



# The Ghost of Anne

by Nitisha Naureen

THE day turned out to be a splendid one, for I was granted the much desired vacation with my parents. It was the winter season, a perfect time to be in Cox's Bazar.

Winter is regarded as the best season in Bangladesh, for it is in winter that nature bears a breathtaking beauty. I along with my parents boarded the Chittagong bound train early in the morning, then we were to travel by car to Cox's Bazar. I was obviously enthusiastic and keen to learn on what lay ahead of the journey.

During the journey, I observed the nature's beauty, which seemed ravishing and tranquil at the same time. The exquisite beauty of nature truly fascinated me. I desired more and more to be in Cox's Bazar at once.

Time passed by and the train journey soon came to an end. From Chittagong, it takes four hours to reach Cox's Bazar by road. The journey to Cox's Bazar was also very enjoyable. On the way, occasionally I caught glimpses of many small huts made of straw, which presented a very picturesque scenario. We also crossed quite a few hillocks covered with dense forest. The forest reminded me of ferocious tigers and other beasts and I was really frightened. But my parents assured me that once upon a time tigers and elephants roamed in these jungles, but they are no more there. Man has now conquered the jungle and driven away the beasts from their sanctuary. The road that led to Cox's Bazar required repair at many places and for this reason we occasionally faced traffic jam, but nonetheless we encountered no real difficulty.

Finally, we reached Cox's Bazar at around noon. We had already reserved a guest house which was situated in a remote area. Behind the guest house large hills reached the sky while in front lay the sandy beach and the blue waters of the sea. The place highly interested me. The house was two storied and plainly furnished. From the balcony, I could see the splendid view of the sea, its waves sparkling like a thousand diamonds. I liked the backyard with its mango and banyan trees and a little flower garden. My parents decided to spend an entire month in Cox's Bazar. I was thrilled at this decision and made plans to tour the whole place.

I was given a separate bedroom in spite of serious objections from my younger brother Hasib. The bedroom was quite spacious and from the window one could view the beautiful Bay of Bengal. Probably because of this reason Hasib wanted to occupy this room. The journey had really tired me. But as I lay at bed at night, I could not close my eyes. I lay awake hearing the sound of the waves splashing onto the sandy beach. The

wind whispered by and the leaves rustled in the soft breeze. I don't exactly remember when I had fallen asleep, for a sound—a haunting sound disturbed me.

I suddenly woke up, with perspiration on my face, and my heart began to beat impulsively. I sat up and was trembling with fear for I could still hear the agonizing sound—the sound of someone crying in distress. The room being dark, I was unable to see clearly, but I could figure out a silhouette of a girl against the wall. I could not see her face but she seemed to call me by my name. I was terrified by this strange occurrence. I screamed for help, but unfortunately no sound came out from my mouth. My whole body was numbed with fear. I closed my eyes to forget the frightening experience.

I woke up when the early winter morning sun penetrated through the thin window curtains and fell on my face. And immediately I remembered the frightful experience.

I decided not to tell anyone about this experience, not even my brother. I knew that no one would believe me, and would take it as an imagination. My brother would specially mock at me and would take the opportunity to occupy this room by emphasizing that I did not deserve the right to occupy a single room alone. He would tease me by saying that I was afraid to live alone and should stay with my parents.

Days and nights passed by and every night I encountered the shadowy figure. When the shadow called me in a whispering tone, I just pretended not to hear.

Sometimes I just simply closed my eyes and at other times I just put the blanket on top of my head. But the shadowy girl continued to call me in a soft voice. This went on every night and I felt crazy. I lost my appetite and became almost sick. One night, unable to restrain myself, I decided to listen to what the shadowed figure was trying to say. So I lay awake and when the figure of the girl appeared on the wall and began to call me, I answered her call. Then she related her sad story.

The girl was named Anne. She was the only child of her parents and lived with her family in the house which we now occupied. As she was the only child, her parents loved her dearly. Anne had a poodle with long silky, curling, white hair. Anne had no friend but only the dog. She loved to play with the dog and considered it as her best friend.

The dog was very devoted to Anne and always accompanied her wherever she went. Anne fed the dog with her own hands and it had the privilege of sleeping with her every night. But as the years passed by, Anne sud-

denly became ill. Many doctors treated her but nobody could understand the nature of the disease. Gradually she became very weak and she finally met her death at the age of eight due to the unknown disease.

Her parents were bereaved with shock at the loss of their only child. Therefore, they decided to leave the place, for the house bore the memory of their beloved daughter. Anne was buried in the backyard underneath the banyan tree. When her parent left the house the dog refused to go with them.

