

Armchair Adventures: A Join-in Story Podcast For Kids

An Adventure in Gujarat

Part 1

Connie: Welcome to the Armchair Adventures Travel Agency, journeys of the imagination. I'm Head Travel Agent and Host, Connie!

Music: Armchair Adventures theme tune

Connie: G'day, afternoon or bonne nuit, wherever you're listening from adventurers (or similar). The voices of this episode's special guest adventurers are...

Adventurers all say their names

Connie: Hi Everyone!

Children: Hi Connie!

Connie: You too can star in an episode of Armchair Adventures as one of our special guest adventurers. All you need to do is ask your grown up if you can join the Armchair Adventures Fanclub on Patreon. For more info, Simply head to the armchair adventures website. That's www.armchair-adventures.co.uk and click on the adventurer fan club page.

Scene 1

Connie: Anyway, I am so excited! My cousin Sura's sister is getting married and I've been invited! I've never been to a Hindu wedding before. I don't know what to expect.

It would be good to be prepared. I don't want to turn up in the wrong clothes or at the wrong time.

I know what I'm going to do. I'm going to give my friends at Dipak Dristi a call to see if they can help me out and let me know what to expect. Dipak Dristi, which means Light of Vision, are a social group for older people of South Asian heritage, based near the Armchair Adventures Travel Agency.

In fact, I'll get all of my customers on a group telephone chat, because with an Armchair Adventure, adventurers, we can go anywhere we like

from the comfort of where we are right now, so they're perfect for everyone, no matter what age you are. Start. Call. Now.

SFX Phone ringing

Connie: Hello?

Customers: Different hellos.

Connie: Hiya all! How are you?

Customers: Hiya Connie. Very good. Not bad at all etc.

Connie: As well as my usual customers, I've also invited some new customers onto the call.

Hansa: I'm Hansa.

Kanta: I'm Kanta.

Lalita: I'm Lalita.

Indu: I'm Indu.

Dinesh: I'm Dinesh.

Connie: Everybody, say hello to my friends from Dipak Dristi.

Customers: Hello there! Nice to meet you. Hope you're well, etc.

DD group: Hello. Pleased to meet you too, etc.

Connie: So good to chat to you all! I wanted to speak to you because I'm hoping you can help... I'm going to my cousin Sura's sister's wedding and I'd like to know more about a Hindu wedding, so that it's not a massive surprise when I get there. What do you all think? Could you help me understand what happens at a Hindu wedding, please?

Hansa: Yes, of course. We'd be delighted.

Kanta: We come from a place in India called Gujarat.

Indu: Gujaratis have many different rituals, traditions and ceremonies of our own.

Dinesh: Not unlike where you're from, Connie.

Connie: What like?

Hansa: We always greet each other by saying "Namaste", or "Jay Shree Krishna".

DD Group: Jay Shree Krishna!

Connie: Jay Shree Krishna, everybody!

Customers: Jay Shree Krishna!

Connie: Jay Shree Krishna, adventurers.

SFX Ding

Adventurers: Jay Shree Krishna!

Hansa: In a Hindu wedding, the Groom – or the Varraja, will give the Bride – or the Dulhan, a necklace with black beads.

Kanta: The mangal sutra.

Indu: It represents the symbol of marriage.

Dinesh: The same as wearing a wedding ring.

Lalita: And in British culture, where it is good luck for the Bride to wear something old, something borrowed, something blue, the Gujarati tradition has something similar.

Hansa: The bride and groom give each other a gift of clothes before the ceremony, for them to wear afterwards. It's called Paheramani.

Connie: Hmm, I don't know why we need all this traditions stuff, though. It sounds fun and all that, but shouldn't we just be living in the now?

Dinesh: Perhaps an Armchair Adventure could help you find out?

Connie: That's a great idea! It would be brilliant if we could go on an adventure to see what happens in a Hindu wedding.

Ada: Let's go to Gujarat!

Anne: Ooh, yes please!

Pat: That would be wonderful.

Connie: Yes! Could we do that?

Indu: Why not? During our adventure, we could recreate one of our wedding traditions, the Baraat.

Lalita: That's a great idea! The Baraat is the journey that the groom takes through the villages to get to the bride's house.

Connie: Brilliant, let's do that! We'd better make a move, though. I'm going to need to get back in time for the wedding!

A journey of the imagination here we come.

