



THRILLER SPECIAL

IDOL

by Sohana Shahnaz

ONCE at home he started preparing for bed, but could not get Amin out of his mind. The family had been living in this house from just a few days and everything had been going fine with them.

Tareq himself was new in these apartments, but since he came, he had been listening strange accounts about the dwelling in front. He had never been a believe of Phantoms or spirits and had a firm opinion that things such as ghosts did not exist. But today... he couldn't decide whether to believe his very eyes or not.

Why was Amin smiling so mysteriously? And that figure in their living room? He couldn't deny the fact that there was something unearthly about it. Should he go and check if everything is all right with them? Anticipating, he at last decided against the idea and gradually dozed off to sleep.

In the morning, Tareq went to meet the couple, and finding everything okay, went off to work. Shailla although looked tensed and weary, he tried to enliven her and reassured her of any help she might need. The whole day Shailla had been observing Amin subtly and in no way could match this Amin with the one she saw last night.

Meanwhile, Amin was totally natural and showed signs of surprise at Shailla's accusations of the night before. At last, she forced herself and succeeded in believing last night as a hallucination. But a night fell, her fears rose.

Amin had been out of home for several hours and only then did she feel the atmosphere natural. Many a time did she go to the idol and observed it keenly, but it simply looked like any other statue. She couldn't understand why she saw such terrible scene last night.

When Amin at last returned, she prayed to God so that everything would be alright. Soon they had their dinner and everything was peaceful but Shailla could in no way dispose of any of her thoughts for a moment, though for the time being she did not verbalize the matter.

Then suddenly she remembered that due to her fright, she kept away from her bedroom the whole day. Now she decided to take a look at her bed and carpet to check the blood she saw last night. As she came near the stairs, Shailla felt a cold wave streaming through her entire body and she shivered. Immediately she looked at the idol and was just in time to notice a piercing sparkle in its eyes.

Shailla lost all her strength and could feel her legs heavy on the floor. She at first thought of calling Amin but the next instant she ran up the stairs and opened her bedroom door. Yes, the blood was there all right. And what more! All those snakes filled her room and gradually, each one of them started moving toward her swiftly.

Shailla felt helpless but somehow regained her strength and realized that their might be a bright chance of showing Amin. She started calling him with all her voice and within a few moments Amin was in front of her. Seeing the condition she was in he tried to calm down the atmosphere and helped her get into bed.

Shailla immediately pointed towards those snakes and showed Amin the place where she saw the blood but when they looked there, they could not find a single snake or a trace of blood anywhere. Amin then looked concerned and asked what had happened, but when she narrated the whole incident to him, he laughed off the entire mishap and advising her to take rest, he went down.

Shailla soon fell asleep, being weary after a whole day's adventure. But not a few moments had elapsed and she started seeing horrifying sights. It started with all those snakes again, but they weren't in her room anymore. Instead, she saw them in a dark passage and for some reason felt suffocated. She hurriedly looked around and instantly felt that she was somewhere beneath the ground.

The whole area had an eerie atmosphere and although there was no sound of any living thing to be heard anywhere, she felt that there must be something nearby, cause she could hear a very blunt echoing. Shailla turned numb realising the situation she was in and made a quick thinking. She closed her eyes and covered her ears with her hands and started to run with full speed. She could find no other way of escaping those terrifying snakes all around.

After sometime she felt through her closed eyelid that there was a change in the darkness. She stopped and looked and found herself in a great hall, faintly lighted she wondered how, and saw thousands of worshippers, men, women and children bent down before the very idol she saw in her own home. Shailla screamed and sat up and found herself on her bed.

Yes, this was no nightmare! She had seen the secret behind all this. Shailla had the experience of seeing many of her dreams come true; and she did not dare take risk by not caring what she just saw. Thanking her dream luck, she immediately ran down stairs only to find the room empty.

Shailla felt dizzy but suddenly remembered the next-door neighbour, Tareq. He had said he would help her. She dashed off to Tareq's home and briskly related the whole incident to him. Tareq became thoughtful. Shailla was agitated. She wasn't even sure where her husband was. Had the demon taken away Amin to its own world?