The dog whom Anne loved so deeply stayed by her side to mourn her death. The dog roamed inside the house and around Anne's grave and never left the compound. Nobody could take the dog away from there. Years passed by and the dog gradually became weak with no strength left in the body. One day the dog died besides the grave of Anne. His bones now lie scattered on the soft earth besides Anne's grave for he was never buried.

The ghost of Anne now insisted that I bury her dog, because that would give peace to her soul. I was reluctant to do that for I was really frightened. But she requested me time and again and urged me to follow her to the grave. Although I was frightened but nevertheless felt sorry for her also.

With whatever courage I could muster, I decided to agree to her request. It was really dark all around. I got up from the bed and followed the shadow, making no sound at all. I did not want to wake up anybody. As I tip-toed downstairs, the shadow also accompanied me. I opened the kitchen door making as less noise as possible. It was drizzling outside when I reached the banyan tree, true to her words, I found a grave. Beside the grave I saw some bones scattered probably that of a dog. Anne stood through the darkness.

I promised Anne that I will bury the dog in the morning and hoped that this would give peace to her soul. The shadow did not respond but vanished into darkness. The whole night I could not sleep. Early in the morning, I woke up my brother and told him the whole story. To my surprise he believed me when I showed him the bones scattered besides the grave.

We brought a shovel from the store room, dug a grave beside that of Anne's grave, and buried the dog there. The next night I had a very peaceful sleep for Anne never returned to me. The entire month passed by without any further incident. When the day came for our departure from Cox's Bazar, I visited the grave of Anne and put some flowers on top of it. From then on everyday I recall Anne and her story, for I knew from that moment onward that Anne would never fade away from my memory.

# THE PURSUIT

by Rubaiyat Khan



SHE put down the receiver with a trembling hand. He looked at her questioning. "He has vanished without a trace. No one can find him," she stuttered.

The man banged his fist down on the plush mahogany desk, his eyes burning intently with an unfathomable fierceness.

"I don't care how your men accomplish it. Just get him for me. And then, he'll die slowly in my hands". The menacingly quiet words hung stagnant, in the air.

April 1976. "A beautiful day for fishing in the Volga" — the old fisherman thought. He set sail with his new fishing net, feeling euphoric, for the vodka that he had drunk a while ago, kept him warm. The sky was unusually blue, laced with cumulous clouds and he sat back on deck, lazily fingering the gentle swells of the green water rippling beneath him. Suddenly, he felt something hard and solid brush against his hand withdrawing sharply, the old man looked closely, then gasped aloud.

It was the body of a man, suspended in water, with only a dead log supporting him. The body had drifted towards the boat while the old man was inspecting the sky. Despite his age, he managed to pull up the still-breathing man. He realized with horror that the man had a bullet wound in his chest. The frozen waters of the Volga had partially sealed the gash, but fresh blood, now spurted out.

The images were blurred at first, but soon, things began to take shape. He opened his eyes slowly and saw the doctor staring down at him.

"How are you feeling?" The voice slowly drifted into his ears. "What is your name and where are you from?"

The words echoed in his head. He suddenly sat up and repeated the words in a daze — "Who am I. Where am I?"

The doctor was taken aback.

He stated more gently, "Even if your injury was minor and you barely escaped severe hypothermia, I think you should rest now. I'm sorry I asked you so many questions at a time. My curiosity prevailed on my better judgment as a doctor. Forgive me."

The patient was indeed a curiosity in this little village. He looked foreign and was built strongly. But the doctor realized that he was as intelligent as he was strong — dangerous, was the word that kept popping up in his mind.

"I have to warn the others," was his initial decision. For he had read in the newspaper, or rather looked at the picture, which was an amazing replica of this patient. He was involved with the KGB on dangerous footing! The man was said to have access to top-secret information, regarding Russia's greatest nuclear submarine. He was being hungrily searched for, by the KGB and would immediately be killed. The doctor felt a shudder. He was French — he hated the Russians and wanted to help this man, if not for his own ends. But the bare facts revealed little chances of his survival — for he had amnesia.

September, 1976. The pursuit for his true identity was never revealed to him. The doctor's body had been found one morning with a clean shot through the skull. The man was taken by the KGB, who prided themselves in their intricate way of operating. Sources had revealed the hiding place of the man and brought him to their clutches.

His eyes opened once more: the hazy pictures around him taking form. But now he opened his eyes, not to see the doctor's face staring at him, but a dark and filthy cell — and the hard triumphant face of a man looking down at him — his hands holding the instrument which was to kill him slowly. He died, never knowing who he was.

# Competition Entry Idol

# A Nightmare

by Ahmed Khaled Rashid

NOTICE the pool of blood that was on the carpet. Amin then turned to Shailla and asked in a cold voice, "What's the meaning of all this? A cold wave ran down Shailla's spine when she saw Amin's eyes.