Music: Armchair Adventures theme tune

Scene 2

SFX Bull cart passing by

Hansa: Welcome to Bardoli, this is where my family are from.

Customers: Wow! So pleased to be here! I've always wanted to visit India.

Dinesh: You are very welcome here.

Pat: It's lovely and green.

Christine: We're surrounded by farms and farmers.

Hansa: There's a bull cart, a cart pulled by a bull.

Indu: They're carrying the sugar cane.

SFX Rickshaw

Cyril: And there's a rickshaw!

Kanta: A rickshaw is a two-wheeled cart.

Indu: They carry passengers. Just like a taxi!

Connie: Should we hop in the rickshaw, adventurers?

SFX Ding

SFX Rikshaw bouncing along, full of adventurers

Adventurers: Wahey! This is fun! Go faster! Argh!!

Pauline: It smells beautiful here.

Ada: Fresh soil.

Steve: Roses.

Keith: Cow pats!

SFX cows mooing, goats bleating, water buffalos making their sounds

Connie: Not a smell I usually enjoy, but I know what you mean!

Pat: So many animals!

Anne: Cows.

Lily: Goats.

Christine: Water buffalo.

Cyril: Women carrying clay pots on their heads.

Steve: They must be so strong!

Indu: They're carrying water from the well to their homes.

Kanta: And those women there are carrying grass for their animals.

Customers: Jay Shree Krishna!

Villagers: Jay Shree Krishna! Welcome to Gujarat! Bhale Padharo Gujarat!

Customers: Thank you.

Christine: We're here to find out more about the Hindu wedding traditions.

Connie: And recreate the Baraat.

Villagers: (*Cheers*) Hurrah!

Dinesh: We need to start with a bull cart! A Balad gardi.

Connie: A bull cart?

Lalita: We'll be travelling in style, Connie!

SFX Bullcart moving by

Kanta: Here's one now.

Dinesh: I know the farmer who lives here. I'm sure he'd be happy for us to borrow his cart. I'll go and ask.

Connie: Great, thank you!

SFX Bull mooing

Indu: With the baraat, the groom, his family and friends, travel from one town to another, until they arrive at the Bride's house.

Kanta: When the tradition began, they travelled in a bullcart.

SFX Cart moving

Lalita: These days they might travel on a horse...

SFX Horse walking and neighing

Lalita: Or an elephant, if they're rich!

SFX elephant trumpeting

Hansa: Or a fancy sports car.

SFX sports car speeds off

Dinesh: Good news! The farmer is happy for us to use his balad gardi!

Connie: That's great!

Lalita: We'll decorate it! We can attach bells to the cart. And colourful garlands.

SFX Bells

Hansa: Do we have a volunteer to be the groom?

Keith: I'll do it!

Anne: But you're married to me, Keith!

Keith: I'm using my imagination, Anne! It is an Armchair Adventure...!

Anne: Hmm.

Steve: I'll do it!

Indu: First, the tradition begins with a Sehra, a decorative veil of flowers being tied to the groom's turban.

Steve: (*Sneezes*)

Customers: Bless you!

Villagers: Sita ram!

Steve: Thank you! These flowers must be affecting my hay fever. (*Sniffles*)

Connie: That's no good!

Cyril: I'll be the groom instead!

Steve: Here you go, Cyril. Here's your turban and Sehra.

Connie: Adventurers, don't forget your Sehra!

SFX Ding

Indu: Then the groom rides on the bullcart.

SFX Bull mooing

Pauline: I'll drive!

Connie: Adventurers, you can have a go, too! Climb up onto the cart and drive!

SFX Ding

Connie: We should have a bullcart race!

Steve: Yes!

Ada: Customers versus adventurers!

SFX Ding

Adventurers: Bring it on!

Adventurer: That'll be so much fun!

Connie: Ready everybody? On your marks, get set, go!

SFX Ding

SFX racing bullcarts with bells

Adventurer: I know we're gonna win!

Adventurer: We're going to beat you!

Adventurer: We're the fastest!

Pauline: Woohoo!!!

Pat: Yeehah, this is fun!

Anne: Watch the corners!!

Customers: Woahhhhh!

SFX Ding

Adventurers: Hurry up bull! We're in the lead!

Connie: Here comes the finish line, everybody!

Lily: I'll wave a flag!

SFX flag waving

Ada: Come on Customers!

