

Our story begins at a well-heated room in central London.

A short, well dressed, corpulent man is sitting on a sofa, glancing through the evening paper in a self-assured manner. A tall man enters the room. His muscular shape is evident even through his multi-layer outfit.

Tall man: Well, Sir Carmody, this is the situation. The researchers are very near

their goal. The 'Perpetual Theory' of professor Anis is being put into practice, and the result will come out this evening. Not to the public, of course, but my links at the Cambridge University are confident about the possibility of success. Shall we begin our part?

Short man: Yes, agent Sina, when the scholars accomplish their goal, more practical people must take over.

Sina: The usual process?

Sir Carmody: No. It's no police job. I'll call in the Army.

Sina (wincing): Army, sir? The newspapers will be at our neck.

Sir Carmody: Accidents do happen. Especially when a group of eccentric people is working on a very dangerous material.

Sina: What'll this 'dangerous material' be?

Sir Carmody: How about biological weapon?

(ii) A Biochemistry lab of Cambridge University in England.

10 January 2010. Several scientists, donned in aprons, are crowding around a cage. The cage contains a few guinea pigs. The young scientists are eagerly waiting for the response of a sedate looking middle-aged professor, who is examining the animals carefully. Slowly a smile begin to break on his wrinkled face, and a low, cheerful murmur arose from the crowd.

Middle aged man: My dear Doctors, I think that proves it. The difference is clear even to laymen. We have discovered immortality.

"Congratulations! Professor Anis, you have won against death". A cheerful, round faced young woman chirped out. The others echo her felicitations.

Anis: Why, thank you Julia, but I couldn't have done it without your help.

"And what are you going to do next with this 'perpetuating serum, sir?" A rebellious looking young man interjects.

Anis: Test it on some more guinea pigs, and then on human beings, Shejan.

"Sir, the Army is ordering us to stop the research immediately and leave the premises. "A worried looking intern comes running to the professor.

Julia: What? By what right....

Intern: By the PM's orders, they are saying.

Anis: We won't stop even if Satan Himself orders us. We will flee abroad and expose this to the world.

Intern: No way sir, the army has surrounded us and is now entering the premises.

The terrified scientists watch the soldiers, armed to the teeth, come in the University ground. Shejan discovers Julia sneaking away from the crowd to another room and follows her.

Shejan: Julia, what are you doing with those guinea pigs?

Julia: Here, hold this cage for me. Let me find the professor's formulae and experiment logbooks. There, that's it. Now, for a dose of the serum. The best place to store this proof is my body. Shejan, can you get me out of here?

Shejan: Out? You mean escape? Through the army lines? That eternal life of yours won't protect you from machine guns, you know.

Julia: But I must get out. We mustn't let this discovery to be covered up. And do you know how far they can go to hush up



this project? I doubt whether they'll let us live for long.

Shejan: There is a way. If we can somehow sneak to the main complex, there is some hope cause they won't dare to arrest the whole Cambridge. But what then?

Julia: We must leave this country. The third world will be the best place for us. We will think of something then.

Day 2. At the office of Military Intelligence 5 (M.I.5)

(i) Agent Sina is at a desk going through some papers. Professor Anis is waiting patiently before him.

Sina: So, my naughty professor, you were trying to step in an illegal area.

Anis (heatedly): There's no illegal area for science. We were working on....

ETERNITY

Sina: You were working on a mass destruction biological weapon and trying to sell it to some terrorist state--at least that's what the papers say.

Anis (rising): You liar! you....

Sina: Temper, my dear professor. Though you were performing a criminal act, there might be a way out for you if you listen to us.

Anis (stifling his anger): I will expose this fallacy to the world, I'll call a press conference.

Sina: Of course, and in a few days too. There you will announce that you were forced to commit this notorious business, because some foreign agents, disguised as scientists, threatened you. That you were afraid for the safety of your family, which you must be....now....and you'll appeal to the law-enforcing agencies of the world to help catch the two escaped foreign agents who had fled with the weapon formula.

Anis (with change of want to speak behavior): I to my family.

Sina: All in professor, and sound. But you meet them security abide by our return to your and family a m p l e

By Abin Widad Shahab

research or face charges?

(ii) The Daily Dhaka Time's Office.

The assistant chief reporter is having a chat with one of her colleagues, "Masum, are you busy tomorrow evening?"

Masum: A bit, Bony, I'm going to write a feature on the accident in Cambridge.

Bony: Beastly job, wasn't it?

Masum: Yeah, 20 of the 23 scientists dead, though the head of the research, professor whatshisname was miraculously saved. And, this is the most interesting part: the two foreign agents who were behind all this have escaped with the weapon formulae.

Bony: It's about this I wanted to talk to you. Yesterday, an anonymous caller--a man, called me saying he had some inside news about the incident and, for that he has to meet me alone in a place of his choice.

Masum: Do you want me to go with you?

Bony: No, I don't think he will show up if he sees anyone with me. But you can keep a watch on me in case the caller turns out to be a King-Kong sized hijacker.

Day 3. Evening.

Bony: Masum, look that's the restaurant. Ugh! What a place to meet. This is worse than a slum.

Masum: Worried?

Bony: To say the least. I am going in now, there's supposed to be a table reserved for me.

Masum: I'll go in after ten minutes. Try not to look at me. Don't forget to start your tape recorder.

Bony enters, finds her table and sits. Half an hour later, a man enters carrying a box in his hand. His worried face couldn't completely hide the rebellious look in his eyes. He goes straight to Bony, and without a word, takes a sit.

