

Henna from the Heart

Veda wiggled in math class. As soon as school got out for spring break, she would travel to Virginia with her family. They were going to Aunt Diya's wedding!

Veda loved weddings with her big, Indian family. Her favorite part of the wedding celebration was the day before the ceremony. That's when the bride's family would host the Sangeet.

The Sangeet used to be just for the women. But now the men came too. The two families would sing and dance together. Veda had been practicing online with her cousins. They would do a dance for the bride and groom.

Veda usually wore jeans and hoodies. But for the Sangeet she got to wear a lehenga. Her lehenga had a full pink skirt that swished around her ankles. It had a pink crop top decorated with gold flowers. Veda felt beautiful in her special clothes.

The Sangeet would start with the bride's family singing a traditional folk song to welcome the groom's family. Veda's family had been practicing that, too. Then family members would present dances and songs to the bride and groom. Sometimes they made loving jokes about the couple. At the end of the night there would be a big dance party with music, lights, and lots of food.

Veda thought the best part of the Sangeet was the Mehendi ceremony. That's when all the woman and girls would get their henna! Henna is a rust-colored dye made from plants. Henna artists use the dye to draw designs on the bride's hands, feet, and arms for good luck. The artists also apply henna to the hands of the female guests.

Tradition says that the darker the henna the deeper the love between the bride and groom. It is also the custom that brides do not have to do any housework until the henna fades. Because of these two beliefs, Aunt Diya would want her henna to be as dark and as long lasting as possible! Veda wanted that too. That way she could show all her friends when she returned to school.



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NAME: _____ DATE: _____

1. What will Veda wear to the Sangeet?
 - a. Jeans
 - b. A hoodie
 - c. A sari
 - d. A lehenga

2. How will the Sangeet start?
 - a. The cousins will do a dance
 - b. The women will get their henna
 - c. The bride's family will sing a song
 - d. The groom's family will eat the food

3. Why did Veda wiggle in math class?
 - a. She had to go to the bathroom
 - b. She was excited about the wedding
 - c. She didn't understand the lesson
 - d. She was bored

4. How does Veda feel about her henna?
 - a. Ashamed
 - b. Proud
 - c. Upset
 - d. Happy

Instructions for teachers:

These questions can be used to assess understanding of the reading passage.

The item in bold is the correct answer for each question.

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