

A Daughter, No Daughter

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“I am Khusboo,” the girl replied when I asked to introduce herself in English in the very first lecture of literature class.

Asking students to introduce themselves has stuck with me since the day I joined the college in December 1990. This unfailingly helped create a good rapport with them.

She was a dashing beauty I had ever seen in my entire teaching career. She was fair, slim and tall. The prominent features in her were her big eyes, sharp pointed nose, thin rosy lips and a cascade of shining black hair reaching below the knees. The line of kohl in her eyes and a light pink suit together made her astonishingly and enchantingly beautiful.

“Well, what do your parents do?” I asked further to elicit more English sentence structures from her and test her grammatical sense.

Instead of answering straight, she hesitated and looked sideways.

“You haven’t answered, Khusboo,” I said and waited for her answer.

She looked blank for a while and soon, I saw, tears welled up in her eyes.

It perplexed me immensely. I couldn’t realize that I could have hurt her in any possible way. I was sure I wasn’t insolent in the least.....

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