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PHYSICAL ABUSE IN SCHOOLS

An unending nightmare



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

EDITORIAL

I studied at a school that discouraged all forms of physical punishment. If anything, the teachers would talk to us about such forms of punishment and why they were, in no way, justifiable acts of ensuring discipline inside classrooms.

Sadly, many students across the country did not enjoy the same privilege.

What disheartens me is that we consider ourselves privileged when we realize physical punishment was something we didn't have to endure. However, in no modern school setting should such forms of punishment exist.

It is arguably one of the most disgusting things about our education system. Teachers often make matters worse by boasting of their own upbringings, and smacking the student every now and then helped "develop" them into better humans. I believe that this situation is worse in various madrasas across the country.

I do, however, hope that a time will come when teachers will abandon this practice, not just because the law will stop them from doing so, but willingly.

– Faisal Bin Iqbal, Sub-Editor & Digital Co-ordinator, SHOUT



PLAYWATCH

MOVIE



Netflix's adaptation of *Persuasion* is disappointing

ADRITA ZAIMA ISLAM

When Netflix announced their adaptation of *Persuasion* – Jane Austen's final completed novel – fans were thrilled.

Favourites like *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma* have received numerous adaptations over the years and their popularity pushed Austen's quieter novels, like *Sense and Sensibility* and *Persuasion* into the background.

Due to *Persuasion's* big screen portrayals being few and far between, Jane Austen fans welcomed the announcement of a new film.

That is until people saw the film.

Persuasion tells the story of the 27-year-old Anne Elliot, played by Dakota Johnson. In the bloom of her youth, she was persuaded by her family and friends to give up the charming albeit poor Frederick Wentworth, played by Cosmo Jarvis, due to the differences in their societal positions. Now, almost a decade later, the two are placed in proximity once more and Anne is forced to face her feelings for him, as well as her regrets over past decisions.

What draws admirers to Anne is her quiet compassion, introspection, and ability to be long-suffering while her family goes on being indifferent toward her. Thus, when Johnson started addressing the camera directly with her family woes, as though the audience is her therapist and she was their patient, it was jarring.

Throughout the movie, Anne breaks the fourth wall with her mischievous smirks and snide asides. Many have pointed out that it is more like something Phoebe-Waller Bridge would do in *Fleabag*, and it is to soothe fans who like feisty female characters.

Furthermore, the movie sets the overall tone to be comic rather than tragic, as the original story demands. The anguish and longing that Anne and

Frederick feel in the novel appear to be reduced to a rom-com situation.

Anne's character does have the mental prowess and wit to say the things that Johnson does. Even in the book, through her observations, she points out the follies of those around her. But Austen's Anne is more likely to do so through her internal dialogue. Austen relied on textual implications to portray Anne's feelings. While I don't entirely disagree with breaking the fourth wall to convey said feelings, it does bring a drastic change to the character.

Art changes with time and environment, as well as the attitude towards its subject matter. The character modifications to fit modern sensibilities make sense then. However, isn't changing it to a modern context an insult to the audience's intelligence, like saying that they would not understand Anne's situation in her historical and social situation?

While it is true that everyone should have the artistic license to interpret a source material as they wish, Austen fans, including myself, feel betrayed. They are furious over what they are calling a misrepresentation of the story. They view this adaptation as being meant less for them and more for the *Bridgerton* fans who like their characters to be modern while wearing frills and frocks.

Director Carrie Cracknell stated that she hoped to uphold the complexity of *Persuasion* while bringing a comic undertone to the film. However, while the sentiment is understandable, the execution fell short and proved to be a disappointment.

Zaima is a fake poet with a serious problem against anything that resembles seriousness. Send her your sympathies at zaima2004adrta@gmail.com

TITLE OF YOUR MIXTAPE



A

A Pearl
Mitski

Numb
Linkin Park

Harder to breathe
Maroon 5

Death by a Thousand
Cuts
Taylor Swift

B

What Is Love
Haddaway

Glimpse of Us
Joji

Voy Dekhash Na Please
Mohan Kanan

Meant To Be
Ber, Charlie Oriain

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



Is “status anxiety” making our choices for us?

AHMED NUZHA OISHEE

When influencers and celebrities share their extravagant lifestyle on the internet, a tiny part of our brain wishes to have what they have. Though they are non-referential to us common folks, sometimes we end up feeling pressured to achieve similar feats.

