

# RISING STARS

## The Spiritualist

by Md Kabiruddin

CYRUS eased the car into the speeding traffic, accelerating fiercely to match their pace. Once he had settled into the flow, he relaxed and glanced at Shahed.

"I don't know why you want to see this spiritualist ... do you believe in all these stuffs about spirits and ghosts," Shahed asked, pushing his glasses more firmly on to the bridge of his nose.

"Well" Cyrus began, "few days ago I received a letter from a guy named Patrick. He wrote that he is a spiritualist and asked me to contact him immediately. He smiled apologetically at Shahed seeing the frown of disbelief on his face. I know it's pretty weird, but I want to make sure that everything is okay."

Shahed looked at him tentatively for a while, understood he was serious and had a stupid intention of replying that he would go with him.

Cyrus found a gap in the middle lane of cars, indicated and moved into it. The car began to pick up speed.

When they had covered a few miles the road forked, and they ran on through a series of narrow, winding lanes. Twice they took wrong turnings and had to ask their way. Half an hour later they had reached their destination. Shahed looked about him and scowled slightly. There was a dense forest ahead of them, the road ended there.

Tattered trees and branches swung at them as they walked. Grass clutched at their legs, curling round their ankles, wanting to bring them down. Shahed kicked it angrily. Finally they stopped near a small and inconspicuous cottage. The brown paint on the door was cracked and peeling, revealing speckles of dark green. Cyrus knocked on the door. Footsteps sounded on the stairs and the door was opened by a fat-faced, rather sour-looking middle-aged man.

"Are you Mr Patrick?" Cyrus asked.

"That's right" replied the spiritualist, looking nervously around. Dusk was changing into night. He stood aside, and with a short gesture of his fleshy hand, indicated them to enter.

"Why did you ask me to come here?" Cyrus asked once they were inside the room.

"First of all you must believe that I am not a crank. The spiritualist began, "I have been

practising spiritualism for the past ten years. Spirits approach me and speak through me. However two weeks ago, a new voice began to communicate with me. It was confused and angry voice. It was calling your name."

"What are you talking about?" snapped Cyrus.

"I assure you it's not a lie," the spiritualist replied. The voice was totally confused at first. Then over the days it became more distinct. This be-

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