

ROMANCE

APPROVED



01



ARRANGING LOVE

TRADITION

DON'T
WORRY—
YOU'LL BE
NEXT!

IN THIS ISSUE:

*"I wasn't sure
Marriage was
what I wanted"*



Welcome to *Arranging Love*, a story of arranged marriages, love and family.

I am Raksha, I teach at Newcastle University. This comic book is the story of **three** arranged marriages in a Hindu-Punjabi family of British Indians. It shows how arranged marriages have **evolved** to suit a British Indian **identity**.



MEET THE ANANDS*

PREMA
ANAND



70 years old.
Housewife and temple volunteer. Likes growing her own vegetables.

RAJEEV
ANAND



74 years old.
Retired businessman. Likes watching cricket and playing chess.

GEETA
ANAND



37 years old.
Runs her own tailoring/fashion business selling Indian wedding wear. Loves Bollywood films and Zumba.

RANBIR
ANAND



41 years old.
Runs his own wholesale business. Loves motorbikes. Would like to be less busy at work and spend more time with his family.

INDIRA
BRAR NEE ANAND



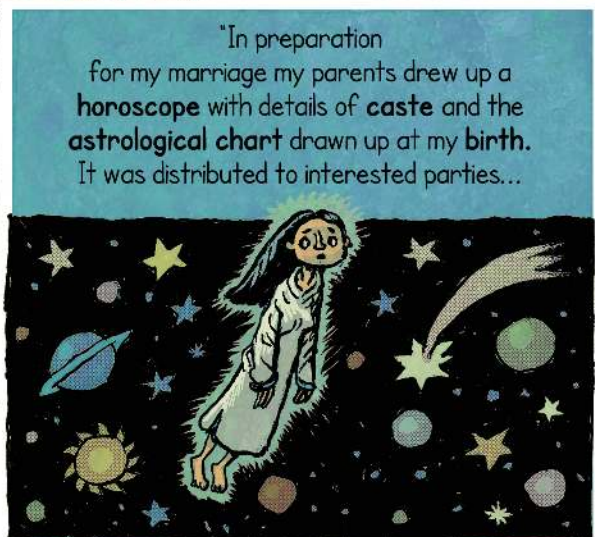
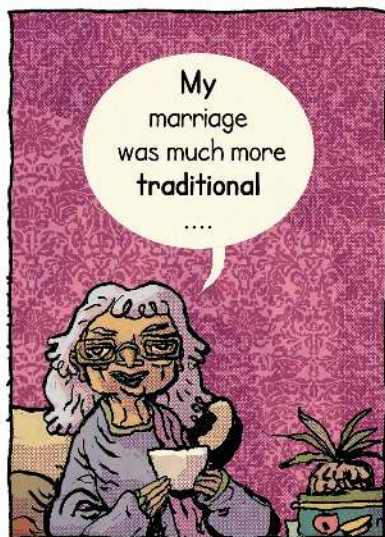
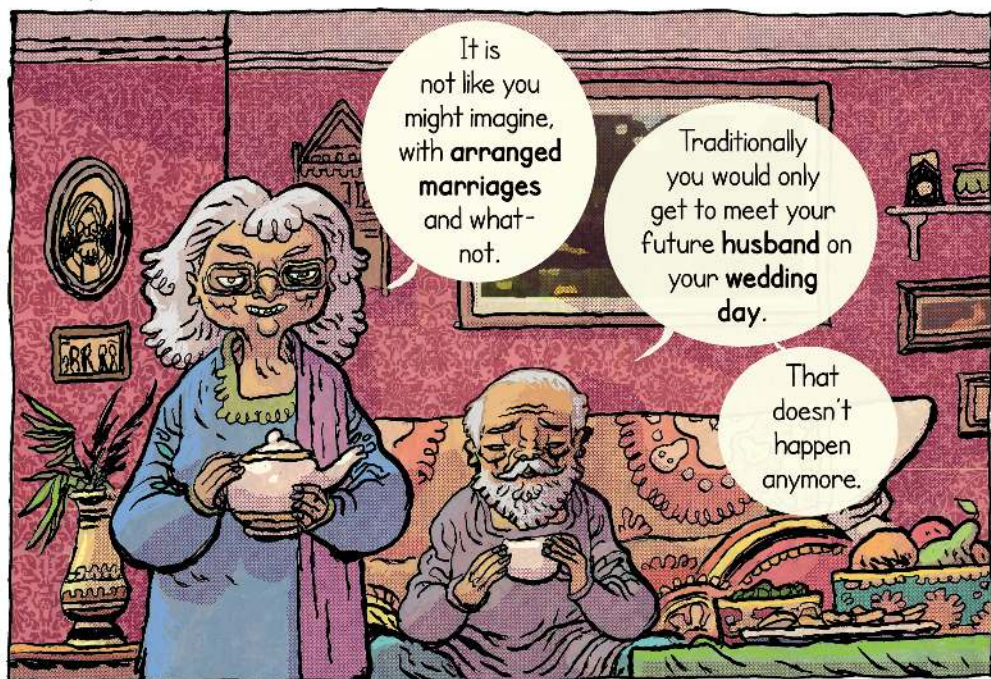
37 years old.
School teacher. Likes reading novels and volunteers at the local women's centre.

