

# LIVING

## What an Engagement Entails

by Sylvia Saleem

**T**HE engagement time is a time of planning, choosing and, usually, spending and adjusting. No matter how large or small our resources are, there never seems to be quite enough money to buy all the things we have set our hearts on.

There is so much to choose from, that shopping for a new home is an exciting but very complicated business. Even more exciting and complicated because there are two people involved in it. A piece of furniture, a coffee set or cutlery may be good in itself but even if it is the best buy, the best value for money, the engaged couple have to decide whether they both like it and whether it is right for the home they are planning together.

In many ways it is more important how we choose than what. Sometimes, our tastes are quite different. Who then will have the last, deciding word? This is a matter of understanding what is at stake. Happiness in marriage begins during the engagement. The important thing is to realise that adjusting from "me" to "us" has already started.

### A Matter of Taste

There are some things on which one of the two is more knowledgeable than the other, some things that one of them will be using more often. But there are many things on which the final choice will be simply a matter of taste. And these are often the most important and difficult to settle.

When we are planning and deciding about our future home, the things to go in it and how we will furnish and decorate it, the way we will live and how we will entertain our friends — over all this we can all be quite surprisingly obstinate. This is not really surprising when one comes to think how long we have taken many things for granted in our own childhood home. We tend to assume that certain things should always be as we have always known them and to resent any change. In other ways we are, on the contrary, only too anxious to be more up-to-date and progressive and not follow the old pattern.

It is essential to understand just how deeprooted these tastes are and to allow for the fact that the one we are en-

gaged to may have quite different tastes that are just as strongly felt. And this difference is not necessarily a bad thing.

### Planning Together

How important is it, if we are to make a successful and happy marriage, that our tastes should be alike? Or, at any

ways held. What was "her" taste or "his" has become "theirs". Reaching agreement may be a really difficult business for them, but the process can produce some very satisfactory results.

These differences and the way they are settled are perhaps the most important — and



A part of the engagement ceremony

rate, that our tastes should fit in with each other's?

It is usually rash to generalise about anything so individual as marriage. But we have all of us seen marriages where the husband and wife are so much alike you might almost take them for brother and sister or even twins. People remark how "well-suited" they are to each other. They have very little difficulty in planning and choosing and can agree easily on priorities. The rest of us may envy them the ease and comfort and speed with which they decide.

Other marriages are almost the reverse of this. Nothing can be settled without a lot of discussion and some heat. At first glance we may feel these two are not "suited" but if we know them well we may find that somehow their relationship is richer because of these differences. Everything comes out new, nothing is a mere replica of tastes they have al-

revealing — aspect of an engagement. A difference of opinion about whether there should be tea or coffee for breakfast may, to an outsider, seem a silly thing to get heated about. What does it matter, why not toss up or take turns or have both? But when we are engaged and are beginning to plan a marriage and a home we realise how strongly we feel about such details that have always been taken for granted. The beloved may suddenly seem exasperatingly obstinate about his coffee or tea, or about whether to buy modern or traditional furniture.

**The Mutual Opinion**  
So, as we plan and choose and spend both money and time coming to agreement or agreeing to differ, we gradually find that something quite new is happening. Out of the differences comes a third opinion, which is a mutual opinion. Since marriage is a total relationship and not a limited

one, there is an almost infinite amount of this discussing and deciding to be done. Much of it is as new and exciting as one could ever have imagined. Some of it is difficult and tiresome because it is difficult to recognise our own obstinacy and the things we have always taken for granted.

Over most things we can probably laugh and if necessary give way or give in or compromise. But if there are a lot of them or if they are things that matter vitally to us and we cannot reach an opinion or decision that is "ours" rather than just his or hers, then more serious doubts begin to arise in us and a more hurtful dispute looms up. We begin to wonder if, after all, we are "suited"; if we can ever make a go of it, if we ought to think again before actually getting married.

### Romantic Love

These doubts are worrying and disturbing but it is absurd to pretend they don't happen or think that being in love and engaged should be nothing but walking on blissful air, above the clouds. Much of it is, but not all of it. Clear-headed lookers-on are apt to feel that a friend or colleague who has fallen in love has, so to speak, caught something, some sort of delirious madness. What can you expect? They ask indulgently, she's in love! Responsible elders are apt to shake their heads kindly but fearfully, as though no-one can tell what the outcome of this attack may be. Romantic love often incurs an indulgent but frowning envy. Why?

