

The Who and the What – Summary

June 20, 20.00

Schauspielhaus Graz

The titular “The Who and the What” is also the title of a book the young and emancipated Muslim Zarina is writing. In its criticism of the Koran, the prophet’s image and the role of women in Islam, it clashes with the beliefs of her father Afzal. Following the early death of his wife, he has been trying to raise Zarina and her younger sister Mahwish according to his traditional ideals. One such tradition prohibits a younger daughter from marrying unless her older sister has been wed first.

Since Zarina shows more interest in gender studies than marriage, her father resorts to unconventional tactics: unbeknownst to her, he creates a profile for Zarina on a Muslim dating website. However, before the candidates have a chance to meet her herself, they have to face Afzal’s evaluation first. Eli, a white American convert, passes the fatherly test but when Afzal introduces him as potential husband to Zarina she is enraged by his subterfuge. Nevertheless, she agrees to meet with Eli and has to admit that her father was indeed right to pick him. Just like her, Eli is a critically minded intellectual who questions concepts of faith and religion and even encourages her to finish writing her book. However, when her father finds her manuscript, it is the father-daughter relationship that is put to the test...

After the performance, there will be a roundtable discussion with dramaturgs and other representatives of Schauspielhaus Graz.