Replace these public figures with peers and the tables turn. We begin comparing our lifestyle, accomplishments and privileges. You recollect that your cousin has a better degree or works a six-figure paying job. Consequently, there is this pressure from family and acquaintances to exceed that threshold of success and achieve greater things to surpass individuals your age.

“What are the prospective career options?”

“Will you get paid well?”

“Think about the social implications, what neighbours and relatives will think.”

Whether you’re choosing a major for university or making a decision related to your future, sooner or later, you’ll be forced to ruminate on these aspects before making decisions. Consequently, you begin worrying how these choices determine your position on the social ladder.

You might begin relating to Farhan Qureshi’s short monologue from *3 Idiots*, “No degree means no plum job, no partner, no credit card, no social status.”

You see your friends achieve something laudable. You genuinely applaud them because they deserve it. But an uncomfortable emotion keeps plaguing you. It’s not jealousy. Rather disappointment in yourself for failing to be in their shoes. Their success seems to have amplified the bitterness of your failures because you dread being left behind.

British philosopher Alain de Botton has termed this crippling anxiety of ranking low on the status scale for not conforming to the parameters of success as “status anxiety”. He explains how inferiority complex, low self-esteem and judgement instils dread of being perceived as unsuccessful and therefore getting ostracised by people assuming higher positions on the social ladder.

Status anxiety is provoked through such comparison of material ownership. Perhaps watching your peer group lead an economically better life and realising you cannot afford the same lifestyle. Or learning they have bagged the job you have always dreamed of or have gotten into a good university while you are still struggling to achieve the same.

Capitalism has ingrained in us that earning and achieving more invariably decides our worth in the society. That emotional contentment is impossible without accomplishments. Perpetual comparison between what we are and what we could be has muddled the lines between striving for greatness and seeking social validation.

The biggest factor fuelling status anxiety is chasmic income inequality. Bangladeshi farmers and labourers and their families enjoy far diminished social status compared to teachers, physicians or other highly paid careerists, despite playing equally (if not more) significant roles. The standard of life they can afford with their pays determines how validating society is of their contributions.

It’s important to remember that status is fickle. So, it is necessary to challenge the status quo and form ideologies that do not only aim to placate social expectations.

Nuzha forgives people for pronouncing her name wrong and wallows in books and anxiety. Suggest her fiction at nuzhaoishee1256504@gmail.com

What’s the big deal with gender pronouns anyway?

KOUSHIN UNBER

In recent years, the practice of including your preferred pronouns during introductions has become increasingly common. Whether it be during debates, meetings, ice breaker sessions, or Instagram bios, personal pronouns have started to integrate themselves into our interactions with others more so than they ever were before.

However, it is quite unfortunate how the notion of having personalised pronouns is still considered laughable by many. Misinformed beliefs cause a lot of individuals to insist on using the pronouns that they deem right for somebody based on their outward gender expression.

Navigating through this specific topic may feel difficult, so let’s explore what each of these mean.

For us to understand the concept of gender identity, we must first unlearn the idea that biological sex and gender are tied together. Both deal with expression of physical and personal traits, however, they do not necessarily have to act in accordance with each other.

The Spring 2017 issue of *Sex, Gender, and Medicine* by Stanford Medicine magazine says “Gender is inextricably linked to sex, but not defined by it. And it indisputably affects health,” providing backbone to the claim that gender is based on society and culture, rather than solely relying on the chromosomal makeup of one’s biology.

One’s esoteric feelings about their own gender is not necessarily always related to biology. This is where the great debate about whether or not sex and gender are the same thing comes in. Succinctly speaking, they are not. As the world progresses and advances, we have come to know that gender identity has to do more with psychology than anatomy.

Our X and Y chromosomes may determine our biological makeup, but pure biology is not what makes a human, a human. What sets us apart from every other species in the animal kingdom is our ability to think, perceive, feel, and form personalities.

Pronouns act as an excellent tool for people to express their gender identity, and they do an amazing job in doing so as well. For a lot of people, their personalised pronouns are a way for them to communicate their deeply personal relationships with their gender to the outside world. One may choose to use the binary pronouns such as he/him or she/her, or they might choose to go with gender neutral pronouns such as they/them. Whichever set of words they choose, it is important for us to not assign pronouns to them based on what we perceive them as.

Using somebody’s preferred pronouns when addressing them is an act of mutual respect. A standard rule of thumb is to simply ask them, “What are your preferred pronouns?” upon meeting someone new. Know that it is okay to make mistakes, but it is even better if you are to correct yourself.

