

# YOUR ZOOM WEDDING STARTS IN 10...



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PLEASE WAIT FOR A FEW MINUTES. THE HOST WILL LET YOU IN SOON.

I adjust my bangles, probably for the 100th time. Sigh. You'd expect this wedding ceremony to go smoother, what with the digital upgrade to this marriage. Well, some things never change. It's okay though, I remind myself; this is a minor issue. At least, this virtual wedding won't be witnessing any of the sillier obstacles you face when you're getting married for real, real.

I consider calling my betrothed to get an update on their virtual ETA but I am frankly too mad. How can they be late to a virtual wedding ceremony? What are they busy with, adorning the Wi-Fi router? I am interrupted from planning out the incoming arguments in my mind by the sudden cheer of everyone around me. I peek at the screen through my wool-thick red veil and see we are finally in the Zoom meeting—I mean, wedding—but the setting isn't right. Someone from the groom's side is sharing the screen and—oh no. We are now watching the music video of *Desi Boyz*.

YOUR INTERNET CONNECTION IS UNSTABLE.

The pop-up flashes on my laptop. This really makes it worse because the half-naked boys, who are the *Desi Boyz*, are still dancing on screen. The video keeps freezing so we have currently only been able to pick up "Make....noise...boys!" Miraculously, both the screen sharing and music are abruptly stopped as I hear a voice say, "Chachu! That is not what we meant by grand entrance!" I hear more chuckles from the

other side. Inevitably, a small smile escapes my lips too.

The virtual background is changed once again, and we are now looking at a bunch of people dressed in *sherwanis* and *lehengas*, sitting in front of... a virtual beach? Hmm. I did want to get married at a beach. Oh well, virtual life, fancy dreams.

My to-be is finally sitting on the other side, his face just as concealed as mine, except his is with the traditional *sehra*. I would have preferred to glance a few more times at him had the chat notification on Zoom not *tinged* just then. "You look

lovely..." I feel myself stifle a big smile, thinking how romantic my Mr. To-be is!

Hah, if only. The next chat notification comes in, this time from my sister, replying, "Thanks, Zayd!"

...wait a minute.

Zayd, my brother-in-law, is seriously attempting to flirt with my sister on a ZOOM VIDEO CALL? Everyone is too busy to notice the romance blossoming in the chat, save for my sister who soon catches my evil eye and immediately stops typing.

The *qazi* is now brought to the video call hurriedly, amidst many phone flashlights

going off from all sides. The *dua* is recited, followed by the *qazi's* distorted voice now asking me for my consent in accepting the holy matrimony. I think the fact that I'm seated so far from the laptop has caused some sort of panic to the *qazi*, who has covered the entire screen now with his zoomed-in face. Not exactly the vision to have while I am about to say the final words.

Just as the "*kobul*" is about to be uttered from my mouth for the third time, the shrill ringtone from my dad's phone steals the spotlight. Inexplicably, it is my dad's old neighbour's aunt's daughter who is calling. We are all baffled, and naturally uneasy, given the current situation's pattern of hurling unexpected bad news. Panicked, my dad picks up quickly and speaks, "*Salaam apa*, all okay?" We wait in bated breath, waiting for the person on the other end to speak up. After an eternity of WhatsApp reconnecting, we hear her say, "Well, well, well. Forgot to invite your closest people, eh?"

My dad looks up, confused, just as the *qazi* coughs in a not-so-subtle manner, prompting me to finish the less important task at hand than dealing with the *apa*.

Heart beating fast, I am finally about to utter yes, one final time. And just as I am about to—

The electricity goes away.

Roshni likes to travel in her mind and explore different writing streams. Mail her your thoughts on other prompts you'd like to read at [roshni.shamim@gmail.com](mailto:roshni.shamim@gmail.com)

