

A panjabi's tale

OSAMAN BIN AHMED

The cupboard creaked open, revealing his gleaming face. With sheer haste, he began to shuffle around the few shirts he had, discarding and throwing them on the floor as if looking for something very specific. His eyes shone up as he held a black shirt aloft. He mumbled, "She would love this."

A sharp, womanly voice interrupted him. "Sameen, tidy your clothes before you go," she asserted. He replied, "Not now, *ma*. I'm running late." She stared blankly at him as he sped past her, buttoning his shirt as he went. The cupboard doors closed, revealing a thin ray of sunlight. I looked around, marvelling at the freedom my neighbours possessed. Ever since I was gifted to Sameen, I have been imprisoned inside this transparent barrier.

The tweed suit, a prized possession of my owner, jeered at me as he exclaimed how useless I was. Existential crisis encroached my mind. The store tag on my neck whispered, "You have what he does not. Look at your beautiful embroidery. While your colour may not be the best thing in the world, it is our imperfections that make us the perfect version of ourselves."

Days passed by. My dream was about to come true. One such afternoon, Sameen, much to my amazement, picked me up. Taking me to the same woman as before, he stated, "Ma, I will wear this for Eid." She asserted, "Beta, there is still one week for Eid. Besides, I am not letting you go outside." He

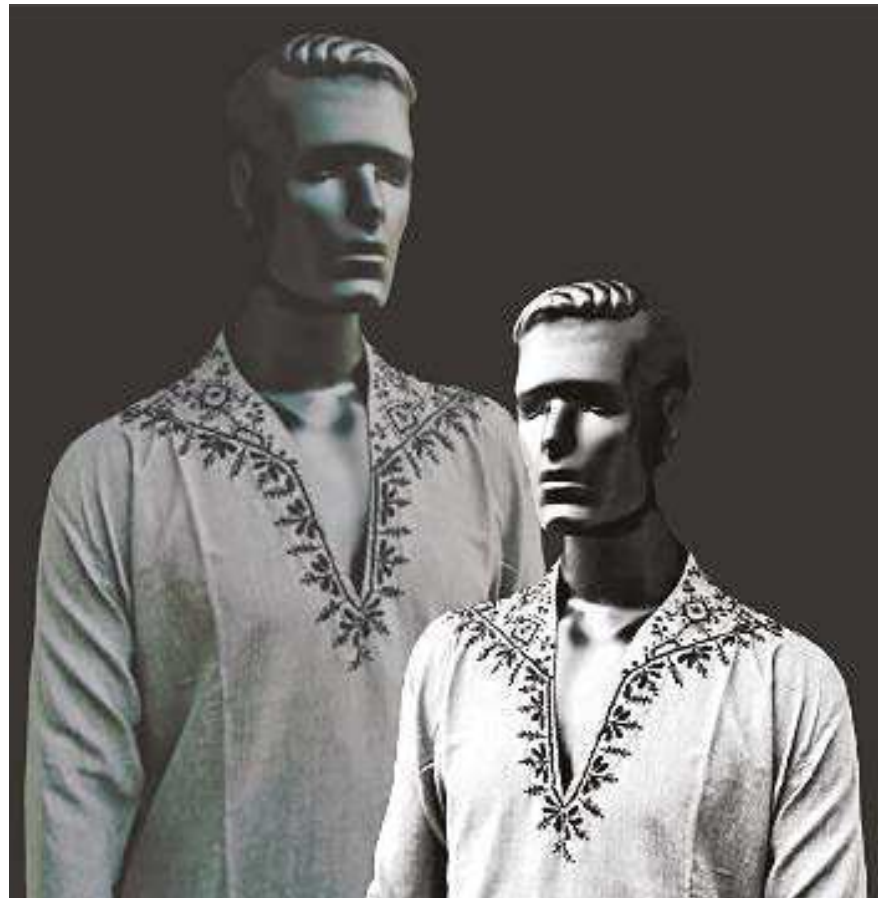
smirked, saying, "We have Discord." After one long journey around the house, I was rested back to my humble abode. I was elated, as a glow of smugness radiated from me.

