

Iswaran, the Storyteller

by

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Module 3

Handout

One morning, Iswaran sought permission to cook a special dinner as it was the day when they cooked a meal for the dear departed elders of the family. That evening, Mahendra enjoyed a tasty meal and complimented Iswaran on his cooking skills.

Mahendra was relaxing after a hearty meal. To his chagrin, Iswaran launched into a story related to ghosts and supernatural powers. He said that the factory area where they lived had earlier been a burial ground. On his very first day here, he had seen a human skull lying around.

He added that he was not afraid of ghosts and had seen many bones and skulls. On a full moon night, he claimed to have seen the ugly ghost of a woman who had a shrunken face, matted hair and held an unborn baby in its arms.

This vivid and melodramatic description given by Iswaran compounded the distress of Mahendra and added to his disquiet. Masking his unease, Mahendra scolded Iswaran for talking nonsense.

He said that ghosts never existed, that they were just a figment of the feverish imagination of Ishwaran. He sarcastically suggested that

Iswaran would do well to consult a doctor as he (Iswaran) had gone off his rocker!!

Even though Mahendra put on a brave face in the presence of his cook, he was no longer the same person. From that day onwards, Mahendra felt uneasy and would peep out of the window in order to check for the presence of any ghost around.

One night, Mahendra woke up from his sleep as he thought he heard someone crying. At first, he thought that it was a cat looking for mice. As the sound became harsher and deeper, Mahendra could no longer ignore it; he gave in to the desire of peeping out of the window.

As he looked out, he saw the white moonlight and a dark shadow holding a bundle in its arms. As he saw the ghost he started sweating, breathing heavily and fell back on the bed.

After sometime, Mahendra started pondering in his bed. He thought it very likely that his subconscious mind was playing tricks with him. There was no question of sighting ghosts. How could an intelligent person (as he fancied himself) fall prey to such a cheap trick!! It could never be!

He got ready the next morning for the important business at office. He had forgotten all about the phantoms of the previous night.

Iswaran greeted him and gave him his lunch bag. He said that a few days earlier Mahendra had admonished him for talking about ghosts. But ironically, the previous night he had seen it himself.

Iswaran had heard Mahendra crying at night. It was confirmed that Mahendra had seen the ghost the previous night and it was not just a trick of the mind. Mahendra turned pale on hearing this; he was a shattered person.

He left in a hurry without saying anything; he resigned from his job the very same day. He could not live at a haunted place for a single day.

Well, after reading this story, you may think that it is a horror story. But in reality it is a mixture of many things – a sense of horror, a vivid sense of imagination, susceptibility to others' narration and underlying superstitious beliefs –they all feed into one another, compounding our misery.
