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Marriage: An Afterthought

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She was busy in the humdrums of her marriage; everyone was excited for her marriage, everyone preparing for her wedding. The wedding shopping was still on its way, the cards along with the sweets were being distributed to all the relatives and friends. The entire family was busy in the preparation for her new journey which was about to begin in the matter of few days.

In the days following, the entire house was decked with flowers and lights, it was as if even the house was coming to take part in the festives like all her relatives and friends, decked in their best attires and jewellery, showing off their boisterous nature. Everyone was busy enjoying the wedding yet nobody took the time to know the feeling the bride had.

The bride to be was mesmerized with all the colors and shopping going on. For a person who had spent her entire life, watching where she was spending the money, suddenly during her wedding nothing was out of bounds for her. She could buy anything and everything she wanted now, for she was going to be somebody else's responsibility in the matter of few days.

She was nervous, she was excited, and she had butterflies in her stomach for her future was unknown to her. The people appeared pleasant when she had interacted with them in the past few encounters but it was going to be entirely different scenario whilst living with them day and night and also leaving behind her known family.

She was happy for her family was happy but at the same time she felt sad in her heart for she knew it would be never be the same after marriage. She wouldn't be able to wake up at her whims and fancies and have her meals at her wish, cooked and served to her according to taste and preferences. She wouldn't be able to call upon her brother or just chill out with her brother watching Netflix or roaming around for movies and listening to the rural Punjabi songs. She wouldn't be able to sit with her mother with the cup of tea and gossip about all the relatives and friends, discuss latest movies or even the Pakistani dramas they had watched together. She

wouldn't be able to go for walks with her father and discuss all the world news and the latest trends in taxation and laws.

The days finally came when her marriage ceremonies began, when she was actually going to dolled up in her best clothes. The ceremonies began and ended with the blink of an eye, she didn't feel any difference, for the first two days of the ceremony she enjoyed being dressed up and getting her makeup done. She enjoyed the attention as she that at the end of the day, she'll be safely tucked in her bed, relaxing after the day's work.

Finally the day came, when she was actually going to get married, that last night in her own bed, in her own room, she knew she wouldn't be able to return that day to the same room and sleep in her own bed. She knew in her heart that that day would be a new beginning for her. She had nervous jitters and she kept tossing and turning the whole night, thinking about the day ahead of her.

She got married and all she could think about was the drastic change her life was about to go through. Her thoughts were of revealing her innermost self to another person, sharing a life together. She kept it together in front of her family, laughing away and joking about nobody being left to worry them or hanker after them with her demands but the moment she got seated in the car, the reality of her situation sunk in and she broke down when she realized that she won't be heading towards her own home but to a new home filled with strangers who were about to become part of her family as well.

The evening was entirely new for her, she couldn't bank upon her mother to smooth things over. She had to be on her own now. She knew the groom she had selected is a good person but it was going to be roller coaster ride moving henceforth. The pins that were keeping up her hairdo were killing her, she wanted to change out of those clothes then and relax as her new family members were doing but she couldn't do it, for she was a newly wedded bride and she had to abide by all the laws and customs first.

Finally, she was given the space and time to change but now she had a stranger with her who was going to be with her for a very long period of time. She was sure he was also feeling the same uncertainty and awkwardness for the society had created a pressure on the newlyweds for

consummating the marriage on that very same day, but they were still new to each other, both shy, both hesitant to reveal too much and offend the other.

The next was a new beginning for her, she got up early as she had seen on television, got dressed up to meet her in laws, who were still in their nightwear. Nobody had asked her to get dressed up yet she had been taught that some things were expected out of her. The new family was accepting and loving towards her yet she was missing the comfort of her mother's lap, the kisses her mother showered on her whenever she hugged her mother.

The next few days were life changing for her, she discovered that marriage wasn't all it was made out to be; it wasn't an ugly affair where the women were beaten and thrashed or even thrown into kitchen for the entire day or maybe she had lucked out in her choice but still the things weren't as hunky dory as she made out to be.

The family and society had talked all about the functions and the clothes she was wear after the marriage or how to be presentable before the family and accept or acquiesce to their demands yet no one had told her about the changes that she would go through both physically and emotionally.

She had a roller coaster ride where her emotions were concerned, the turmoil she felt couldn't be deciphered. On one incident, she was roaming about with her new family when suddenly an old punjabi song came on the radio and she was instantly reminded of the outings and the quarrels she had had with her brother when he used to insist on playing that song on repeat. She couldn't have those same carefree rides with brother for now she would always be accompanied by her better half.

