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Thank you, Azzam. Is this on? Can you hear me down the back? Okay.

First off, I'd like to thank my beautiful bridesmaids, Dalila and Lucia. I've got to tell you, I don't think I would have made it without them. They are both so special to me. My big sister Lucia has been there for me all the way, especially after certain people back home, who I thought were girlfriends, had 'issues' with my decision to marry my handsome Moustapha. 'Oh no,' they said, 'you know what Muslim men are like.' They're like, 'Oh, he's saying he's cool, but off you'll go to Marrakech and he'll have you in a burqa before you can say Allah be praised.' Well, hello. News for them. Here I am in Marrakech, and do I look like I'm in a burqa? I don't think so. So thank you to the lovely Lucia who stepped in as bridesmaid at the last moment when my so-called girlfriends left me in the lurch. It's been a big thrill to have her involved in making this day so special.

What about the gorgeous frocks we're wearing? I have to thank my new sister-in-law Dalila on that one. She led us all around those little boutiques in town to find these beautiful outfits. Although if you'd told me three months ago I'd be getting married in a caftan in Marrakech I would have told you, that is so not going to happen. But here I am, dressed by a sweet little place called L'Elegance d'Morocco for Brides, Also Specialising in Mother of the Bride. So we dragged Mum and Salima, my new Mum, there to make them the glamorous things they are today. Don't they look so cute! Cambodian silk, traditional Moroccan design, a touch of Muslim for my husband's family. A little bit of lace from my Nonna's wedding veil—all the way from her village in Naples—to set it off. If that's not building bridges across the cultures, I don't know what is!

Dalila has helped me heaps with my new life here in Marrakech. Oh. My. God. There was so much I had to learn. Big thanks, Dalila.

You know, a wedding at home is not so different from what we've had here in the last few weeks. I so related to so much of it on a really spiritual level. And with the whole five-day party thing you've got going.

I'm sure you've all noticed my henna swirls. Dalila and Salima took me and Lucia to the traditional pre-nuptial bath ceremony the other night. After the bath it's off to henna painting. I get the most and the nicest henna, of course, being the bride, but all the ladies in the bridal party get painted with a little bit of henna. And I can't show you here but, naturally, my swirls weren't complete without the name of my beautiful new husband somewhere on my person! Dalila assures me it will wash off in a couple of weeks.

But what's really cool is that the whole thing is called a henna party. Like in Sydney, I would have had a hens' party with all my girlfriends. We would've gone to a day spa before getting dressed up in traditional clothing, like angels' wings and rabbits' ears, and then headed out for a few drinks and some 'marital advice'. And after the henna-ing (is that a word?), all these lovely ladies took me off to the kasbah to tell me a thing or two about marriage Moroccan-style, some of it a bit surprising. As I said, our cultures have more in common than you think.

But before the henna party, there's the engagement party, although I guess that's not what you'd call it here. A drinks thing to celebrate the 'betrothal'. Well, that was a bit of an eye-opener with us all getting together to make sure Moustapha and I were 'right' for each other, which we are, not that it's really anyone else's business. Our Dads had to say three times that they were cool with us getting married and then we stood around drinking sherbets. Now I'm no stranger to drinking the odd sherbet (shut up Lucia), but this was a bit different from what I'm used to back home. Still lovely but.

And another thing our cultures have in common is real estate, of course. We have an excellent new home, just near the medina, thanks to Moustapha's family. As part of the custom, Moustapha took me to the house so I could walk around it, not once, not twice, but three times, to see if I liked it. We have a similar ritual in Australia, actually, only we call it an Open House. But I tell you, back home in Sydney, you wouldn't get halfway around a house that cute once before someone had pushed you face-first into the floor to get to the agent with a deposit cheque before you did.

Before I finish, I know it's a bit unusual for the bride to speak at a reception here. But it's a bit of a tradition at our family weddings and Moustapha's Dad was so nice about it when I asked him if I could speak. He was a bit reluctant at first; told me I'd understand Muslim ways in time. But after I worked on him a bit more, he said he admired my pluck. Thanks again, Big Moustapha.

Finally, I want to thank you all for sharing our special day with Moustapha and me as we begin our spiritual journey together. I can feel it in my heart of hearts that we will have a long and happy life together. And for all my Sydney friends who came all this way, don't be strangers. You'll always be welcome in our beautiful home...just near the medina.

Adapted for performance by Barbara Campbell from a story by Steven Alward.