

# Arranged marriages

## Text A

### Asian men say no to the misery of arranged marriage

JOHN ARLIDGE

'If it wasn't so tragic, it would be funny.' Mohammed Khalil, a Glasgow-born Pakistani, is not laughing.

His story is as tragic as it is complicated: five years ago, when he was 17, he met Tahira, a local Asian girl, and they fell in love. When Mohammed's parents discovered that the two teenagers were dating, and that her parents would not allow a marriage, they sent him to Pakistan and forced him into an Islamic marriage with Khatija, the daughter of a family friend.

After the wedding Mohammed returned to Britain and married Tahira in secret. When Tahira's parents found out, they sent her to Pakistan and forced her to marry a relative. Khatija arrived in Glasgow and, rejected by Mohammed, married a Scot.

'We are all 'married' to two people at once and none of us is happy,' said Mohammed. 'I have lost the only woman I have ever loved, my family has been destroyed . . . and the last I heard, Tahira was miserable.'

Shunned by relatives, Mohammed, a restaurant manager, has outraged the Asian community in Glasgow's West End by trying to have the marriage with Khatija annulled. He is one of an increasing number of Asian men who are breaking with tradition to denounce loveless unions.

#### Source

Extract from John Arlidge's article on 16 May 1993: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/asian-men-say-no-to-the-misery-of-arranged-marriage-2323340.html> [Accessed 23 April 2015]

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## **Advantages of Arranged Marriages**

If we leave the west for a few days and transplant ourselves into any culture that promotes arranged marriages, we will, in time, realise the logic behind this practice and appreciate the reasons why they work. Some of those reasons can be attributed to the wisdom of elders. Because they raised and cared for their children, they instinctively know what's best for their children, which includes the decision to select a life partner.

### **1. Risk of incompatibility is diminished**

Arranged marriages presuppose that two people are perfectly matched because they belong to the same culture, share the same religious upbringing, speak the same language, and raised in more or less the same socio-economic class. These identical backgrounds make it easier for the couple to communicate with each other and understand where each 'is coming from'. Decisions in the upbringing of future children and their education leave little room for disparities in their thinking because of this 'likeness'.

### **2. Idea of divorcing is unthinkable**

This is another acknowledged advantage of arranged marriages. Given that the man and woman come from a similar background and therefore share the same views of marriage and family, the chance of divorcing due to irreconcilable differences is not as strong as in western cultures.

Note that it is not so much the arranged marriage per se that reduces the likelihood of divorce. As we discussed in another article, most arranged marriages no longer trigger a negative reaction because a good number of them are not forced. Parents who arrange marriages are fully aware that their children can always refuse a selected partner, in which case they simply look for another suitable partner. The input from the future groom and bride carries weight. The combination, therefore, of the parents' wisdom and consent of the child would lead to a happier union so divorce would be unlikely.

India is the perfect example of a society where arranged marriages are still the norm and where the divorce rate is very low.

### **3. Extended family support has its benefits**

In traditional societies, spouses sometimes live with the parents or live in the same housing compound. In times of difficulty, the couple can count on the help of their parents and in-laws for physical, emotional and financial support. When the children are born and both spouses work, finding adequate babysitters is a non-issue because the grandparents pitch in the care and nurturing of the children. The children are therefore supervised by close family members instead of by complete strangers, making them comfortable because they live in an atmosphere that they know well. Needless to add, when the couple has arguments, well-meaning elders can step in and offer advice and 'arbitration' sessions.

#### **Source**

<http://www.professorhouse.com/relationships/marriage-advice/articles/advantages-and-disadvantages-of-arranged-marriages>  
[Accessed 23 April 2015]

## Wedding Monologue

It's just nerves. (2)

But how do I stop my hands from shaking? Someone's bound to notice... He's right; today will be over so quickly. What will he expect of me when I'll be his? Will it be any different from now? Grandma says we're a good match, and that every young girl has cold feet on the day of her wedding. And *of course* she's right! *I am* nervous; it's just nerves.

