

Barbareek

In the 1920s British India, lies a small village in the womb of the picturesque mountains. The villagers are naïve, simple people who live a happy life and they don't lock the doors to their houses, believing that no criminal could enter their village, due to their Saviour Ghost that lives in the mansion right outside the village border.

In the centre of the village, there is a small temple with a statue in it of the British General Clive Anderson.

The Saviour Ghost is said to be of the dead British general, Clive Anderson, who lived in the mansion until a few decades ago before he was burned in the fire. The villagers believe that there were no last rites performed for the British man and hence, his soul remained stuck in the mansion and took on a ghostly body.

Clive's ghost is apparently a good-natured ghost that saves the villagers from the atrocities. Nobody has seen the ghost ever eye to eye but the protective shadow of the ghost looms large on the village. All they have to do is feed the ghost twice a day. In the morning and the evening, a large plate full of different delicacies is placed in front of the mansion's gate, one ghostly hand approaches and sneakily takes the plate inside.

One night, two brothers, Heeralal and Motilal enter the village, hearing from somewhere that people don't put locks on the doors in the village. They are thieves and they think that they have discovered a goldmine. They enter different homes in the village sneakily and begin stealing valuables. Heeralal, the younger one, while breaking into one of the houses, overhears a mother telling her child about the ghost of Clive. Heera is fascinated but he makes a mistake and lets the mother know there's someone in her house. In another house as well, Moti has been caught by the owner of the house and both the thieves are chased down through the village.

The brothers run for their lives and seeing the mansion at the border, they jump through the gate and enter the mansion. The villagers, chasing them with the intention of killing them, stops outside the gate. They sit down there, knowing all well that the Ghost of Clive will take care of the thieves. The village chief proclaims that by the first light in the morning, both the thieves will be dead and the things they have stolen will be returned back to the villagers. They all sit down, waiting for the showdown to happen.

Inside the mansion, Heera and Moti are panting hard. They have managed to save themselves from the wrath of the villagers but Heera has heard of the ghost. He warns Moti that they should depart immediately and try to run away and anyway, getting killed by a bunch of villagers is always better than getting eaten alive by a ghost. Moti doesn't believe in such fables and is sure that in the old mansions like this, you can always find some treasure and they have to look for it.

They light up a candle in the otherwise dark hall of the mansion and begin to look around for ‘anything.

They find out some really weird stuff, such as an old machine that seems to have been disassembled, a bow and set of arrows, and a few artefacts from Ancient India that symbolize the owner’s interest in history and archaeology.

They find out that most of the furniture in the house is half-burnt and the walls are blackened by fire. In one of the rooms, Moti discovers human skeletons. Heera, on the other hand, is scared as fuck but his brother’s thrashing has made him look for the treasure.

Moti discovers a secret door in the mansion and has a ‘bingo’ moment. He and Heera climb down the stairs into the basement, through a cave-like pathway and are welcomed by another huge door. Moti is ecstatic as he believes this is ‘it’ and this is where the treasure lies. He threatens Heera to go in first. Dubiously Heera slams the door repeatedly and hears a weird noise coming from inside. He begins crying and moves back. Moti, all excited, breaks the door and is welcomed by the GHOST sitting on a wooden bed, with a candle in his hand, reading a fat book. The ghost screams, Moti catches a quick glimpse of the ghost and shouts out loud and runs, shutting the door from outside.

On the ground floor, Heera and Moti are shaking. They have seen the ghost and now Moti is actually worried about leaving this place alive. They rush out of the door and see that the villagers are sitting outside with weapons in their hands. The villagers shout at the thieves and the thieves are now stunned. They run back in.

Inside, they think of a way to do something to stay alive. They plan to spend the entire night in the mansion and wait for the villagers to leave, keeping the hidden door shut by placing the huge machine in front of the door.

Moti ponders over the entire incident and concludes that the Ghost was not screaming out of fury, in fact, the ghost seemed as scared as him. Heera asks Moti to dump the thought and think of a way to escape. But Moti smells some fishy business and tells Heera that the ghost was scared of them and that there is a treasure that he is hiding down in the basement. And anyway, the ghost had a small height and he can easily be overpowered by the two brothers.

Heera is frightened but Moti persuades him again, showing him the dreams of a rich life. Heera reluctantly agrees. The thieves had brought ropes and two big daggers on them in case of emergencies and they carefully walk into the Ghost’s lair.

Upon reaching the door, Moti puts his ear to the door but can't hear anything. On the count of three, they both open the door and enter the room. They don't find anyone in the dark and damp room, but a tiny lamp. The ghost seems to have disappeared. Moti looks around the room, there are only books, thousands of them, just lying around. Among them, are books based on astrology, ancient Indian myths, psychology, philosophy and much more. Heera is mindful of the ghost but the ghost isn't to be found anywhere.

