

## The Huma Bird

Farah looked out the window. She was tired of listening to the grown ups talk. She wished she had a brother or a sister. She wished she had cousins. Then these family gatherings wouldn't be quite so boring.

Besides being bored, Farah was worried. She had a project due tomorrow in her social studies class. She had to stand up in front of the class and talk about a mythological creature. She was planning to tell them about the Huma bird.

The Huma bird is a special creature in Iranian legends. According to the stories, it never touches the ground. If it flies above your head, you will have good fortune.

Farah's grandfather always wished her the luck of the Huma. She really wanted to have some of that luck now. Maybe if she opened the window she would spot the Huma. Then she could go outside and see if it might fly over her.

Farah smiled. Now she was thinking silly thoughts. Of course the Huma wasn't real. If only it was. Then she wouldn't have to worry so much about her project.

"Can I open the window?" Farah asked her grandmother.

She was allowed. But as she leaned outside and looked into the sky, she didn't see a Huma bird. Disappointing.

Then, she noticed something moving in the bushes. She squinted to try to see it better. It wasn't a Huma bird. After all, they never touch the ground.

Her grandfather joined her at the window. "Ah," he said. "The leopard."

"What?!" said Farah. "There are no leopards around here."

"Well, there is one," said her grandfather. "Right there in that bush."

Farah looked harder. Sure enough, the animal in the bush looked like a leopard. It was definitely bigger than the neighbor's cat.

"You know, in Iran, leopards are symbols of courage," said her grandfather. "Is there something you need courage for?"

Farah smiled. "Yes," she said.

"So now you have it," said her grandfather. He winked. "And, with any luck, the Huma will come visit you too."



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

1. What was Farah going to tell the class about?
  - a. The leopard
  - b. Her grandparents
  - c. The Huma bird
  - d. Iran
  
2. What does the Huma bird bring?
  - a. Courage
  - b. Good fortune
  - c. Brothers and sisters
  - d. Good grades
  
3. Who taught Farah about Iranian legends?
  - a. Her cousins
  - b. Her grandmother
  - c. Her teacher
  - d. Her grandfather
  
4. What did Farah feel that she needed courage for?
  - a. Talking in front of her class
  - b. Escaping the leopard
  - c. Finding the Huma bird
  - d. Surviving the family gathering

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.

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