

# MA, I DON'T LIKE MY SCIENCE TEACHER

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*The clinking of metal on glass piqued Faisal's attention, and he scrambled on over to the living room. Someone was making Tayng. When he arrived, he saw the vibrant orange glasses, full to the brim. The sugar had been stirred in and the sweet concoctions were waiting to be drunk. Faisal eyed the glasses closely. He touched one gently with the back of his hand, holding his gaze as he did so, as if staring down suspects at a police line. "Aha," he exclaimed. The drinks had been prepared with cold water. He could now avenge his defeat.*

Earlier today, his science teacher had been teaching the water cycle. Faisal was for the most part, disinterested in school, and had a hard time paying attention to the mundane lessons his teachers parroted all day. No surprises today then, when the rain outside had his mind hostage over talks of rain inside.

"Faisal. FAISAL!"

He glanced around too quickly and knew that he'd been caught. His grades were good so far, and thus Faisal's parents were not too concerned.

"What are you doing, young man?" the teacher asked sternly.

Faisal shuffled his feet under the table. His raindrop had probably won its race by now. He could feel the eyes of his classmates on him.

"I'm sorry, miss," he muttered feebly.

"Tell me, what topic were we just discussing?"

Faisal's mother used to see a program on TV every night about a young girl trying to make it as a lawyer. Whenever she was in court, she asked her witnesses questions with a fearsome intensity. The camera would then zoom to her face, and Faisal swore he could see — when she flared her nostrils — the actress's individual nose hairs.

That face from the TV was now right in front of Faisal.

"Well, answer me!" the face asked impatiently.

Eyes speared into Faisal from all sides. His tongue fumbled with the syllables and ultimately the words got stuck in his throat.

Dissatisfied, his teacher asked him,

"Well, can you tell me what condensation is?"

Faisal shook his head. An austere reprimand ensued, followed by an authoritarian, point-to-prove lesson, on condensation.

At one point, the teacher mentioned, the water droplets that form on the outside of cold water bottles is because of condensation.

"But teacher," Faisal spoke up immediately. "The water leaks out."

The teacher stopped in her tracks. She looked bemusedly at Faisal. "What did you say?"

Faisal was glad to have this chance to bring an end to her pompous rant; to prove her wrong.

"It leaks out, teacher. The water leaks out of the bottle."

The teacher smirked. "I wouldn't expect someone who counts clouds to know any better."

Maybe if you stopped looking outside and paid attention instead, you'd know, stupid boy." With a flick of her wrists, she ordered Faisal to sit down.

Faisal could feel fire light up in his belly.

He was sure he was right. The water leaks out of the bottle. Or mug. Or whatever. Water is very pesky like that, he thought. He recalled the time he had to walk home

from school in the rain. Hadn't the water drenched his shirt, his inner, and then percolated all the way through to his skin. And what about his books?

Hadn't Abba scolded him because his books had become wet? How then did the water penetrate his bag and soak his books? Even when he tried to tear the bag open when the chain got jammed, he would fail. The water though, went through and left him needing new books. Surely a glass bottle, which he could break by simply dropping it on the ground, was nowhere near as strong as the bag.

And what about the times he had wet the bed?

Water could permeate through anything. It just could, that's the way it was. Faisal cared not for condensation one bit. And he was determined to disprove his teacher's blasphemy.

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He had been eyeing the glasses full of Tayng for a good few minutes now. The outside had become moist with the droplets that had formed. Faisal stooped down and looked straight at the glasses and the drops.

"The drops are also orange," he whispered to himself.

But he had to be sure. Merely looking at it would not suffice.

He grabbed one glass of the tray, and brought it to his lips. A sip, then a pause. He engraved the taste to memory. Taking out his tongue, he then licked the outside of the glass, moving his head up and down, twirling the glass in his hands as he did so. A moment of reflection.

He took one last sip to be sure. Then he planted the glass back down, and went to look for his mother.

Mrs Jahangir was frying vegetable pakoras for the guests she was expecting. Her son tugged at her salwar, and she saw a slight frown in his face.

"What's the matter, Baba?"

"Ma, I don't like my science teacher."



*Nibras is a doctor-to-be and a lover of murgi roast. He spends his free time stalking you on Instagram, so DM @niibzzz*