

PINOY EXPERIENCES WITH THE SUPERNATURAL,  
THE PARANORMAL AND THE EXTRAORDINARY.

TRUE  
PHILIPPINE  
GHOST  
STORIES

BOOK I

BY GIANNA MANIEGO  
AND HER TEAM OF GHOST WRITERS

# True Philippine Ghost Stories



Compiled and edited  
by Gianna Maniego

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*From immensely popular stories of White Ladies to spine-chilling tales of devil possession, Philippine culture is ripe with stories of the supernatural, the paranormal and the extraordinary.*

*Perhaps this is because Filipinos have a rich imagination, a suspicious mindset and a penchant for the unnatural.*

*Give a Pinoy a ghost story and you have his undivided attention for the next couple of hours...or maybe the whole day.*

*The thing about ghost stories is, one tale often leads to another, until the whole thing snowballs into one giant ghost story-telling session.*

*This book started out that way.*

*From a single story evolved a whole collection of ghostly experiences and close encounters with the supernatural that we wrote down and compiled to share with everyone out there who loves a good scare every once in a while.*

*So sit back, relax and enjoy the book. This night's on us.*

The Editor

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# THE HAUNTING AT CONCHA CRUZ DRIVE

By Joel P. Salud

**Marc, a young man in his late 20s,** was cruising inside BF Homes Subdivision in Parañaque City along with his two pals. They were speeding along at about 40 kms/hour on a quarter-mile long road known to BF homeowners as Concha Cruz Drive. This long stretch of asphalt used to be the venue for drag races among teenagers in the early 80s.

Ronnie, one of Marc's friends riding with him motioned for them stop. He wanted to relieve himself by the grassy area along the right side of the road. It was nearly midnight, and all was quite as usual. There was not a car in sight.

After Ronnie finished doing his business, the group went back on the road, cruising along Concha Cruz on their way to El Grande Avenue to bring home their friend Jen.

About two hundred meters before the nearest intersection, they were surprised when a black sedan pulled up along their right side. Its windows were heavily tinted so that neither Marc nor his friends could see into it. The black car stopped right next to Marc's, obviously spoiling for a drag race. Marc, the son of a

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race car driver, was just too ready to oblige the unknown challenger.

As both car drivers gunned their engines repeatedly, the three young boys noticed the window of the black car slowly being rolled down. Marc and Jen rolled down their own window to



see who they were racing against. What they see inside chilled their blood.

Inside the black sedan, Marc and Jen saw a young man and a young woman, dressed totally in white, their clothes drenched in fresh blood, their ashen faces streaked with blood that seemed to be pouring from head wounds.

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Both lay lifeless on their seats, looking like victims of an accident, with their bloodshot eyes staring unseeingly ahead.

Marc immediately stepped on the gas pedal and sped away from the sedan, which remained motionless. When Jen looked back, he saw nothing but pitch darkness, with only the light from a lamppost flickering feebly in the distance.

They rushed to the nearest house on Concha Cruz, where they knocked frantically until someone finally opened up for them and let them inside. All three were shaking from head to toe; pale from absolute fright. Upon hearing what happened, the lady who let them in, Mrs. Tirona, told them to sit down and listen to a story...

During the early 80s, Concha Cruz was *the* place to be if you were a race car enthusiast. Teenagers, beginning at nine in the evening, would converge at a certain portion of the road to drink beer, play some loud music from their expensive car stereos, and rev up their “loaded” engines. Most of them lived in BF Homes and adjacent subdivisions.

Eric (not his real name) was one of the top racers of the bunch. He drove a jet black Toyota Macho Machine which his father gave him for his 23rd birthday.

One Sunday afternoon, Eric and his girlfriend, Jenina, were cruising down Concha Cruz Drive when a rival racer – Bernard – pulled up at his side and challenged him to a race. The two cars were right at the very spot where the starting line was drawn. Eric tried to beg off, at the request of Jenina. But Bernard was insistent. Eventually, he managed to provoke Eric into accepting challenge.

As the two drivers gunned their engines, Jenina tried to strap on her seatbelt, asking Eric to do the same. But before she could do so, the two cars lurched ahead, careering down Concha

Cruz Drive at top speed.

All of a sudden, one of Bernard's tires blew out. As the car swerved and skidded off the road at close to a hundred kilometers an hour, Bernard's car hit Eric's Toyota, crashing the black sedan into one of the trees. Without the seatbelts to protect them, Eric and Jenina had no chance of surviving. Eric died instantly from massive head and facial injuries. Jenina's head cracked open on impact when she hit the dashboard. She died a few hours later on an operating table.