She felt mad with rage. She must do something to get her husband back. She heard Tareq calling her and sat to listen to him. He at first said that the demon must be after Shailla next, because according to what she saw, it didn't leave women or children. So, they sorted out a plan and Tareq convinced

her that he would keep a round-the-clock watch on anything going on in their house. Together they left for Shailla's home and on reaching there, she thought she heard a noise from inside. Tareq motioned her to enter the house alone as his presence might change the situation like the first night, and simultaneously he felt the pointed instrument in his hand.

He had brought it with him as he felt this might be a suitable weapon to conquer the devil. As Shailla entered the house, she gave a little shriek because the idol had returned to its place again and she heard Amin calling

seemed to gobble her up. Gradually the whole room started getting dark and then she felt something behind her. Shailla turned back and her eyes fell upon a pair of glaring hostile-looking eyes staring into her.

She instantly targeted them and ran the instrument straight into the demon's eyes. Immediately the idol vanished, and the whole world seemed to change. She saw Tareq run up the stairs and looking back into the room. Shailla saw an exhausted Amin lying for the first time in a few days, she could feel her husband.

IDOL

by Mir Saaduddin Ahmad

IT was a hard day for Tareq and he was in no mood to face an absurd episode with his neighbours. He tried to laugh off the incident by telling himself that Shailla's imagination had run off with her, but every time he did, he kept seeing that ghastly idol's face. Anyhow, despite a series of tosses and turns on his bed he did manage to fall asleep.

"He knows my pet, he knows. You know what is to be done, don't you?" It was that voice talking to him. The voice, he had come to like, grown to respect. Amin left the house, his face bloody once more. He had no idea all the voice had completely taken over him and now it was telling him... to kill.

As he left the boundary of the house, something happened. The voice just fell dead, he had his face again. Outside the confines of his house he was himself, was Amin Kabir in the flesh. A cold wind hit him with a blast to reality. What was he doing out in the streets? Had he been sleepwalking? It seemed as if he had woken up from a bad dream. Unsuspecting, with a smile of puzzlement on his face, he returned home to seal his fate.

"I thought I had lost you out there. I made the mistake of over estimating my power. They have imprisoned me within this house. But not to worry, I am making plans."

Morning, new day, new night, new dawn. Now why had she thought of that? Her husband was in the shower, it seemed to her the ideal moment to get rid of the sinister beast. She did not want to touch it with her bare hands so she got out a pair of her husband's gardening gloves. Even though they were her fingers felt cold and eerie. Now just how would she get rid of it?

"My pet, I need you now. Come save your master!"

Tareq's bedroom just overlooked the Kabir's back lawn. It was close enough for him to be woken by the piercing scream that shattered the air. He sat bolt upright, his body tense. Something had been telling him to expect something invidious. But was he prepared for it? He ran on the road between the houses in his night dress. Surprisingly, no one else was

This is a special edition of The Rising Stars

ON September 27, 1996, a competition was set in order to give the general readers an opportunity to continue from where the two breath-taking articles, 'The Idol' (written by Md. Kabiruddin) and 'Perfection' (written by Adman R Amin) ended. The response to this competition was tremendous and we thank each and every participant for their well-crafted, imaginative pieces. However, due to space-constraints, we, with much regret, are unable to print every entries in this issue.

We have also decided after much careful consideration (for this was not a very easy job), on who shall be the winners of the competition.

They are Sohana Shahnaz for his 'Idol' entry and Munjulika Rahman for his 'Perfection' entry. Congratulations to both of you! Please come and collect your prize at our Dhanmondal office at 4.00 pm on Thursday 24.10.96.

Recap.....

The Idol: From the very beginning the bizarre idol evoked a tinge of horror in Shailla's mind. Then there were incidents when she found out her husband's figure becoming distorted to an ugly grotesque monster, much similar to that of the idol. But soon after some moments of frenzy and shock she would find her husband (Amin) in the usual human form. It appeared as though Shailla was hagridden. In the end, when Tareq, a family friend who caught sight of Shailla dashing out of the house in horror late night, went to probe into the matter he found nothing. However, the fiendish smile on Amin's face and the pool of blood on the carpet which Tareq failed to notice leave a reader with the impression that mystery is not solved yet.

