

# EDITORIAL

With the ongoing load-shedding situation and the extreme heat that we have been experiencing, I finally caught a nasty cold last week. The heat, coupled with my already weak immune system, made for the perfect recipe for this disaster. However, I found solace in my hearty bowls of tom yum soup and warm cups of ginger lemon tea.

Unfortunately, the tea that offered me a little piece of heaven, is the source of misery and exploitation for the many tea workers who get paid 120 taka or less for an entire day's work. Work they have to show up for, come rain or shine. Even with the kind of heat that managed to make me sick, regardless of my privilege that allows me to seek shelter from it for the most part.

Finding comfort in the fruit of exploited labour is my privilege, as it is for many of us. I recognise it. But to sit in my air conditioned office and call the living conditions for all the people of our country heavenly, would be outrageous.

Or would it?

-- Syeda Afrin Tarannum, Sub-editor, SHOUT



## PLAYWATCH

### TV SERIES



# Humanising Horror The Sandman's "24/7"

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*The following article contains spoilers for The Sandman.*

The Sandman's Netflix release brought with it a plethora of opinions. Many fans of the original comics by Neil Gaiman were miffed by the mellowing of the comics' gruesome tone. However, it would be a misjudgement to think that the series lacks dark themes. The horror might be less raw, but not less ruthless.

In the comics, John Dee (aka Doctor Destiny) is portrayed as a supervillain set upon a path of destruction for ambiguous reasons. He is evil for the sake of being evil. The series takes care not to leave the waters as murky.

The first four episodes not only build the narrative around Morpheus (the titular Sandman) but also provide a solid background for John Dee. We learn about his past and the world of lies his mother wove for him. We see that his primary view of the world and humanity is warped as a result, and that he wishes to eradicate all lies from existence to make up for the psychological wounds he suffered due to his mother's lies.

It is with this understanding that we enter episode five, "24/7", an adaptation of the comic issue titled 24 Hours. Set in a 24-hour diner and revolving around the lives of the people in it within a 24-hour time period, this episode is nearly isolated from the larger world of The Sandman.

Through John Dee's eyes, we explore the stories of the customers and employees at the diner while they are stuck in a time loop. We act as passive witnesses as the various lies these characters tell each other and themselves, either to provide

social lubrication or remain hopeful about their own prospects, get stripped away by John Dee using Morpheus's ruby.

Meanwhile, the enclosed bubble-like atmosphere of the diner allows the tension to grow till it boils over. The claustrophobic environment adds to the audience's growing anxiety about why the Sandman is not yet there to put an end to the insanity. As we slowly come to terms with the fact that a hero is not going to arrive and save these people, the hopelessness of the situation solidifies in our minds.

As the characters begin self-mutilating and ultimately killing themselves in increasingly vicious manners, The Sandman leaves behind its label of a fantasy show and embraces body horror. Accompanied by the ambient music and dark hues, the scene with all the corpses lying dead on the floor of the diner feels paradoxically cinematic yet terrifyingly real. And the appearance of Morpheus in the end, after everyone is dead and there is no one left to save, acts as the final touch of horror.

John Dee's appearance isn't outright scary, as in the comics. However, it is knowing that a malevolent storm is brewing behind that face that makes his character even more chilling than it originally was. His goals in "24/7" are not only comprehensible, they are even desirable. After all, who doesn't want a world without lies? However, seeing the grotesque outcome of that wish renders a quality of eeriness to the story that the comics couldn't achieve.

*Zaima spends much of her time fantasising about Mazikean. Send her your sympathies at zaima2004adrta@gmail.com*

TITLE OF YOUR MIXTAPE



A	B
I Can't Handle Change R.O.A.R.	Sheishob Dinraatri Karnival
I'm Just A Kid Simple Plan	Avalanche Bring Me The Horizon
Oblivion Grimes	Imagination Foster The People
Shiki No Uta Minmi	High Hopes Panic! At The Disco

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