Bernard walked away with only minor bruises.

Eric and Jenina were dressed in white during their burial.

The black car still haunts Concha Cruz Drive to this day.

"Sometimes, there are witnesses who claim they still see Eric and Jenina drive down the street, flagging down cars driven by teenagers, showing the kids their wounds.

It's probably their way of warning kids not to race down Concha Cruz Drive. □

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# MESSAGE FROM TWO LOVERS

By Joel P. Salud

**They almost never made it to Bataan.**

The sky was unusually downcast for that time of month, almost desolate, though not nearly pitch black.

Juni, the associate editor of a lifestyle magazine, and his staff of photographers and writers, were assigned to do a feature on the history of Bataan.

It was the kind of assignment no editor or writer would ordinarily want to do, except for the prospect of advertisers coming in to sponsor the feature. At P120,000 a full-page ad, journalistic ethics may be temporarily suspended, or so they say.

Dampness hung in the air like freshly washed linen. The somnolent dusk, awash with the scent of the cool night wind, made the late afternoon suitable for sleeping. Surprisingly, however, the whole staff was wide-awake and alert, raring to get started so as to make the most of the trip.

As the day unwound, slowly slithering into nightfall, the group began rearranging and packing their things inside their dark

blue van. From a distance, they saw where they would make their first stop for the day—an old, historic light at the old abandoned port at the foot of the steep cliff.

Through the years, Rodel's family had befriended numerous sailors and seafaring merchants. Most of whom brought them vases, jewelry and other gifts every time they docked at the port.

It was on one of those numerous visits that Rodel's great, great grandmother, Estrellita, then 16 years of age, met Chiang, a young 18-year-old Chinese-Filipino boatman from Manila.

After a few visits, the two fell in love. The lovers used to rendezvous at the old lighthouse.

Rodel stood up and, pointing at the wall near the small window, said that the soft white limestone allowed the two lovers to make inscriptions on the wall.

Jhen, Mark and Cynthia could barely read the scratch marks, but they were distinguishable just the same. The messages were written in old Tagalog. They were short love letters, a record of meetings, dates and time. Estrellita and Chiang actually recorded in stone the days, times and goings on each time they met at the lighthouse.

How romantic, Cynthia said, taking a long swig from her beer can. Mark could only laugh at her comment.

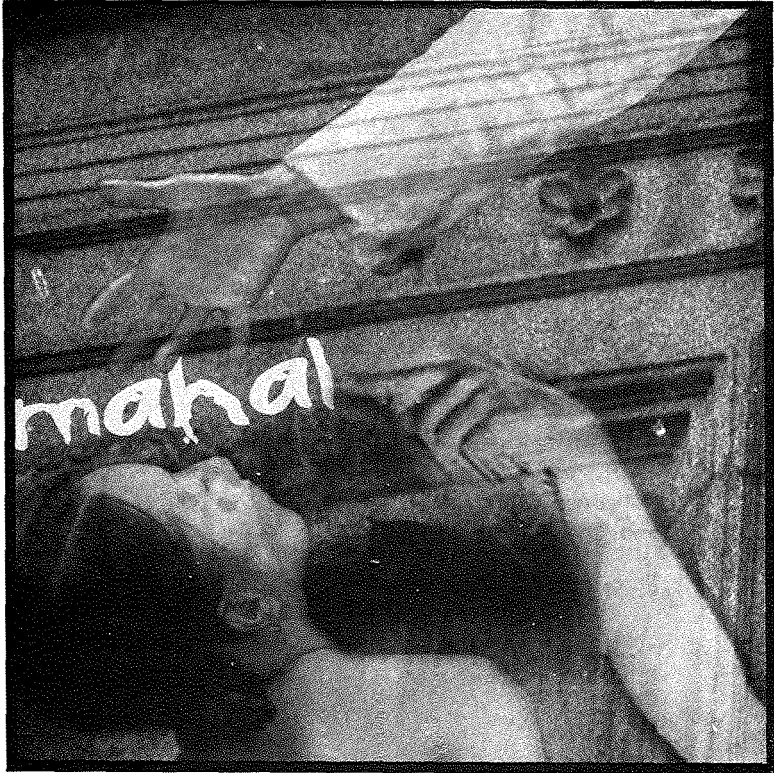
However, not all inscriptions told happy stories. One inscription, presumably from Chiang, spoke of a certain José, a Spanish-Mexican sailor who wanted to have the young Estrellita for himself. The inscription did not elaborate. However, Rodel knew the whole story.