People point to the mistakes it sometimes leads to, to the unhappy or "unsuitable" marriages that sometimes come of it. But really this only confirms what we all know, that marriage is an adventurous project. We should not be afraid or too easily critical of the romantic aspect of love. Some Darbys and Joans can get along comfortably without it. Their tastes are very much alike and that is the kind of marriage they want. They are contented though sometimes, perhaps, a little bored. For others, the magic of romantic love is the most exciting and, therefore, the most precious part of their relationship.

(To be continued)

## Popularising Designer Jewellery

by Lavina Ambreen Ahmed

**E**VERY fashion conscious or not so conscious woman is probably well acquainted with designer clothes, thanks to the frequent dress sales that take place all the year round in the city these days.

But what about designer jewellery? In countries like the US, Europe and the rest of the fashion connoisseurs including our neighbouring India, where brand names sell like hot cakes, it's still not all that popular in our country.

To promote this trend here in Bangladesh, Nibras Panni, a young designer, recently held a sale of her costume jewellery at Dhanmondi.

About two hundred pieces of ornaments mainly earrings and necklaces made out of wooden beads, marbles, tassels, dried berries, glass or plastic beads, and false ivory materials were displayed at the exhibition.

Talking about how she got things started, Nibras says, she was always keen on designing jewellery, but the idea of starting up a sale first came, while she was studying fashion designing back in Singapore. "You see, I had all these ideas piled up in me and felt like I simply had to do something about it," confides the vivacious entrepreneur. Eventually, she created "Moods" designer jewellery, which acted as the outlet of her creative flair.

Explaining the significance of the name "Moods", Nibras says, that people wear jewellery matching with their various moods, whether one is feeling blue or maybe is in a party mood, or a no-nonsense mood, one can express oneself with the right jewellery. "Secondly, my mother thinks it is an apt name for my store as I'm such a moody person!" she chuckles.

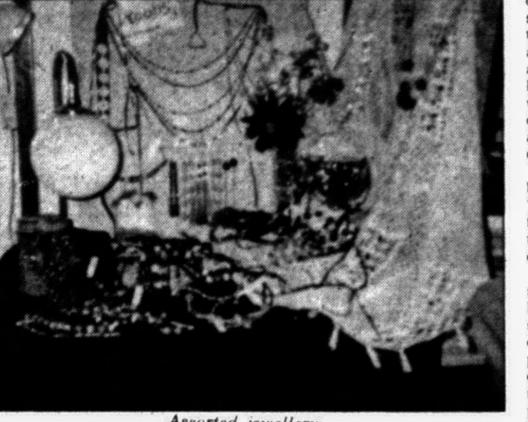
"My mother is my greatest inspiration, she encourages and helps me a lot with the designs. Without her I couldn't have managed alone," adds Nibras in a serious tone.

The price of her accessories ranged from Tk 20 to Tk 150, which she feels is a lot cheaper compared to the

typical ones from Bangkok, Singapore and India that flood all the city shopping centres.

Thinking about the majority of her customers who are mostly students, both guys and girls aging from thirteen onwards, Nibras says she tries to keep the price as reasonable as possible. "Most of younger generation are interested in funky trendy stuff but they might not have too much

feels. People are always on the lookout for something original and trendy as well as something within their budget. The local stores don't provide them with a vast collection of unusual jewellery and even if they have some exclusive pieces, the price might act as a positive turn off. Take into account the few shops, 'Aarong', 'Probartana', 'Kumudini' where the gold plated



Assorted jewellery

money to spend on them. Instead of scaring them off with a 'beyond their reach' price tag, I want to satisfy each and every customer, who wants to purchase something from me," explains Nibras.

From where does she get her designs? "From my head, where else!" was the direct reply. "Of course, I keep an eye on today's style, go through the latest magazines and watch the current TV, programmes, or movies specially, the fashion shows, shown on 'Star Plus', but the rest is strictly my imagination," she admits. Judging by her successful sale, it seems that her imagination can work wonders. All the accessories of her two days' sale were sold out and now she is working on orders.

Giving the reason behind the success of her sale, Nibras

without fussing too much whether or not it matches or clashes with your outfit."

Among some of her many designs a long dangling earring made out of beige slightly carved wooden beads decorated with blue thread was quite impressive. It also came in a green, black and red shade.

So was another type of long one colour or multicoloured earring made of tassels.

There were also several 'classy' chokers with three strings of wooden beads meant to fit snugly on the neck and also a black felt one with white applique flowers stitched on it. If not anything, these chokers were at least, a refreshing change from the ones we see at every jewellery store nowadays.