Perfection: Young dazzling lady, Marian was married to an old business man, Mr Chowdhury. From the very beginning it is implied that Marian was unhappy in her life and detested the flamboyant life of the riches.

At one juncture, she receives attention from another business man Siraj. The clever Marian quickly master minds a scintillating plan. And so, one night she shoves a knife through her husband's back, leaving him instantly dead. The heave of the knife had the finger prints of Siraj, an 'evidence' that will cost his life. But the question remains,is Shailla's plan so impeccable to deceive the eyes of law?

her casually from her room. Looking back she saw Tareq motioning her to go ahead, and silently showing her what can be done with the instrument, he gave it to her.

As Shailla proceeded towards the idol she saw that it remained totally calm. She felt a bit relieved and went up the stairs to look for Amin. As she opened the door, a cold gust of wind blew in through the window, which nearly knocked her aside. Papers, files and clothes were flying all over the room and the next instant everything turned quiet.

She then looked inside to find a semi-human figure sitting on the bed, groaning and crying like an animal, and the look in its eyes

Amin looked totally fatigued and his eyes seemed drained. Shailla shook her husband several times to help him gain his strength. Amin then slowly told Shailla that the idol was a real demon who wanted human beings to be its worshippers. And so, from hundreds of homes at different times, it adopts various techniques to take away people to its own world. He then said that the demon had nearly gotten him but suddenly he found himself safe in his own room.

Shailla dropped down on the bed, and with tears in contented eyes, the only thing she could say was, Amin, I could save you from that mysterious world, the world of the idol."

PERFECTION

by Munjulika Rahman

THE police arrived after about ten minutes. Marian felt a little nervous at the sight of them but remained calm and continued pretending to cry. She immediately took them to the study. When Ahsan Rajib saw the police he looked baffled, and even more when Marian started talking.

"I heard a scream from my room upstairs and when I quietly came down, I saw this devil Rajib driving a knife into him. Look there's the poor corpse. You villain you!"

The police squad consisted of about ten policemen and was being led by inspector Khaled. He ordered a photographer to take pictures while other policemen put the glass, handkerchief, knife and some other objects into plastic packets. After Ahsan Rajib was taken to the police car, the inspector explained that everybody present in the house had to go to the police station. Marian was at a loss! She hadn't been able to hide the bloody gloves very securely in her room after the murder. She asked if she could go upstairs to change her clothes. But the inspector replied, "I am sorry but you have to go as you are."

In the police station Marian waited anxiously for the results of the tests of the objects in the room, where Siraj was murdered. After an hour a policeman handed over some papers to inspector Khaled. He studied them carefully and a surprised look spread over his face. But he said nothing about the results to Marian. Instead to her surprise he said,

"Due to unavoidable circumstances you have to stay in the police station. Just one night. Marian was furious, and actually very afraid. Had she overlooked something? But she screamed aloud.

"Why should I stay in here? You've already got the murderer. And there are so many evidences to prove that. I should like to go home now."

But Khaled did not let her go home. He also decided to stay in the police station. He had to think carefully about this case. It was a very complicated case especially because there were so many suspects. By now Khaled had a lot of factual information. Investigation proved that Siraj Chowdhury was involved with black marketing. He had so much money anybody could kill him for it. The murderer could be his business rivals. But Ahsan Rajib! He had enough money himself. He wouldn't have to kill anybody for it. Rajib was unmarried and a business man in profession and wanted to make business deals with Chowdhury.

According to Rajib he had known Siraj for only two days. He had told the police about Marian's phone call and that made Marian a suspect. Not only that there were other signs to prove that she was involved. Khaled was very surprised to see in the tests that there was a little of her blood in the handkerchief that was in Siraj's clutches. Therefore he decided to talk directly to Rajib.

It was the middle of the night and Ahsan Rajib was yawning when he entered the empty

room. There were a few chairs and a table where Inspector Khaled was sitting. Khaled curiously noticed that Rajib's face did not have any trace of anxiety. Rajib now started to speak.

"Look, I know I didn't kill anybody. If I really did murder him why didn't I escape from the open window? Because I didn't even know there was a corpse in the room and that I was locked."

