# Yes, an eye-catching performance, darling!

*This submarine wedding, said my wife, took place in Australia, or rather, off Australia, and involved 2 persons crazy about skin-diving. And what is more, they met a Reverend with similar proclivities who agreed to marry them on the ocean bed.* ■ **by D. P. Sabharwal**

"YOU ARE the most unimaginative husband I have come across," she said, taking her eyes off the magazine section of the Sunday newspaper.

I ignored her question, "Now do you realise the importance of reading papers and magazines? You see, it broadens your horizon and informs you about the good and bad, funny and not-so-funny happenings around the world," I said.

"Don't tell me about the advantages of reading because I am not a student of Class IV, nor are you a priest who has to deliver sermons."

"I definitely was not sermonising, dear. In my humble way, I was bringing home the point that whenever you read something, you come out with the most original and thought-provoking ideas." I then asked, "What were you saying about my being a husband?"

"A husband you are, there is no denying this fact," she said. "But you are the most unimaginative husband I have come across."

"Aye! That's revealing!!" I said, "How many more husbands have you got?"

"Don't be silly," she admonished me. "Whenever I say something that hurts your male chauvinism, you try to change the topic."

"Now, that's a false accusation," I said. But after a moment's gap, I added "All right, I will not give you a chance to feel that way. Now tell me what made you feel that your husband is unimaginative."

"Listen to this," she said reading from the paper, "This submarine wedding was unique. It took place in Australia, or rather off Australia, some time back and involved 2 persons crazy about skin-diving. And what is more, they met a Reverend with similar proclivities who agreed to marry them on the ocean bed."

"But how did they manage to exchange vows with rubber hoses in their mouths and bubbles out of their snorkels?" I inquired.

"Well, there is no mention of it over here," she said, flashing the paper at me.

"Your unimaginative husband can make a reasonable guess," I said teasingly and added," "Maybe, they held up waterproof cards with 'I do' and 'I will' writ large."

"Whatever they did must have been really exciting and thrilling," she sighed.

"I agree with you 101%. But what has this incident to do with my being unimaginative?"

Ignoring my question, she carried on, "Only yesterday I was talking to a lady who had returned from Bangkok after a year's stay. She told me that the latest craze in fashionable circles in Thailand was to get married, seated aloft a pair of trunk-swaying elephants in howdahs matching his or her dress."

"Hey! wait a minute, I think I have got wind of your thoughts. I hope you are not comparing these crazy and weird marriages with our simple, conventional and solemn ceremonies."

"Thank God, you understood at last," she said loudly and then mumbled, "Oh, what wonderful ways to get married! On elephants, under water or up in the sky in balloons!"

"Well, that is not the complete list of innovative and funny ways of getting married; for your kind information, my dearest darling. Couples have got entry into the *Guinness Book of World Records* through strange marriages. I only wonder if such couples remained tied to each other or broke away sooner or later to create yet another record with someone else."

"Who cares what happens later on so long as you steal the thunder in everybody's presence?" she asked. "Which in your opinion is the most unusual marriage?"

"There is the reported case of a couple who got married while in the air some 2,000 feet above the ground in a glider. The best man, the maid of honour and a notary public were also up there in 3 gliders. And officially to complete the marriage, the notary public spoke the "magic word" over the radio set," I said. "But I fail to understand one thing. How could the best man have planted the customary kiss on the cheek of the bride? Do you have any idea?" I asked.

"I don't think about such trivialities," she replied. "I am only interested in major events. Only an innovative and interesting marriage triggers my thought process."

"Well, perhaps, in that case this one will help you. You see a photographer and an actress got married in an ice cave 15 feet underground in Antarctica at —26°C."

"Oh no! The very thought of this chilly marriage is sending shivers down my spine," she said.

"In that case this marriage might warm your heart up," I said and continued, "A school teacher and his companion decided to have a non-traditional, informal and intimate wedding at the 18,640 feet high peak of Mt. Kilimanjaro in Tanzania. What is more, the couple symbolised it to the uphill struggle to attain peace and harmony in marriage."

"It means people of other countries too have problems in attaining peace and harmony in married life," she said. From her bewildered tone, I could not make out as to whether she said it to herself or had posed a question to me.

"Why! You thought only you can create problems?"

"I wish I could lay claim to anything, even if it is negative in character," she sighed again and added. "Mine has been a routine marriage followed by a dull and dreary married life."

"But giving birth to 2 children and rearing them up cannot be called dull or boring by any standard," I countered.

"And you think by producing 2 children you have achieved something unique! On the contrary, you have become one of those tens of millions of Indians who got sold to the slogan of *Ham do hamare do*."

"Instead of being sarcastic, you should have been proud of my nationalistic feelings," I said. To that she kept quiet.

Realising that the talk was drifting away to a dead and barren field devoid of any humour or fun, I returned to the original track. "But you never told me

that you had ambitions or any desire to set any milestone on either getting married or thereafter?"

