

## Darjeeling

Anya packed her suitcase with clothes and books and her new shampoo that smelled like magnolias. She couldn't wait to see Aunt Meera. This visit was the first time that Anya had been to her apartment. Usually Aunt Meera came to stay with Anya and her family at their house, but now they were going to have a girls' only weekend in the city.

Anya felt very sophisticated as she stepped off the train into the bustling crowd. There was Aunt Meera, waiting to meet her as promised. Everything was starting off perfectly.

When they got to Aunt Meera's apartment, Anya was amazed. She had never seen a place so beautiful. It was neat and tidy, with lots of metal and glass. The living room was all white and black and gray. The only pop of color was an ornamental doll Aunt Meera kept in a small glass display case. The doll had long black hair and a colorful, jeweled sari. She was standing up in the case with her hand raised in a wave.

"That's Darjeeling," said Aunt Meera, when she noticed Anya looking at the doll. "She's a collector's item that was given out by the Darjeeling Railway the summer I visited India."

"She's lovely," said Anya. But something about Darjeeling didn't feel quite right. Her eyes seemed to follow Anya as she walked around the room.

“She doesn’t want you here,” a voice inside Anya’s head told her. But that was ridiculous. She was just a doll.

Anya got settled in the guest room. It was painted turquoise, with gauzy white curtains on the windows and sea green pillows piled up on the bed. It felt like stepping into the ocean.

When she came back out to the living room, she didn’t see Aunt Meera anywhere. What she did see was Darjeeling. The doll was now in a totally different position. She was sitting with her legs crossed and her hands at her sides.

“Did you move Darjeeling?” Anya called to her aunt. But there was no answer. When Anya looked back at the glass case, she was sure she saw Darjeeling give a slow wink.

Anya went looking for Aunt Meera in the kitchen, bedroom, and bathroom. Where could she have gone? The apartment wasn’t that big. She went back into the living room and looked warily at the glass case. She was sure Darjeeling was in a different position now, standing again with her arms above her head like a ballerina.

“What’s going on?” Anya said out loud. The voice in her head said, “get out.” But where could she go? The apartment door was locked, and they were up too high to climb out the windows.

Anya heard a knock and whirled around. It was Darjeeling, tapping on the glass. As soon as Anya spotted her, the doll froze. But Anya knew what she had seen. She ran to the guest room and closed the door, breathing hard.

Anya leapt onto the bed and put the sea green pillows over her head so she couldn't hear the tapping. Eventually, she heard another sound. Lifting her head up from the pillows, she heard Aunt Meera calling her name.

"I'm here!" Anya called back, running over to the guest room door. She tried to pull it open but it was locked from the outside. "Aunt Meera, I'm here!" she shouted, pounding on the door. Her aunt didn't answer.

As she looked around the room, Anya realized it was filling with water. Just like stepping into the ocean. But Anya couldn't swim.



This page has been intentionally left blank.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What color is in Aunt Meera's living room?
  - a. Turquoise
  - b. Magnolia
  - c. Gray
  - d. Sea green
  
2. How is the doll positioned when Anya first sees her?
  - a. Sitting with her legs crossed and her hands at her side
  - b. Standing with her hand raised in a wave
  - c. Standing with her arms above her head
  - d. Leaning over and tapping on the glass
  
3. When does Anya first start worrying about Darjeeling?
  - a. When she feels the doll's eyes following her
  - b. When the doll starts tapping on the glass
  - c. When the doll changes position
  - d. When she sees the doll in the case with her pretty clothes
  
4. Which item of clothing is Anya LEAST likely to have packed in her suitcase?
  - a. A sari
  - b. A pair of shorts
  - c. A dress
  - d. A bathing suit

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.

1. What color is in Aunt Meera's living room?
  - a. Turquoise
  - b. Magnolia
  - c. Gray**
  - d. Sea green
2. How is the doll positioned when Anya first sees her?
  - a. Sitting with her legs crossed and her hands at her side
  - b. Standing with her hand raised in a wave**
  - c. Standing with her arms above her head
  - d. Leaning over and tapping on the glass
3. When does Anya first start worrying about Darjeeling?
  - a. When she feels the doll's eyes following her**
  - b. When the doll starts tapping on the glass
  - c. When the doll changes position
  - d. When she sees the doll in the case with her pretty clothes
4. Which item of clothing is Anya LEAST likely to have packed in her suitcase?
  - a. A sari
  - b. A pair of shorts
  - c. A dress
  - d. A bathing suit**