VIOLENCE AT HOME

A 25-year-old woman from India is six months pregnant. She went to the US because the man she married lives here. She has been in Seattle for a year, but her husband does not allow her to leave the house without him. She speaks Punjabi and Hindi but very little English, and has no friends and no community. She is completely dependent on her husband, who beats her and yells at her. He uses the threat of deportation on a regular basis, knowing that to be sent back to India would be shameful, and her family would likely not take her back. He keeps her passport and her documents, so that she cannot leave him even if she chooses to. When she is in pain, he beats her into unconsciousness, she does not call the police because she is sure that he will ask the police to deport her. One day, her husband gets angry when they are downtown and abandons her in the middle of a crowded street. She has never been alone in the city before, and she is terrified. She finally sees someone who is Indian and runs to them asking for help. Luckily, they are sympathetic and speak her language. They take her to a lawyer, who refers her to a shelter. Although the shelter workers are kind, they do not understand her and have no interpreter. The young woman is very hungry, but she cannot eat because she sees that meat is being cooked in the same pots and pans that hold vegetables. For two days in a row, she eats only bread. Finally, she cannot take it any more. She calls her sister-in-law and asks to be taken home to her abusive husband. She stays with him for some more time until he decides to throw her out. After much trying, she finds a job. But without day-care for her newborn, she cannot accept it. Unless someone prominent abuses her partner, little is said or heard about domestic violence. But every day countless women are physically battered by their partners. These acts account for almost a quarter of all violent crimes against women. One-third of all murders of women are a result of domestic violence.

Even if they are able to leave abusive partners, victims of domestic violence too often enter a spiral that sends them hurtling from emotional and physical violence into the hole of poverty, depression, and social stigma. The woman above finally got help from Chaya, a grassroots non-profit organization created to meet the needs of South Asian women in crisis. Chaya's volunteer advocates refer them to appropriate legal and immigration services, inform them of their rights, and work to find solutions that protect their safety while respecting their cultural traditions.

In its first 18 months of operation, Chaya served 33 clients, fielded 232 calls requesting telephone counselling from clients, and provided 11 cultural sensitivity trainings to law enforcement officials and mainstream service providers. No matter where we're from, domestic violence affects us all in countless ways. The State, too needs to step in since domestic violence has direct impact on overall productivity since women, many of whom are professionals, cannot be expected to be very professional with their work while suffering abuse at home. There is also a dire need for professional counselling for abused women to help them get out of the spiral that the otherwise supportive society tends to keep them pinned in.
Dear Dee,

That was good news indeed. A new man. How nice. There’s nothing quite like the early heady days, is there? I’m really happy for you. Describing him as ‘this bloke who lives down the street’ hardly scales the heights of wuthering but is revealing nevertheless!

Women, I’ve convinced can change whatever their age but leave men alone for a minute and they set like cement. The other day got mail from a generous donor of y chromosomes to my life. Said he hoped I wasn’t turning his son into a mother’s boy. I thought that was quite rich considering he’s hardly seen him since he was born. If I were to shuffle him around with four other babies, I doubt if he could pick his own with any real confidence. Men!! Well, Europe no less! What kind of a job is this?! Mine only takes me to Tadung. I’ve always fancied myself sitting out at Parisian cafes, being utterly charmed by some Frenchman, telling me in broken English how fascinating I am (will just be back, I can hear the baby crying). Ya where was I? Never mind.

It is possible to pick up a book for me. It’s a new release called “Life Makeovers”, has great tips on how to change your life. A friend read it and says she’s not been the same again. Which reminds me, my horoscope for July says, ‘Mars and Venus join forces just as the sun moves into your sign to make you the sexiest sign of the zodiac. A sexy Scorpio or earthy Virgo could be a potential partner. A new playmate could help you burn off a few calories, but old loves are likely to turn up to complicate things’.

I tell you I haven’t felt so wanted in a long while!

Love,
Mia

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Two moments were unforgettable in the life of Soraya Esfandiary. Once was when she stood by the side of his Imperial Majesty, The Shah of Iran at the age of 18 to become his empress; the other was the day she stood on the steps of the plane taking her to Europe and out of his life forever.