On another occasion, she being a lazy person at heart wanted to rest the entire day but she didn't have that luxury now for her new family wanted to go out and explore some supermarket. It was at that moment she realized that her life had actually changed for she had to prioritize her new family's wishes over and above her own desires.

The major emotional setback came when she went to visit her own family. It had never even come to her mind that she would be treated as a guest in her own house. She had gone to her parental home as a part of a custom, usually when there were guests at the house, she was the

one who was asked to cater to them in respect of food, drinks and beverages and then pick up their dirty utensils and take them back to the kitchen but that day something strange happened, as she was about to get up and go into the kitchen to help out her mother as she usually did before her marriage, she was forbidden to do so by her grandmother for she too was now part of the guests that had arrived at home. She was rather asked to company the guests while they did all the work and catered to her alongwith the other guests.

It was a shockwave to her system for after a single ceremony she was no longer the part of the family that she had grown up her entire life with but somebody else's responsibility now. She was taught that day that henceforth, they are your new family and will come before the family she had grown up with. She wasn't a machine who could turn off her feelings for her original family, yes, she had accepted the new family with her own arms but it could in no way mean that she will forget her own family. Whenever she encountered an issue or a problem, whether in kitchen or in any other matter of her life, her reflex was to call her own mother and not mother in law, she couldn't change that reflex with a switch of a button. She knew what society expected from her yet it wasn't as easy as they made it to be.

She had newfound responsibilities that she didn't have before her marriage. It was normal for her to call up her mother or even father without a reason any time of the day but now she had a responsibility to call not only her own mother but also mother in law and father in law. Even though it wasn't in built in her but it was what was expected of her and she had to abide by it. It wasn't that she didn't want to talk to mother in law or father in law, it was just that she didn't know what to talk about to her in laws, with her mother she could discuss everything and anything but with her mother in law she had to be on her guard for she didn't knew what said by her could be misconstrued. So every day with her new family was a new journey, new story where she had to think before her every action.

It wasn't just the emotional upheaval she underwent, she also underwent physical upheaval. It wasn't that she was beaten or thrashed but her bossy yet underwent another round of changes that she wasn't prepared for. Her body which was now being caressed by her lover and her partner was undergoing changes that were affecting her mental health as well. Suddenly she wasn't as petite as she always had been; suddenly she was gaining weight that she hadn't gained in her entire life irrespective of the junk food she ate. She always used to think that women

gained weight after marriage by their own choice that now they were committed and didn't have look beautiful or attractive to lure anyone in but when it happened to herself it opened her eyes that it was natural and part of the life cycle.

She began hating her body and warding off her lovers touch for she thought it was what was making her obese, she forgot what it was to be happy with her body and with herself. She felt extremely annoyed when her friends and relatives asked her about if she was expecting or if she was planning, some even went as far as suggesting that may be she had conceived and she didn't realize that she was carrying the baby. It was all these comments that assailed her and made her gloomy. She couldn't even discuss it with anyone for nobody could understand what she was going through.

She went through a passage of embarrassment when she had to send her entire wardrobe for alternation as she could no longer fit into her old clothes. She suffered major embarrassment when people asked if her weight gain was due to the baby she was carrying, she couldn't explain to them it was because of the excessive junk food she ate because she couldn't cook for a penny's worth.

She went through turmoil of emotional upheaval many times whether it was because of her body weight or when the memories of her family assailed her in her moments of depression reminding her of the life she had left behind. It was usually during those times that she missed the comfort of her mother's arms and solace of the home cooked food.

A woman goes through many upheavals right from the moment she says "yes" to marriage when she starts talking to a new person, trying to know that other person and alienating her own family in the same process for she couldn't share all the details of the conversation with her family with whom she used to share each and every detail of her life. She has to manage the conversation between both the families and be a mitigator in both the families extinguishing the fires that keep erupting managing both the families.

The mother, who used to be her best friend, starts feeling alienated for she can't communicate or express all that she is feeling for the new person in her life. Her brother who had been keeper of her secrets feels betrayed when somebody else takes his place. On one incident she remembers very clearly the alienation she made her brother go through accidentally when she handed her cell

phone to her husband after marriage which she used to give to her brother normally for safekeeping.

Hence she was going through multitude of changes as was her family, as was her in laws family for they too were accepting a new stranger into their folds without knowing if she would be able to adjust into their family and accept them with their flaws and imperfections for nobody is perfect in this world.

Marriage an afterthought is a journey that women undergo after they commit or acquiesce to getting married irrespective of it being arranged marriage or a love marriage, the changes she goes through remain the same in most of the cases. It may vary in some cases, where the women are aren't as lucky and get stuck in an abusive households yet in most of the cases, it is more of the emotional journey than physical one that a girl goes through in order to become a woman.