

THE DEFINITIVE  
**YOUTH**  
MAGAZINE

# SHOUT

DHAKA THURSDAY JUNE 23, 2022, ASHAR 9, 1429 BS | A PUBLICATION OF *The Daily Star*



SHOULD NATIONAL CURRICULUM TEACHERS RETHINK HOW THEY GUIDE COLLEGE STUDENTS?

**PG 3**

THE BEAUTY OF READING WITHOUT A PURPOSE

**PG 4**

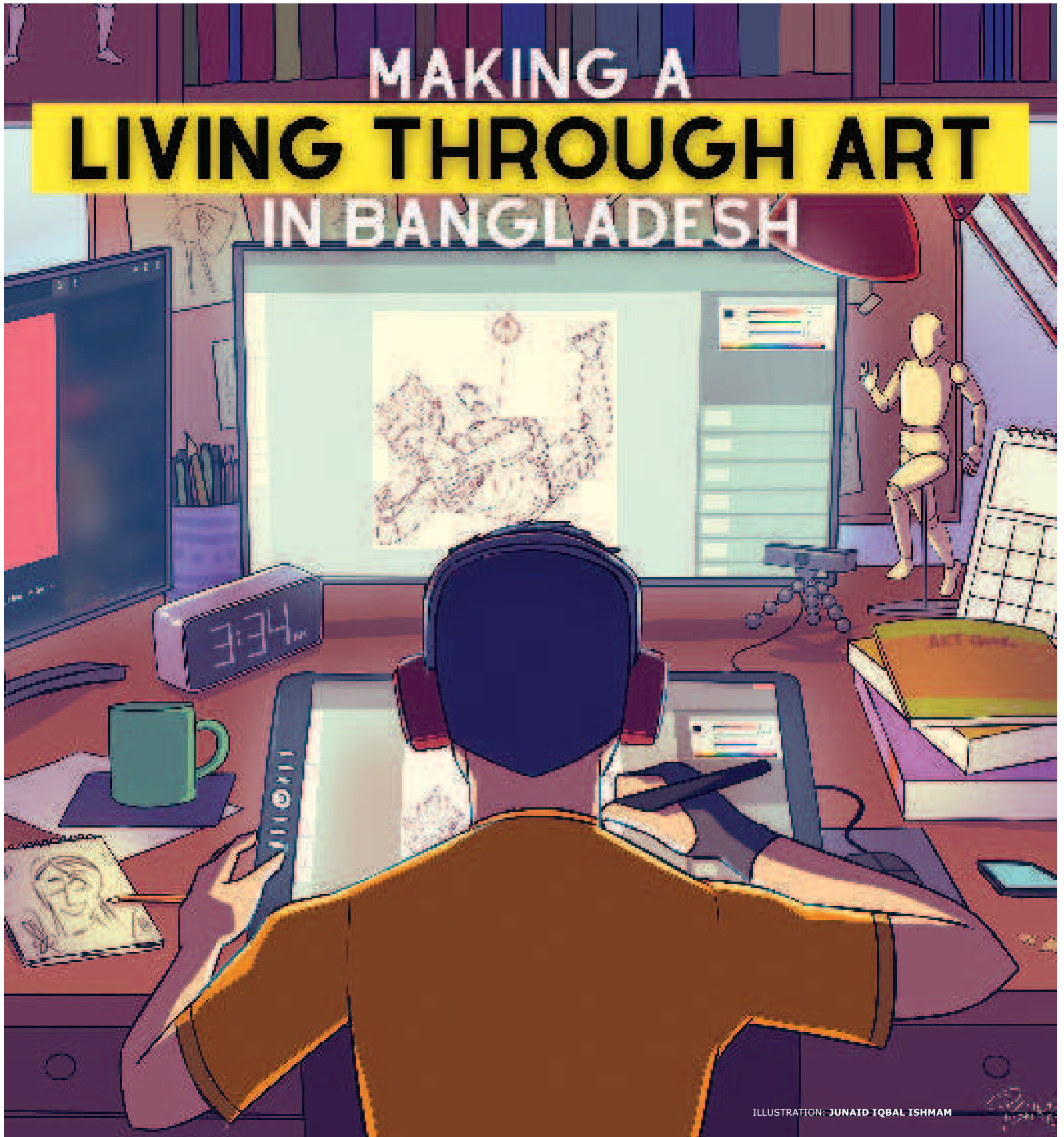


ILLUSTRATION: JUNAID IQBAL ISHMAM

# EDITORIAL

Being creatively inclined is the best.

The ability to do things in your image as opposed to extending a template, creating pieces of work that have a piece of you in it, is an unbeatable feeling. Getting paid to do work like this, that's just the best, right?

Or is it?

While there are well trodden paths when it comes to careers in the creative world, in arts, in writing, in music, the roads are still treacherous. Almost every artist I know, every writer I work with, and even musicians pursue the thing they do the best as an afterthought, often working soul crushing jobs to support themselves. While we know why our society prefers utilitarian professions over ones derived from passion, I think this can still change.

Instead of treating creative work as something that can "never" pay well, I think we could start by pointing out to young individuals the avenues that do exist if they wish to make a living from it. If more people took that option, the roads will eventually widen. Maybe then, this simple choice wouldn't be something daring for generations of the future.

– Azmin Azran, Sub-editor, SHOUT



## PLAYWATCH

YOUTUBE



# Book Vlogs for Bookaholics

### SABIBA HOSSAIN

Watching book reviewers describe their daily lives and getting lost in the sea of tranquillity is a strange addiction. It draws you into another world and often lets you experience a lazy stroll on the streets of Paris, browsing books in an antique store in Seoul, or trying out vintage clothing that you admire so much.

