

**W**HEN The Wifey said she was thinking of turning a high-brow with intellectual leanings, I assumed she was talking of attempting to start reading the newspaper, for once. I shoved that day's editorial page before her and waited for her to start, saying, "Great. Let's have a stimulating discussion once you're through."

I soon saw her pout and understood.

"Something else up your mind, Wifey?"

"I want to do theatre."

"Good idea. Let's scan the newspapers for some current performances in the city. We can attend one tonight."

"No. I want to act in a play." If I hadn't already exhausted my quota of nightmare for the day the previous night, I would have had to pinch myself.

"But you'd told me earlier you don't appreciate drama. You find it lacklustre when compared with cinema."

"Did I? I don't recall having said that. And in any case, I can't act in movies, so why broach a non-possibility?"

"But I remember clearly. Six years ago when I took you out one evening for a Chekov play, you'd said only aimless people do theatre, and that it is the most boring form of entertainment..."

"You make up whatever stories you have to. And since when have you started remembering everything I say? I also complained about our near-tattered lounge drapery, and that was last week by the way, and you seem to have no recollection of that. Anyway, nothing can stop me from acting in a play now. My mind is made up. And I've done some homework."

"Which means?", I tried my best to suppress the scepticism in my tone.

"I've identified this local theatre group that promotes fresh talents. I'll call them up this forenoon."

"And what will you tell them? That you're interested in drama? As far as I know, you haven't read even a single play in your life."

"What are you saying? I've read Romeo Juliet."

"The abridged version meant for Grade2 students..."

# To Act or Not to Act That Is The Question

RICHA JHA

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"So what? A play is a play. And try to be more supportive, please. I know it's difficult, but you can try?"

"Don't get me wrong, Wifey. All I'm saying is, don't jump into acting straightaway. Why don't you start with some back stage work? Do you know the kind of effort and team work that goes behind staging a play? Be a part of the larger thing, and experience it from close quarters before taking the plunge into acting."

"It was a mistake even letting you know..." she sulked, quivering lips, et al. It's a mystery how she manages a tear or two so quickly with an equally poignant tone of voice to match. The most efficient defence mechanism I've come across so far. I shrugged and decided it better not to complicate matters any further. When her mind is made up, there is little scope for negotiations.

That afternoon, I saw her borrow four tomes on dramatics from the library. She pretended to be pouring over them in bed, but when I realised she'd been on the same page for over thirty minutes, I quietly turned off her reading light.

Next morning, the visibly charged Wifey rushed through her breakfast. "We are meeting today. The director said for an audition, but I'm sure it's a mere formality. After all, newcomers are not expected to act like Shahrukh, are they?"

"Shahrukh acts in movies. This is a stage production you're going for. The two are different. But anyway, I understand what you mean. But I'd still suggest you rehearsed a bit on your own before going there. Few lines from anywhere. Shall I download something for you?"