Only seven years stretched between the joy of the first and the anguish of the second. Seven years at the end of which she lost the man she loved, her country and her crown. And all for one reason alone she could not give the Shah the son and heir he wanted. The story of Queen Soraya and the Shah is one of the most poignant in modern history. Everyone presumed the marriage to be one of convenience. Everything depended on whether she could provide an heir to the Peacock Throne. What no one had taken into account was the fact that they would fall deeply in love. Soraya, a ravishingly beautiful young woman was the daughter of an Iranian father and a German mother. She had silky raven black hair, high cheekbones, huge dreamy green eyes and full red lips. One day in 1950 the Shah saw rather fuzzy snapshots of her taken in St Moritz. But they were enough to rouse his interest. Soon Soraya was schooled in the formal protocol to rouse his interest. Soon Soraya was schooled in the formal protocol to rouse his interest. Soon Soraya was schooled in the formal protocol to rouse his interest. Soon Soraya was schooled in the formal protocol to rouse his interest. Soon Soraya was schooled in the formal protocol to rouse his interest. Soon Soraya was schooled in the formal protocol to rouse his interest. Soon Soraya was schooled in the formal protocol to rouse his interest. Soon Soraya was schooled in the formal protocol to rouse his interest. Soon Soraya was schooled in the formal protocol to rouse his interest. So...
For that special evening, to bring that glow back to your skin, here are two face lighteners to brighten your face before going to a party. Beat one egg white and apply on your face with a brush. After it dries up (15 – 20 min.), wash off with warm water. Splash cold water on the face. Pat dry. Mix a paste of 1 tsp. of flour, 1 tsp. of wheat husk (obtained after sifting ordinary quality wheat flour) and enough milk to form a thick paste. Rub on your face and neck. Rinse after it dries. The corn starch tightens the skin, the husk removes the dead cells and the milk provides the nourishment.

**What’s cooking on the net**

Internet has literally millions of people going from shop to shop with the aim to find something different. The fad of shopping on line is increas­ingly becoming popular and many people are starting to use it as a source of entertainment. Today, a search on the internet may be far from fruitful unless you are netsurf correctly.

**MAFIA MAMAS**

“Investigators have always underestimated the role of women in the Camorra,” said Observatory president, sociologist Lamberti. “We shouldn’t wonder at the sight of women holding the shot gun and firing. For at least 30 years women have been taking power inside these criminal organisations.”

In the Camorra spousal of one of Italy’s most notorious female criminals, Pupetta Morresca, who became famous in 1955 after she personally avenged the murder of her husband. Her life was turned into a film in 1985 with the starring role played by Alessandra Mussolini, the daughter of the wartime Italian dictator Benito Mussolini, who was actually an ace foe of the mafia.

There were other isolated cases of famous female Camorra such as Celeste Giuliano, better known as Celeste di Forcella, after the district in Naples where she controlled the heroin trade and other gangster activities following the death of her husband. After her arrest in 2000 at the age of 45, the brain-beached Celeste made a notorious last request to police – she wanted to go to the hairdressers and be allowed to put on a leopard skin outfit.

Women have been able to move up the ranks in the Camorra faster than the Sicilian Cosa Nostra because it is more of an urban organisation, which started life in gambling and gaming before moving into the world of drugs and public building contracts.

In rural Sicily, where Catholic traditions are stronger, women are more hidden by traditional mores regarding the sexes.

According to the Camorra Ob­server the role played by 75 per cent of the women in Sicilian mafia families is passive; supporting their husbands, and husbands rather than actually participating in the crime.

But even in Sicily, women have always been more than the glamourous, naively realistic, or amorous mistresses of mafia bosses as portrayed in Hollywood films like The Godfather.

And as such, they have also been vulnerable to vendetta violence.

With the growing number of spectacular mafia arrests and maxi­trials, including the 1993 trial of the boss of bosses - Sicilian Salvatore Riina, who was responsible for turning the Cosa Nostra into a sophisticated multinational corporation - women have been increas­ingly taking control of their imprisoned husband’s businesses.

Rina’s wife Ninetta Bagarella is generally seen as the brain behind her husband’s organisation.

Women’s clean names are also used to open bank accounts for money laundering and other white-collar crimes. But as the position of women improves in society, so will their careers within the family’s criminal network.

Men will be men whether they are from Mars or Majirt. Here are their six favourite lines.

- *What’s to eat?*

Fung at you first thing as he comes in when you’re lying in bed with cerebral malaria. Say fried cholesterol and he’ll say he’s Muslim.