We as humans continue to learn and conduct more research about phenomena surrounding ourselves, and our habits and perceptions change based on what we have learned. This unique ability allows societies to thrive, and people from various communities to feel more at home.

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2. Stanford Medicine (Spring 2017). *Sex, Gender, and Medicine*

Koushin is currently on her fourth character arc this year. Send her video essays on indie films to cope at: koushinunber27@gmail.com



DESIGN: SYEDA AFRIN TARANNUM

The falsehood of adulthood

BUSHRA ZAMAN

Financial/educational stability in adulthood is confusing.

Society sets an example where almost everyone faces the expectations of having a secure job, starting their own family, or, in some extreme cases, buying a home, in our twenties. In real life, however, such scenarios are not designed to be fit for all. When this realization occurs, it shatters one's faith in their ability to maneuver through adulthood.

Eventually, one begins to rethink the very standards by which an ideal adult is set. Do all ideal adults focus on starting jobs as soon as possible? Do they eat, sleep, and work differently to achieve impossible feats by a very young age? Is sacrificing dream goals a common practice in order to meet society's standards? Or is there something fundamentally incorrect in our ideology of the perfect adult?

I personally believe the issue is with the latter, and the creation of such a thought process starts earlier than you think.

Usually, we are taught to follow one of two main ways of living; you are either taught to focus on attaining happiness, or achieving accomplishments related to your academics or career. The problem lies in the lack of emphasis on how these goals or accomplishments are achieved and how long it will take to achieve them. Consequently, we grow up with the belief that education entitles us to a job immediately, which will allow us to acquire financial stability, as though they come one after the other automatically.

In reality, proper adult decisions should be tailored according to an individual's own wants and

needs in terms of our career and family, as these desires and requirements vary from person to person. In fact, even the age when a person is first forced to make important decisions can vary depending on how life treats you. Sometimes, the youngest of children have to run their families and make major life decisions.

Just because your neighbour found comfort in early entrepreneurship, does not mean you necessarily will. If your parents found interest in pursuing degree after degree and building a career in academics, you do not need to force yourself to study against your will. Your career path and general life decisions can be influenced by others, but in my opinion, should ultimately be made on the basis of what you believe will be best for

yourself. There is no exact, fool-proof decision that will automatically guarantee you as set for life. Both major and minor life decisions consist of a lot of trial and error.

In the end, I personally believe whether you love the career path that you are choosing for yourself, or whether you are capable of bearing the consequences of decisions that you make is of great importance. A lot of the time you just need to ensure that you're trying your best in your given situation, so that come what may, you will not have any regrets.

Have faith in the fact that you are meant to be where you are in life, even your most unnoticeable struggles will all be worth it as long as you yourself find contentment in the path you choose.

Bushra Zaman likes books, art, and only being contacted by email. Contact her at bushra-zaman31@yahoo.com



DESIGN: FATIMA JAHAN ENA

The problem with using slurs in friend groups

NAHIAN NAWAR

Using derogatory terms at the expense of marginalised groups is never okay, no matter what the context may be. However, it is disturbingly commonplace for people to justify the use of slurs between friends, brushing it off as harmless jokes or banter between pals.

Many claim that it is perfectly fine and within your rights to call your friend names as long as they are not personally offended. This rationalisation is flimsy, since the consequence of casually throwing around these damaging pejoratives contributes to the normalisation of this kind of conduct.

Over time, you become desensitised to the harmful language and when these words are used by people with actual malicious intent, you may fail to identify

it as an issue.

The idea that just because one member of a community grants you a supposed "get out of jail free card" to use an abusive epithet, you are now allowed to make it your own without any repercussions, is absurd. This is because the implications of certain words always remain the same, regardless of the way you may mean it.

The role that peer pressure plays in perpetuating this culture of using slurs in friend groups must also be taken into account. More often than not, those who



are on the receiving end of these demeaning slurs do not have a say in whether they find these terms to be disrespectful. They are simply expected to be a good sport and play along. Speaking up or protesting is never a viable option for them, because the moment they voice a concern, they will be accused of being petty or worse still, be officially pronounced a "snowflake" who "can't take a joke".

In that instance, staying mum can feel like the easier way to go about it. One can't blame them of course.

That is not to say that the rest of us can also keep turning a blind eye to this practice when we see it happening around us, especially in our own circle of peers. Calling out your friends on their ignorance and letting them know when they are in the wrong is always a wise thing to do, even if it means you have to burn a few bridges along the way.