One evening, while Estrellita and Chiang were inside the lighthouse, José barged in with a couple of Spanish soldiers, demanding the arrest of the young Chinese-Filipino trader.

By this time in Intramuros, Manila, the Chinese commu-

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nity was being harassed by the Spaniards for no apparent, justifiable reason. The Spanish soldiers dragged Chiang and Estrellita out of the lighthouse where the young Chinese-Filipino was shot pointblank in the head. He was killed instantly. Estrellita fearing



for her life, ran back to the lighthouse until she reached the top. José, vowing to claim Estrellita's chastity before killing her, tried to rape the poor maiden.

But it was too late Upon reaching the top, Estrellita leaped from the ledge to her death, her head and body crashing on the jagged rocks below. Her last words were, according to those who knew the story, "Hindi kita mahal!"

The group did not say anything, as the garbled sound of

waves smashing against the cliff wall punctuated the silence.

Juni, who by then had already consumed about four cans of beer, stood up to go to the john. It was a small room at the side of the window. While the caretaker continued to relate his story, Juni excused himself and went in. The room was dark, save for the feeble light coming from the rechargeable lamp.

As Juni relieved himself, he noticed moisture building up on the mirror next to where he was standing. A chilly breeze rose inside the small room as the midnight moon hurled patches of light where Juni stood wide-eyed.

Suddenly, Rodel, Mark, Cynthia and Jhen heard Juni scream from within the bathroom. They rushed to see what happened. There they saw Juni, immobile, his eyes fixed on the mirror beside him. On the cracked mirror, words were spelled out as droplets of water ran down the unpolished glass.

“Hindi kita mahal...”

Juni, they all remembered, is a Spanish mestizo. The group fled the lighthouse. ◻

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# GHOSTLY ENCOUNTER IN BORACAY

By Henry Barrameda

## Part I: The mysterious passenger

**Behind the festive mood that Boracay** has on summer nights is a mystery waiting to be discovered by an unfortunate few.

I was one of those few whose memories of wholesome frolic in the pristine sands have been tainted by a dark and horrific experience.

It happened two summers ago, when the company I worked for mounted a huge event in the island paradise. As expected, the Boracay nights that summer were lit up by a string of parties because we were not the only ones scheduled to hold an event there.

These parties would last throughout the night and almost always end in the wee hours of the morning. Some of the revelers would party on even as the morning sun peeked out of the horizon.

On our last night on the island, when the last of our parties

was held, my roommate and I decided, for once, to turn in right after midnight. After a week of festivities, we were both partied out. Besides, we were exhausted from the work we'd been doing for the past five days. We decided on an early morning swim before departing for Manila in the afternoon.

As we weaved in and out of the crowd on our way to our rooms, the noise became steadily fainter. As we stumbled onto the main road, an eerie silence greeted us.

Since it was only a little past midnight, we thought we could still catch a tricycle to ferry us to back to our resort, which was on the southern end of the island. For half an hour, we waited. Finally I proposed that if after another 10 minutes no tricycle passed by to pick us up, we might as well walk the one-kilometer trek back to our resort.

My companion wasn't too happy with the idea since we didn't know what we would encounter on the way. He had heard about the island's urban legends. Being a non-believer of such horror tales, I insisted that if we wanted to make it back to the resort and get enough sleep, we had to hoof it.

Realizing he was left with no choice, my friend finally agreed. So after 10 minutes and no tricycle passed, we began our hike back to our lodgings.

By the time we'd reached a hundred meters, we were so exhausted from trying to trudge through the badly-lit road, which, to top it off, was under repair at that time. We had to be careful about which side of the road to walk on.

Minutes later, we heard the welcome sound of a motorcycle engine somewhere behind us. I looked back and saw a tricycle coming towards us. Relieved, we flagged down the vehicle and stumbled into the vestibule, stammering our thanks to the driver.



The driver merely grunted and sped down the highway.

After another hundred meters or so, we neared a bank. To our surprise, the driver told us that he could no longer take us any further and insisted we get off at that point.

We asked him why but he would not give us a straight answer, answering cryptically:

*“Basta, madilim na masyado paglampas diyan. (It’s already too dark beyond that point.)”*

We became furious upon hearing this, not because we were frightened by what lay ahead, but because we were already exhausted and walking the rest of the way to our rooms was a big inconvenience. We hurled invectives at the driver, but he seemed

oblivious to anything we did.

Left with no choice, we got off and began trudging back home.