Moti takes a good look at the entire room and he finds a chest, which contains more books. Moti is frustrated and he sits on the bed. Heera is somewhat relaxed now, takes the lamp from Moti's hands and looks through the entire room. He realizes that they haven't peeked under the bed yet. Heera slowly bows down and there he is, the GHOST, staring right into Heera's terrified eyes. Heera shouts out loud and the ghost screams, Moti screams as well and quickly bows down, dragging the ghost from under the bed. The ghost keeps screaming terrifyingly as he is being tied with a rope.

Outside, the villagers marvel at the frightening sounds and they smile, knowing that the ghost of Clive was about to do its business.

Heera and Moti drag the ghost outside and ties him from a pole near the window, from where the blue moonlight gives a clear view of the ghost for the first time. He is a heavily deformed humanoid entity wearing a British general's costume, has a bald head and a heavily burned face, even his jaw bones and neck bones are visible. He screeches in an ugly voice, trying to scare the brothers but the brothers are somewhat relaxed.

Heera approaches the ghost with his dagger but Moti stops him, saying only this ghost knows where the treasure lies in this huge mansion. Moti beats the ghost up, asking him to reveal his true identity. The ghost talks in threatening gibberish at first but after taking quite a lot of beating, the ghost begins speaking in Hindi, begging for his life and screams out loud that HE IS A HUMAN BEING.

Heera is somewhat relieved now but Moti is more anxious. He keeps beating the ghost, wanting to know the location of the treasure.

The ghost carefully analyses the brothers' faces and their palms and smiles.

The ghost shouts out his name, "WAIT MOTILAL. And you HEERALAL, I thought you have a soft heart. Is it right to beat up a helpless man like this?"

Moti keeps on beating the ghost, but Heera stops him as he has realized 'how does he know our name?'

Heera stops for a second and punches the ghost again, “HOW DO YOU KNOW OUR NAME?”

“I also know that you are from a village 1000 miles from here and you both are brothers. You lost your parents when you both were kids when they were caught stealing from a British officer.”

The brothers are stunned. They go to a side and discuss the miraculous turn of events. Heera tries to make Moti understand that the ghost is not ordinary. He must be actually a ghost or, even a God since he clearly remembers seeing a temple of him in the village. How else was it possible for him to know so much about them?

Moti is also calm now as it also boggles his mind. They return to the ghost, thinking about how is it possible. Heera falls on Ghost’s feet and asks for forgiveness. Moti is standing proud and asks his brother to let go and leave. Heera tells him that the villagers will kill them and now they are at mercy of this heavenly being who is the only one who could help them from their certain deaths.

The ghost takes advantage of the situation and tells them that their future is bright and they are destined to be rich, only if they listen to him. The ghost says that he is willing to help them because he has sensed goodness in Heera’s heart.

Heera further bows down to the ghost. He asks Heera to open his shackles. Heera obliges him cautiously. Moti takes out his dagger and comes into an attacking position. The ghost relaxes a little and sits on a chair.

Moti asks the ghost where’s the treasure. The ghost tells Moti that it is the greatest treasure in the world and that reaching it is not easy. They have to solve a riddle.

The riddle is that the ghost will narrate to them three stories of his origin and out of them, only one is correct. But only one of them will come out alive. Whoever gets the correct one, will live a life full of riches and the other one will die right here before the sunlight hits the village. If both of them are wrong, they both die. And not both can give the same answer.

The brothers agree.

Story 1- The ghost tells that he is a time traveller from the future. He directs them into different corners of the mansion, where he has hidden some proofs of his futuristic self. A broken time machine is placed in a corner. The ghost tells them that he revisited the past and the future

several times over, and eventually, his machine broke, and he got stuck in the past. His deformities were caused by travelling through the machine countless times over.

Story 2- The ghost tells them that he is a character from MAHABHARATA. He was cursed to live forever by Krishna and over time, his soul remained intact in his body but his skin began melting. In a room, there are ample proofs to validate this story.

Story 3- The ghost killed the owner of the mansion, Clive Anderson when the British general raped and killed his mother in front of his eyes. The ghost burned the general alive and got burned in the process as well.

The brothers begin arguing about the stories but don't fall to a conclusion. They have a few hours to go and hence, they decide to take turns sleeping for an hour each to cool their minds.

When Heera is sleeping, Moti sits with the ghost and mulls over the time travel angle.

When Moti is sleeping, Heera sits with the ghost discussing the actuality of the Mahabharata angle.

Ghost understands Heera's naivety and tries to manipulate him into believing that Moti is destined to kill Heera and take away the riches. Heera undoubtedly believes the ghost.

