Who Dares, Wins...

RICHA JHA

The Hubby Speaks. It started rather quietly, the typical battle of the sexes as her magazines brand it euphemistically, but before we knew it, she and I had dragged in eternally unresolved elements of contention, and before long, thanks to her barrage of 'male inefficiencies', the pride of the entire 'man'kind was at stake. The next thing I knew was, she stood there challenging me rather mockingly, and dismissively, to spend two hours window shopping!

I thought the altercation had frazzled up her equanimity slightly, which is why she had unwittingly getting into a situation where I knew she would lose, and lose face badly!

Maybe she needed a break. A round of shopping would do her good. Why didn't she go instead of me; the challenge could be played out some other day?

She thought I was trying to dodge taking on the challenge, so she started calling me names, coward, and all. I lost my temper, and stomped out of the room yelling she would lose badly, and then she would have to prepare dinner that night! She yelled back saying, "Forget it, this evening, I will be out splurging twenty thousand bucks on myself! Just you wait, hubby dear." As you would have figured out, that was my part of the deal in case she won the bet. But then I was so sure there was no chance of my losing that I could have signed on the contract for twenty lacs too!

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And so I pulled out my car and drove straight towards Gulshan DIT I market. It was my choice; I had been free to name a market of my liking, and the deal was that I would have to window shop at each of the shops in the market. Not sure of the name of any other market in town, I took a wild chance with 'Gulshan 1 market', and she sealed it with an instant ok.

Let me admit friends, that the first shock was the very sight of this sprawling two storied bazaar. Even as I entered the car park my head spun. Had I been alone, I would have reneged, swung the car around, headed home and lied to the Wifey fabricating some tales. But not trusting me alone with the challenge, the Wifey had come along as well, though she did make sure that she wouldn't hang around with me.

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Besides, I couldn't have let anything in Gulshan 1 market break my morale. And so, I parked my car and marched on to the altar.

A minute into the exercise, and I knew that window shopping is the most excruciatingly painful and wasteful work one can indulge in, or rather, be forced into doing on gunpoint.

In my case, it was neither indulgence nor gunpoint. It had been a silly little fight that triggered it off. I drew out the piece of sealed and stamped covenant for the modus operandi. "...under no circumstance will you purchase any piece of item...the term window shopping need not prevent you from stepping inside the shop, and pretending you have come looking for the most exotic silk from the Orient...and remember, not one shop should be left un-ventured into..."

The entire exercise had felt like the easiest thing to bear on the torture table. But now, standing before hundreds of bustling shops, I suddenly developed cold feet. I would go back to the written deal, and then look in the direction in which the Wifey flounced in the same market for her quota of the day's retail