That's why I watch book vlogs.

They make book reviews more interesting and let you feel you're discussing books with your friend and not just some critic on the internet.

Here are four magical book review channels on YouTube that'll give you a taste of escapism from the hustle and bustle of everyday life.

### CARI CAN READ

This channel hosts lively discussions about books and tv shows, and bits and pieces of Cari's daily life in Seoul. She mainly gives recommendations on young adult fantasy and contemporary books, and sometimes on new adult books.

Cari is very interactive with her subscribers. She often takes book recommendations from them and shares her thoughts. If you want calm-yet-chaotic reviews of the books that are in trend, check this channel out. To experience life in South Korea, head over to her second channel, *Cari Cakes*.

### \* E M M I E \*

If you're looking for something aesthetically pleasing, \* e m m i e \* is the right place to start. Emma is a university student studying in Canada who weaves book reviews into her life stories like attending online classes, doing assignments, buying worn-out books from the market, and so on. Emma mainly reviews classics and books of foreign literature.

If you want to read unique books that

aren't popular within the YA community, check out her channel. ASMR sounds, brilliant videography, and Emma's soothing voice will give you a sense of peace and serenity. Besides book reviews, you will find study vlogs and literary and fashion discussions on her channel.

### WITHCINDY

We all have that eccentric friend who talks nonstop, cracks jokes and makes us feel blissful when we're having a hard day. Watching *withcindy* is like that.

Cindy lives in the US and likes to move around a lot. She describes it as flexing her nomadic adventures on the internet so that she can use them for tax deductions. Cindy cooks and talks about books, watches movies and roasts the characters, or does something creative and comical at times.

Of all the content creators mentioned above, Cindy interacts the most with her fans. She reads almost every comment and replies to them. However, the most notable feature of her channel is probably her reading and roasting of Sarah J. Mass's books.

When you feel frustrated at the absurdity of the things that happen in YA books, feel free to visit her channels. Her snorts, scoffs, and sarcastic remarks will make your day better.

### THE BOOK LEO

Want to go on a book shopping date in Amsterdam? If so, *The Book Leo* is the perfect channel for you. Leoni mainly reviews contemporary books but recently she has been reviewing books that are popular on TikTok. If you're unsure whether to buy that book that pops on your feed every time you open TikTok or don't know where to begin as a reader because there are so many books, go over to her channel. I guarantee you'll find the perfect book for you.

TITLE OF YOUR MIXTAPE



**A**

Viva La Vida  
Coldplay

Who Says  
Selena Gomez

Absolutely Smitten  
dodie

Coronado  
Lovejoy

**B**

Sweet Marie  
The Walters

I Love You Baby  
Parekh & Singh

Just Another Girl  
The Killers

Rupkotha  
Warfaze

Email us at [shoutds@gmail.com](mailto:shoutds@gmail.com)  
with feedback, comments, and reader  
submissions within 500 words.

## Should national curriculum teachers rethink how they guide college students?

AHMED NUZHA OISHEE

Every national curriculum student undergoes the ordeal of board exams, but college is a unique sense of agony since we are expected to simultaneously prepare for both HSC exams and university admission tests, in under two years. Teachers are supposed to play the most significant roles in helping us follow through on this exhausting dichotomous preparation, however, they often fail to do so.

HSC exams are a stepping stone to public university admission tests. Preparing for HSC exams covers the basics but preparing for admissions is an elaborate, tactical process. Students need to be committed from the very beginning.

At many colleges, teachers skip teaching topics that are unlikely to appear in board exams, even if they are very relevant for admission tests, because they think students are going to learn those during their admission phase anyway. In that phase, however, you're buried under loads of relatively newer topics to study and it becomes difficult to pay attention to skipped lessons that have been overdue for two years.

Some teachers in college emphasise elaborating answers, even when they are beside the point, to adhere to the board's biased marking system. From writing 15 pages of essays, overdone creative questions answers to purposefully describing mathematical processes that could've been solved in four lines, we have done it all. Encouraging this in class leaves students aiming to study in public institutions unprepared for what they can expect from admission tests.

Setting aside the fairness of it all, admission exams test a student's ability to solve problems in the time allotted and their ability to perform well under pressure, not their ability to elongate answers.

