

HOW I MET YOUR BHAIBHABI:

The cost of forever after

You know that popular saying: To make an amazing omelette, you have to go through a few broken eggs. Guess what? Nobody meets their 'The One' on their first try but have you ever wondered what it took to find your forever after? Of course, I hear you say in unison, "heartbreaks," "shattered dreams," etc. and you are right obviously. But here's another way to look at the scenario; what did it cost you to find your ever after?

Let's face it, the reality is you do not see someone across the room, fall in love simultaneously, leave the room and get married on the spot, unless it's a movie with the cheapest budget and shortest plot. The dance of love takes place over many dates, many 'small' gestures, some big occasion generousities, and romantic getaways.

And guess what? One moment of indiscretion, one wrong text, one unnecessary 'friend,' or one moment of 'self-discovery,' and all of your progress is made null and void, and you are back to square one. And as a surprise to no one, nearly all of us have to do this dance over and over.

Rituals of love

Without further ado, let's get to know the ones who will take us down their money-down-the-drain lane, starting with Rousseau Kabir, a 41-year-old father of three working for a creative agency in the 'tri-state area' of Dhaka.

"I was 16 when I first went on a 'date.' This date was four months' worth of tiffin money in the making. Also, because we were 16, our dating radius was judged by how far you could go for Tk 10 on a rickshaw, and there weren't as many fast-food places as there are now. Blew it all in one outing, only to hear from her friends that she had a boring time. Even more ironic, she later took someone to that same place, and soon after, became a couple. Yay!" recalled a sarcastic Kabir.

Tasnia Fahim, a 28-year-old grad student from a reputed university, recalled a date she had recently with someone she met online a while ago.

"We had met and had been talking for a couple of weeks. I was smitten. I didn't even mind topping up his smartphone credit sometimes so we could talk. Our last date was at this popular (and expensive) burger joint. I tend to be

quite punctual so I arrived a few minutes early. When he reached, he called me outside and asked me to get his Uber bill, because he apparently lost his wallet.

Understandably, I had to foot the bill that day, and I helped him get home. A week later, his number was switched off, and I never heard from him again. In other words, another day of dating in Dhaka city," scoffs Tasnia.

Aven Aseef, a 34-year-old banker said, "I used to be one of those hopeless romantics you see on sitcoms. I'd pull out all the stops to make sure my date felt like a princess. Now, all my 'excitement' is spent planning 'dates' at a certain pizza joint for potential matches for an arranged marriage. Since I am not considered a 'hot commodity' in the arranged marriage circles, these things will take time, meaning more of these 'dates' same bad time, same bad place," laments Aseef.

Tokens of love

In a relationship, tokens of affection are a common practice. Said tokens can

increase and decrease in importance depending on whether it's a normal unplanned purchase on any random day or those big moments you plan for weeks or months in advance. The important

thing though is that said token needs to convey your feelings, not be its own thing, something Kabir found out the hard way.

"For my better half's birthday, I gave a bouquet and four potted plants. I think she expected more because she looked visibly confused. What was I supposed to do? Give a diamond necklace?"

exclaims Kabir, visibly confused to

this day.

There is a grey area regarding tokens that nobody talks about; what is done with something once it is given to someone. "Sure, you can say that once it is in their hands, they can do with as they please.

However, I think putting your present up for sale is a bit much!" states Tasnia.

"I once gifted my partner of two years a laptop as he was always juggling multiple jobs and side

hustles. And because I was paranoid, I took him with me to choose the model he wanted. After a few months, I came across a sale post for this exact set, put up by his friend. I couldn't confront him at the time so I asked him in passing why he never uses it, to which he replied that he 'didn't want to ruin it.' It's been years since we are apart, and to this day I still don't know why he sold it," reveals Tasnia.

It's also important that tokens of affection be accepted graciously when presented without unnecessary drama.

"Sadly, some people don't get that," accuses Shariar, a 36-year-old copywriter, adding, "My girlfriend of 3 years always wanted a camera but never got around to getting one. Keeping that in mind, for her birthday, I decided to get her an entry-level camera. Instead of meeting positive gratitude though, I was given an emotional lecture on how I just wasted money for nothing. Sure, maybe the intention for said lecture came from a good place, but the language certainly needed work," complains Shariar.

Relationships are hard. And as prefaced earlier, you need your share of experiences before you get to the right one. Rousseau Kabir is now happily married, and his wife always appreciates his potted plants and bad jokes. Tasnia has finally met someone who doesn't sell her well-thought-out presents or ghost her anymore. Aven is hopeful he will meet his one, and her family, when he comes across someone who knows life is bigger and clearer than Gulshan Lake. As for Shariar, he remains hopeful that he will meet The One who will get his romantic side, and be his guiding hand in managing his finances better.

By Intisab Shahriyar

Photo: Prerit Saxena,
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Model: Mayeesh & Nabil