VEER
BRAR



40 years old.
Pharmacist. Likes doing computer coding and programming for fun, and cooking curries from around the world.


*This is a true story. Names and biographical details have been modified to protect the privacy of the family.




A girl with long dark hair and a white jacket looks up with a worried expression at a dark sky filled with stars, planets, and zodiac signs. A large green arc is behind her.

Matching the
horoscope
used to be
one of the
first steps in
arranging a
marriage
...

It was
done by the
family priest.

A jagged horizontal line with a dark brown and black background.

But there
was a **fault** in my
horoscope.

An upside-down illustration of a priest with a beard and a white robe, looking up at a starry sky with zodiac signs. A large green arc is behind him.

So it was
very difficult
to find a
match.

Fortunately
my parents
found out about
a match with a
similar fault..."

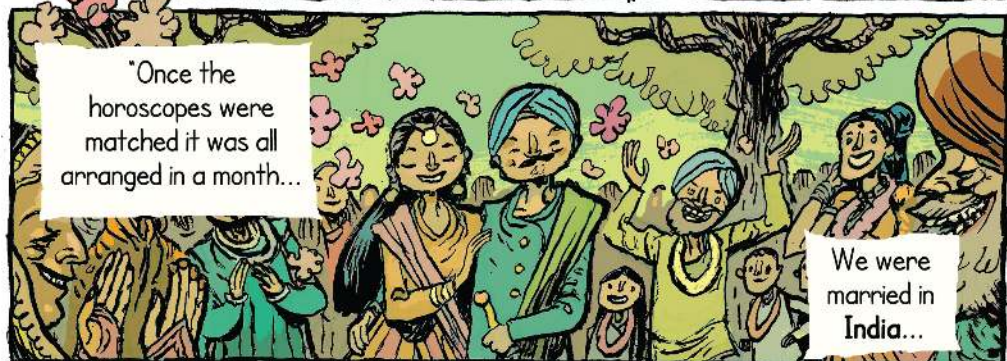
I was
allowed to
pick and choose
between all those
whose horoscopes
matched
mine.

But
in my case,
there was not
much **choice**,
because there
was **only one**
match!



"Once the
horoscopes were
matched it was all
arranged in a month..."

We were
married in
India...



Five months
later I joined
Rajeev
in the UK."



See,
our children
are **British**.
It wouldn't do
to have them marry
someone from **India**.
It would be like
marrying a
foreigner.

My son
Ranbir
had a **modern**
arranged
marriage
...

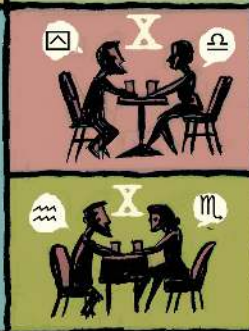




"I met the possible matches independently of the family."



Maybe a dozen women.



And on one of these dates I met Geeta.



She's now my wife."

With Geeta
it just clicked.

We had
chemistry.

We went on
a few more
dates, movies
etc, and then we
chose the right time
and gave our parents
the go-ahead with
the **arrangements**,
so to speak.

"So you see,
it is not a
forced
marriage...

Parents
only get involved
when you **want**
them to, they
lead the rituals
of the **engagment**
and the **wedding**."

"We were
lucky, we
wanted this.
not **every-**
body does.

Like your
sister
Indira.."



"My late
twenties
were hard.
I was
studying.

I wanted
to finish my
PHD before
I settled
down.

I wanted
to figure
out what I
wanted to do
with my life."