A few minutes later, we heard another motorcycle engine coming from behind us. Another tricycle was coming. It was running at low speed and so we thought it would stop to pick us up. We flagged him down.

To our surprise, he did not stop, though it was impossible for him not to see us. Instead, he sped up.

He probably had too many passengers already, we thought.

Peering into the tricycle cab as it passed by, tried to peek in. We saw nothing but the driver and a lady seated at the back. A few meters away from us, the tricycle stopped and we saw the lady alight.

This is our chance, we said. We shouted at the driver, telling him to wait for us, and ran to the vehicle. As we made ourselves comfortable inside the tricycle, we attempted to make small talk with the driver.

We asked him if the lady who went down from his vehicle earlier was his girlfriend. The driver did not seem to hear, nor bother to answer us. Instead, he increased his speed and careened dangerously from side to side. We had to hold on to the railings to maintain our seats on the vehicle.

By the time we reached the end of the road and were about to alight, we began to worry that the driver had gone berserk. We asked him what the matter was. As we handed him our money, he finally replied, "*Sinong babae* (Which girl)?" obviously referring to our earlier question.

We replied, "*E di yung binaba ninyo dun sa may puno.* (The girl who alighted near the group of trees.)"

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*“Wala akong sinakay na babae, kaya ako huminto sa unahan niyo kasi yung pwesto niyo kanina may lumalabas na babae pag hatinggabi.(I didn’t pick up any lady passenger. The reason I didn’t stop in front of you is because that area is notorious for being haunted by a ghost lady who appears every midnight.)”*

## Part II: The telephone call

As the tricycle driver sped off, all we thought about was how we’d reach the resort without encountering any more eerie incidents.



There was still a stretch of road before we finally got to our lodgings. We took comfort in the fact much of it was via the beach, where some other resorts were located.

We prayed that these resorts would have their lights on at

that time of the night. Sure enough, all of the resorts that lined the last strip of beach towards our resort had lampposts, giving more than ample lighting to those passing by.

Upon reaching the resort, we noticed that the reception area was empty. None of the guests appeared to be up and about.

“At last, some peace of mind,” we thought, heaving a sigh of relief.

We took our keys from the front desk and tried to put up a brave front by singing our way up the stairs in order to keep our minds off the lady of the road.

When we finally reached our room, we checked for anything unusual, like if the bed covers were disheveled, or the windows left open, to make sure we didn't have anymore spooky encounters.

Everything seemed to be normal. This calmed down our jittery nerves and we tiredly prepared for bed.

Looking at the air conditioner, I debated whether to turn it on or not, since the air outside had been cold and dry. I decided not to, informing my roommate that the air was cold enough to leave the aircon off. He agreed.

I settled down to get some shut-eye, as my roommate went to the bathroom for a quick shower.

Just as I was drowsing off, I felt a chilly wind slip into the room. It was colder than the breeze we felt outside. I stood up and shut the windows against the frosty night air. Bothered but too exhausted to do anything else, I cocooned myself within the bed covers. Determinedly I ignored the icy atmosphere.

My roommate, who had just gotten out of the bathroom, rushed to put on some clothes, complaining loudly of the cold. I told him I had already closed the window. I no longer felt the cold so much since I had already covered myself in the comforters

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that I brought.

We got into a heated discussion over whether to put on some music as we slept. I wanted some music because I usually fell asleep listening to it. My roommate on the other hand complained he couldn't sleep with the radio on.

After some amount of reasoning, I won the argument. But he had gotten worked up by the thought that he might not be able to get some sleep and so grumbled loudly, even as I hummed to the music that was playing, oblivious of my roommate's irritation..

After a few minutes, he got fed up said he would not be able to sleep if we kept the music on, moreso if I kept humming to the songs. What started as a little argument soon escalated into a shouting match.

In the middle of the argument, we both realized I had dropped some of the materials needed for our event while we were on the tricycle.

I told him nothing was gonna make me go back out there and pick them all up, not even the threat of my boss' wrath.

In the middle of the argument, the phone rang. We froze and stared at the phone. It was like a scene from those horror schlockers, when something spooky is about to happen. Meanwhile, the phone kept on ringing.

We let it ring few more times while we silently argued over who would pick it up. Neither of us would budge. Eventually, I caved in. I felt guilty about the music and the lost materials.

I picked up the receiver and said hello, but there was no one on the other end of the line. So I put the receiver down and went back to bed.

Less than a minute later, the phone rang again. I told my roommate it was his turn to pick up. So he answered the phone,

but like the first time, no one was on the other end. Instead of getting scared, we became annoyed by the incessant ringing.