Man: Are you the reporter of the Dhaka Time?

Bony: Yes, and you must be the caller. What news do you have Mr....?

Man: Names are irrelevant. The news is that the 'explosion' you have read about is part of a big hoax, orchestrated by the British Government to cover up a much bigger incident.

Bony: Does this have something to do with the X-Files?

Man (unmoved): I'll show you something. (On opening the box he had with him, he took out a cage) Here, see these guinea pigs? Good, one of them is clearly different from the other two. Can you understand that?

Bony: All I can see is that they are all rotten things, only that one's a bit jumpy.

Man: Yes, because this one is younger than the others are. But, they were all born on the same day, only the active one was given a dose of a serum two months ago. It's this serum which the British Government wants to keep secret, cause it stops the aging process completely and can effectively make mammals immortal.

Bony: Nice story, but I still can't take it, I don't know anything about guinea pigs.

Man: Then tomorrow I will take you to one of the scientists who have worked on this project. I'll meet you here tomorrow. Be here.

Day 4. London M.I.5 office.

(i) Sina: Sir Carmody, I think we have got our birds. Our sources in Bangladesh have got a lead from a journalist-some Masum... and are presently tracking them down.

Sir Carmody: Good, I will ask my friend at the N.S.I. to handle the matter.

Sina: No prisoners, I hope?

Sir Carmody: Never. There will be a slight misunderstanding and the foreign agents will be killed. And then we can make plans about the immortality serum. We will produce the serum in small quantities. First give some to the cabinet to keep them down, then sell it. Billionaires, Presidents, head of states-why, everybody will want to become immortal. We will run this country, if not the world.

(ii) That evening, at a house in Dhanmondi.

Julia: Lucky for us, to have your parent's living in Bangladesh.

Shejan: You don't mind being introduced as my wife, do you?

Julia: Not the least. But why do you look so worried?

Shejan: I don't know, but I feel something is not right. I don't know whether this woman, the journalist will be coming or not. And another thing, I think I am seeing too many able-bodied men on the road by our house today.

Julia: What? Your imagination must be working overtime.

Shejan: No, I'll show you, here, come to this window. Now, do you see that gardener in front of that house? I swear he wasn't there yesterday. And who are those guys, pretending to work on the electric pole? All of them look too well organized, too disciplined.

Suddenly a man carrying a sub-machine gun comes running into the room.

Julia and Shejan (alarmed): Who are you?

Man: Shut up and keep standing by that window.

As they comply, he shoots through the window. In a moment, volley after volley of shots from the street blow the window open. The two scientists lie dead in a bloody mess.

Day 12. Professor Anis' residence.

Professor Anis is trying to take an afternoon nap. Bony comes out of his bathroom with a gun in her hand.

Anis: What do you want? Who are you? How did you get in here?

Bony: Just shut up or I'll shoot. I have come in without getting caught, and don't think I can't get away after killing you.

Anis: But why...

Bony: Because, for your inaction, greed and cowardice, each of your fellow researchers has died. Take a look at this photo, from yesterday's paper. Julia and Shejan have been shot like common criminals 'while trying to kill a number of policemen!' The rest were blown up with your lab. Just like your family died in a car accident yesterday.

Anis: This is all propaganda, fraud, and lies of your insane mind. Why should I believe you? The M.I.5 promised me that no harm would come to my family and colleagues. (shouting) Sentry!

Bony: (As the guards pull her away) Then dream on. But everyday of your accursed life, everyday till you are silenced by the M.I.5, this photo will torment you.



Day 14. At the London press club.

(i) "And now, ladies and gentlemen, I present you the person you've all been waiting for--professor Anis."

The hum of the reporters rises as the professor walks in.

Anis: Ladies and Gentlemen, I am not here to tell you what you expected. I am here to expose a government-orchestrated hoax--that the whole story of biological weapon is nothing but that. (The hum turned into a roar as question after question is hurled at the professor.) Yes, the two 'foreign agents' were two of my best students, who had the courage to flee with the serum--the serum that can make man physically immortal. We have discovered eternal life in our labs. But the government, for its own hideous reasons has blown my lab--with all my researchers. My family....(the professor is carried away by two security guards. And the flushed announcer regains his poise).

Announcer: Ladies and gentlemen, the professor is still suffering from the shock of the explosion. I hope you will excuse his temporary abnormality. I am sorry, but the conference ends here. Thank you.

(ii) That night.

The newscaster of BBC announces, "The world was shocked by the news about the government ploy. Police is examining the explosion site to find out who actually was behind it. Whole England is wild with anger. The government has resigned. The caretaker government has decided to allow mass production of the eternity serum and make it available to all."

A month later.

Bony is visiting professor Anis' house.

Anis: Just released from jail? You look young as ever. Come to think of it, did you ever take the serum?

Bony: No professor. Haven't had the courage yet. But I will take it. It seems to me its becoming the most pervasive trend after jeans. Everybody who is anybody has taken it.

Anis: Come, I'll show you something. (They go to another room, where Julia's cage rests on a table) Remember these guinea pigs? See any difference?

Bony: Where's the other guinea pig? The immortal one?

Anis: The 'immortal one' died yesterday. Its skin shrank, tore and crushed its body within. Of course, there wasn't much to crush as its flesh and bone had already started to rot. Painful three months for guinea pigs, I wonder how many for man?