Long bead necklaces of vibrant hues and a simple 'peace' sign hanging loose from a 'kattan' (a kind of black thread) were also the favourite of many.

As for the future Nibras says, she is not that eager to have a regular store, feeling she will lose interest once the excitement dies down. "My plan is to have a store, but I'll organize a sale, only once a month. This will give me plenty of time to work on the designs and bring out new styles at each sale," she adds. She is planning to introduce accessories made out of semi-precious stones i.e., pearl, sapphire, topaz, amethyst and moonstones in her next sale.

Making these jewellery demands a lot of time and concentration, and the job often proves to be quite tedious. "But the contented smile on my customers' faces is a great satisfaction and more than makes up for all the hard work," says the designer.

Now that someone has taken the initiative and set an example, we can surely expect to see more people coming forward with such creative ventures — as all Bangladeshis ever needed was a slight push on the back to get the ball rolling. And, maybe we too, can proudly boast of our own famous designer's some day.

### Potato Nests

- 1 lb cold mashed potatoes
- 1 dessertspoon butter
- 2 dessertspoons grated cheese

- 1 small tin green peas
  - 12 boiled prawns
  - pepper and salt
- Mix the potato with the butter, cheese, pepper and salt, and pipe the mixture through an icing nozzle into nest shapes. Choose a nozzle like the small rose nozzle, or the shell nozzle. These make markings which give the effect of twigs. Build the sides of the nests up rather high. Bake in a hot oven till brown. Fill each nest with green peas, and perch a boiled prawn on top. Leave the red tail on the prawn so that it looks like a brightly-coloured bird.

### Potato Puffs

- 1/2 lb boiled potatoes
- yolk of 1 egg
- 1 oz butter
- about 3 tablespoofuls milk
- salt and pepper to taste
- 1 little beaten egg

Pass the potatoes through a potato masher, and turn into a large basin or pudding bowl. Pour on the melted butter, and mix with a fork. Now add the yolk of egg mixed with half the milk, and beat thoroughly with a fork until light and fluffy. Season to taste, and add the rest of the milk gradually until the mixture is soft enough to pass through a fancy rose pipe or plan meringue pipe. Place the pipe in a double cornucopia of grease-proof paper, put in the potato mixture, and pipe on to a buttered tin in small fancy-shaped mounds. Brush very lightly (so as not to spoil the shape) with the beaten egg, and bake in a quick oven until tipped with brown. Life off very carefully and serve on a hot dish with a paper doyley, garnishing here and there with small tufts of fresh parsley, or a tiny sprig of parsley stuck on the top of each puff.

### Potatoes, Roasted

- 1 lb potatoes
  - 1 oz dripping
  - salt
  - pepper
- Choose round, equal-sized potatoes. Wash and pare the potatoes as directed in Recipe 423. Put them into a saucepan

## Cookery

with sufficient boiling water to cover them and add a little salt. Boil for 10 minutes and then drain. Sprinkle them over with a little flour and place them in a baking tin with the dripping. Bake in a moderate oven until they are cooked and nicely browned, adding salt to taste. Turn the potatoes occasionally during the cooking. Drain them from the dripping before serving.

N. B. If a joint of meat is being roasted the potatoes can be cooked in the same pan.

### Vegetable Cutlets

- 1/2 lb mixed cooked vegetables
  - 1 dessertspoonful finely sliced red onions
  - pepper
  - salt
  - 1 teaspoonful dripping
  - 2 teacups milk
  - 1/2 oz flour
  - egg and breadcrumbs
  - dripping for frying
- This is a nice way of using up left over vegetables. Chop the vegetables finely. Melt the

dripping in a saucepan and fry the onions, sprinkle in the flour and stir for a few minutes. Take the pan off the fire, add the milk and cook again stirring constantly until the mixture boils. Then add the chopped vegetables, make hot, season to taste and spread on a plate to cool. Shape into cutlets with the aid of a little flour. Brush them over with beaten egg, coat with breadcrumbs and fry in hot dripping. Drain on paper and serve hot.

### Potato Salad

- 1 lb boiled potatoes
  - 1 tablespoon ground red onions
  - 1 teaspoon ground garlic
  - 1 tablespoon finely chopped parsley
  - 1 tablespoon butter
  - 2 tablespoofuls mayonnaise
  - pepper and salt
- Peel and slice the potatoes into thick slices. Melt the butter in a saucepan add the ground onions and garlic, chopped parsley and mayon-

naise. Turn in the potatoes and toss them in the mixture till all the pieces are well coated with the seasoning. Take off the fire, sprinkle with salt and pepper and serve hot.