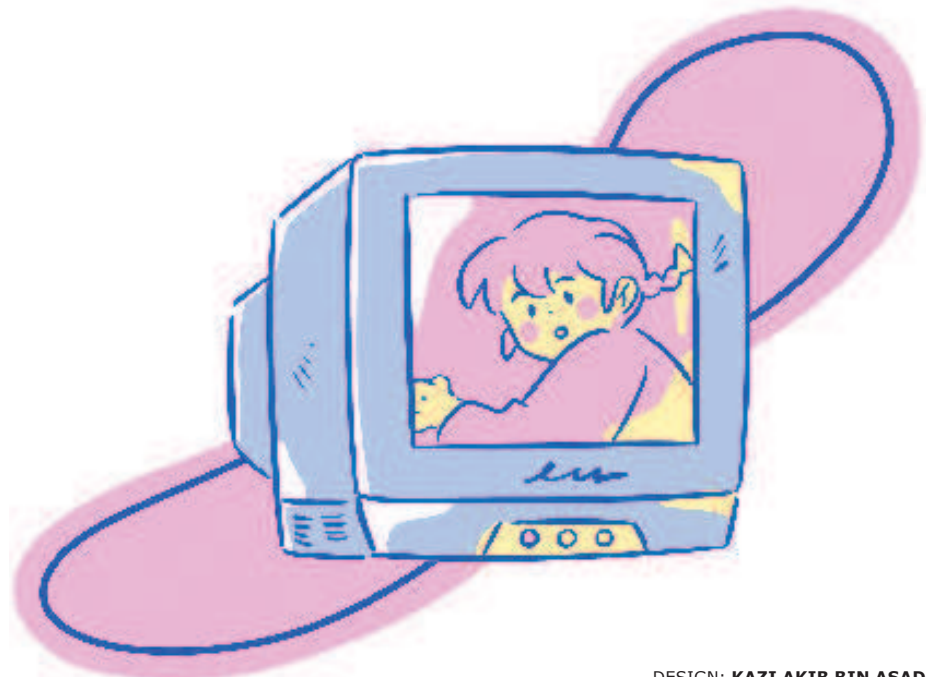
Truth be told, teachers often take little initiative in classrooms to point out strategies or good-to-know advice for admission tests. Students are forced to turn to private tuitions or coaching for guidance. Rather than solely fixating on board exam patterns, teachers, after having taught traditional methods, should teach time-saving, effective tactical approaches and shortcuts to answering questions. The board committee should also reassess their approved assessment criteria.

Teaching methods currently are often too reliant on test papers as teaching material. Test papers are supposed to give students an idea of how board questions work, but they are often unreliable because of the inaccuracies in the published answers. Teachers and students, thus, scramble to finish solving test papers in the final days leading up to HSC.

Once HSC exams are over with, admission test preparations force students to deconstruct the approach they have honed throughout the past two years, to create and adopt completely new ones within the span of only three to four months.

If teachers provide suggestions during class on balancing preparations and guide aspiring students from the very beginning of college, keeping this dichotomy in mind, it would alleviate unnecessary pressure and hardship on students.

*Nuzha forgives people for pronouncing her name wrong and wallows in books and anxiety. Remind her to take it easy at nuzhaoishee1256504@gmail.com*



DESIGN: KAZI AKIB BIN ASAD

## Menstrual commercials, please do better

SHANUM SARKAR

As someone who grew up in a culture where conversations surrounding periods were taboo, I believed TV advertisements for menstrual products to be an important source of information.

I later realised, they were misleading and ultimately, disappointing.

Firstly, the "blue liquid" shown in these ads in place of blood sends a confusing message to young people about what periods truly look like. It suggests that anything depicting period blood is too inappropriate to show on television, whereas blood is regularly shown in sports, films and medical dramas. Upon closer observation, we see why these commercials resort to such tropes.

In 2020, Australian period underwear brand Modibodi's "The New Way to Period" campaign intended to normalise the reality of menstruation by using red to represent blood more accurately. The brand found itself on the receiving end of an ad ban from Facebook, saying it violates its guidelines regarding "shocking, sensational, inflammatory or excessively violent content".

If you are young, what media you consume has a big impact on your beliefs. These commercials tend to be overly optimistic, demonstrating a rather tainted sense of reality.

Enter hustle culture, which can guilt individuals into being constantly productive, despite not feeling their best. The reality is that according to a recent article published by UNICEF, one-third of adolescent girls in Bangladesh skip school for a few days every month because of their period.

On the other hand, modern ads depict athletic people being uber-productive while menstruating. The intent might be to highlight the active movement people

can get from their products, but this is simply misleading.

For instance, a recent Bangladeshi advertisement portrayed menstruators effortlessly trekking, implying pads are all you need to perform such daunting tasks during your period. This moulds young people into thinking they have to be on the move all the time, or else they're underperforming.

Besides demotivating menstruators, ads that only represent hyperproductive women and athletes solidify the notion that period pain is simply an excuse to avoid working. This neglects most people who experience period pain entirely, particularly ones held back by menstrual illnesses such as dysmenorrhea.

The overwhelming pressure to be productive while menstruating is internalised to the point where many people feel compelled to lie about period symptoms when calling off work. Employees opt for calling with a flu or cold to avoid being accused of laziness, despite menstrual symptoms being much more severe.

If it isn't abundantly clear, you don't have to be your most productive while on your period. You don't have to feel guilty about period pain holding you back.

After years of being guilt tripped by hustle culture amplified by marketing schemes, I'm slowly coming to terms with being okay to take the time to rest and accept the realities of being human. Hopefully, you will too.

### Reference

UNICEF (June 09, 2022). *School girls in Bangladesh learn that periods are nothing to be ashamed of.*

*Shanum closely resembles a raccoon, send her reasons to cut down on caffeine at shanumsarkar18@gmail.com*



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

# STRENGTHS OF THE HIGHLY SENSITIVE INDIVIDUAL

IRINA JAHAN

If you often find yourself crying when listening to songs or have frequently been told that you are “too emotional”, it may be that you are a highly sensitive individual. It is not easy to be sensitive in a world that tries so hard to be emotionally frigid. Yet, there are strengths that highly sensitive people possess that prove this personality type to be of more virtue than people typically perceive it to be.

Having a highly sensitive personality is not always about tearing up during difficult conversations or about being horrible at taking criticism. One of the most distinct ways in which people with highly sensitive personalities stand out is with their empathy. People with such personalities are known to be able to use their gentleness and empathy to cut through the callousness and apathy of modern life.

