



LAXMI'S MOOCH

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I never really thought about my mooch until the other day,
when my friends and I were playing farm animals at recess.



Zoe was a horse.

Noah was a cow.

And Zoe said, "Laxmi, you're a cat, OK?"
"I want to be a chicken!" I said.
"But you're the perfect cat! You have
these little hairs on your lip, like cat
whiskers," said Zoe.



"I do?" I asked.

"Meow!" said Noah. "Yeah, you have a little mustache
like my dad."

My cheeks grew as hot as a steaming bowl of
Mummy's aloo gobi.

When I got home that afternoon, Mummy asked, "How was school, beta?"
"Well, Zoe said I'd make a good cat," I said.
"Aww, you're my little billi," she said.
"No, Mummy! She was calling me hairy!"



"Huh, I thought we named you Laxmi,"
said Papa, looking up from the roti he was
making on the stove.



That night, I dreamed about Royal Bengal tigers prowling through the Sundarbans. Their long black whiskers danced in the hot breeze, and butterflies flew behind them, fluttering around their long tails.



A small group of the other kids in our class crowded around as I carefully drew a mooch on Noah's lip.

"Me next!" said Savi.

"Me too, please!
After Savi?"
asked Timmy.

They lined up behind Noah for my world-class mooches.