### Potatoes, Steamed

Steaming is one of the best ways of cooking potatoes. Pare the potatoes as for boiling, sprinkle with salt, and put them into a steamer. Place the steamer over a pan of boiling water and put on the lid. The time for cooking will depend on the size and age of the potatoes. When sufficiently cooked remove the steamer from the water and stand it in a warm place until the potatoes are dry.

### Purple Yam, Boiled

- purple yam
  - salt
- Pare the yam rather thickly, cut into 1 1/2 inch squares and drop at once into cold water. Then wash well and put into a saucepan with sufficient water to cover them. Boil until soft, then drain, sprinkle a little salt over them, shake the pan for a couple of minutes and serve the yams very hot.

Nearly all yams are boiled in the same way. **SL**



Linda Evans in 'Dynasty' on 'Star Plus'



'Startrap' on 'Star Plus'

**T**HERE is a risk of some sort in almost every action we take. But most of the good things that happen in life come about because someone takes a deep breath and makes a positive move to get out of some intolerable situation. Of course, one may have to put up with some difficulties for a limited time, but after about six months of misery a situation should always be reviewed; if nothing good appears to be gained from letting things drift on, then one should go and do something else.

### Mights and Maybe's

The amount of it-might-happen-if philosophising which goes on would strike terror into the mind of any expert on statistics and the laws of probability. "If I go on seeing him he might propose next year." "If I stick this job I hate, Miss Smith might get married or the sack, and I might be promoted." (It is far more likely that when Miss Smith does go, the department will be reorganised and you might be redundant).

Life is not so very long, and most people will sincerely admit that few things matter terribly, except in anticipation; but being brave, adventurous and truthful (with yourself, as well as others) brings about a fuller life than that lived by the cringers, the afraid-to-doers and the buck-passing brigade.

### Leaving a Man

Leaving a man is never very easy, and it is fear more than anything which precipitates women through engagements right up to the altar, while they know they should stop now, this minute, and get out of making a real mess of their lives — and the man's. It may be fear of loneliness or pride. Their friends have perhaps all married or they may feel it is

## Learning to Leave

their last chance. Their last chance of what? Of being miserable for ever? More often than not, girls go on hoping, go on seeing a man who never actually proposes. They break their hearts for years. If in doubt, get out. Go and do something else, see other people.

### Leaving Home

Deciding to leave home is difficult because, on the whole, people love their parents and do not wish to give them pain. On the other hand, Daddies' girls and Mummies' boys should seek fresh pastures after, say, the age of twenty-one.

### Leaving Parties

It was the German poet, Heine, who said, "Never spend a moment longer than you can help for you and you are not for him." The wisdom of this probably takes time to find out, but a great many people waste time seeing others and going to parties for all sorts of funny reasons. They want to be seen around; they want to be thought popular; they think someone might be useful.

If you are not enjoying yourself, if you hate all around you, if you are bored to the back teeth, you do not appear to others at your best, so you might as well go elsewhere or refuse the invitation in the first place. Most people react to invitations as a starving man does to bread. Refusal is unthinkable, even if you do put the card on the mantelpiece, saying at the same time, "I bet

one. It is really more courteous than leaving early.

Getting out of things or leaving places is not such a destructive decision as you might think, because when you leave a place you have to go somewhere else, and gaining experience is very important in life. But even more vital is to think carefully before you leap, and to know more or less what lies ahead.

— Sylvia Saleem

## Hanging Pictures

**A**RRANGING pictures on your wall depends more on your personal preference than upon cast-iron rules. However, there are a few general ideas which may help your own arrangement.

A large and important work usually needs a wall to itself. If you hang something trivial near it, it will not only detract from the main work but also emphasise its own inferior quality.

Small pictures crowded on a wall like a photograph album can be highly useful. You might aim at balance or symmetry at the edges, with an asymmetrical pattern in between.

### Illusion

Pictures tend to look best at your standing eye-level. But if your ceiling is particularly high, there is a lot to be said for raising the height of the picture in order to create the illusion of lowering the ceiling. Conversely, if the ceiling is low it's a good idea to hang the picture lower than eye level in order to give the illusion of raising the ceiling. Pictures, too, can make a room look wider or longer if grouped horizontally along one wall.



Jane Torvill and Christopher Dean at a recent British Ice Dance Championship