This helps them to understand other people’s emotions and feelings better, which makes for richer and more fulfilling connections. Being able to think from another individual’s point of view can be remarkably impactful



DESIGN: MRITTIKA ANAN RAHMAN

because it is this transformational empathy that is often lacking in many people.

Although sensitivity can sometimes manifest itself in people through the form of rage, it is almost never destructive. Highly sensitive people’s knack for paying attention to others’ feelings and their ability to correspond to that makes them some of the most considerate people to work and interact

with. If anything, they are able to think selflessly and love generously. This observational skill is something that sensitive people also carry on to other aspects of life and perhaps also owe their creativity to.

Nevertheless, sometimes, despite all the wonderful things that come with being a sensitive person, it may feel overbearing. When one feels like they have to constantly defend themselves

and apologise frequently for displaying hypersensitive traits not seen in others, it can make them feel like the odd one out.

While feeling alone may serve as a reason to think of this as a weakness, reminding oneself of the upsides of having these qualities should serve as a personal reminder that being the odd one out does not undermine the traits that make highly sensitive people unique and truly authentic.

Unfortunately, sensitivity is often treated as a defect, as if it’s some kind of a personal virus that would wither away one’s mental wellbeing if not fought with utmost diligence. Regardless, no matter how much people would like us to believe that we deserve to pat ourselves on the back for fighting against our sensitive side, the innate introspectiveness and affectionate nature of being sensitive will always be commendable and something to be proud of.

*Irina is just another hypercritical movie critique in the making. Send her your movie recommendations @ irinajahan17@gmail.com*

# The beauty of reading without a purpose

SHADYA NAHER SHEYAM

People will tell you that reading as a hobby is an exhausting activity. Given the extremely competitive era in which we live, the majority of individuals tend to do things with a purpose in mind. In fact, you are advised to do so.

You may recall your teachers advising you to be a self-absorbed reader, teaching you to question what the material can accomplish for you before going through it. My initial motivation to read was to enhance my grammar by reading English newspapers. A definite purpose. It felt so crucial to have a purpose at the time, it was as if reading without purpose was a peculiar, zany activity.

Since I began living on my own, my everyday life has forced me to do a lot of reading. I mostly look up DIY suggestions or how to take care of plants, or some random ridiculous inquiry on the internet. Everyday life compels you to seek knowledge from written sources, causing you to read out of necessity rather than by choice.

As a student researcher, I spend a great deal of time reading too. But this job-related reading has a specific objective – gathering resources for a paper, closing an information gap or gaining deeper



grasp on a topic, making me more of a “fact-finder” than a reader.

Many people who claim to read are information seekers rather than readers. It’s not their fault as pleasure reading was seldom encouraged, despite the fact that

it is the only type of reading where people want to be entertained rather than influenced, and where you find value in the act of reading rather than in the information found. You’re not looking for a specific result.

Many individuals assume that those who read for enjoyment prefer to read fiction because it provides escape. I, however, believe pleasure readers want escape as well as relativism from their reading. While fiction allows more room for diving deep into a characters’ attributes, both fiction and nonfiction have a narrative shape that do wonders to the mind when reading.

I’ve learned a lot and had fun at the same time while doing this mindless reading. Most of the time, this has led me to find out things I needed to know, but by accident.

Purposeless reading has brought me relaxation and comfort. It’s made me feel like I’m not the only one going through a certain experience, and it’s helped me discover characters who became my role models. Even though it’s pretty clear that I’m still in the apprentice stage and need to read a lot before what I learn from reading becomes part of who I am, the only time I don’t feel like I’m working is when I’m reading without a purpose.

*Shadya Naher Sheyam attempts to live life like Ashima from The Namesake. Talk to her about Mira Nair films at sadianaharsiam@gmail.com*

# Making a living through art in Bangladesh

ABIR HOSSAIN

For some, blank canvases and empty pages is the gateway to a world of infinite possibilities awaiting the genius of their brushstrokes. This urge to reimagine the world they reside in or create new ones emerge from doodles, watching cartoons, or drawing their “gramer drishho”.

While the practice of turning your creative endeavours into a career is frowned upon, there is no denying that artists are here to stay. Moreover, it is now easier to get your work out to a larger audience. The existence of social media and sites such as Behance and ArtStation allows artists to create portfolios and helps in taking up requests and possible employment opportunities.

Many options have opened up for the artistically gifted, but the end goal for some is to sell original pieces. Whether it is a client found through social media, an acquaintance, or a gallery show, to be able to sell your art for a sum is a sign that they have made it.

It is no easy feat though. To be able to create demand for your art, especially in a closed-off market, requires the right connections. It takes time to break through and connect with an inaccessible circle, and to convince the same group of people to be paying top bucks for your creation is a completely different game.

As a result, selling original pieces becomes an outrageous prospect for aspiring young creatives. What gets attention, and hence, potential customers, are pieces from established names or widely recognised artworks.

A more feasible service offered by young artists are commissions. The question “Can you draw me?” should no longer irk them as they can finally put a price on the question. Portraits and caricatures boast a large audience and widespread demand. Such mediums can especially help those with the ability to render hyper-realistic pieces or ones with very distinct styles.

Artists can branch out even further. Murals are an option for those who love to paint. Walk into any cafe, and you can catch a glimpse of an ornamental concrete wall elevating the ambience. In recent years, office spaces and schools have also devoted themselves to establishing an identity in their premises. Interior design firms work closely with artists to work on murals and sometimes even outsource the mural entirely.

