



Just an accessory

After Hina lost her earring, she didn't want to wear one. Was it such a big deal?



Illustration: Sreelath R. Kumar

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Hina had always been a curious 'id. After "o", the word "Why" had become her favourite.

"Hina, don't touch the glass jar."

"Why can't I touch?"

"Hina, eat fruits. These are good for you."

"Why are they good?"

Some of her questions even surprised Mummy and Papa. "She is making us think," Mummy would proudly say.

Lost

Hina's ears had been pierced when she was a baby. She was three years old now, but she didn't remember anything about it. One morning, as Mummy cuddled Hina out of her sleep, she gasped. "Oh, where is your

Talespin

earring?" she asked, as she tucked Hina's hair behind her ears. Hina rubbed her eyes, not realising what her mother was talking about. Mummy and Papa looked everywhere — under the pillows, in her blanket, around her chair — but they couldn't find the earring.

"I think we will just get her a new pair," Papa said.

The next day Hina saw a new tiny box on the coffee table. "Come here," Mummy called.

"What is that?" Hina asked, excited that it would be a new toy. But it turned out to be a new shiny pair of earrings.

"Do you want to try these?" Papa asked. "They are beautiful, aren't they?"

Hina was just silent. "O'ay,"

she replied in a small voice.

Mummy tried putting one earring in. But, just as the stud touched her ear, a scared Hina ran away. "It won't hurt you," Mummy called. Hina refused to try again. "Maybe tomorrow," Mummy sighed.

The next day too, the same thing happened. Hina refused to try.

Mummy and Papa didn't force her.

They tried in many ways: when she was reading a book, watching her favourite rhymes

and even treating her with chocolates. But nothing worked.

Letting it be

One day, before she went to sleep, Mummy and Papa hugged

Hina, you can be whoever you want to be, as long as you are kind, brave and wise ...



Moving on

Years passed and Hina forgot about the earrings, as did the people around her. One day, Hina saw a boy in her class with earrings. She became curious. She asked him, "You wear earrings?"

He nodded. "Just in one ear."

As always, Hina asked, "Why?" The boy just shrugged and looked away.

Hina nudged him, "Did it hurt?" The boy answered, "I don't even remember, actually."

Hina looked at the ears of every person she met. She was taken aback by the vivid colours, designs, shapes and sizes of the earrings. Some danced like hanging canopies, a few stood still in their petite designs. A handful encircled the ear in a beautiful grasp.

As night approached, Hina cuddled her mother and tried to sleep. But she kept fidgeting. "Is something bothering you?" her mother asked.

"I was just thinking about getting earrings," Hina said, as her cheeks turned red.

"If that's what you want," her mother smiled. "It's just an accessory."

That doesn't matter," her parents would smile.

Bookworm

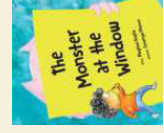


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