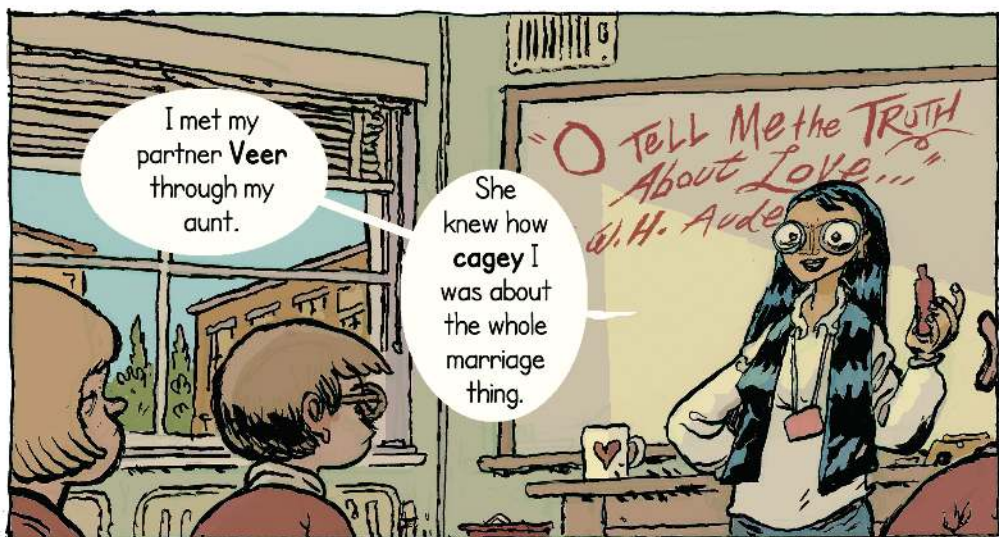


For
us Asians,
marriage is
life's goal.

Everybody
has to get
married.

They
think there
is something
wrong with you
if you can't
decide or
don't want
to.





But she said-

What's the harm in **meeting** the guy?

If you don't like him you can always say 'no'.



"So I agreed to meet him for **coffee**."

But I didn't **like** him much."

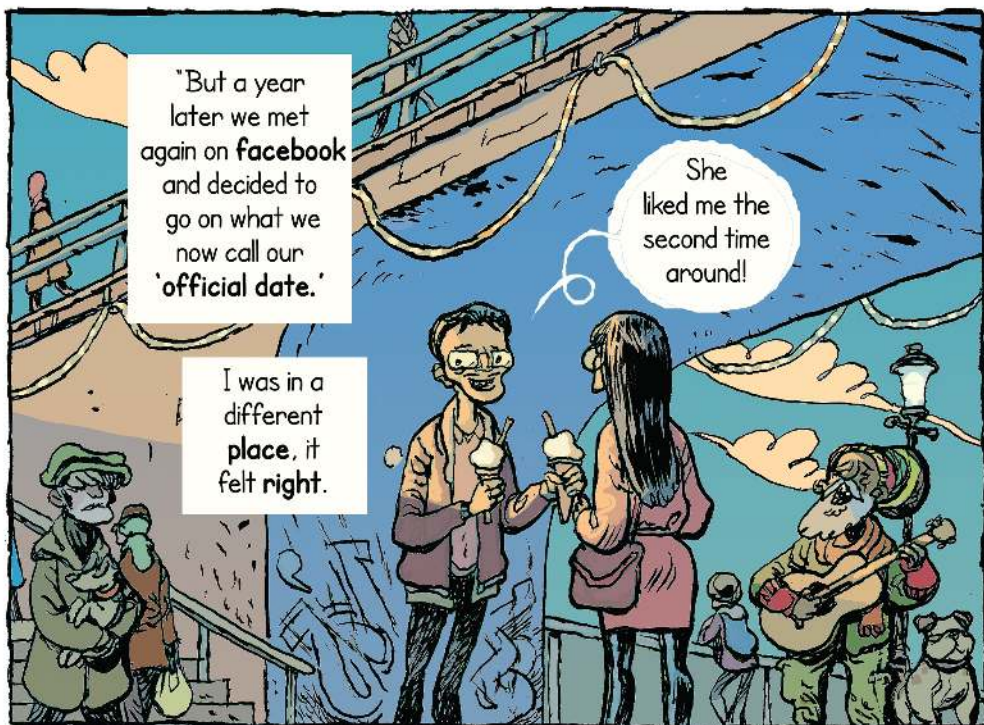


Timing is **every-**thing..

I wasn't in the right frame of mind.

I only agreed to **meet** him to please my family.





"But a year later we met again on **facebook** and decided to go on what we now call our '**official date.**'

She liked me the second time around!

I was in a different **place**, it felt right.



Two dates later and I decided to ask my aunt to approach my **parents** about the match."



It was the **Indian** thing to do!



.. Because **traditionally** women are **not** supposed to be **forthright** about getting married.

Especially if they've chosen the man on their own!