Khaled was surprised that he didn't think of this before. Now that he came to think of it, two

of the windows were open! She now talked to Rajib very kindly.

"Let's try to find out who's trying to frame you. See if you can recognise these objects with your fingerprints on."

Rajib studied the pictures carefully. "Yeah, I know this knife! Wait, I remember Marian cutting the lamb with it last night. Then she cut her hands and I finished cutting the lamb with it. I gave her this handkerchief then. Doesn't it have her blood on it? Her wound was pretty bad."

The inspector was getting more and more excited. He thanked himself for forcing Marian to stay in the police station. But he needed some more evidences to prove her guilty. He remembered that Marian had wanted to go upstairs to her room and seemed somewhat desperate. May be there was something in her room. He immediately ordered some policemen to get ready to go with him.

Before leaving he checked two things. Khaled checked Siraj's will which stated that all his possessions and money would belong to his second wife after his death. Then he went to see Marian. He pretended that he wanted to see if she was alright. But he saw what he wanted to see. There was a bandage on one of her hands. Khaled was now more than sure and set off for Chowdhury's house.

Nobody was there except the policemen who were stationed to guard the house. Khaled and the policemen went upstairs to Marian's room and began searching the room. A little later they found a pair of plastic gloves inside an almiraah covered with dried blood. Later Ahsan Rajib was freed and the documents and evidences provided by the police department proved Marian guilty. She was sentenced long terms of imprisonment but the judge was lenient due to her young age.

PERFECTION

by Farzeen Saleh

HE wait was long but worrying. It gave Marian time to think about the fact that she might also be suspected. Maybe it would be wrong to make an innocent person guilty. But she had suffered enough. It was time someone else did!

At the arrival of the police Marian explained the situation. She was passing the study when she heard voices. When she opened the door she saw Ahsan Rajib having a heated discussion with her husband. So she was about to close the door again she heard a scream. She felt scared and locked the door and went to call the police.

In the study, Ahsan Rajib was found leaning over and examining the corpse. When he saw the police he moved away only to get his hands cuffed. Marian on seeing her dead husband leaned down against him faking tears. An officer picked up the knife from the floor and put it away for investigation. Marian blamed Ahsan Rajib in agony shouting at him calling him a murderer. The officer took Ahsan Rajib away. The prisoner speechless what had he done? He knew he hadn't killed Siraj!

Marian stood back watching the prisoner and her husband being taken away. Seeing Siraj for the last time made her forget the false agony she had to put into show. She noticed the officer take the knife and the glass, and the handkerchief. They were all the evidence she needed to show... enough to get a man a death penalty.

The funeral came and went. She didn't have to act any longer. Just watching other people show her sympathy made her feel sad...! She was also busy thinking about her mistakes. There had been lots of those! There was just too much of evidence against Ahsan Rajib. It was a perfect murder.

Ahsan had wanted to be tried out. The trial was scheduled for the next day and Marian felt confident again. There were no flaws. No one had seen her. It had been dotted to perfection...! Then there were the servants. They knew Marian had hated her husband maybe they wouldn't tell...!

Mrs Marian Chowdhury is requested to come up a judge announced. Marian stood up. This was it. Fate or destiny would open its birds. The oath was taken.

Marian's memory flashed back. Ahsan Rajib still seemed guilty. All prints matched with his although he had said he never talked to Siraj and there hadn't been an argument.

"Mrs Chowdhury why did you lock the study door when you heard the scream? You could have just gone inside." A lawyer directed at her.

Marian said smoothly "I was scared and I didn't want to go and talk to Ahsan or meet him."

"Why not?" The lawyer asked. "I don't like him." She answered "What do you have to say to the fact that he said there was no argument?" He asked after a pause. "He's lying I heard it with my own ear. Marian said sternly looking Ahsan. "She's lying. She called me over. I saw him dead." Ahsan cried

out the judge's hammer beat. Are you absolutely sure that it was Ahsan Rajib you saw?" asked the lawyer.

"Yes" said Marian without hesitation.

"Who do you think killed your husband?" He asked slowly.

"Ahsan Rajib" she replied.

"Did you kill him?" He asked looking her in the eye.

