



XIONG, BAI

Bai is a junior at D.C. Everest Senior High.

There's a lot of things that I hate about my culture. One of them is the Hmong weddings. I hate how the girls get married at such young ages; usually in their teens! Some parents even force their children to marry strangers they choose, or engage their children when they're babies. Sometimes the men "catch-hand" the women. That means that the man and his relatives kidnap the girl and take her to their home. Once she's there she cannot return home. She has to marry him. If a woman's pregnant she is forced to marry the father of her child. That isn't even the worst part about Hmong weddings. Another thing is the men drink alcohol for the woman's family! There is also a bride price the groom must pay for and a dowry is given. If the bride is free, often it means that the groom can treat the bride badly. But, if she is worth something they must respect her. Most brides are worth \$6000 these days. If the bride is pregnant, she may be worth more. That's what I hate the most, I feel like we're dogs being sold. I think the people who have the hardest time being Hmong are the women. They're sold to their husbands! They have to wear Hmong clothes when traveling to and from the groom's house, and it gets really hot in it. The women have to help cook the food at the weddings. However, the men have hard jobs too. They pay for the girl, drink alcohol, and go down on their knees to bow in a position as if pleading or begging to honor the future bride's family. In some cases the girl's parent may even make the man bow to anyone, even to a dog. Hmong is what I am, so I should be proud of it but, I never liked our weddings.

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