At the end of the day, however, none of us can dictate how others behave but we do have full control over our own actions. So, making sure that we ourselves refrain from using slurs that may potentially hurt a community of people, even as an alleged joke, is key.

Nahian Nawar is a slow reader and a fast eater. Teach her how to change her ways by reaching out at nahianawardhk@gmail.com

PHYSICAL ABUSE IN SCHOOLS

An unending nightmare

HASIB UR RASHID IFTI

On a quiet sunny afternoon, I quietly came back to my seat with my eyes looking at the floor because I was too ashamed to look at the faces staring at me. I kept staring at my bruised palm, still shaking from the impact of the rubber scale that hit me. I was in class 5 then, too old to be crying after getting hit by my teacher rather than just taking it like the rest of my classmates.

Over the next five years, the abuse would get normalised. Getting slapped, smacked, and bruised over the simplest of offences would later become our high school memories. We gave up trying to justify ourselves or even trying to comprehend whether we were truly guilty or not. Only years later as I met more people, did I realise that we were not the only ones. High schools across Bangladesh are guilty of traumatising their students through a continuous and elaborate process of physical and mental abuse.

Ishraq Bin Akram reminisced his days at Ideal School and College. "We were required to attend Zuhr prayer in our school. I used to attend it regularly but one afternoon, I couldn't even lift my head because my sinuses started acting up again. A teacher came to the room searching for students who were bunking prayers. Before I could even explain myself, he started hitting me until I got up and went to the mosque."

"Another day during recess, I was talking to my friend while sitting on my bench. There was a bit of commotion going on because it was our tiffin break. A teacher came to our room and saw me talk to my friend. He made me stand up and pinched me hard on my stomach. It got all swollen up and I couldn't stand straight for an entire period," continued Ishraq.

"Our class teacher used to grab my hair and shake my head grabbing it. My head would ache and he would top it off by slapping me," said Mahir Asiful Haque, another Ideal School and College alumnus. "I once went to the school after three days because I was sick. After attendance, he made me kneel in front of the classroom the entire period and in the end, hit me a couple of times before I could go to my seat."

What's more disturbing than the continuous physical and mental abuse is the normalisation of it among the victims themselves. Most high-school students facing the abuse don't even realise the severity of the injustice they're facing and often tend to accept the abuse silently. In some cases, even the guardians don't consider the violence in schools to be problematic and consider it to be a necessary evil.

Abdullah Al Faiaz, an ex-student of St. Joseph Higher Secondary School, believes students are often wired in such a way that they never really question a teacher's integrity.

Abdullah shared his experience, "There was a cricket match going on between Bangladesh and New Zealand. Class time was almost over and I couldn't control the urge to know the score. I asked my class prefect what the score was. The teacher slapped me a couple of times with a hardcover diary and I literally bled from my ears. The worst part was, after all of these, I couldn't dare blame him about it because I was wired to think teachers could never cross the line."

Galeev Hasan Rafee, who shifted from an English medium school to Ideal School and College in class 6, had a tough time coping with the abuse, "The culture was obviously different and I was having trouble coping with it. But I got a tremendous shock in the first class when I saw a teacher throw a duster at a student. And after recess, I saw teachers grabbing students by the collars, chasing them and beating them up, forcing them to attend the Zuhr prayer. I developed a fever from the fear of being beaten up in the first week in school."

The narrative defending corporal punishment in schools revolves around the idea of educating students about discipline and morality. With this excuse at hand, abusive teachers unleash hell on students over the slightest of blunders or misunderstandings.

Manzoor Elahi Tamjeed, an ex-student of Motijheel Govt. Boys High School, spoke of his days at school,

"Our exam copies were distributed and there were some counting mistakes in my copy. I went to the examiner and he told me to sit down. I couldn't hear him say it, so I simply stood there. He slapped me right below my ear. It was buzzing for a while after that."

"Back in class 9, our math teacher used to write down formulas on the board and asked us to recite them from memory the next day. If someone couldn't answer properly, he'd grab our neck, bend us over and smack us really hard on our backs," Manzoor continued.

The abuse doesn't stop for the female students as well. Mental abuse, shaming, verbal abuse, academic bullying – these are common in most girls' schools in the country.