"Would it have made any difference had you known it?" she asked matter-of-factly.

That left me gaping. Frankly speaking, I had never expected her to say that. Now that she had asked it without mincing any words, I had to be truthful to her.

Thus I said, "I agree that our marriage could not have been the most expensive one to merit attention. And even if the idea had occurred to me, I would not have had the courage to get it solemnised as per Muslim, English, or Sindhi rites even if it meant an entry into the *Guinness Book of World Records.*

"Yes, we could have remained engaged for a record period, but your desire of bossing over a helpless husband spoilt even that grim chance."

"I am neither interested in your lame excuses nor am I going to castigate you for your lapses of the past, provided you can come up with a bright idea to make good the loss."

"So nice of you, dear, for being considerate," I said politely, for I knew the fire her tongue could release on such occasions. After a pause, I said, "I will do anything you tell me."

"You are again displaying that indecisiveness," she admonished me and added softly, "Look, just forget that you could not add any colour to our marriage when it took place.

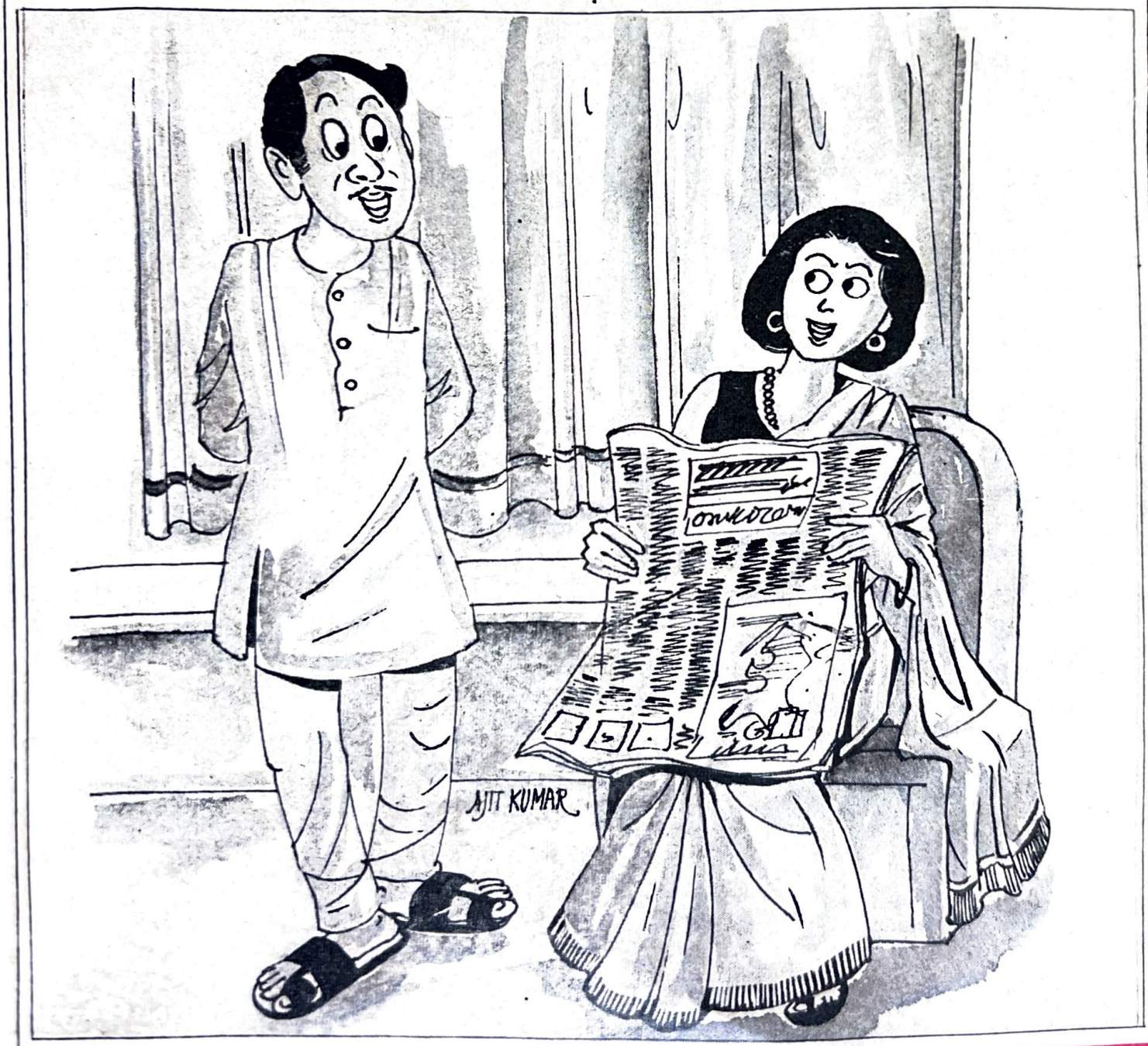
"Also forget about the monotonous interim years. Just think about the present and the future. Think how this marriage of ours can be made an event, a rare happening to which none else has laid a claim till date."