Children’s book illustrations have also gained significant traction over the last few years. Amar Ekushey Boi Mela has seen a surge in the number of books geared towards toddlers. Publishers and independent writers are on the lookout for illustrators. These books tend to have a childish charm about the art style as they often deviate from a polished look and prefer illustrations reminiscent of children’s scribbles. Therefore, depending on their strengths, the artist can work on orders

they specialise in and carve a niche out for themselves.

Tahmeed Karim, a 22-year-old artist based in Chittagong, shares, “My first customers were my friends and classmates. Everyone used to recognise me as that kid who paints and sketches. That helped in getting the word out.”

He adds, “I would go to comic cons, participate in school events as well as share work in art groups online. This helped gather momentum until eventually, it accumulated to somewhat of a stable client base.”

Commission work and freelancing are options to consider but the underlying problem that often repels artists from pursuing them is the lack of security and its unsustainable nature. Unless there is a con-

stant stream of orders for them to work on, there will be little to no income. As significant as commissions are to an artist, working exclusively on orders takes the joy out of the process. Artists have lamented about burnouts, creative blocks, and just a general lack of motivation when they spend all their time working.

Moreover, the process of gathering clients is arduous in and of itself. To gather a stable client base, one must have an online presence, accumulate recognition, and be deemed good enough amidst an abundance of content.

“When I first started, the rates were embarrassingly low. Anyone starting must remember that it is very difficult to convince people to pay for your art. The key to making it sustainable is to be willing to consistently put in the work,” asserts Tahmeed.

Nevertheless, the golden age of content is somewhat of a jackpot for artists. TV shows, movies, video games, comic books, and graphic novels are all narrative mediums that require creatives and such content is being churned out at an unprecedented rate. From story-boarding to character

design to designing the opening sequence, creating the final product requires an artist almost every step of the way.

Asifur Rahman, the mind behind Arts by Rats, says, “Locally, there is a handful of studios in the country with small teams. In such scenarios, artists usually work on numerous tasks simultaneously. At Mighty Punch Studios, I worked as a concept artist as well as a character designer while also involved as a background artist.”

He continues, “There is no global standard as to how many artists a studio requires. Smaller studios have a smaller team with a more hands-on approach across all departments, which usually gives more leeway for individual expression.”

In the long run, everyone aspires to work for the biggest studios but the fairy tale is for art exploited, whether it is through low prices or long hours of work.

Moreover, the appeal of commercial art is very linear. The corporate art style of saturated palettes and skewed proportions has become infamous. Such standards not only deprive artists of fully showcasing the nuances of their style but also create restrictions that disrupt the fluidity of art.

Asif states, “It is very unlikely that a studio will hire you based on your style. To catch their attention, artists should develop a portfolio that tailors to the needs of the said studio.”

The harsh reality is that to obtain even a mellow grip on the industry, most artists will need to cater to the needs of the industry, and even then, there will truly be no guarantee of attaining your dream job.



PHOTOS: ORCHID CHAKMA

a challenge. With opportunities few and far between and a system that provides an obstacle for creative pursuits, artists cannot thrive. The option to pursue a degree in any form of art is not only demeaned, but it is also very limited in the educational sphere of our country.

Asifur is currently pursuing a diploma in 3D Modelling, Art, and Animation from the British Columbia Institute of Technology. He feels as though the degree has given him a clear set of guidelines as well as instilled some discipline into the learning curve.

“Although you could find similar resources on the internet, there is just something about being taught by an industry professional that cannot be replaced. There is also the aspect of getting in touch with people who have experience in the field and establishing a network with such individuals goes a long way,” Asif says.

Fortune certainly favours the bold, but to leap, one must at least take a look down at the drop. The many hurdles in the local creative field emerge from deep-lying systematic issues that put artists at a disadvantage. There is no denying that young creators will inevitably have their passion

However, all isn’t doom and gloom. The local market is also participating in the mass stream of content. Video game studios are popping up across the country, and established comic book studios, as well as positions in newspaper outlets as cartoonists, have great opportunities for artists. On the other hand, those working with a more traditional medium can seek out openings in art director positions. Museums, TV studios, and marketing agencies all need an art director, and there are few cut out for the job as well as fine artists.

To be passionate about art is truly magical. It is rewarding and reassuring. There is marketing yourself, knowing your market, and setting the right prices – all of which develop with the artist. Obstacles and hurdles are only part of the process but there is no reason why it shouldn’t become a reality. With foundational support and some fine tuning in the right places, the creative part of the economy will become a mainstay and perhaps even a source of pride for the country.

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

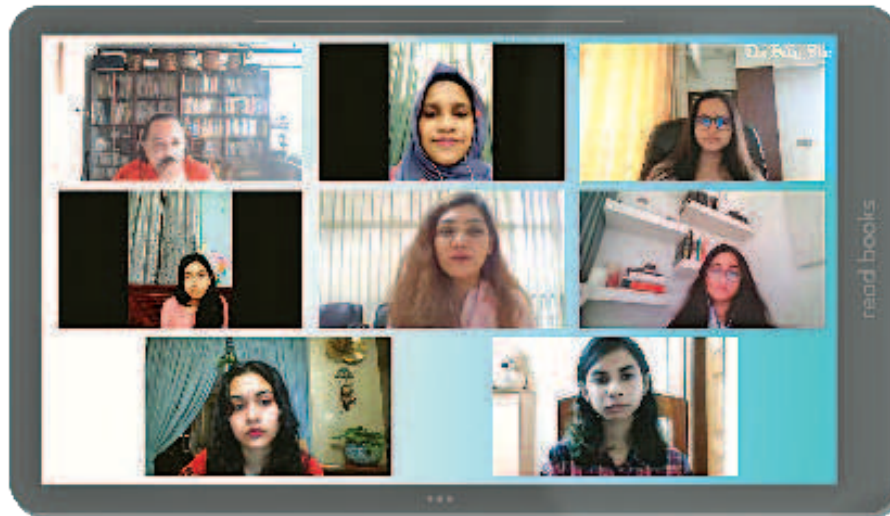
# “We have Rashids, Laylas, Mariams in each society”