Those eyes did not belong to 'the Amin' she knew, with whom she had lived the two years of their married life. "I don't know what's happening to me, Amin? Why these pictures are coming to my mind" saying this Shailla started to sob. This seemed to soften Amin's heart a little bit. "Go to bed and try to sleep everything will be alright", saying this Amin went up the stairs to their bedroom.

Shailla thought probably Amin was right, perhaps it was all a bad nightmare. She started for the stairs but suddenly stopped and stood still like a statue. Her face became pale and white as if someone had sucked all blood out of her body. There in the carpet was a pool of blood. She certainly wasn't hallucinating now. She gathered herself and knelt down and put her finger in the blood to examine it.

Suddenly she heard a 'crack' she looked up and saw the idol sniggering at her. She flinched back in fear and tried to backpeddle to the main door. She felt something cold at her feet. She looked down and to her aghast saw a greenish black mamba slithering up her legs.

She screamed in fear and flung her legs and managed to extricate herself from the snake. To her horror she saw countless snakes surrounding her. They were not advancing towards her but all of them seemed to look straight at her eyes. She was gripped with such fear that she hardly flinched from where she standing.

A little later she heard howling and growling from upstairs. It was her husband! He came downstairs and like before he was trying to peel off his own skin and blood was screaming from all the lacerations. He came nearer and nearer to Shailla. His voice had changed, it was not Amin's voice. "You're so beautiful, Shailla 'it' said. Why are you so beautiful? Now you have to pay for your beauty. I will suck every drop of blood from your body and tear your heart out!"

Tareq felt very tired after a party at a friend's house. He decided to go straight to bed. But he could not stop thinking about the incident at Amin's house. He had a queer feeling that something was wrong. He had known Amin and Shailla for quite sometime and always thought them to be very nice people. He brushed aside his thoughts thinking Shailla must have been hallucinating.

Just as he was falling asleep he heard a scream. He sprang up, he knew it was Shailla! This time he was sure something was wrong. He looked through the window and saw the lights on in Amin's house. He quickly went downstairs and rummaged through the store room for something. He finally found what he was looking for — his hockey stick.

Tareq was a hockey player in his younger boys. He was quite a good player. He had a feeling that this hockey stick might be needed. He went through the garden and peeped at the window of the drawing room of Amin's house. He saw the most horrifying scene in his life. Shailla was surrounded by countless slithering snakes, a howling Amin was advancing towards her, the Demon idol was

also there.

It looked so alive! Tareq could not believe what he was seeing. He could not think for a while. Then he perceived that the idol was the cause of all this, so he decided to destroy it. He tried to go through the back door but it was closed then he saw an open window. He went inside the house and tried to sneak up behind the idol. But the snakes seemed to feel Tareq's presence and suddenly all of them, the mambas, boomslangs, alters charged towards Tareq.

Tareq used his hockey stick to crush as many of them as he could and tried to go near the idol. Seeing all this Amin had stopped advancing towards Shailla and again began to scratch his face. In the meantime Tareq had killed a lot of snakes and hit the idol with all the power he could muster. The idol broke into two pieces. He hit the idol again and again and broke the idol into many pieces. Amin then advanced towards Tareq and tried to strangle him. After struggling for a while Tareq managed to free himself.

Suddenly Shailla screamed Tareq, crush the eyes of the idol. Tareq looked at the eyes of the idol and saw they were shimmering. He managed to hit the eyes of the idol and crushed them to powder. The eyes did not shimmer any more. Instantly Amin fell into the floor like a dead man. There was pindrop silence except for the sobbing of Shailla. There was blood every where on the floor. Tareq rushed to Shailla to see if she was okay. She was obviously shaken but she was alright. Then they went to Amin. He was unconscious and bleeding profusely from the face. There were lacerations all over his body.

### 4 Years Later

Amin and Shailla were sitting in their apartment in Minnesota. They had moved to USA. Their friend Tareq has come to visit them. They still remember the night clearly. Tareq and Shailla decided not to call the police or the ambulance because they thought the police wouldn't believe their story and would think that they are insane. They took care of Amin, slowly he recuperated and became normal. Tareq on the same night put the broken pieces of the 'demon' idol and all the dead snakes in a sack and threw it to in a pond a few miles away and cleared the blood stains and disposed the carpet.

Amin doesn't remember anything of that night. But they perceive that for some reason, the 'Demon' idol endeared Amin. This demon spirit tried to possess Amin's mind. But Amin loved his wife Shailla more than anything else in this world. So in a quaint way the idol felt jealous of her and tried to get rid of Shailla through Amin himself.