I decided to contact the officemates we left at the party to ask if they had been trying to call. I was sure no one would call us at that time of the night except our officemates, who probably wanted to make sure we were safely back at the resort. Not one of them admitted to calling us up.

Then the phone rang again. This time, it was my turn to pick it up and a voice finally spoke on the other end. It was a woman's voice. I asked what she wanted and she asked if she had called the right room number. I said yes. I asked her again what she wanted.

What she said sent chills down my spine.

*"Hindi niyo ba kailangan ang mga gamit na naiwan niyo sa daan kanina (Do you not need the materials you dropped on the road earlier?)"*

I instantly dropped the phone. I tried to recall if there was any other lady in the area at that time. I could swear there wasn't any.

I ran for the bed and buried myself under its covers. I told my roommate all about the conversation. He said it could have been some lady whom we saw back there. But how could she know which resort and room they were staying in, I challenged him. It was impossible for her to tell from the materials we had dropped because they did not contain any information about where we stayed.

My roommate ordered me to leave the phone off the hook so we would not get anymore calls. I did. Right after I did that, the phone rang all of 13 times!

Already frightened out of their wits, we unplugged the phone.

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“Let’s see if that phone rings again. Because if it does, I am out of here. I am running to the beach and heading off to our officemates, even if it takes me half an hour to get there!” I cried.

The phone became silent after this.

But as soon as we were under the covers, the phone rang 13 times again. We did not get up. Instead we shut our eyes tight and determinedly ignored the incessant ringing.

When we woke the next morning, we told all of our officemates about the incident. I thought our horror had ended that night. I was wrong.

The resort owner overheard us talking about it and finally spoke up:

*“Paano mag-ri-ring e putol ang lahat ng linya mula alas-onse ng gabi. Tsine-tsek ko po nga oras-oras e. Di ako nakatulog kasi may kailangan akong tawagan sa resort diyan sa daan malapit sa bangko. May babae daw na nawawala. Akala ko, yung pamangkin ko. (How can it ring, when the line had been disconnected since 11 o’clock last night. I know because I kept checking every hour for news of my niece. I couldn’t sleep because I had to call the resort near the bank. Reports claim a woman has been missing, I was afraid it might be my niece.”*

He left us speechless, with our mouths hanging open.□

# A SUMMER NIGHT'S TALE

By Dino Ray V. Directo III

**It was a scene straight out of an episode** from the twilight zone. Or perhaps a chapter from one of Bram Stoker's spine chilling novels.

Before my eerie encounter with the supernatural, I was a skeptic, oftentimes shrugging off these stories as "make believe" or bedtime tales that grandmas sometimes tell their *apos*.

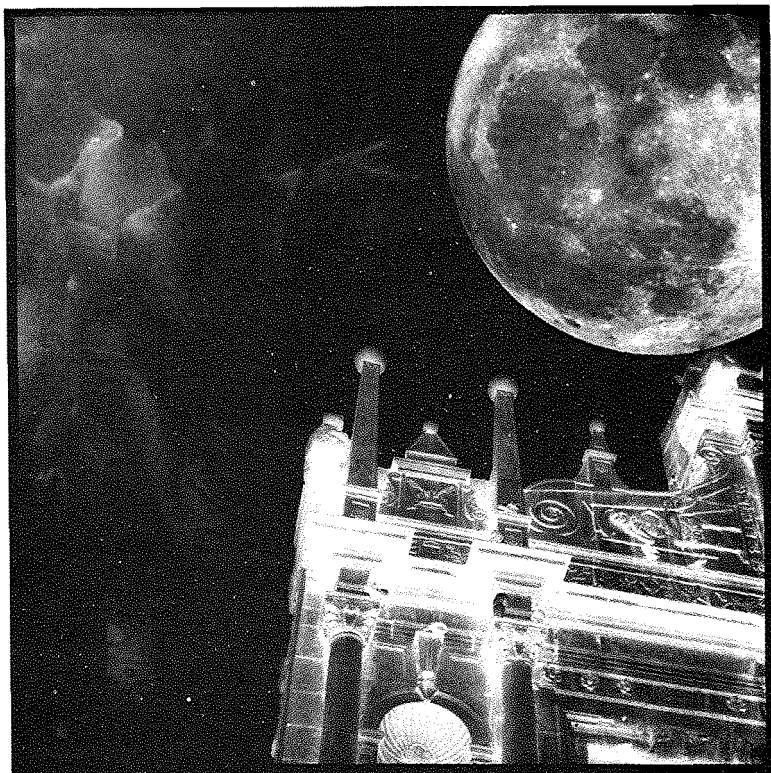
That was, until I experienced a ghostly tale of my own.