**MD TANJIM HOSSAIN**

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

This month’s special guests Asrar Chowdhury, professor of Economics at Jahangirnagar University and columnist in SHOUT, and Dil Nusrat, Assistant Professor, English Language Institute, United International University were present at the live session. The event was moderated by editor of Daily Star Books, Sarah Anjum Bari.

The top five winners of the second segment of the campaign, based on Khaled



help the readers to empathise with women as a whole.

Nafia mentioned how many of the women’s actions are overshadowed by rather smaller actions in the book. Sanjana talked about her favourite character in the book, Mariam, and why she has developed a soft corner for her due to the trauma she has faced throughout her life, and also commends the character’s courage. She also discusses about her favourite character’s transitions – how she is almost filled with jealousy at the beginning but later sacrifices herself for Layla.

The discussion further continues with the pacing of the novel. As Amrin mentions, how despite the intensity of the topics covered, the book hooks the readers in a way that we can call it a rather fast-paced novel. The progress, the narration, and the language are easy to read for people who are not regular readers is also a great feature of the book, she thinks.

With the brilliant writing style that encapsulates readers, with the quotes that stay rent-free in the readers’ heads for a long time and the scenes that immediately jump to their minds every time A Thousand Splendid Suns is mentioned, Sarah Anjum Bari and the winners later talked about Khaled Hosseini’s mesmerising art of storytelling.

Overall, it was a brilliant conversation about literature, characters, and this month’s book A Thousand Splendid Suns, 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.



A joint initiative of  **UNITED INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY** and  **The Daily Star**

Hosseini’s bestselling novel A Thousand Splendid Suns, are Amrin Tasnim Rafa, Mumtahina Aziz, Sanjana Jahan Shams, Nafia Tabassum, and Nusrat Jahan Shifa.

The event involved an eye-opening discussion between the guests and the winners. Prof. Asrar Chowdhury commenced the discussion with his interesting views on the different forms of por-

trays of Afghanistan, including the ones the West has been accustomed to as well as the ones he has been familiar with. He also talked about the idea of friendship between the two main characters Mariam and Layla, which evolved from rather unfriendly situations at the beginning of the book.

Dil Nusrat talked about the reasons behind choosing A Thousand Splendid Suns for the segment, saying, “The book was selected at the end of 2021 when the political turmoil in Afghanistan was taking place.”

She further mentioned how this book would help visualise scenarios of Afghanistan in ways apart from the news. “While not for children, the book can also be introduced in the classrooms to late teens or early twenties,” she said.

On a related note, Prof. Asrar Chowdhury also talked about the layers of the book and the characters in a society that correspond to the characters in the book.

“We have Rashids, Laylas, Mariams in each society of the subcontinent,” he tells us. It is versatile in the way of displaying versions of our own society, and this is precisely why Prof. Chowdhury thinks it is important for everyone in the subcontinent to pick the book and read it.

Amrin talked about the struggles of women from different perspectives, even apart from the two main characters. The lack of human rights that Afghan women face, not only the oppressed but also those in supposedly privileged positions, is something that the book highlights through its characters. Amrin says that the portrayals of the struggles of these women

A Thousand Splendid Suns is a critically acclaimed novel by Afghan-American author Khaled Hosseini, published in 2007.

It is a profound novel focusing on women and their role in contemporary Afghan society. It explores the unique relationship between two women, Mariam and Layla, as they influence each other’s lives and those around them.

The novel begins with Mariam who has a rough childhood as her father abhors her for being an illegitimate child, forcing her to live on the outskirts of town in a secluded hut with her mother.

On her 15th birthday, her mother hangs herself, and Mariam is left all alone. Her father quickly marries her off to Rasheed, a widowed shoemaker from Kabul who is 30 years older than her.

Rasheed is initially kind to Mariam, but after she becomes pregnant and miscarries multiple times, their relationship sours and he becomes increasingly abusive to her over her inability to bear him a son.

After Layla’s parents are killed and she is injured in a rocket attack on their home in Kabul, and her childhood sweetheart, Tariq, leaves the city due to the civil war, Mariam and Rasheed take her in. As Layla recovers from her injuries, Rasheed

expresses a romantic interest in her, much to Mariam’s dismay.

Layla discovers that she is pregnant with Tariq’s child but learns that he and his family have been killed en route Pakistan. She agrees to marry Rasheed in order to protect herself and the baby, whom Rasheed believes to be his. But Rasheed rejects the child when he realises after birth that it is a girl.

Layla and Mariam grow a close bond as they both suffer at the hands of Rasheed. They become confidants and plan to run away from Rasheed and leave Kabul, but are caught before they can do so.

The Taliban rise to power in Kabul and impose harsh rules on the local population, severely curtailing women’s rights.

After suffering much abuse and trials, years later, Tariq appears and reunites with Layla. Rasheed had hired a man to falsely claim Tariq’s death to manipulate Layla into marrying him.

