gone mad; your mother is beside herself.

"What have we done to warrant this? Weren't there any other girls in the community that you could choose from instead of getting married to a complete stranger?" she wails.

"She's not a stranger for me," you reason patiently.

"What will our relatives say? Nobody will come to the wedding. This is such a shame. I'd rather be dead than have to listen to all this!"

More waterworks.

Your dad is furious. Your parents won't have anything to do with the wedding if you go ahead with it, he says.

But we don't follow any Sylheti culture, you argue. Your family friends are from different parts of the country. Your parents preach unity and diversity. Why would they be so 'Sylheti' when it came to who you wanted to marry? Isn't that totally hypocritical?

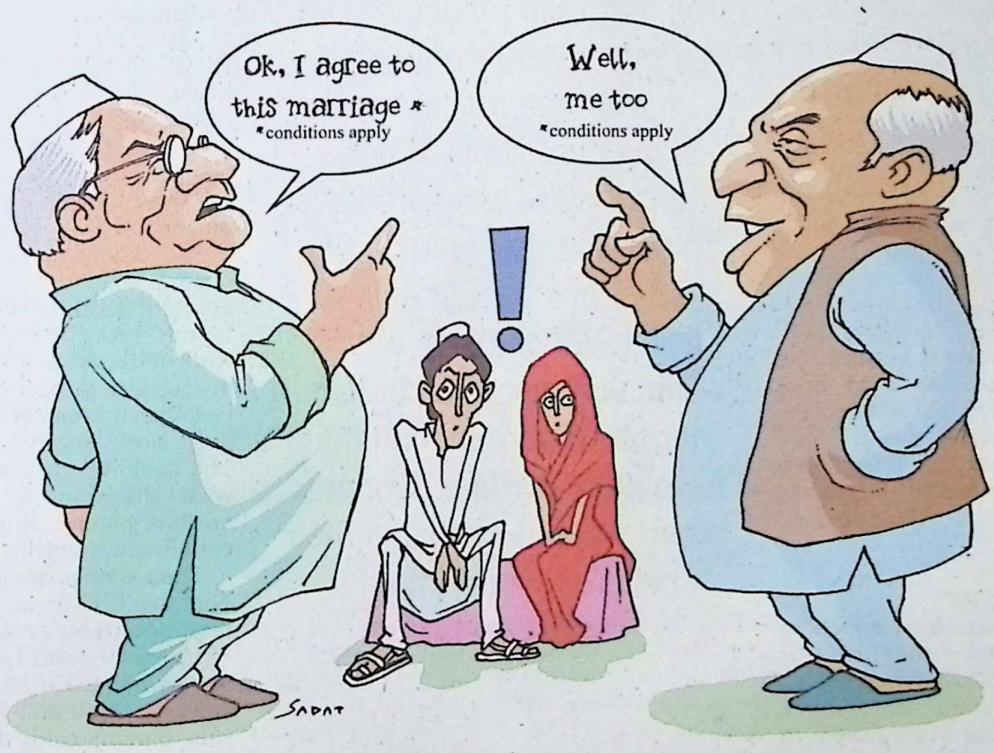
"This is different," they say.

And that's that.

Scene Three

You come back home to find a horde of relatives at your place. Your mother is busy frying samosas and making tea for the guests. You find yourself stuck in the middle of a plump aunt and her presumptuous daughter.

"You've become darker than the last time we saw you. You should do something about it, otherwise no boy will want to get married to you,"



laughs the aunt, pushing in one samosa after another into her already full mouth.

You are quite content with your complexion and are in no hurry to get married, you answer politely.

"Who doesn't want to get married?" asks the presumptuous daughter. "Girls your age are already married with kids of their own!"

You are 27, have a steady job, are happy with your single status and have no intention of getting married anytime soon, you say.

"27?" screams another aunt. "I got my daughter married off as soon as she completed high school.