

# When your sibling seals the deal

SAMIN SABAH ISLAM

Marriage, the supposed unification of two souls. What doesn't quite make the "happily ever after" image is the separation between another set of souls. Somewhere between the mister stealing your sister and your brother making movie plans with the in laws, you're left alone handling the parental quarrels, ordering food all by yourself and discovering you too are now living the lone child life.

Now, you probably haven't noticed this minuscule detail about your sibling before all the *patro/patri* hunt began—they're an adult now, apparently. The Fred to your George, the Bart to your Lisa, and the Loki to your Thor is no longer available for late-night dance parties or fighting over the last piece of *porota*. They are now "grownups" with responsibilities and families of their own raiding their lives. You're just sitting at home wondering why the *ghotok* didn't bother to bring up these significant alterations while proposing the entire marriage fiasco.

Ever since your sibling took up the whole adult-ing debacle and paraded off with their significant other, things got pretty lackluster. Even if you do have another sibling to keep you occupied, the void of the elder sibling hangs painfully in the air. If the wedded sibling is your



only one, the house gets dreadfully quiet. Almost as if your partner-in-crime shipped away all the excitement and energy along with her wardrobe to her *shoshur bari*.

The "what's yours is mine" law doesn't work too well when there's a third party in the picture. You can't march in and claim your brother's laptop anytime, because now his beloved has entitlement over it too. You'll be barging into your sister's wardrobe in pursuit of clothes, but

end up coiled up in a corner sniffing her ugly old sweater from the left over pile in reminiscence. One of those days you'll stare at your organized penholder and wonder how it's possible that you truly miss your pencil stealing sibling.

You wouldn't understand how your sibling's marriage can affect you so so much unless you realise that you are now held accountable for not only yours, but all the household responsibilities said sibling once had. You can't rely on putting

your name last minute on your sibling's anniversary gift to your parents. The *moshari* is now yours to arrange regardless of Mondays or Tuesdays. While your sibling starts their new *shukher shongshar*, you're stuck weaving back the holes they left on your old one.

Betrayal comes in all forms. One of these days you'll call your brother hoping to manage stadium tickets to go to, only to find out he's already going with his brother-in-law. The day fate brings forth you, your sister merrily shopping away with her in laws, you'll feel your blood boiling.

However, your sibling marrying off does have perks. You now get to laugh at their attempts at being grownups while living the unpledged life. The bigger room is now your domain without having to put up a cat fight. With them out of the way, your parents finally realise they have another child and focuses more attention on you. Alterations can be favorable too.

But no matter how much things change, nothing can change the blood, bond and cat-fight scars you share with your sibling. Think of it this way, you're not losing a sibling, you're gaining another.

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## Dealing With A Sibling You "Disagree" With

MITHI CHOWDHURY

A working definition of siblings is, people you're stuck with. Forever. The more you grow up, the more conflicts arise. Your sister can't seem to stop criticising your career choices, and you can't see eye-to-eye with her on anything.

Yes, navigating a sibling relationship can be tricky. Yet, in spite of the petty disagreements, you're always going to count on your sibling. No matter how exasperated you feel sometimes, admit it – you're quite fond of them. Just like any relationship, the one with your sibling must be built on mutual understanding and easy communication.