Nuzaima Islam Arunima, an ex-student of Ideal School and College, had to leave the Scout organisation in her school owing to the rude behaviour of her physical training (PT) teacher. "In class 10, we were supposed to bring our guardians to the parent-teacher meeting. I went into the school first while my mother was behind me outside the gate. The PT teacher howled at me for not bringing my parent, accused me of bunking classes and roaming outside. Before I could even explain myself, she simply smacked me on my face as my mother watched from across the gate."

The situation outside the capital only gets worse. Be it the lack of consciousness on the guardians' part or the lack of implementation of laws regarding physical abuse in schools, students from schools outside the major cities often have to endure much worse physical violence.

Rakib Hossain Mridul, an ex-student of Rajshahi Collegiate School, shared his experience, "During the early years of our high school, a certain English teacher used to remind us how students and cows can be kept in a straight line while moving forward by the use of a cane only. She used to stretch her arm, gather all the momentum necessary and hit us with a full swing again and again until she was certain that it had hurt us proportional to our height and weight."

Junaid Jalal, an ex-student of Government Muslim High

School, Chittagong said, "A teacher used to bring a cane to class every day. One day he told the class captain to note down the roll numbers of the students who were talking in class. The class captain included my roll. The teacher came and kept hitting me on my palm with all his strength. My wrist started bleeding. I was in class 5 back then."

In 2011, Bangladesh's High Court declared all types of corporal punishment in schools to be "illegal and unconstitutional" after Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST) and Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK)'s litigation to stop cruel punishment for children.

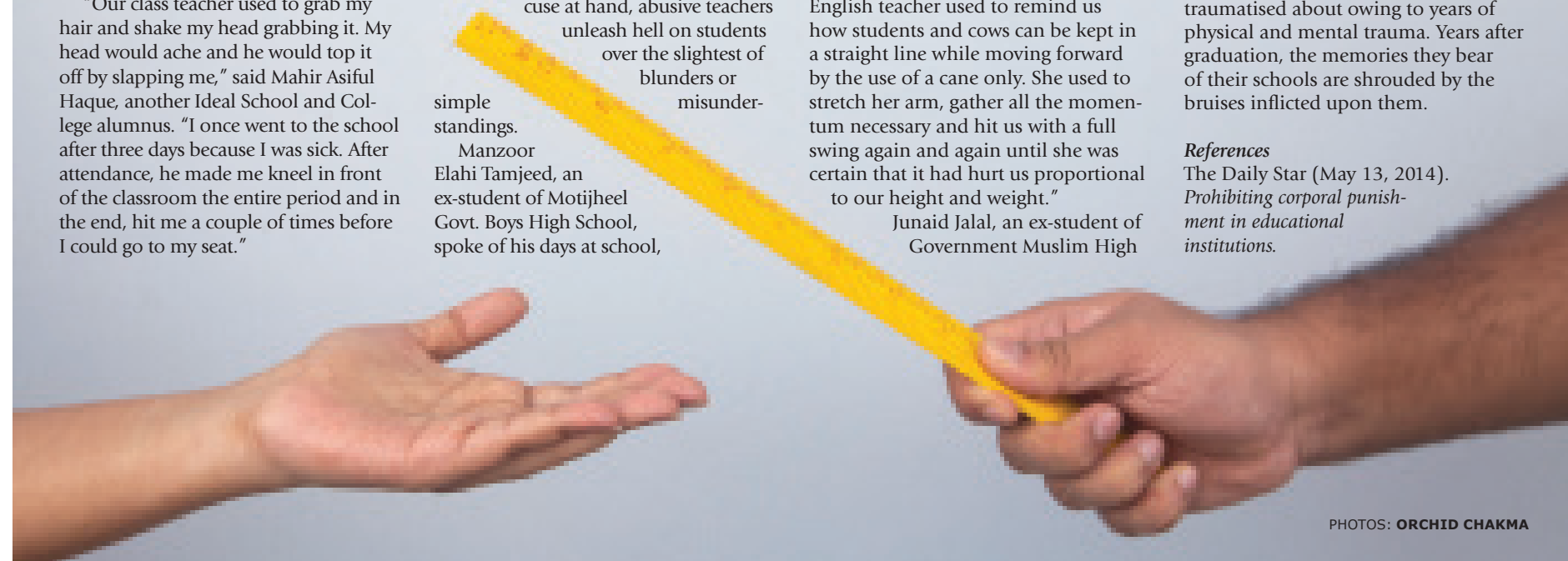
Habib Ullah, senior teacher at Ideal School and College, believes corporal punishment should be replaced by a counselling committee responsible for maintaining discipline in the institutions. "Students at this age need to be educated on discipline and regulation. The sense of discipline and authority students perceive at this tender age in the institutions is absolutely crucial. However, corporal punishment cannot be our way forward," says Habib.