Steve: Come on Adventurers!

Pat: Who's going to win?

Anne: Yeah! Come on everybody!

Connie: They're coming up to the finish line. The adventurers are just ahead, but what's this? Someone's had a good breakfast this morning and found some extra energy from somewhere!

Pauline: Come on!

Connie: It's a draw!!!

Customers: Cheers and whoops!

Villagers: Cheers and whoops!

SFX Ding

Adventurers: Well done, Customers!

Pauline: And to you, too, Adventurers!

Connie: Well done adventurers!

Hansa: Those bullcarts can go much faster than I ever imagined.

Kanta: I'm glad they're still in one piece!

Connie: That was fun!

Promo swap

Connie: Let's pause our journey of the imagination. There's something I'd like you to listen to. It's another podcast I think you'd enjoy...

Advert plays

Connie: Welcome back to the Baraat, adventurers. So, the groom is driven on the cart...

Promo swap ends

SFX The bullcart is moving

Lalita: Everybody else walks alongside it and we have a big celebration!

Connie: Walk with us, adventurers!

SFX Ding

Lalita: There are night lights. And fireworks!

SFX Fireworks

Cyril: *(Waving to everybody)* Hello, Jay Shree Krishna!

Villagers: Jay Shree Krishna!

Kanta: And there's live music.

Indu: With drums.

SFX Dhol drums beating a rhythm

Dinesh: And singing!

Music: Ensemble Singing - Aaj mere yaur ki shadi hai

Hansa: As well as lots of dancing!

Connie: Yeah, come on everybody. Let's dance!

SFX Everybody dancing

Connie: You too, adventurers!

SFX Ding

Hansa: It's a celebratory wedding procession.

Pauline: It's very grand.

Keith: Lots of colours, red and gold.

Ada: Garlands on the cart.

Dinesh: The men all wear turbans on their heads.

Connie: Adventurers, why don't you imagine you're wearing a turban?

SFX Ding

Connie: You all look very smart.

Kanta: And the women have fresh flowers in their hair.

Lily: Jasmine.

Christine: They smell beautiful.

Connie: You all look incredible! Smile for the camera! Adventurers!

SFX Ding

SFX Camera snaps

Pauline: I'd better give the kind farmer his bullcart back. Please tell him thank you from us.

SFX bullcart with bells

Dinesh: The farmer said you're very welcome. Bhale Padharo. And he's invited us all to join them for dinner!

Connie: Oh, that would be lovely.

Hansa: Guest is God.

SFX Hubbub of people dining

Pat: There's a big table laid out with steel plates in the centre of the village square.

Anne: The local people encourage us to sit down.

Villagers: Please sit down. (In Gujarati)

christine: And our cups are filled with water.

SFX water pouring into a cup

Steve: The food looks delicious.

SFX Hubbub of people serving food onto tin plates.

Ada: And smells amazing!

Lalita: It's a vegetarian meal. Rice, aubergine, potatoes.

Kanta: Black chickpea curry.

Indu: Puri – a small, round piece of bread, deep fried.

Dinesh: And something sweet to finish.

SFX Spoons on tin plates

Everybody: Sounds of them enjoying their meal

Cyril: That was the best thing I've ever eaten.

Lily: So tasty!

Connie: Yummy! I'm so full. It's getting dark now.

Pauline: Look at the moon.

Keith: It's so bright.

Ada: The sky is very clear.

Hansa: When I was little, we would sleep on the veranda outside and my Grandma, we say Baa for Grandma, would call us to see the moon. She would say there's an old woman who lives there, can you see her? Whenever I look at the moon, I can see the old woman that my Grandma showed me.

Connie: Oh yes! I see what you mean! Can you see them, too, adventurers?

SFX Ding

Lalita: We know a song about the moon.

Indu: Chanda Mama.

Hansa: Pushpaben sings it. Will you sing it for us please, Pushpaben?

Music: Chanda Mama

SFX Customers clap

Connie: Thank you. That was beautiful.

Dinesh: It translates as “Your Moon Uncle, who lives so far away, will feed you.”

Scene 3

SFX – sun comes up. Birds tweeting. Cockerels crowing.

Connie: Hmm, I don’t like the look of those clouds.

Anne: They do look a bit ominous.

Hansa: The villagers will be grateful if it rains.

Connie: Not on an adventure, though! It rains enough at home!

