

To Bridesmaid or Not to Bridesmaid

MASHIAT LAMISA

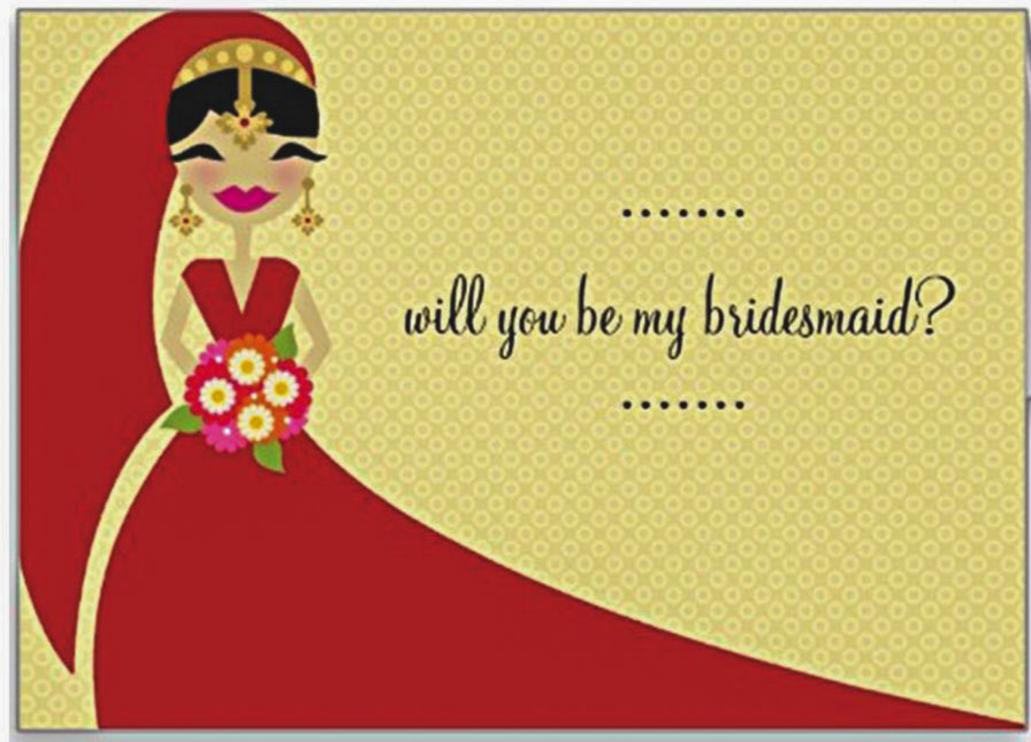
From a distance, weddings seem fun, effortless and full of well-cooked potatoes in large plates of biriyani. Especially in a country like Bangladesh, it might seem that the only ingredients to pull off a successful wedding are a bride, a groom, a nice venue, a renowned photographer, a million dollars, and good food. However, some of us out there exist, prepared with our weapons made of patience and charms, ready to take on distant relatives and the plethora of responsibilities that come free with an extravagant wedding ceremony. We are the sisters, best friends and sometimes, nieces of the bride and groom. Now and then we suffer from existential crises because our identity as bridesmaids are only limited to captions on social media. Although we do not get paid for this, we work harder as a bridesmaid than we would in our actual jobs.

Our responsibilities start with accompanying the bride or groom to shopping and to saloons. We leave our work, school and poop routine so that we can be there for them 24/7. We stand by them when they throw tantrums over the dress that got ruined, and we speak up for them when their tailors mess up, or when the photographer does not agree to a pre-wedding shoot on Jupiter. When in shopping malls, we are like dinosaurs let loose to haggle with shopkeepers. And sometimes, we don't mind becoming the Edward Cullen that sparkle under the harsh sunlight of Dhaka just to make them happy.

Next, we assign ourselves to one of the most terrifying jobs in the world. Once the wedding cards are printed for the third time (because the stationary guy kept on misspelling the bride's father's name), we set out for the homes of relatives we haven't met since we were 5 months old. We hand the aunties and

uncles the wedding cards as they squeeze our cheeks and tell us "Kotto boro hoye geso OMG!" More often than not, these aunties and uncles treat us with roshogollas while subtly asking us about our grades or reminding us that we just might be next in line to get married.

Then comes the fun (read:dreadful) part of every wedding—preparing for the *gaa-e holud*. We spend sleepless nights discussing with the bride what dress code the event should have. We go over swatches of several different fabrics and realize how little we know about how dull the pink colour would look in the *gaa-e holud* pictures if the groom's side decides on green. Once the dress code is set, we invite our friends and their friends and cousins to our house which is already over-occupied by people we have never seen. Once these friends and friends of friends have gathered, we go over every song that one can possibly dance to, as



the bride/groom sits in one corner of the room nodding her/his head to that terrible Hindi song about blue water. And then begins the rehearsals where everyone is always late; yet, we keep texting them until they make an appearance and learn the dance steps from expert choreographers i.e. us bridesmaids.

Gradually, once we are done preparing for *holud*, we move on to create secret message threads adding every friend the bride/groom has ever had to arrange a surprise bachelorette/bachelor party for them. From successfully keeping the party a secret from the to-be-weds to managing the million dollar photographer to take super candid pictures of the bride, we suddenly become expert event managers for a day, only to break down in tears at the end of the night when everyone has gone home leaving us with dishes to wash.

Slowly comes the wedding day when

we get to put on a lot of paint on our faces and dress up fancy in expensive clothes hoping to get that one dreamy profile picture. However, in between running to the gates to receive guests and wiping away the extra biriyani oil from the bride's face, our makeup melts down, leaving us with no option but to dump our faces in food and stay content.

Throughout the emotional rollercoaster ride that is a wedding, people like us get by with a smile on our faces, thinking about all the beautiful plates of food we will get for free, and all the opportunities we will get to look pretty. But then of course the caterer messes up and things only go downhill from there. That story is for later.

For now, happy bridesmaiding.

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