



COVER STORY

# Tales of shidur khela

This is my first “shidur khela,” a ritual strictly for women, I see no reason as to why I have to go through this alone, while the amazing, tall, dark, smart partner gets to witness a different kind of red wedding in the making.

The better half is lying in bed, dressed in a white panjabi, and a frown on the face, “Everyone’s already dressed and waiting for you to be done,” he says. I

scowl at him before taking one final look at myself in the mirror, it still amazes me how this all feels normal. I wish I had time to blow dry this uncontrollable mane, but this partially damp wet-hair look, with the bright red vermillion peeking from the centre of my hair parting, and matching red “teep” will suffice for the day.

As we make our way to the mandap,

he looks at me, and with a smirk on his face, says, “You look like a traditional bou-maa today.” I poke his cheek and say nothing, but make a mental note to make him pay the bill for our next coffee date.

The sounds of the dhaak can be heard, even before the mandap is in sight. Once we’re out of the car, my mother-in-law hands me the thali and carefully arranges the betel nut leaves, laddus,

and the box of sindur on it. She tries to feign busyness, but her excitement is too obvious. This is her first shidur khela with her daughter-in-law, if only she knew that her bou-ma had two unforgiving left feet.

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