... But, I can't help feeling it's not right, this whole (.) *thing*. I'm not ready for this, but how could I have refused? Grandma said I should be happy, I *was* chosen, I couldn't help it.

I remember seeing him for the first time (.) – girlish, childish tendencies making me blush at his handsomeness ... I felt ashamed that he, a wealthy man, had to degrade himself as such as to visit us.

My time is nearing. (2)

This gown needs pulling in (1) it's the smallest size he could get, but still it's swallowing me. The arms are too long and too loose, the bodice is too big for my non-existent chest and the waist is too big. If Mama was here she'd help. (1) She'd help me out of this (.) this dress, this stupid house.

No – (.) I have to stop and I *must* stop getting carried away. I'm getting married in an hour to a man who I love and will better my family's lives. I'm going to be his wife. *I am* going to be his wife.

The white point shoes look solid and unyielding, they're new. At least they're my size, a small number etched in silver on the soles: 12. My lucky number, my age.

\*Three knocks on the door\*

I thought I had more time (.) but it's fine. It's normal to be nervous. It's just nerves.

### Key:

- (1) : time pause
- (.) : micro pause
- : emphasis
- Italics* : soft emphasis

## Reading

Read Text A carefully (**‘Asian men say no to the misery of arranged marriage’**).

1. In the headline, the writer uses the adjective ‘misery’ to describe arranged marriage. Can you think of an alternative adjective? Explain your choice.

- Remember to read between the lines in order to answer this question.
- It is a good idea to use the word ‘because’ to help you to explain your opinion.

*This is an inference question which asks you to think about what is suggested by the vocabulary used.*

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2. Is the following statement true or false?

	True	False
In the East End of Glasgow Mohammed has caused outrage amongst the community.		

*This is a deduction question. You need to read the text carefully and show that you understand it.*

3. The information refers to ‘annulled’. Select one definition from the list below that best defines ‘annulled’.

- a. declare a marriage to have had no legal existence ☐
- b. divorce ☐
- c. a separation ☐
- d. disassociate from something ☐

*This is a multiple choice question which asks you to choose the best fit meaning for a word or statement based on its use in this passage.*

Read Text B carefully (**‘Advantages of Arranged Marriages’**).

4. List three advantages of arranged marriages reducing the divorce rate.

*This question tests your ability to retrieve information using deduction and inference skills.*

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5. In the text the writer refers to ‘irreconcilable differences’. Select one definition from the list below that best describes ‘irreconcilable’.

- |                                |                          |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. unable to discuss           | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. violent clashes             | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. hostile to each other       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. incapable of being resolved | <input type="checkbox"/> |

*This is a multiple choice question which asks you to choose the best fit meaning for a word or statement based on its use in this passage.*

Read Text C (‘**Wedding Monologue**’).

6. In your own words, summarise the emotions conveyed in the ‘Wedding Monologue’.

*This is a summarising question. You must select information from the text and convey it in your own words. **Do not** just copy from the text.*

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7. In all the pieces, there are references to arranged marriages. How do the writers try to engage the readers’ interest? Which piece do you find more interesting and why?

*This is an analysis question which asks you to look at the language writers use to convey their meaning effectively.*

You need to comment on:

- the writer’s choice of words;
- the details the writer has chosen to include;
- the types of sentences and paragraphs used.

*You are also asked to evaluate the texts by comparing and contrasting styles of writing/information given.*

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This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

## Writing

8. What do you think about arranged marriages? Do you think it should still be allowed? Write about 200 words.

*Remember to give your opinion and to give reasons for your opinions.*

9. Describe a time when you've had to do something that you didn't really want to do. Write about 200 words.

## Oracy

10. In a small group discuss the advantages and disadvantages of arranged marriages.

*Ensure that everyone has a chance to give his/her opinion and that you listen carefully to everyone.*