



Anahita's Woven Riddle Discussion Questions

1. *Anahita's Woven Riddle* takes place over 100 years ago, and changing technology is the cause of many changes in Persia at the time. What advancements in technology are causing the Nomadic tribes to settle? Is the change inevitable, or is it possible for the old ways and the new to co-exist peacefully?
2. Describe Anahita's relationship with her father. Did it surprise you that she was able to express herself freely with her father? How does their relationship change as the story progresses?
3. What do you think of the idea of arranged marriage? Why would Anahita's father, who loves his daughter very much, want to choose her husband for her? Why would he want her to marry at such a young age?
4. Consider Anahita's mother, grandmother and cousin Shirin. Do you think it is true that their worth and ability to contribute to their tribe's well-being comes solely from their status as married women? Do their marriages give them any advantages that Anahita doesn't have?
5. What previous idea did Anahita have that caused uproar in her community? What did she learn from this incident?
6. Why was it so important to Anahita to choose her own husband? Was it courageous or selfish for her to pursue this desire, despite the Kahn's actions? Should she have married the Kahn to make life easier for her tribe?
7. Seeing how nervous Anahita is on the day of the contest, knowing that anybody — young or old, rich or poor, handsome or ugly, nice or mean — could enter the contest, would you rather consent to an arranged marriage in which your parents choose your spouse, or would you take your chances in a contest in which you create the rules, but in which anyone could enter?
8. At one point, Maman Bozorg suggests to Anahita that since she can't be absolutely certain of the outcome of her choices, then it doesn't make a difference which path she chooses. Think about this with regard to Anahita, as well as some of the choices you've had to make in your life. Do you agree with this philosophy? Why or why not?
9. Do you feel that Anahita has matured enough by the end of the story for marriage and for creating a family of her own in a new place?
10. Do you agree with Anahita's choice of husband? Why or why not?

About the Author

Meghan Nuttall Sayres writes and weaves in Eastern Washington where she lives with her husband, three children, two sheep and cat. She enjoys hiking, biking and skiing as well as art and archaeology from around the world. Meghan spins her own yarns for tapestries, dyeing her wool with native plants. She has explored this craft in Ireland and Turkey and taught workshops abroad.



Ms. Sayres received a B.S. in Recreation Therapy from the University of Colorado and an MPA in International Rural Development from the University of Utah. She established the Department of Recreation Therapy, Physical Rehabilitation Services, University of Utah Health Sciences Center, and currently volunteers for Taipseis Gael, a tapestry weaving cooperative in Donegal, Ireland.

Much of her work reflects these interests, as well as environmental and cultural preservation. She has won awards for her children stories and adult essays, and has been published at home and abroad. She enjoys speaking at schools and other venues.

Persian Riddles

Riddles are a very important part of Anahita's story. Test your wits with these Persian riddles. The answers are listed in the box below. No peeking!

For more riddles, visit <http://users.cybercity.dk/~ccc12787/smokingroom/phillot01.html#answer1>

- 1) What is that which travels without feet, head or hands?
- 2) What is that which is light as a fairy?
It flies without wings; it emits sound though void of mouth.
- 3) It travels to the sky ahead of the eye;
But no one has ever seen it.
- 4) What is that fairy-shape that has no life?
It laughs yet has no mouth;
It weeps yet has no eyes;
It travels much yet has no feet.
- 5) What is that which from head to foot is all tongue?

Answers

1. Water, wind or a worm
2. A paper kite
3. Sight
4. A cloud
5. Fire