to play and train under the rigours of an academy. Alongside grooming them as professionals, we also help the players attain athletic scholarships to prestigious universities."

However, not everyone will make it. Does that mean they have to completely deviate from the sport? Absolutely not. There are innumerable jobs outside the field.

"Get your coaching badges, pursue a major in sports management, pick up commentary. The world of sport is evolving all the time," Amit shares. With the rise of franchise sports, there is a realm for the creative as well as technically gifted behind the scenes.

Ashreen shares the intrinsic value of outdoor activities, saying, "There are so many benefits of playing sports – physical and emotional well-being both included. You make so many friends through sports. You learn the value of teamwork and discipline, which pay off in other avenues in life."

"It is important that athletes learn to share their feelings and open up to people who are in the same situation. To cope, one must communicate and perhaps, find new aspirations to strive to," adds Gulnazar.

Ashreen believes that foundational support will aid in breeding a more open mindset towards sports. "Educational

institutions must prioritise sports and provide equal opportunities for both genders. At Deshi Ballers, we try to raise awareness among parents to recognise the value of physical activity along with academics for their child," she says.

"If athletics, as well as the arts, were implemented into the system, perhaps, we could see our dreams flourish. The youth can truly take flight with the right resources in place," asserts Daheer optimistically.

Like all other aspirations, the dream of playing at the highest level must be backed by belief and hope.

"You never know where your life could take you, especially until you're 25. Pursue it relentlessly," concludes Amit Hassan.

Some dreams gradually leave the grips of our fingertips and become unfulfilled promises to our younger selves but the perception of failure must be reimagined. The definition of success is one-dimensional and quantified through money and fame. While those are aspects of any career, it's not the only measures of success.

Ashreen concludes by urging young players to see the greater value in sports, "Years down the line when you are done with studies or when you have retired from the job, you don't want to say that you wish you had spent those years playing the sport you love."

*Abir Hossain is a failed SoundCloud Rapper. Tell him you too can't find anything to rhyme oranges with at: fb/abir.hossain.19*