PROTOCOL

"So my aunt was the proper channel to go through to my parents.



They were over the moon.



And were happy to arrange things with Veer's folk."

I was so proud of her.

She kept our izzat* by taking things slowly.

*IZZAT- a Hindi word that translates to family honour or reputation. Izzat can be enhanced or compromised by individual actions.

And including us in her decision early on.



"It is the best of both worlds, this love and arranged marriage of hers."

Choice is there about **when** and **how** you get your marriage arranged. You make the choice with your parents.

Like all marriages- the role of **timing** is crucial as well as the desire to have a 'love story.'

You **can** have **love** in arranged marriages- they can be arranged by your **parents** and via the **internet!**

Traditional arranged marriages are **outdated**.

Tradition and **modernity** can live **side by side** in these love and arranged marriages.

You need to have **choice** and **love** in arranged marriages.



As the **Anand** family's story shows, you could say that there is **no such thing** as a traditional arranged marriage among today's British Indians. **Modern** arranged marriages involve a **variety** of different **matchmaking practices** where each family tailors its **own version** to suit British **identities** and **ambitions**. The range of practices that now exist can be thought of as a **spectrum**:

FORCED MARRIAGES

- Entirely arranged by parents.
- Offered **little** or **no choice**.
- **Least popular** form.

SEMI-ARRANGED MARRIAGES

- Partly arranged by parents who make 'introductions' to prospective partners.
- The relationship then follows an established '**westernised**' **pattern** of the couple going on dates to get to know each other better and, **if** they fall in love, then getting married.
- **Most popular** form.


LOVE-CUM-ARRANGED MARRIAGES

- The person wanting to get married finds someone from their own community that they like **themselves** and will go on dates to get to know each other.
- **If** they decide to get married, they ask their parents to approach the parents of that person to arrange a **formal introduction**, followed by **parent approved courtship** and then marriage.
- Becoming more popular.

ARRANGED WEDDINGS

- **Most westernised** form of courtship and marriage.
- Can include **inter-religious** marriages where parents may **only** be involved in arranging the **wedding**.
- **Rare** but becoming more acceptable.





Ranbir and Geeta's marriage can be said to fall in the semi-arranged marriage category. Although Indira was first introduced to Veer via her Aunt, She did not pursue the match then. Instead she claimed to 'fall in love' with him later; **independently** of parental involvement- her marriage is one example of what a 'love-cum-arranged marriage' can look like. The fact that both these forms still ensure religious and class **endogamy*** is what makes them arranged marriages.

***Endogamy** is an anthropological term that refers to the practice of marrying within the same ethnic, cultural, social or religious group. The opposite of endogamy is inter-marriage.

As part of my research, I also asked the Anands to **clarify** some **common myths** about arranged marriages and their answers are on the following pages...

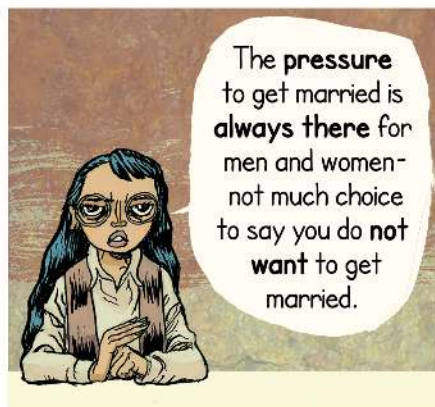
ARE ARRANGED MARRIAGES THE SAME THING AS FORCED MARRIAGES?



DO WOMEN HAVE ANY CHOICE IN ARRANGED MARRIAGES?



Yes and no - depending on how strictly traditional your family was.



AREN'T LOVE MARRIAGES BETTER THAN ARRANGED MARRIAGES?



This comic was rendered by **Mark Stafford**
based on a collaborative draft created by
Mark, Hannah Sackett and **Jim Medway**.
It is based on research by **Raksha Pande**.
This collaboration was facilitated by **Lydia Wysocki**.



Raksha Pande teaches social and cultural geography at the School of Geography Politics and Sociology. She studies how family structures have changed over time among the Asian population in the UK, using interviews as her primary research method. To access this comic and associated teaching resource online please visit:

<https://www.ncl.ac.uk/gps/staff/profile/rakshapande.html>



Mark Stafford is the co-creator of the graphic novels *The Bad Bad Place*, *Lip Hook*, *The Man Who Laughs*, and *Cherubs!* alongside much other stuff.

He has created beer labels, theatre posters and record covers, worked with the British Council on two projects in South Korea, and has been the Cartoonist in residence at the Cartoon Museum in London.

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