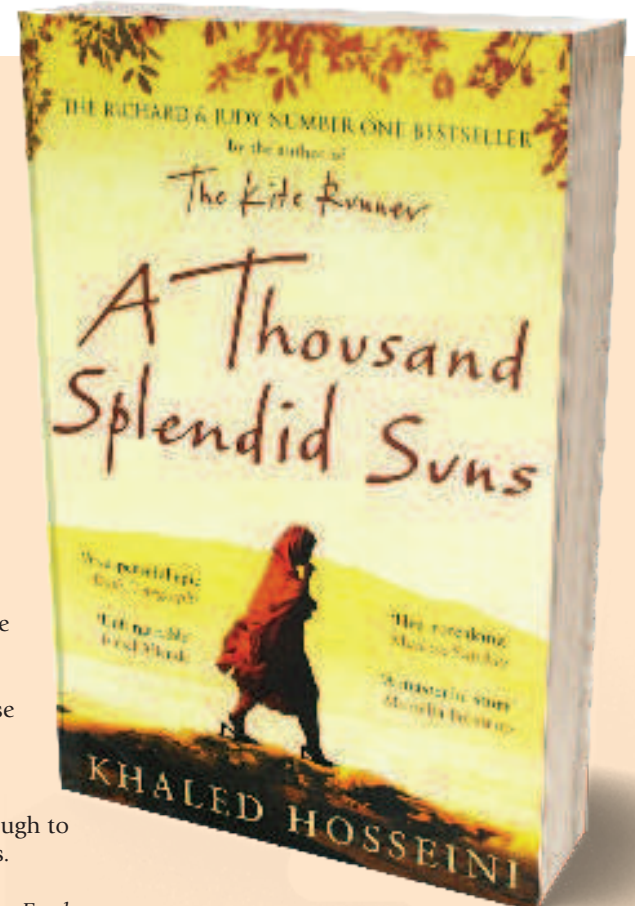
Mariam comes to the rescue, striking Rasheed with a shovel as he is beating Layla. She ends up taking responsibility for Rasheed’s death and is executed publicly for it.

Layla and Tariq are able to leave and come back years later after the war. Layla

is able to make a life for herself, marrying Tariq, becoming a teacher, and the novel ends with her expecting her third child, who she wants to name Mariam.

While war, destruction, global and regional power struggles and chaos ensued on the outside world, these two women fought their own inner battles. The violence outside pales in comparison to the casual violence these women face every day. The powerful, harrowing tale of love and loss is enough to leave its mark on us.

Written by Sara Kabir, Freelance Contributor, SHOUT.



**FABLE FACTORY**

# I Exist in Small Spaces

**UZAYER MASUD**

i exist in the smallest of spaces  
 in the underside of a bed  
 a corner of a balcony

the plants are my friends  
 they exist in tree-time  
 grounded in reality

i dont want to take up more space  
 i dont know how to fight  
 i just want to go home

sitting on a chair feels too foreign  
 too grown up, fast paced  
 everyone is scary

i'd rather sit on the floor  
 see the world through the gaps in leaves  
 watch the sky grow bigger and the clouds drift apart

i unbecome unto myself

i miss the warmth  
 my soft unbroken lips

you're a child until you're not anymore  
 the lines feel hazy  
 i dont know where it starts or ends

the facial hair feels alien  
 the heaviness kicked in  
 lethargic to the core  
 how is it on me in the first place

i am tired of fighting  
 of struggling to live  
 i simply wish to exist

to love in simple ways  
 this softness will be the death of me

*Uzayer Masud loves pretzels, guitars and pretending to write.  
 Send them memes at [instagram.com/uzayermasud](https://www.instagram.com/uzayermasud)*



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

# EVERY TIME IT RAINS

**ANGELINA NODEE FRANCIS**

Every time it rains, I am reminded of the story that started but never really had a proper ending. You were the narrator but you chose to leave it midway, like you always do.

I remember sitting across the table and watching you dance with the woman of your dreams, forgetting about my own happiness and indulging myself into this moment that made you smile.

You crossed your heart in order to promise me that you would never leave my side. But the day had to come, when I was laughing until my stomach hurt and you broke into the moment to tell me that you had to go.

I put my hand on my chest, tears rolled down my cheeks as I lied on my bed thinking about what I might have done that led you to do this.

When the rain started pouring into the night, it felt like nature mourned the separation of two souls and a story that would have made its place on the pages of history. Never did I ever imagine that the lyrics to the song "Exile" that said "And it took you five whole minutes, to pack us up and leave me with it" would become a reality.

I still sit there across the window when it rains heavily, reminiscing the good and bad memories that you gave me. You would call me an emotional fool for doing so, but did you even feel the same way?

There are so many questions that keep flooding my mind, yet I remain quiet. Talking about it too often wrecks every piece inside me that I have managed to mend somehow, but you had to break it.

Maybe I lost some of those pieces too, because you are carrying them within yourself.

The peace between us will never be restored and now, your happiness only makes me want to run away into the wilderness and never come back because do you even deserve to be this happy, when all you did was build something, only to see yourself leave without saying goodbye?

A part of me died when you chose to leave, and I am still trying to revive it. I don't think that we can ever really move on from these circumstances but hope that the memory of this incident fades away slowly.

The lyrics to "Champagne Problems" that said "Love slipped beyond your reaches" still echo in my ears when I am all alone.

You used to say that maybe you and I are the same, but how is that even possible when I managed to leave my past behind and walk with you. And you were still stuck in time. You froze your future and walked backwards when I froze my past and walked forward.