Lalita: We’ll have the mehndi party here, then.

Indu: That’s a party for the bride and her guests.

Lily: Fantastic!

Connie: Where do we start?

SFX Party noise, background music

Pauline: All of the women are dressed in traditional clothes.

Keith: Multi-coloured.

Ada: Red, yellow, blue and green.

Lalita: Who will volunteer to be the bride?

Pat: I will!

Kanta: We paint patterns on each other's hands and feet using henna, which is a natural dye.

Dinesh: It is reddish-brown. And made from the leaves of a tropical shrub.

Hansa: The bride has the groom's initials hidden somewhere in the pattern.

Ada: Ah, that's very romantic!

Kanta: Some of the women will have fruit, mangoes, or flowers.

Connie: What designs will you have drawn on your hands and feet, adventurers?

SFX Ding

Adventurer: I'd like roses and smily faces.

Adventurer: I would have flowers and puppies.

Adventurer: Can I have a rainbow?

Adventurer: I'd like butterflies and flowers.

Adventurer: A dragon wrapped around a sword breathing fire!

Adventurer: I'd like the little mermaid.

Connie: They sound great!

SFX Ensemble painting each other's hands, chatter

SFX Ensemble Chatter and giggling

SFX The heaven's open... a monsoon

SFX Ensemble cheer

(Above the sound of the rain)

Connie: Where is everybody going?

Hansa: They're very excited!

Lalita: They've been waiting a long time for the rains.

Connie: It's torrential.

Kanta: This is a typical, Indian monsoon.

Villagers: Come on!

Come on! (In Gujarati)

SFX Cheering and dancing in the rain, muddy splashes

Connie: Why not! It looks like fun! Come on, gang!

SFX Customers dancing in the rain with Connie

Connie: Dance with us in the rain, adventurers!

SFX Ding

Adventurers cheer, splash about, having fun

Connie: This is great! And I hate all the rain at home!

Christine: It's very refreshing.

Ada: Like an outdoor shower!

Steve: It's so exhilarating, dancing in the rain.

Music: Ensemble sing Aav Re Varsad

SFX strong winds and heavy rainfall splashing onto mud

Cyril: I don't mean to be a doom-monger, but have you seen the state of the path out of here?

Connie: Oh no!

Lily: It's turned to mud!

Christine: It's like a swamp now!

Pat: How will we ever leave here?

Connie: How am I ever going to make it in time for the wedding? I can't miss it!

SFX Mobile phone ringing

Connie: Sura's calling. She must have a sixth sense!

SFX answering the call

Connie : Hi, Sura. Are you ok?

SFX Sura's chipmunk voice

Connie: I'm just on an Armchair Adventure in Gujarat!

SFX Sura's chipmunk voice

Connie: Oh, the weather's lovely thanks, yeah!

SFX Some of the gang chuckle

Connie: Ssssh!

SFX Sura's chipmunk voice

Connie: What's that? Your sister's bridesmaid has broken her arm? Oh no!

SFX Sura's chipmunk voice

Connie: She's asked me to step in? Wow!

SFX Sura's chipmunk voice

Connie: The mehndi is tomorrow night? Oh.

SFX Sura's chipmunk voice

Connie: Funnily enough, I do know what a Mehndi is!

SFX Sura's chipmunk voice

Connie: Yes, it'll be lots of fun. I'm sure I can get back in time. Yeah, no problem.

SFX Sura's chipmunk voice

Connie: Ok, I'll see you tonight, then.

SFX Sura's chipmunk voice

Connie: Bye!!

SFX Putting the 'phone down

Connie: Oh no, did you hear that? Sura's sister has asked me to be her bridesmaid, which is lovely and such an honour, but now I really have to know what's going on at a wedding. I've never been to any wedding, let alone a Hindu one! What if I make a fool of myself? Oh, no... Argh...

The Mehndi is tomorrow! How will we ever get back in time?

SFX rainfall

Anne: That path isn't looking good!

Connie: And, even if we could get there, I have nothing to wear!!

What are we going to do?!

Find out in the next episode... and see where our adventure in Gujarat takes us next!

Music: Armchair Adventures theme tune

Ian: This episode was produced in partnership with Dipak Dristi Social Group. Thank you to The National Lottery Community Fund and National Lottery Players who have enabled us to undertake this project through their generous funding.

END OF PART 1.