Laila Khan wins English Dept. writing contest with ‘Kismet’

By ISABELLA OHLMEYER
Online editor

Student Laila Khan has been deemed the winner of the Spring 2012 Ohlone Writing Contest.

Her story “Kismet” is a compelling short fiction about a young woman who finds herself with no choice but to leave her home behind and head for an uncertain future.

Khan’s story was selected among 14 other entries this semester.

Professor Jeff Dean is one of the judges of the contest. He distributes originals and copies of the writing submissions to others in the English Department.

Judging the contest is a diligent and careful task that all of the judges are honored to be part of, Dean said. According to Dean, the “number of readers vary from year to year, depending on availability of other professors and the number of entries which need to be read.”

Clear composition skills and the ability to sustain a compelling narrative are two of major criteria that are common in judging.

“Often when I see students googling off in the computer area on sites like Facebook and YouTube, I make an announcement to make it stop.”

“But, before finals week I have noticed that students tend to do less of this because they want to help their peers and they have a better understanding of where each other are at because they are all on the same boat,” Greenstein said.

Khan said that she turned in her story at the last minute. “I wrote until April 29, the night before the last day to turn it in. I felt unsure about it, but I thought there was no harm in taking a chance,” Khan said.

The English Department encourages all students to check back next March and April for information about entering into the Spring 2013 writing contest.

From his own personal judging perspective of the stories, Dean said, “I can only speak to my own specific criteria, but stories which have the ability to leave a lasting impression tend to rank highly.”

Even winners can procrastinate. Khan said that she turned in her story at the last minute. “I wrote until April 29, the night before the last day to turn it in. I felt unsure about it, but I thought there was no harm in taking a chance,” Khan said.

The English Department encourages all students to check back next March and April for information about entering into the Spring 2013 writing contest.

Khan’s winning story can be viewed on the Ohlone website at http://www.ohlone.edu/instr/english/writingcontest/.

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