My encounter occurred during the mid-90's, when I was still a cub reporter for the Manila Bulletin.

My editor, who edited the features and lifestyle section, was given an invitation to the opening night of a play being staged at the ruins of Fort Santiago by a group of stage artists.

Although I don't remember the title of the play, I remember distinctly it topbilled sexy actress Tetchie Agbayani and was directed by comedian Soxy Tapacio.

Because my editor had a previous engagement, she decided to give me the tickets so I could cover it for the paper.



The invitation was for Saturday, at 7:00 pm at the ruins of the Fort, directly across the building that housed Jose Rizal's memorabilia.

I decided to turn the assignment into a date and took my then-girlfriend to watch the play with me. It was a glamorous event, with tinseltown's best, not to mention top politicians and socialites, in attendance. The opening night alone was a story in itself!

At around 9:20 pm, during a lull in the play, my girlfriend whispered that she had to go to the comfort room. But there was a long queue at the comfort room behind the stage, so we opted to look for one outside.

After asking directions from the security guard, we finally

found a comfort room, at the side of the Fort's main entrance. These restrooms were newly built, constructed in the area that used to showcase the cars of Emilio Aguinaldo.

Since everybody was at the play, the only person in the vicinity was the security guard at the main gate. Nobody else was around.

The chamber going inside the restroom was cold, damp and pitch dark. Apparently nobody was expected to use the facilities at that time of the night, so the maintenance man probably turned off the lights. I had to grope for the light switches. The first door on the left was the ladies' room and the door down at the hallway was for men's room.

Out of habit, I peeked inside the cubicles to see if anyone was there. As expected, no one was in the restroom.

So I went about my business. As I was taking a leak, the air inside the restroom plummeted several degrees—like the air from a refrigerator when the door is opened. That's weird, I said to myself, but didn't think it was anything to worry about.

All of a sudden, I felt something caressing my neck. The hairs on the back of my neck stood on end. And then I felt something caressing both my shoulders, down to my feet. Goosebumps popped up all over my arms.

I didn't know what to do. I did not want to turn around, for fear of what I might see behind me. There I was in the middle of answering the call of Nature, and some invisible...entity...was giving me a back rub!!

To keep from screaming my lungs out in panic, I began humming out some unintelligible song to break the heavy silence. It was like something was about to happen. After what seemed like an eternity, halfway through my act of nature, all five toilet bowls in the restroom flushed at the same time.

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This was all I needed to hear. Galvanized by fear, I zipped up my pants, even though I was not yet through doing my thing, and fled to the corridor, trying hard not to scream.

When I got to the corridor, I heard my girlfriend scream from the inside of the ladies room. I rushed inside, grabbed her, and we both scampered out the door.

Later, when we'd both calmed down she told me that something weird happened to her too in the restroom.

As she was answering the call of nature, a person in military boots walked by her cubicle three times. At the same time, the tiles in front of her got hit by some inexplicable force and flew outside the cubicle. That was when she decided enough was enough, and she screamed her head off.

Hearing the commotion, the security guard came over to check on us. We told him about what we experienced and he immediately radioed for assistance.

The following day, I relayed my experience to the stage director. He merely laughed at what I told him. Apparently he and the other members of the play had gotten used to such bizarre happenings that hardly anything scares them anymore.

Once, he said, during a rehearsal, a spectre walked across the stage in one of the scenes. Those who saw him said he was Caucasian and dressed in colonial attire. The rehearsals were cancelled for the day.

More than a decade after that incident, I still find it hard to go inside Fort Santiago after dark. □

# SILHOUETTE

By Patricia S. Servano

**My alma mater, St. Scholastica's College** in Leon Guinto, Manila is one of the older schools in the country. As a former sanctuary for soldiers, it lay witness to the brutalities wreaked by the invading forces during World War Two.

Bombed, destroyed and eventually rebuilt, St. Scho has withstood the test of time and the ravages of Nature. The institution takes pride in its antiquity, and among its jewels is the home of the dramatic *kulasas*—the Little Theater, situated in the high school building.

During my senior year, my classmate was the director of the theater group. This gave our class an excuse to enjoy such perks as being excused from class to see the productions.

After a successful season, which culminated in a well-received play at the end of the semester, the theater group decided to celebrate their triumph backstage. Nearly everyone came to the party.