"No. Why should I?" She answered her hands cold.

"One last question, were you and your husband happy together?"

"We had our troubles" she answered nonchalantly.

Thank you

The judge was back in his seat. The court was in order. The decision would be made in a few seconds time. Marian sat quietly in her seat. "Perfection". The words jumbled in her mind. Had her plan lacked it? Or was there too much of it?

"Of the Chowdhury murder case Mr. Ahsan Rajib has been found guilty of murder. The punishment is death. The judge announced with a thumber of his hammer.

Ahsan looked up at the judge in disbelief. His agony was horrible to see. The statesmen quickly took him away. He managed a look at Marian. If looks could kill that would be the closest.

Marian read in the papers that Ahsan Rajib had been hanged. She could really sign out of relief now. She had everything she needed now.

"It is hatred for man and love for money and freedom that kills the coldest of hearts. Only that can make love and hate collide."

IDOL

AFTER Tareq had left, Shailla and Amin decided to go back to sleep. But Shailla was still confused. Something made her feel that the man she was living with was not her husband. But she could find no explanation, and this gave her a chill.

While walking through the drawing room to the stairs, Shailla's eyes caught sight of the pool of blood on the carpet. She was struck by lightning. Surely, she was not imagining now! Her heart started to pound fast and drops of sweat collected on her forehead. The blood on the carpet seemed so fresh and real.

Shailla slowly walked to the spot and bent down to touch the blood with the tips of her fingers. Just as she bent down, a hand on her shoulder made her jump. She turned around just to see Amin standing behind her. "What are you doing here, my dear?", these words came out of Amin's mouth. But Shailla couldn't recognize the voice. It was not, definitely, Amin's voice.

But Shailla couldn't go back to sleep. Those horrible thoughts were still circling in her mind. Is she going insane or something really has happened to Amin? She closed her eyes and instantly flung them open, hearing a howling noise of some animal. She turned and saw a wolf sitting beside her with blood-red eyes and blood dripping from its mouth. It howled vigorously and glared at Shailla with revulsion. Shailla screamed desperately, and jumping out of bed, she quickly turned on the light. Turning on the light, Shailla found that the wolf was gone.

It was Amin, sitting in bed with a look of malevolence in his eyes. It was happening again! Amin was howling in bed, his skin had begun to rip off and his eyes were trying to come out. Blood was dripping from his mouth and from the corner of his eyes. Shailla was terrified. She ran down the stairs to the drawing room.

The idol of the 'demon' was there and it was radiating a faint glow of light. By this time, Amin had reached the drawing-room. He was murmuring some words which Shailla couldn't make out. Amin was getting more horrible every minute. He came forward to Shailla, but she backed away and ran to the kitchen and armed herself with a knife. Amin slowly entered the kitchen.

"You can't kill me, my dear," he growled. Shailla was sweating profusely and tears came out of her eyes. She tried to run to the front door but Amin caught hold of her. There was a struggle between them and suddenly Shailla stabbed Amin in his chest, with the knife. Her night-gown was soaked with blood and she sat there, whispering, "What have I done, what have I done?"

At that moment, a loud noise came from the drawing-room. It was the idol of the demon! Shailla, by all no means, had to destroy the bizarre thing. She took a box of matches and a gallon of kerosene, oil from the cupboard and entered the drawing-room. The idol was there, but it had changed its place and a rising noise was coming from its mouth.

Shailla walked near the idol and split the kerosene all over it. She then, lighted a match and threw it at the idol. Within seconds, the idol started burning with a reddish flame. Shailla began to lose her strength and her head was becoming heavy. She fell down on the floor, unconscious.

Tareq couldn't sleep well that night. He was sitting near his window and suddenly felt something unusual about Amin's residence. He walked to that house, to make sure everything was alright. But, when nobody answered the door, he called the police. The police came and found the corpse of Amin, and the unconscious Shailla. Tareq remembered the bizarre idol of the demon. But, when the police searched the house, they found no sign of the demon!

Later, Shailla was accused for the murder of Amin, and was sentenced to lifetime behind bars.

The writer's name was not mentioned on his main script. We thank who ever has contributed this piece.