- *You’re just like your mother*

Is this the same man who once likened you to Madonna? Well, he stands corrected now. Suddenly you’ve morphed into an overweight nag, a slob and a god-awful bore. The picture he has of the woman he openly disliked from day one.

- *You’re hurting my mother’s feelings*

His mother is the adored one, his godchild and all time oracle. She’s never wrong and you’re never right. Never say never, never ask why. You’ll hurt his mother’s feelings.

- *When did we get married?*

While he can never forget your former school boyfriend’s name, his memory gives him a slip when it comes to the most important day in your life. Before amnesia does you apart, anniversary and birthday dates (especially hers) need to be circled in red on the calendar and served a week before.

- *Where is my socks/mobile/ remote control?*

Is your fault if you don’t keep a map to each item in the house. How can you be a good wife if you can’t locate all his things when he needs them. Deep breathe, until he shrieks. “Where is my mother?”

- *Come on, you only have to lie down!*

The honeymoon is over. Your headaches have begun. He wants sex; you a sardon. 

- *Can we be reached at 7094909 or emailed at 3283dmov@ mailfr1.com?

The absolute “must visit” site, it is crammed with links upon links. There are literally hundreds of them. Additional features include regular competitions, attractive prizes and the latest news about food. There are sections on pages and recipes, table manners, weight loss and herp spotting.
Health First

An estimated 150 million people worldwide suffer from diabetes. It is a condition where the body is unable to produce or use the hormone insulin leading to elevated blood sugar levels and potentially serious complications. In India, there are nearly 35 million people who are diabetic and the figure is expected to double in the next few years. In Sikkim, although no statistics are available, doctors say that they are witnessing a great rise in the number of diabetic patients.

Contrary to popular belief, diabetes is not a mild disease. It is more than just high blood sugar. Diabetes affects other vital organs of the body and if not well controlled can lead to serious, acute, as well as long term complications. Nearly 80 per cent of diabetics will suffer from eye problems and 30 per cent from kidney failure. Diabetes is also the biggest risk factor for developing cardiovascular complications with diabetics up to four times more likely than others to develop heart disease or suffer a stroke. In a recent survey, doctors felt that their diabetic patients were not adequately aware of their increased heart disease risk, when in fact, 65 per cent will die of a heart attack or stroke.

On June 22, the first patient education programme was organised in Gangtok by the Cardiology Department of STNM Hospital in collaboration with MiTa Zulca, an NGO, in the presence of Dr. K. Bhandari, Senior Cardiologist, to find out more about the disease.

Shanti Thatal: Married to Music

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There has never been dearth of accolades and appreciation for Shanti Didi. Numerous cultural organisations from all over the region and from Nepal have felicitated her for her contributions. She has, however, never been known to have indulged in self-promotion. Rather, she is known to be a selfless and dedicated woman to the point of her retirement being taken advantage of. A suggestion Shanti Didi laughs off.

Life has been fulfilling, says Shanti Didi. Throughout this long journey with regex and tasha, she did mostly what she wanted to do. Like, for instance, the conscious decision to remain single. But in no way does she feel incomplete or that she has missed out anything in life. "In fact, my life has been thoroughly fulfilling as well as exhilarating. It is not that everything was perfect. I have my share of disappointments and difficult times. But all this has contributed to the person I am today. I have grown with each experience, no matter how good or bad. I have no regrets, whatsoever," she says.

Having devoted her life towards the promotion and preservation of music and culture, retirement from active service will give her more time to devote to her other pet projects, like documentation work of folk traditions of different ethnic communities.

Is there any other thing that interests her apart from music? "Yes, good food. I am very interested in cooking and trying out new recipes. Maybe I will now have more time to take up this interest too," Shanti Didi says.

Her retirement is also a subject of discussion with people closely associated with her. "Will she now leave Sikkim and settle down in Darjeeling?" everyone seems to be asking. Shanti Didi is reluctant to let go of its "melody queen".

"I may be retiring from service but certainly not from active life. I will be closely associated with both Darjeeling and Sikkim, the way I have always been. I will continue to create music and promote art and culture till my dying moments."

Shanti Didi is an epitome of today's woman - strong, independent and dedicated to her work. Someone who is not afraid to live a life in her own terms.