



Left: Junior Ilora Ismin takes a tour of her in-laws' house with her sister-in-law and cousin-in-law. Right: Ismin's husband, longtime family friend Mohammad Hossain, shows her flowers that can't be found in America. *Courtesy photos/Ilora Ismin*

'We instantly fell in love'

At 17, LC junior marries a man who lives in a different hemisphere

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As junior Ilora Ismin watches her peers deal with their high school relationship problems, she faces her own relationship troubles on a whole other level. The 17-year-old is married. Her husband lives in an entirely different hemisphere more than 8,000 miles away.

This past summer, Ismin and her mother traveled to Bangladesh, a South Asian country where her family is from.

While there, she reunited with longtime family friend 25-year-old Mohammad Hossain. A few weeks later, on July 4, the young couple got married.

Ismin's and Hossain's parents had grown up together in Bangladesh.

However, Ismin said she and Hossain had not seen each other for 14 years.

"When I first saw him, there were instant sparks," Ismin said. "We hadn't seen each other since we were very young. He said he didn't expect me to look so mature and beautiful. We instantly fell in love."

Ismin said she does not consider her marriage to have been arranged.

"Technically it was arranged, but to me, it was different," Ismin said. "Arranged is when you have never seen the person before. But he has known me since I was born, my parents know his parents, and we love each other."

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Ilora Ismin
junior

Ismin's husband, Hossain, remained in Bangladesh when she returned to the U.S. Ismin and Hossain will remain separated

until he is able to receive his United States visa, which can take up to a year. Being a young wife in high school and being separated from her husband has brought many changes in Ismin's life, some good and some bad.

Ismin is living in Indianapolis where she has grown up.

Hossain is living in Bangladesh where the couple got married.

"It is extra difficult. Sometimes you can't get good internet connection and I can't Skype with him very often. But he understands me more than anyone, and I couldn't be any happier," Ismin said. "My grades have improved, and I am overcoming past problems that I didn't know how to deal with. He really put meaning back into my life. Plus, I don't have to deal with stupid high school relationships."

Many people have given their opinions on Ismin's recent marriage. She said while most comments are positive, there are a few who voice negative opinions on her marriage at such a young age.

"They think that I don't get to live my life the way I want to and are



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against it," Ismin said. "People just don't understand my culture, which is OK; I don't expect them to. But at the same time, I don't like hearing the negative stuff. At least respect that I'm married, and I'm happy. People ask me if I can date. Obviously not, I am kind of married."

Ismin said that being married at such a young age has helped her learn how to respect herself and value her family's customs and traditions.

"No woman should give up her self-respect for a guy or for what they believe in," Ismin said. "You need to ignore the hate and respect yourself. Otherwise, who else will?"