It was a couple of nights before Eid. Sameen's joyous screaming had broken the cold silence inside the cupboard. The door opened, revealing his face, as he placed a packet above me. I now had a competitor. Atop me was a dark blue *kabli*. The air around me felt heavy due to the presence of this intruder. I couldn't help but feel suppressed under the weight; weight that was definitely not physical. I comforted myself by realising that I was indeed Sameen's first choice.

The following night, Sameen picked both of us. He folded us in half and pressed it against his body, standing in front of a mirror. He stood still for a minute. He then looked left and right as he nodded and mumbled inaudibly. Suddenly, he threw me on the bed. I flew towards the bed, as I watched him speeding towards the other room. All my hopes shattered with the blink of an eye. Guess the tweed suit was not wrong about me.

Two years have passed since the incident. I have no hopes whatsoever for often it ends in pain for me. Why am I like this?

Osaman is one such guy who has caused such pain to many panjabis before, with some of them ending up as tablecloths. To send a hypothetical high-five, poke him on fb.com/osaman.binahmed



DESIGN: KAZI AKIB BIN ASAD

Eid dishes I will miss this year

ANTARA RAISA RAHMAN

I am not much of a foodie. Like Josh Hutcherson playing the mean older brother in *Zathura*, the only thing I do know how to prepare (perfectly) is water. No, I'm not proud of it, neither is my mom. However, much like my love for food puns, my love for certain dishes made exclusively for Eid is what keeps me going in life.

Today I will be giving you a glimpse of the food I look forward to every year on Eid day, and the food that gets me egg-cited for this holiday.

WHEN LIFE GIVES YOU LEMONS, MAKE LEMON CHEESECAKE

I still remember tasting this dish for the first time and wondering where it was all my life. So, naturally this is what I will be missing the most this Eid. I'm sure everyone in my friend group will agree as well. This cheesecake is something we grew up fighting for, and the reason I'd have less of everything else. The lemony taste mixed with a bit of cream and crunch makes this dish something I would travel miles over, no joke. If only I could right now.

JORDA, A BIYE BARI CLASSIC

Amidst the extravagant dishes found at this friend's place, the only thing I have an eye out for is the simple yet elegant *biye bari* dessert: *jorda*. Even if there is *kacchi* to my left and some hybrid version of cake pops



PHOTO: STAR/LS ARCHIVE

to my right, I always find myself looking straight ahead at the end of the table, where the *jorda* bowl always is. Talking about this is making me miss friends, Eid and weddings altogether. Great.

DESSERTS BY THAT ONE FRIEND ALL OUR MOMS LOVE

We all know at least one person who is loved by all our moms and secretly envied by all of us. In my case, that is one of

closest friends who never misses the chance to make some delicious desserts for her loved ones. From tarts, snowballs, tiramisu to a classic gourmet cake, this girl can do it all. And because this is something a sweet tooth like me looks forward to every Eid, it is also something I will sincerely miss this year, among other things.

DIY FUCHKA

This is a classic example of our mothers

taking food we like to spend money on, learning how to recreate it, and sometimes, doing a much better job at it. So how would *fuchka* not make the cut? Something my friends and I always look forward to is the homemade *fuchka* and *tok* that can be found in at least one of our homes every Eid. Although this street food has a reputation for being the reason we go home late after school or coaching classes, for me, this also turned into a homey snack I crave all year round.

BISCUIT CAKE TIRAMISU

Ending the list with a dessert my mother has been making since I was in elementary school. This dish brings back memories not only from Eid hangouts with friends, but also from midnight baking sprees and coming home to a sweet treat because why. The funniest thing is that I'd think something as delicious as this would fade from memory, but it did. Luckily, many Eids ago my mother finally decided my friends also deserved to try out this magnificent dessert. I won't lie, these dishes along with the memories surrounding it make me miss friends and family the most this time of the year.

Antara wishes to conquer the world someday and bring back an alien from Pluto. To know more about her evil schemes, send an e-mail at antara56.ar@gmail.com