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## extra

### The butterfly

Shabbir Amanullah

As adults, we consider ourselves capable of interpreting, at least to some extent, the behaviour of children. Many a text has been written about childhood behaviour and its interpretation. We use strategies to reinforce or root out certain behaviours. However, we often fail to grasp the immense strength of a child's imagination. On Canada Day we were at a park, waiting for the fireworks display to begin at sundown. It was a warm day and children were running around the place. There was the usual popcorn, fizzy drinks, ice cream, lobster (exclusive to Prince Edward Island), balloons and, of course, face painting. While sitting beside a fence with a few friends, we saw a child coming towards us. She was beaming and seemed extremely content. She had a butterfly painted on her face. It was in three different colours and covered her face entirely. Thinking that she had come to show us all that she 'acquired' at the fair so far, we commented on the different things she had with her. In a typically childish way, she explained how she got them. Then, as she was about to leave, I said, 'You have a pretty butterfly painted on your face'. She looked at me in stunned silence and then replied in a huff 'I am the butterfly!' We fail to comprehend the extent, depth and importance of the child's imagination by assuming we 'know'.

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