I paused for a moment and said, "It is really simple. Let us stop mutual bickering and quarrelling. And pretty soon the news will spread like wild fire."

"Don't be stupid," she said instantly.

"What is wrong with the idea?" I asked.

**"You are the most unimaginative husband I have come across," said the wife.**
**"Aye! That's revealing!! How many more husbands have you got?" he asked.**



"Well, it suffers from 3 major flaws. First, it is not at all simple to adopt. Secondly, life will become absolutely boring, dull and drab without it and I might even go mad if not allowed to let the steam out. And thirdly, you can never be sure of being the first to reach this summit. For all you know, there might already be a few such saintly but crazy couples wasting their lives this way."

"All right. I have another equally original and simple idea."

"What is that?" she sounded impatient.

"Next year we will be crossing an important landmark in our life. We would be completing 25 years of mutual suffering..."

"You want us to celebrate the silver jubilee of our wedding", she interrupted me.

"No, that is a common thing today," I said. "What I have in mind is something totally different and unheard of. Let all 4 of us get married the same day, on the day of our original marriage."

"Which 4 are you talking about?"

"You, Me, Akshay and Divya," I said.

"What?" was all that escaped her lips.

"Yes, you see Akshay is serving and well-settled in his job. And Divya has crossed 21 years and has appeared for her M.Sc. final examination. Both are thus eligible for marriage. And so are we, for tying the nuptial thread a second time. All the 3 marriages, involving 4 of us, can be solemnised at the same time, at the same place, in front of a common sacred fire."

"What are you talking? Have you thought of what people would say? This would lead to a thousand tongues wagging," she said.

"Now, is not that what you have been wanting?"

This simple question set her thinking.

And she has been thinking ever since.

And I am waiting for her response.

And our son Akshay and daughter Divya are going ecstatic over this idea of the whole family getting married together. □□

**ALIVE invites...**

***Articles and reports on current political, economic and social affairs. Also articles on the art of living, travelogues and short stories, humour.***

***Payment on acceptance.***

***Address your contribution to:***
***Editorial Department***

***ALIVE***
**Delhi Press Bldg.**
**Rani Jhansi Marg**
**New Delhi-110055.**

# SHACKLES OF SUPERSTITION

## Biting luck !

We were a group of 14 girls and boys, trekking in the Bandipur forest as a part of a nature-camp. As we faced no hardships on the way, I casually commented, "Thank God! No danger so far."

Immediately, one of my friends said, "Touchwood!" (This is said after anyone utters a sentence which represents something good so that nothing bad occurs)! On hearing the word, all of us playfully started touching each other's heads as if our heads were as good as wood.

But unlike all of us, one superstitious girl ran to a nearby tree and touched its trunk. She was immediately bitten by the red ants that were crawling on it.

So the act of touching real wood to avoid bad luck resulted in pain and grief!

*—Navina, Bangalore.*

## Grandma's tales

Those days I was studying in class X. I was staying with my parents. My grandmother was also staying with us.

One day before going to office my mother advised me to cut my nails and I agreed to it.

It was nearly 8 in the evening and I had completely forgotten about cutting the nails. In the meantime I heard the horn of my mother's car.

I took the nailcutter and rushed to my grandmother's room and started cutting the nails. Suddenly my grandmother snatched the nailcutter and told me never to cut nails at night. When I asked for the reason she said that a house in which nails were cut at night was bound to be raided by dacoits.

For the next week or so she made my father sit till late at night armed with a gun. It is now 5 years since that incident but not even a theft has been committed.

*—Aman Kanghlia, Delhi.*

## Child sacrificed

In a small village in Saurashtra a man, blinded by ignorance, sacrificed his new-born child in the temple of a goddess. The same man's grandfather had committed suicide by hanging from a tree 3 years back.

To get some peace for his grandfather's tormented and wandering spirit he committed such a heinous crime.

*—Deepak, Bijapur.*

## Opportunity lost

There lives a poor woman with her son in our vicinity. Once the young man was called for an interview.

He had only one pair of clothes. He requested his mother to wash his clothes but she refused as it happened to be a Thursday and she promised to do so the next day.

The next day there was heavy rain and the clothes did not dry up. So the boy had no clothes to wear for the interview and he lost a good job.

*—Rajesh Kapoor, Bombay.*

## Yearning for children

The children born to a certain woman in our village always died within a few days. The couple were much grieved on account of this.

An astrologer warned the woman that her left foot was poison-ridden and hence the instant death of her babies. He recommended that she get her foot amputated.

The couple readily agreed, so great was their yearning for a child. As a result, the woman became lame. A few days later she gave birth to a son, but he also died soon after.

The poor, childless woman, having fallen prey to the astrologer's wiles, lost her foot and gained nothing.

*—Vinod Kumar Gupta, Lucknow.*