The reason why Amin scratched his face and body, they think, is that when the spirit of the idol tried to possess Amin's mind, he subconsciously tried to stop it. So part of him was possessed by the spirit and part of him subconsciously tried to get rid of it. It caused a self conflict and hence, the scratching of the face and body.

Anyway they were glad that it's all behind now. They haven't told anyone about this story and they plan never to do so. They are just happy that the demon idol will never haunt them again.

# A Free Fall of 136 ft



ONCE upon a time, a mighty ruler sent Steve Elliott into the world to capture sensations and collect thrills, to sneak into other kingdoms and seize their scary moments.

So, Elliott donned a device known as an accelerometer, covered it up with a coat and discreetly rode 900 different thrill rides. His goal? Record hair-raising moments so the Walt Disney Co could develop new rides for its own magic kingdom of theme parks.

The chairman (Michael Eisner) was interested in what was going on, and nobody knew. Elliott said, "I went around the world and looked at everybody's rides."

Even arch competitors such as Six Flags Entertainment Corp were fair game, says Elliott. He coasted on their coasters, fell down their free fall. He recorded speeds, angles, the gravitational forces that were at play during a particularly adrenaline-pumping moment.

Disney was typically terse about Elliott's excellent adventures.

"For competitive reasons, we have no comment," said Disney World spokesman Bill Warren.

"We consider our technology to be proprietary," said Ken Green, a Disney corporate spokesman. "We really can't get into this with you."

Elliott's said the Space Mountain in Paris has a corkscrew inversion that is derived from "a couple of dozen roller coasters."

The final element is called a "tongue"; the coaster travels up a steep rise, rolls to the right and then comes back down. This particular maneuver was first used in the Busch Gardens Drachen Firen coaster, but Elliott said Disney developed its version independently.

Pressed about that, he said "It ain't patented and it ain't trademarked."

To help create the Tower of Terror at Disney MGM Studios in Orlando, which simulates the sensation of a falling elevator, Elliott said he visited eight different free fall rides and rode the free fall at Six Flags Magic Mountain "dozens of times."

"I worked with the engineer in getting him the information I had, how much g's do you want to do, how fast do you want to stop."

He said Otis Elevator helped in the design, though they were leery at first. It is a testament to the Disney influence that an elevator company would help design a ride evoking imminent death by broken elevator.

"It's what elevator hell is envisioned," Elliott said. "It's a free fall of 136 feet (41 metres) and can carry 18 or 19 people."

Though it seems like a potentially fatal fall, the whole thing is actually being driven downward by an engine, he said.

"You get an idea of what technology can do when you have a motor pushing 18,000 pounds (8,200 kilograms) around," he said.

Elliott, after more than five years as a collector of thrills, started his own design and safety consulting business in Wisconsin last year.

Ooohhhhh, you betcha," he said. — AP

# A Ray of Hope

by Inshirah Kishwar Sakhawat

AS I walked barefoot down the gravel road. Waiting for a car to stop for me. But nothing came my way. Not a car, not a bird, not even a tree. A deep cloud had just covered my sun. And I was down. Though I tried hitchhiking to my destination. Yet, I couldn't even reach the nearest town.

So I walked barefoot down the gravel road. The quiet road so lonely. No one else around. Just me and me only.

All of a sudden I see. A thin white figure in front of me. But as looked closely at her beautiful face. I saw something more than beauty and grace. I saw a ray of hope. A ray of light. And after a moment of thought I knew she was right. I should have followed my destination. Instead of losing hope I should have carried on with full determination. So I did. And as I reached that town I see My sun is rising again for me.

There's one thing I learned on this day

Never give up in dismay.



# Largest on-the-Water Show

THE world's largest on-water boating exhibition, the Southampton International Boat Show (14-22 September) forms a vital shop-window for the UK marine industry including many boatbuilders and other companies based locally on the south coast of England. Last year's event, attended by 112,000 visitors, saw sales totalling almost £38 million announced during the show period alone.

This year's show, to be held since its inception in 1969, cost £1.7 million to stage. It was completely sold out, with 695 exhibitors (13 per cent more than last year). Some 800 different craft, representing an estimated total value of around £80 million, were displayed ashore or afloat in the show's 10 hectares, with 275 boats moored around 1.8 km of specially-laid pontoons. In addition, terraced spectator seating overlooked a spacious waterborne demonstration area.

The wide variety of craft exhibited, including many new designs being unveiled at the show, ranged from the diminutive Capri dinghy, 1.98 metres long, to the 23.85-metre Sunseeker Predator powerboat. The largest yacht on display was the 21.34-metre Oyster 70.

The huge range of boating products on view included the latest in yachting electronics, deck hardware, watersports equipment, engines, sails, inflatable craft, chandlery, clothing and marine services.