"Teachers should not have the authority to raise hands on their students. A more feasible approach would be to install a counselling committee in each institution. If a student is causing nuisance, he can be reported to the body which'd be responsible for counselling the student, peacefully mitigating the situation and take whatever disciplinary actions necessary."

However, even in 2022, corporal punishment is in application in multiple schools across the country. Authoritative teachers and guardians still consider this sort of practice to be essential in students' moral discipline.

What should've been the golden years of their lives, ends up being the ones these students loathe and feel traumatised about owing to years of physical and mental trauma. Years after graduation, the memories they bear of their schools are shrouded by the bruises inflicted upon them.

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PHOTOS: ORCHID CHAKMA

Public engineering university admissions prep coming up

What English medium students should know

FABIHA AFIFA

The months of May and June have marked the end of O and A Level exams for students across the country. With classes scheduled to start after Eid, I am sure they are spending their few days of vacation either worrying about results or considering what they wish to do after high school.

If you're an English medium student and have decided to give public engineering universities in Bangladesh a shot, here are some tips for you – in the context of preparation for the admissions tests – that I wish someone had told me before.

Be ready to learn a lot of new information

Although it's common sense because you'll be studying content from an entirely different curriculum, many students often either fail to keep this in mind or simply don't realise the significance of the statement when they first embark on their admissions prep journey.

It won't matter if you're an Edexcel or Cambridge student, there will be certain



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

topics, especially in Mathematics (e.g. complex numbers, conics and permutations and combinations) and Chemistry (e.g. vocational chemistry), that you will have to learn in depth, from scratch. This is why it's important to walk into this journey with sound knowledge of the

syllabus and willingness to work on it daily because that way, the workload will always be doable.

Be ready to unlearn a lot of information

On the flip side of the coin, there are also certain things that you will need to unlearn during this time.

For instance, something as familiar as the Periodic table will become quite different later on. It's not just the content you study, either. As Showvik Biswas, a CSE student at Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) and Dhanmondi Tutorial alumnus, recalls, "One thing I had to unlearn while I was studying for the admissions tests was relying on last-minute efforts. Last-minute efforts can definitely take someone a long way during A Levels but that will not amount to anything here. You have to be on the grind from the very start."

Know that classes at coaching will not cover everything in the syllabus.

Gone will be the days of teachers guiding you through the entire syllabus. At admissions tuition, teachers place a lot

more responsibility on you and trust you to do your research on what has not been covered in class and to study those concepts on your own. These untaught topics are always ones that you have already studied during your A Levels and should not need assistance understanding.

While this sounds fairly rational, again, many students often don't figure this out for a while and depend blindly on the notes given at class and once they do take a few tests and understand that they have to self-study a lot as well, there's already an overwhelming workload awaiting them at their study tables.

Ultimately, it's crucial to realise that the chaos surrounding public university admissions is just white noise. It certainly is difficult; it requires plenty of hard work, even more smart strategising and a sprinkle of luck but if you think about it, that's like almost any goal you'll have in life. The best you can do is believe in yourself to give your best and more importantly, believe in yourself to thrive no matter what the outcome.

Fabiha is secretly a Lannister noblewoman and a Slytherin alum. Pledge your allegiance and soul to her at afifafabiha01@gmail.com

Things we'd like to see from our local booktok

NAMREEN SHAIYAZ

The book side of TikTok – "booktok" – is the side of the social media app where people share their love for books. People make videos to share book recommendations, post their favourite excerpts, or make funny content about reading in general.

However, when compared to other countries, our local booktok is just not up to the mark. Here are some ways to improve that.

MORE CONTENT CREATORS

The biggest thing that our local booktok lacks is the amount of people actually making book-related content. Other than a handful of accounts, there are very few people who post about books or any kind of reading-related content.

A lack of content creators means there is less content in general. Different people have different tastes, and a limited number of people will not be able to cover everyone's needs. There is myriad content that can be made about books, starting from funny skits about reader's struggles, to in-depth analysis on various stories.