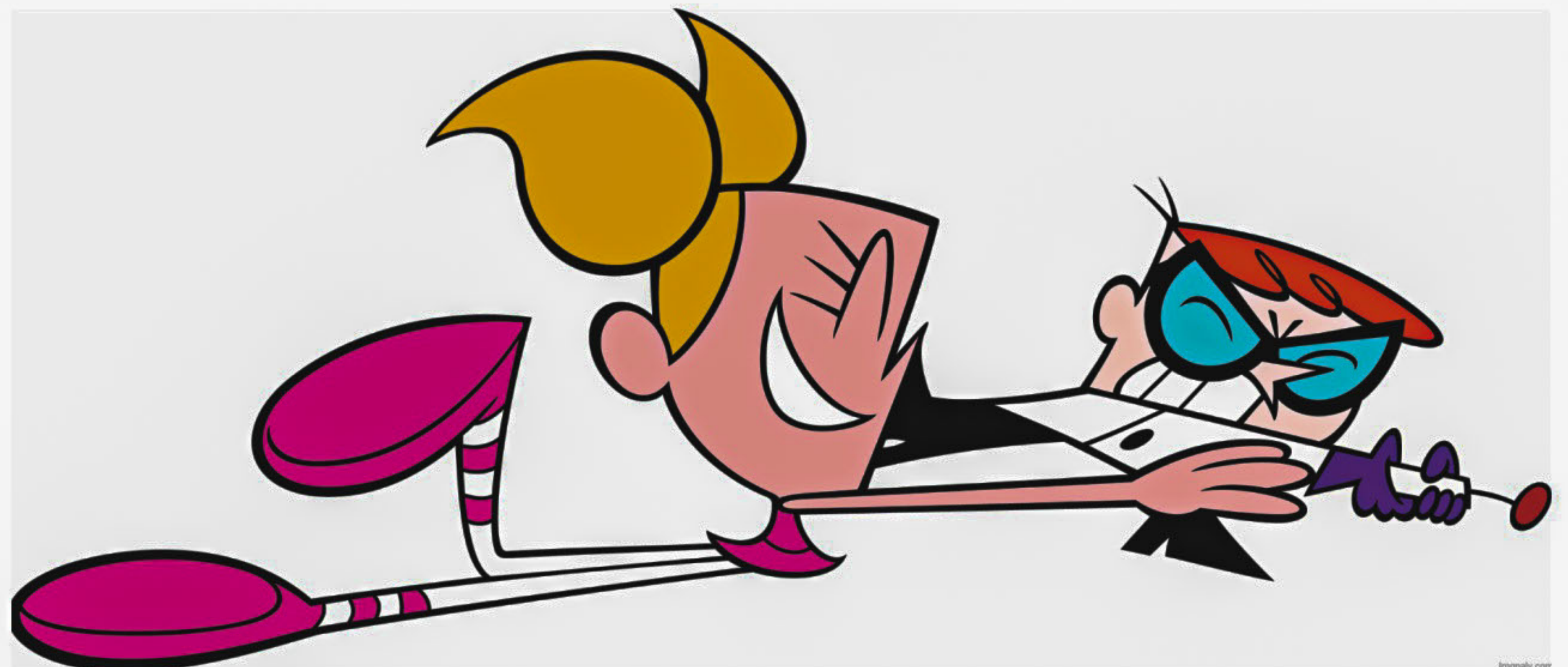
Easier said than done, right? Find out for yourself.

### Pick your battles

Avoid the triggers that you know often lead to arguments. If your younger sibling has O levels coming up, but spends too many hours on Tumblr, don't nag her to study harder (Let's face it, we've all been there). Instead, take her mind off of the pressure of exams by suggesting a movie day. At the end of it, offer to help her study. If confrontations do arise, don't launch a defensive attack immediately. Approach the situation as a problem that needs to be understood from a perspective different than your own.

### Find the root of the hatred

Sometimes, hostility among siblings persists, irrespective of prior arguments. If you want to resolve it, try to figure out the



root cause of the hatred. If the resentment results from your constant absence due to a hectic work schedule, spend some time with your sibling every other weekend. As someone who's fought with her sister countless times, I can vouch for the fact that talking it out always helps. Post-confrontation, apologise for your role in it, even if you weren't in the wrong. While this might hurt your pride, these small sacrifices will strengthen your relationship in the long run.

### Agree to disagree

Accept the fact that you're each an individual in your own right; you won't agree with everything your sibling does,

and vice versa. Hence, train yourself to let go of the smaller issues. If your sister has an annoying habit of messing up your closet (don't they all? \*sigh\*), clean up after her, particularly if raising the issue creates conflicts. When disputes arise, don't feed into familiar arguing patterns that have the tendency to escalate. If your brother's listening to EDM on full blast, and it's hurting your exam preparation, avoid the urge to hurl insults and curse words his way. Instead of yelling, *explain* to him that the noise is disrupting your concentration - it's more likely to yield results.

Late last night, my sister barged into

my room in an absolute panic. We had watched *The Shining* hours earlier, and she was too afraid to fall asleep. After mumbling in an awkward fashion for a few minutes (as is characteristic of her when she's shy), she blurted out that she'd like to sleep in my room for the night.

Hey, if nothing else works, you can always rely on the universal fear of the paranormal to draw even the most rivalrous siblings closer.

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