Moti wakes up and comes near them. They keep arguing over their individual stories and Moti eventually tells Heera that the third story is true. The ghost skillfully distracts them with ample proof from the other two stories.

The back and forth goes and the night slowly begins fading away. Eventually, the Ghost whispers to Heera that within the next 15 minutes, Moti will attack and kill him. Heera becomes conscious and looks at Moti, who is sharpening his dagger. Moti, however, whispers to himself that the ghost needs to be killed before sunrise and they'll carry on with their search for the treasure.

Heera declares that the second story is correct to notice his brother's reaction.

'Doesn't matter now, brother', says Moti and approaches Heera with a dagger.

The ghost shouts NOW and Heera stabs Moti. Moti is stunned, shocked and he stabs Heera back. They both fall to the floor, near the window as the first sunlight hits them.

Moti is shocked staring into Heera's eyes. Heera looks at the ghost, smiling sternly. Heera knows he has been played by the ghost. They both die.

Outside, the villagers hear a loud roar. One of them runs back to the village and brings a platter full of delicious delicacies and puts it in front of the mansion's door.

The door opens and two dead bodies fall outside, Heera and Moti's, along with the bag full of their loots they had stolen from the villagers.

The platter is dragged inside by a creepy, burned hand.

The villagers pray to the Ghost and take away the thieves' dead bodies.

Inside, the ghost walks over to his room in the basement, eats his food and carries on reading the book he was before the thieves came.

He looks all around, to his books, and whispers- MY TREASURE and goes back to reading his book.



Certificate of Registration

This is to certify that I have registered this `Work` and as proof thereof is placed below my digital signature and seal of the Association with relevant details in the QR Code. (The aforesaid digital signature and QR code are present only on the copy of the Registration Certificate provided to the Work's author).

ZAMAN HABIB

Hon. General Secretary

SWA

Author:

Manoj Kumar - Manoj Ashodia

SWA Membership Number:

56680

Type of Creation:

Story

Title of Creation:

Barbareek

Date and Time

Wednesday 2022-09-07 17:45:54

Transaction ID:

1662552880-625147929

Reference Number

111632059458



(Digitally Signed)



This registration is subject to the following Self Declaration by the author:

I, Manoj Kumar - Manoj Ashodia, SWA Membership number 56680, hereby solemnly undertake and declare that,

- A. I am the author of this literary/ dramatic work (Work). In the case of co-authorship work, I have taken permission from my co-authors before registration. Further, I have declared the name of the co-authors while registering the Work.
- B. If I am the Author but not the Copyright Owner of the Work, I have taken due written permission from the Copyright Owner to register the Work.
- C. If the Work is a derivative work, I have duly taken written permission from the original author/owner to create this derivative work.
- D. I understand that the purpose of registering the Work with SWA is only to create a record of the date of the creation of my Work.
- E. This Work (along with its underlying works) does not infringe the intellectual property rights or any other related rights of a person or entity. In case it is found the contrary, I understand that registration will automatically stand cancelled. Besides, I will be solely responsible for the legal and disciplinary consequences whatsoever.
- F. I fully understand that any tampering with this document will make this registration null and void. I declare that I have duly read and understood the rules and regulations, and FAQs of SWA regarding the registration of a work and membership eligibility criteria.
- G. I understand and acknowledge that SWA does not read, access, verify, make copies, store, etc. of any material/Work that I register with SWA.
- H. All the information I have provided to SWA while registering this Work is true and accurate, and I have not concealed any material fact herewith.
- I. I shall fully indemnify and defend SWA for any cost and losses incurred to SWA due to any proven claim of the infringement of copyright, personality right, privacy right, life right, defamation, related rights or any civil/criminal claims arising out of this registered Work by any person at any point of time.
- J. I understand that the validity of SWA registration of any Work is based on and subject to this self- declaration. If I violate any of the above undertakings or SWA finds that any portion of this declaration is untrue, in that case, SWA is entitled to (a) cancel the registration immediately (b) take legal and disciplinary action against me. As a consequence of registration cancellation, I cannot use, transfer, store, distribute, make available to the public or exploit the registered Work in any manner whatsoever. Further, SWA shall not testify regarding the date of the registration in case of an authorship dispute.
- K. I further affirm that I understand the content of this declaration and accept the same. I do not suffer from any legal and/or contractual incapacity/disability. All the information and statements mentioned hereinabove are true and correct to the best of my knowledge, belief and understanding. If anything mentioned above is incorrect, I understand it will be an offence of Perjury, and I will be solely responsible for the consequences arising thereafter Including but not limited to legal action, disciplinary action, cancellation of registration, publicly announcing the default wherever SWA deems appropriate, along with your details, or any other action as SWA deems fit.

This Self Declaration is an electronically generated document and does not require any physical signature.