

The Henna Helper

By Tami Lehman-Wilzig | Illustrated by Yinon Ptahia

READING GUIDE

About the Book

From award-winning author, Tami Lehman-Wilzig, comes a new picture book highlighting the Yemenite pre-wedding ceremony of Henna.

Deep in Tel Aviv's Yemenite Quarter, the small houses on Yom Tov Street buzzed with activity. The entire neighborhood was preparing for Yael's wedding.

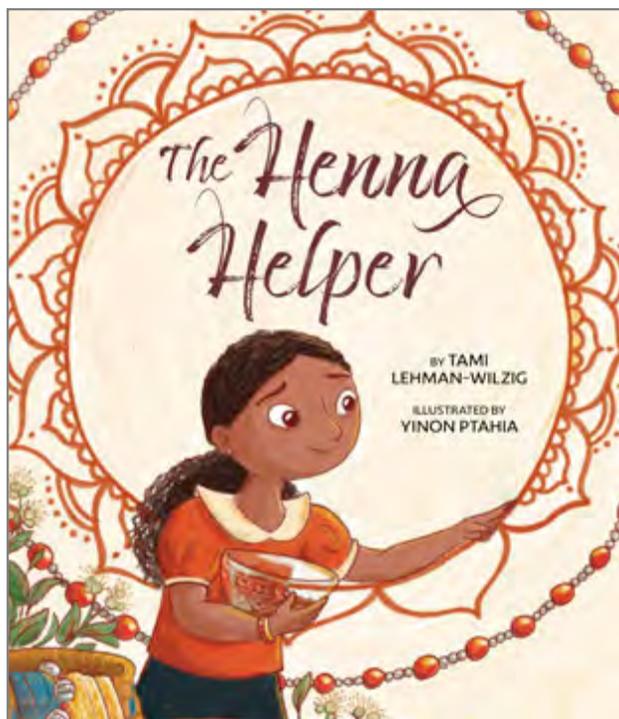
But Gali, Yael's youngest cousin, was confused. Why was no one focused on making her flower girl dress? Why were they making head coverings and beads for a Henna ceremony? They didn't live in Yemen anymore. And this was modern Israel! Why would Yael be interested in such a silly, old custom?

But as Gali continued to help her grandmother, and as she participated in the ceremony, Gali saw just how beautiful and important it was to keep true to her culture.

An author's note at the end further explains the meaning behind the rituals and customs of Henna.

Tami Lehman-Wilzig is an award-winning author of many picture books, including *SOOSIE*, *The Horse That Saved Shabbat*, *Boston Chocolate Party*, *Keeping the Promise*, *Passover Around the World* and *On the Wings of Eagles*. She lives in Kfar Saba, Israel.

Yinon Ptahia worked as a teacher for eight years in elementary school before becoming a full-time illustrator. A member of SCBWI, he learned from top Israeli illustrators like Liora Grossman and Menahem Halberstadt. He has illustrated more than 20 children's books, including *Saliman and the Memory Stone*. He lives in Ma'on, Israel.



Key Themes:

Coping with jealousy, Immigration, Intergenerational bonds, Learning about new cultures and traditions

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Ages 4–8 years

Use these questions to preface and conclude a reading of this book with children. Encourage them to share their observations as you read the book together, and take time to linger on pages or spreads that generate more discussion.

Before Reading

- What do you notice about the design on the cover of the book?

After Reading

- Have you ever had something made especially for you? What was it and when did you wear it?
- If you have been to a wedding, what are some customs that you noticed? Do you know what they meant?
- Do you have customs in your own family, religion or culture that has been repeated for generations?
- What type of special clothes have you worn or saw other wear for special occasions? How do you feel when you wear or see others wearing special clothing?

Activity

1. Ask a married adult to describe or show you some of the rituals they had at their wedding.
2. Draw a henna design on a piece of paper. What type of symbols would you include to bring someone, or yourself, good luck and a happy life?
3. Create a special beaded bracelet or necklace for an important day coming up for a family member or friend.

Discussion Questions by Heather Erez, RJE





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Character Cut Outs