VARIETY OF CONTENT

Of the current content that does exist, a lot can become repetitive. Most booktok posts discuss the same few authors of one genre and it is mostly just their books



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

only. It is completely normal for people to make more content on popular, well-loved authors as more people read their writing, so videos about them are more popular, and get more likes and views.

However, it's gotten to the point where these people are the only ones who are

discussed, and underrated writers from less popular genres are not given the same love. While getting good engagement is important for content creators to thrive, the main focus of booktok should be for book enthusiasts to share their love of reading. Adhering to what only the

majority prefers alienates people who are not into mainstream content. This is something that does not only affect our local side, but is an issue on an international level as well.

CONTENT ON LOCAL BOOKS

Booktok in Bangladesh has the opportunity to become something big. The amount of literature available is immense, and there is much to discuss and dissect on the contemporary and classic scale. There are certain Instagram accounts that share lines from local books, but the amount of content that can fit into a 3-minute video is very different from a post.

Besides, most of these posts tend to be about the aesthetic rather than the content in them. The number of videos that could be made about Bangladeshi novels is untapped and unexplored material. At the same time, it can introduce local stories to the world. Most of booktok is very Euro-centric, and introducing our country's books will help diversify it on a global scale. As previously discussed, booktok is in desperate need of some variation, and this might be able to spread some of that.

Namreen has been stuck in the void for too long. Send help at namreen.shaiyaz@gmail.com

WHEN THE SILENCE SPEAKS

HRISHIK ROY

When the silence speaks
At the dead of these summer nights,
It narrates me tales of brave knights,
Myths of spirits and witches pale
And legendary sailors who set sail.

The silence reminds me about
Failures from the present and the past,
As I look at these damned memories with aghast,
Very slowly creeping on my sanity
Taking away every last inch of my vanity.

It talks to me about unrequited love,
And the mysteries of our colliding hearts —
The misery of our frequencies not being on the
same Hertz—
Highlighting the bleakness of my mundane life
Where tragedies and happiness are both rife.

The profound silence whispers to me
To be optimistic in the face of such tragedy.
“For the road to paradise begins in hell,”
While I remain a prisoner in my mind’s cell.

The pin-drop silence smiles a smug grin
As it leaves me to usher in a new day—
Hopefully one where dreams are fulfilled to the
brim
And one where such night journeys are much less
grim.

