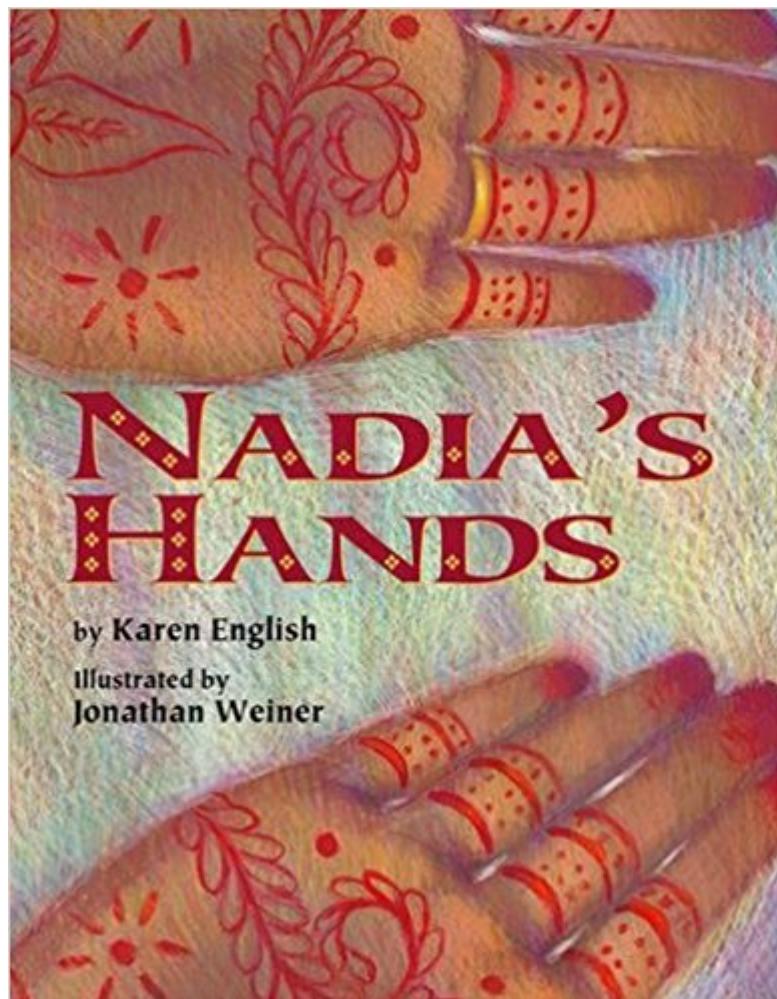


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Nadia's Hands



Synopsis

When Nadia is chosen to be a flower girl in Auntie Laila's traditional Pakistani wedding, her hands are decorated with beautiful designs made with mehndi, and she comes to understand the rich culture she has inherited.

Book Information

Paperback: 32 pages

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Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 10 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #140,168 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #71 in Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Multicultural Stories > Asian & Asian American #124 in Books > Children's Books > Holidays & Celebrations > Non-religious #292 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Fiction

Age Range: 5 - 7 years

Grade Level: Kindergarten - 3

Customer Reviews

Kindergarten-Grade 3-Nadia, a Pakistani-American girl, is chosen to be the flower girl at her aunt's wedding. On the day of the ceremony, Auntie Amina applies a henna paste (mehndi) to the girl's hands and then draws intricate patterns on them. Nadia knows that the designs will not wash off by the time she goes back to school on Monday, and she is very concerned about what her classmates will think. This story of one girl's coming to terms with her heritage is illustrated in oil pastels.

Textured, impressionistic, full-page paintings in neon shades of green, red, fuchsia, and blue are set on ample white space sparingly decorated with patterns taken from Nadia's hands. While the story is slight and the illustrations are undistinguished, the effort gives a glimpse into another culture. Diane S. Marton, Arlington County Library, VA
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Nadia, a Pakistani-American girl, has been chosen to be the flower girl for Auntie Laila's traditional

