

Every other year I travel with my father and sister to India. India is where my father was born and grew up. My father loves to take us there because he says that it is good to learn where we came from. As soon as our plane lands, I am surrounded by my father's big family and a different culture from the one I know in Texas. All my trips there have been memorable, but I remember one particular year when something unexpected happened.

It was the summer after fifth grade. This was the year my cousin Sarika was getting married. Sarika was 21 years old and, "quite dazzling!" is what others would call her. The groom's name was Manu, and he was extremely handsome and well-mannered. It was a <sup>very</sup> good match and was expected to be a grand and fabulous wedding.

Weddings in India, you must know, are very important and spectacular. This wedding would be no exception. There are many traditions that have to be upheld in India though. The groom would have to fast for one whole day. I remember Manu being stuffed with food before the fasting began, to leave him as full as possible before he stopped eating for 24 hours.

When the wedding day finally came, everyone was anxious, especially my aunt and uncle. Everybody dressed well, but Sarika was adorned in fineries of great elegance. The actual ceremony would go on for three days.

This plus the heat was enough to make any eleven-year-old girl exhausted. But I wasn't any eleven-year-old girl, and I was fascinated. This was the first wedding I had ever been to in India. And then something very surprising and unexpected happened. All of the sudden, the bride and groom were lifted into the air above our heads, and paraded around the room! It was a most mesmerizing sight and one that I will not soon forget. It was such great fun and a memory I can keep with me always.

Now that I am thirteen, I will be traveling this summer to India again. I can't wait to go. Just thinking of the exciting things that will happen this time is enough to send chills up my spine. Sarika is expecting a child soon. Perhaps I may even meet my nephew or niece when I am there. And all the wonderful places I will go, and new things I'll see...

Score Point: 4