I will always remember the night when you danced with the woman you love. On the same night you were sitting across me on the same table and you didn't say a word. You knew that I was right in front of you, but the chapter that included me in your book was burned into ashes.

I could see you looking at me from afar, but I knew that you would not approach me because this chapter does not have an ending.

*Angelina Nodee Francis enjoys cracking self-deprecating jokes and running away from her problems. Send her memes at [angelinafrancis004@gmail.com](mailto:angelinafrancis004@gmail.com)*

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# Why is the youth out of touch with Bangladeshi politics?

**FABIHA AFIFA**

In recent times, I have noticed my generation is very much in touch with international relations and politics but very little aware of news at home.

For instance, many of my friends know the history of the occupation of the West Bank but have no idea about the policies implemented for the ethnic and minority populations in Bangladesh.

Similarly, while Texan abortion laws are a hot topic in some of my friend circles, Bangladesh's section 155(4) of the Evidence Act 1872 and section 375 of the Penal Code of Bangladesh, 1860, are not. For context, the former allows a victim's "character" to be judged during legal proceedings for rape cases whereas the latter strictly defines rape as an act committed only by men against women only and denies the existence of marital rape for girls over 13 years of age.

Don't get me wrong. A violation of human rights anywhere is indeed a violation of humanity overall and deserves immediate global attention and response. However, policies at home that directly affect us and our loved ones here should obviously receive some extra consideration from us.

Media coverage plays a pivotal role in shaping people's stance on politics and more importantly, making them engage



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

with politics in the first place. In the USA, for example, there are countless political commentators who create content specifically for the youth on a range of social media platforms like YouTube, Twitch, and Instagram.

The online presence of both right-wing commentators like Ben Shapiro and Candace Owens and liberal ones like Hasan Piker and Natalie Wynn ensure

that people have access to very engaging content relating to different political belief systems and perspectives. Politics is not something limited to the dry language of newspapers and old-fashioned, boring talk shows there. In fact, even a comedy show like Saturday Night Live can sometimes be a great start to learn about ongoing American political crises.

Perhaps what stops the youth from

learning and spreading awareness about the Bangladeshi political scene is the state of freedom of speech here. With new forms of censorship being imposed every now and then, motivation to post about one's political views often takes the back burner.

This fear of unprovoked intimidation is possibly what leads to ageism when it comes to discussing politics in Bangladesh. Young people are often taught to avoid political conversations for "their own good" and also because it is often considered impolite in our culture. This restriction in open discourse only means that the youth often remain in the dark about their own country's policies and decisions. When they do want to learn about it, they usually are unable to find a reliable, engaging source to start with.

Politics, even when it doesn't look like it, affects us all. It affects things as sexual abuse case settlements and things as seemingly ordinary as our access to education. When we are the future of our nation, it is very crucial that space is made for us to know exactly how and what decisions have been made in our country so far, because ultimately, only an informed present can ensure a better future.

*Fabiha is secretly a Lannister noblewoman and a Slytherin alum. Pledge your allegiance and soul to her at [afifafabiha01@gmail.com](mailto:afifafabiha01@gmail.com)*

# Where film adaptations fall short

**ZAHEEN TASFIA ZUHAIR**

"The book was better," said every person who read the book before watching its film adaptation. In most cases, unfortunately, this person is right. This rings especially true when it comes to film adaptations of books written in the first-person narrative.

If you have watched the Percy Jackson movies, widely known in the fandom as the Peter Johnson movies, you might have noticed that something was off besides the obvious inconsistencies and flawed setting, which was the absence of Percy's narration. Rick Riordan's worldbuilding is flawless and his characters are easy to love, and so I used to think that the job of the scriptwriters was made significantly easier.

However, the movies missed out on the witty narrations of Percy Jackson, which perfectly delivered the thought Rick Riordan had put behind the modern re-telling of Greek myths with the perfect dose of humour. Though the movies tried to compensate for this loss by adding another character for the comic relief, it unfortunately did not deliver as neatly.

The unique quality of first-person narration is that we experience the pro-



DESIGN: SYEDA AFRIN TARANNUM

tagonists' journey through them. When such books are adapted for the screen, we are already far removed from the character. This dilutes the intensity of events in the movie, because often the drama is dependent on the protagonists' misunderstandings.

The Princess Diaries perfectly illustrates this concept. Mia finds out she's a princess in the modern world, and has to deal with

being even more of a "freak" than she already is. Her over-the-top internal reactions, exaggerations and extreme sarcasm is what makes the readers flip the pages, despite the story's low stakes.

In the movie, Mia's unreliable and hilarious narration is gone, so every plot point is duller than in the book. The characters were already watered down without her lens, but the movie, for some reason

took it a step further.

Another hiccup that movie producers come across is the difficulty portraying the character's inner workings: their desires, fears, misbelief, and flaws. Whereas internal conflict in books can be conveyed through the characters' internal monologues, narration, dialogue or action, in movies, it can only be naturally conveyed through dialogue and action.

Both Percy and Mia were colourful on the page, yet bland on the screen, because we first experienced their stories through their unfiltered point-of-views.

The screenwriters also have the difficult task of imagining scenes which were skimmed over in the stories using witty narration, while staying true to the original material. The director has to make sure the audience sees what the characters saw in the corresponding books scenes.

In these cases, the book authors are fundamental to creating the movie. However, in most adaptations (such as those mentioned here), the authors had a minimal role in the filmmaking.

*Complain to Zaheen about book to film adaptations at [instagram.com/tasfiazuhair](https://www.instagram.com/tasfiazuhair)*