wedding. Nadia will wear shalwar, or silky trousers, with a matching kameez on top. She'll have her hair curled, and she'll walk down the aisle, strewing flower petals left and right. Before the wedding, however, she'll have her hands decorated with the mehndi, a dark red henna paste swirled into intricate designs, flowers, and stars. Everyone assumes that Nadia is thrilled, but she's worried about Monday, when she'll have to go to school with the indelible designs still on her hands. How the strength of time-honored traditions and the warmth and love of a large extended family transform Nadia's feelings about her hands make an affecting though somewhat abruptly resolved story. Weiner's pastel illustrations amplify the text; he shows Nadia's ambivalence in her face and posture, and conveys both her pleasure at her important role in the wedding, and her reluctance to be different at school. When she comes to terms with those fears, her smile is radiant. (glossary) (Picture book. 5-8) -- Copyright ©1999, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Well-written with beautiful oil pastel illustrations. This book looks at the Hindu/Pakistani/Middle-Eastern practice of mendi/henna as decoration for celebrations, in particular for weddings. The story is told through the eyes of a Pakistani girl and shows some of the inner conflict second- and third-generation children encounter when trying to bridge cultures and find their place in society. In this case, the fear that coming to school after the wedding looking different (with henna on her hands) might make her not fit in. Well done.

I use this book in a Henna Tattoo lesson that I teach 4th graders. This book is a great read while they work to introduce terminology as well as make a deeper cultural tie.

I love this book. It's such a great addition to my multicultural library.

Great story for children! Promotes children to be proud of their culture and their identity.

Karen English is to be congratulated for Nadia's Hands. There is a dearth of stories on issues faced by Pakistani-American children. Nadia's Hands makes a rich and stunning contribution to this area. The storyline is splendidly rendered. Nadia has been chosen to be the flower girl in Auntie Laila's traditional Pakistani wedding. Her hands are to be decorated with intricate designs of mehndi henna. The love of a large extended family assists her in understanding cultural traditions and accepting her role in the wedding celebrations. Notably, Karen English presents a theme rarely

found in children's literature - patience. After the mehndi is applied, Nadia's mother gently reminds her: "Be patient Nadia. Remember sabr - patience." The theme is similar to that of Subira Subira by Tololwa M. Mollel, an Arusha Maasai from Tanzania. In Swahili, "subira" means patience and is derived from the same root as "sabr". In Mollel's story, a brave young girl Tatu embarks on plucking three whiskers from a lion. In taming the lion, Tatu learns the power of patience and song.

"Sabr", "subira" and the theme of patience are indicative of the richness presented by the increasing number of multicultural stories in children's literature. My four year old really enjoyed Nadia's Hands and it remains a favourite. The pastel colours in the book are warm and evocative. A small complaint is the mispelling of Zahra Khan's name on the last page. Also a Pakistani-American child would likely address an aunt as "Laila Auntie" instead of "Auntie Laila".

Nadia has the duty of being the flower girl in a wedding, and two fears threaten her performance of this duty. The first is the fear of her friends' mocking her should she do something wrong or embarrass herself during the ceremony. The second is the fear of what the schoolchildren will do on Monday when they see the orange mehndi on her hands. Her fears almost overcame her, but when she saw her extended family's happiness at her appearance, she was able to refocus and complete her task as the flower girl. She was able to accept her hands as her own. The book is well-written and beautifully illustrated. I'm always surprised at the rivalries among little girls in children's literature, because I never remember as a little boy having these suspicions about the boys my age. With that reservation, I do like this book, and I'm eager to read it aloud to some children and see if they like it as well.

Book Review for Nadia's Hands By Shilpa Krishnan This book is a fantastic story about a Pakistani girl who lives in America. It is very detailed. You can learn about the culture and the weddings in Pakistan. This exciting story tells about how Nadia needs to be a Pakistani in America. For example, she needs to put Henna on her hands but does not want to show them at school. As you flip through the pages, the pictures will catch your eyes. They are colorful and detailed. The pictures are big, so you won't miss it. There is also a lot of background information on Pakistan words. On the first page of the book, there is some Pakistan words and their meanings. I recommend you to read Nadia's Hands. The pictures and texts are very detailed. If you would like to learn about Pakistani culture, you would love to read this astounding book.

We checked out this book from the library for our almost 4 year old daughter, who is born here but

very much in love with everything Indian - from food to bindis to the religious events. When I read it at first, it seemed unnecessarily graphic about Nadia's feelings. After my 3rd or 5th read, I realized that the book brought forth emotions in Nadia, not uncommon amongst multi-ethnic kids in the American culture. Of course they're confused about the weird customs of their parents, the expectations and rituals. It is only through an understanding of the very customs through the kids' extended families does confusion melt away. If more books like this existed for the kids, maybe the ABCD (American Born Confused Desi) stigma would seem more like a rite of passage. A definite read for any Indian parent raising a child in America.

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