Send Hrishik song recommendations for his new playlist
at hrdibbo@gmail.com

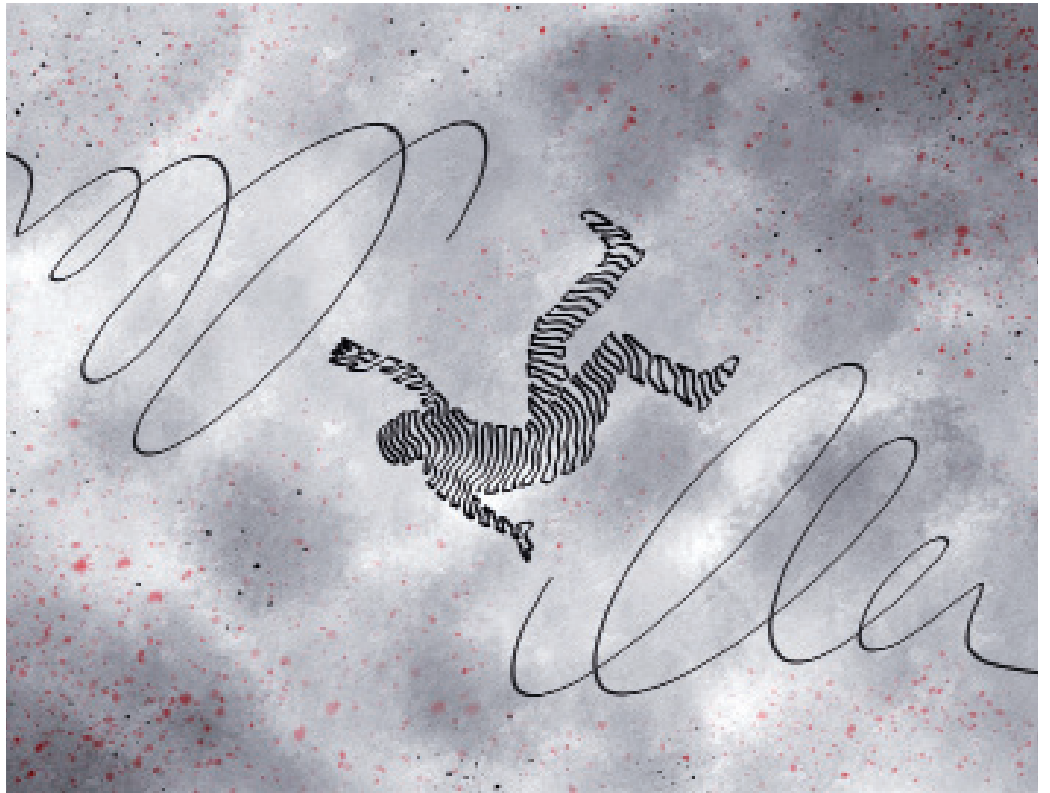


ILLUSTRATION: ABRAR JAHIN ALVEE

Only If They Knew

ABRAR JAHIN ALVEE

They're not ready for the truth, they won't understand. Even if I explain the whole thing to them, they won't. No matter how I explain why I did what I did, they'll never get it. There was no other way to resolve this thing, no other way to redeem myself. Only if they knew.

Damn it, I'm back where I was again, this is getting out of hand. I'm not getting anywhere with this, just babbling to myself won't change anything, not anymore. It's just too late, too late for me to think now. What's done is done, rational or not.

I saw it happening. I saw it happening right in front of my eyes and something inside of me just snapped. It was the same injustice that was done to me, same pain that was inflected years ago. People are extraordinary beings, they can tolerate almost everything, but only so much. I felt this blood pumping impulse to do what's right. Something had to be done, someone had to step up and put an end to that.

So I did it, I put an end to that monster, that disgrace of a human. A wrong had been done to make it right. That piece of filth can't hurt anyone anymore. His days of vicious rampant are finally over, his laughs won't echo on those walls anymore. What did it cost, you ask? My soul? My soul died a long time ago. All this time, I was bearing it like a rotten corpse, the same as the one lying on the floor.

I don't think I can ever forget what I did, ever

leave it behind like it never happened. Or maybe pretend it all just was a nightmare, the worst of its kind. Am I relieved? Relieved that the possibilities I was presented with were limitless, yet I chose the most permanent one? I can't tell.

I can't tell if I was shocked or just angry afterwards, shocked that I had done the unthinkable, or angry that nobody else was there to do it for me. Maybe I was angry, angry at myself, for staying dormant all these years, never standing up and being vocal.

I just remember feeling so calm, so quite after the unthinkable had happened. Unthinkable! How coy I'm being. Well, it's pretty thinkable, it's pretty damn thinkable now that it's done.

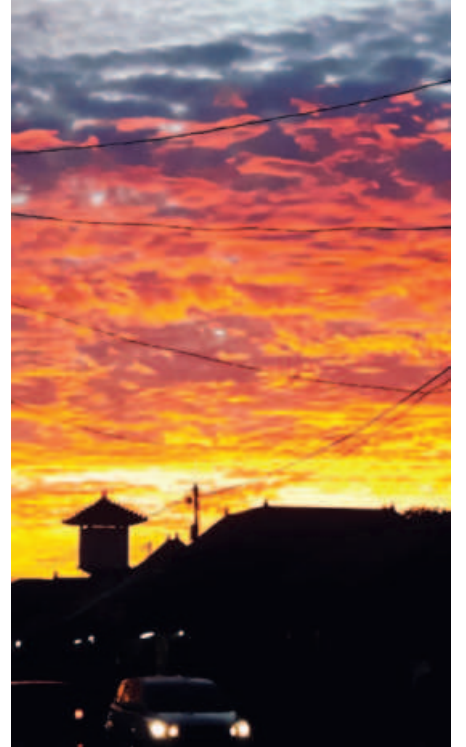
Was it justice that I served? Maybe the public opinion will be on my side, but does it matter? The people in blue will investigate and the people in black will seal my fate.

Are they ready for the truth? Will they understand? If I explain the whole thing to them, won't they? If I explain why I did what I did, won't they ever get it? Only if they knew there was no other way to resolve this thing, no other way for me to redeem myself.

Only if they knew.

Abrar Jahin Alvee is trying to keep it low, but he's down for hustle if you got any bright ideas or cool projects in mind, throw him a bone at abraralv@gmail.com





DIVINE

Red and blue, day and night
Oranges, yellows, dim and bright
The sun, its rays, a master design
Colours on a spectrum divine

PHOTOS BY **SARA KABIR**
CURATED BY **ORCHID CHAKMA**