Needless to say there was lots of picture-taking to record the occasion. Cameras popped everywhere to capture the high-

~~spirited actors:~~ .....

The moment was captured—and so was the image of an uninvited guest.

When the film was developed, the pictures were passed around so that everyone could have a look-see.

One of the pictures of the group contained a headless silhouette in between two of the girls. The figure was very hazy, but one could clearly delineate a dress hanging without a head and feet on the ground. The dress was backlit and looked totally ethereal.

Almost half of the student population at St. Scho saw the picture. Everyone who saw it said it gave them creeps. We all tried to grope for an earthly explanation for the apparition.

We tried blowing up the picture to figure out what it was, whether it was just a trick of camera lighting. But enlarging the picture solved nothing except to make the image even more frightening. Although the figure looked harmless, everyone who saw it felt a profound sense of suffering.

More than a little spooked, the theater group had the Little Theater blessed.

That was the last play I watched in the Little Theater. After a while, the controversy died down and our batch graduated without much incidence.

After graduation, I took a vacation in the province. It was, I felt, a much-needed break before I entered the world of the working class.

Back from my vacation, with no prospects yet of a job, I was spending a little more quality time at home alone.

One day, as I was taking a *siesta*, I had a weird dream. I dreamt of the image and she was warning me about something.

In my dream I was at the foot of an old wooden bridge. It

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was dark, and the evening sky was painted a solid, inky blue, like it was colored in with craypas (the Japanese crayons).

At the other end, lying in wait, was the image from the photograph. Unlike in the picture where the image did not have a head, this time I could see the face of the image clearly. It was the



face of a young woman. I saw her serene, young face. She was wearing the same dress in the picture. She was surrounded by big pine trees and I can feel the mist on my skin. She just stood there, waiting.

As I walked toward her, I became aware of the chasm underneath the bridge. I refused to look down. I kept my focus on

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my pace and joined her on the other side. I couldn't vividly remember what happened when we met. She was trying to explain to me a lot of things and telling me not to go to a Hindu seminar that I was planning to attend.

All of a sudden, I woke up, gasping for air. I was shaken, my heart was pounding a mile a minute.

When I managed to catch my breath I remembered that I saw an ad in the papers for a seminar on Hindu teaching and I was asking a friend to go with me. Why was she warning me about that?

I never did find out. A few days later I landed my first job and concentrated on my career.

I never went to that seminar. And she never appeared in my dreams. □

# THE SHADOW OF A KAPRE

By Gerrilyn Cadiz

**This happened a couple of years back**, when I was just a child of eight. My family and I had just moved an old house in Bulacan.

It was a bungalow-type of dwelling, with two bedrooms, a garage and a big backyard. The house was ample for our compact family, as it was only my six-year-old sister, our parents and I.

For a young girl who grew up in the congested metropolis, this new house was a haven.

The place was surrounded by trees — mango, camachile, star apple, macopa, jackfruit, aratilis, chesa. There were also santan and gumamela plants planted all around the backyard. It reminded me of my maternal grandmother's house in Sta. Cruz, Laguna, only smaller.

It was, in a word, idyllic.

Our first few weeks there were great. We moved in the summer so we were on vacation. We immediately made new friends with other kids in the neighborhood. My sister and our

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new friends had a blast climbing the trees and “shooting” the ripe star apples with our rubber slippers. We would spend the day



hanging out in the bahay-kubo my parents installed in the backyard, beneath the giant star apple tree.

One day, I overheard my mother and her friends talking about the house. From what I overheard, I learned that no family had been able to stay in the house for more than a few months because of the strange things reportedly happening in that house.

One of my mom’s friend’s related the story that happened to a friend of a friend’s friend. According to her, the friend had been passing by the house when she saw a white lady standing in front of the gate, as if trying to get in.

Another related that weird noises could be heard in the backyard at night.

Oh great, I thought, of all the houses in this subdivision, trust my dad to buy the haunted one!

I suddenly remembered how I kept losing, or as my mother would say “misplacing,” my things. How one minute my box of colored pencils would be there and the next minute, it would disappear, only to be found, after hours of frantic searching, right where it was originally.

At the time, I thought my sister was playing a prank on me. But then I remembered she was only six years old, and pretty scared of her big sister. So, I easily ruled her out as a suspect.

Then something my mother’s friend said totally creeped me out.

One of them said that a *kapre* was living in the huge star apple tree at the back of the house!

The starapple tree! The tree which stood over our favorite hangout!

I had a pretty good idea what a *kapre* was. My cousins from the province had already told me stories of a huge, hairy man who is usually seen smoking a cigar.

They said the *kapre* would snatch sleeping children and eat them and that a *kapre* could enchant you and lead you astray.

I felt a chill run down my spine. Not only was our beloved bahay-kubo directly under that star apple tree, but its massive trunk was totally visible from the window of the bedroom my sister and I shared.

All of a sudden, a foul smell permeated the room, like a dirty sewer whose lid suddenly burst open. The women exchanged knowing glances. *It’s the kapre*, said somebody in a

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hushed voice. There was a round of nervous laughter, then silence. After a while, my mother's friends politely said goodbye and left.

I tried to forget what I heard in the days that followed, for fear I wouldn't be able to get a good night's sleep. But after that, I took to sleeping under the covers lest I turn and catch sight of the *kapre* watching me from the star apple tree.

No thanks, I thought. I could do without seeing a *kapre*. Our Visayan maid had provided me an ample and vivid image of the typical *kapre*. I was sure I'd die if I saw him. Among other things, I'd probably wet my pants.

I also spent less time in the bahay-kubo.

That summer, a few houses in our subdivision were burglarized. The homeowners association organized a *ronda* composed of the dads and older brothers. The *ronda* went on for three nights without encountering much excitement.

On the fourth night, with the full moon rode high above the inky, starless sky, the men once again gathered in the streets. While they were out, I, my sister and our friends had a gathering of our own — we played hide-and-seek in our yard while our mothers gathered in our patio gossiping as usual.

It was my turn to be "it." Everybody was safe in their hiding places. I looked around and heard a soft rustle behind the camachile tree. I could see the pink shirt of my cousin Diana. Aha! I said as I silently inched my way towards her.

All of a sudden, a pungent smell assailed my nostrils. Then I heard a laugh. A deep, gurgling laugh that seemed to come from the bowels of the earth. I froze in my tracks.

Slowly I turned toward the sound. And there, on the ground, illuminated by the bright moonlight, was a hulking figure on the roof of our house.

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The head was huge with stringy long hair and the torso covered the entire roof!

My heart raced wildly and against my better judgment, I turned to look up at the house. Nobody, nothing, was there. I looked back down at the shadow, the figure was gone. And so was the stench.

We stayed in that house for about twenty months, probably the longest time any family has ever stayed there.□

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# THE GIRL IN THE MIRROR

By Gerrilyn Cadiz

**Anybody who's been to Baguio can tell you** the city is ripe with ghost stories. I've heard friends and friends of friends tell of their own grisly encounters in the City of Pines.

Much of these stories stemmed from the tragic earthquake that shook Baguio in the early 90s which toppled several buildings and buried hundreds under the rubble. Residents say the stench of decaying bodies stayed in the air for several months.

The story I'm about to share happened during one of our trips there three years ago.

A couple of my office friends and I decided it was time for our annual mid-year break. It had been customary for our *barkada* to go on out-of-town trips whenever we felt "toxic" or stressed out from our day jobs. We left Manila late afternoon on a Thursday for Dau, where the husband of one of my friends was waiting for us. He was attending a convention in Clark and had agreed to meet us so he could join us for our trip to Baguio.

After a night's stopover in Pampanga, we started out early the following day. Our schedule was kind of tight as we were

bent on enjoying every minute of our weekend vacation. We arrived in Baguio at around 11 a.m. and went directly to the vacation house our Baguio friends reserved for us.

It was built on top of a hill overlooking the city. It was spacious, made entirely of wood and though it looked pretty old, it was obviously well maintained. It had two large bedrooms, a kitchen, a bathroom, dining and living rooms, and a barbecue area.

Upon entering the bathroom an icy chill ran down my spine, instantly giving me the creeps. It was cold even by Baguio standards. I figured, hey it's October, and tried to shrug off the sense of foreboding. Still, the feeling stayed with me.

After depositing our bags in our rooms, we went out for lunch. Since most of us were tired from the trip and lack of sleep, we decided to head back to the house early and get some rest.

Waking up refreshed, we decided to go horseback riding and do a little sightseeing-cum-shopping. We went to the market and bought stuff for dinner, before heading for the *ukay-ukay*.

After dinner, all six of us decided to go out on the town and go barhopping. Later, at around 2:00 in the morning, one of my friends said she wanted to go back to the house because she was tired. I decided to accompany her even though I was still having a good time. Actually I was reluctant to return to the house but no one else could accompany her, so I went.

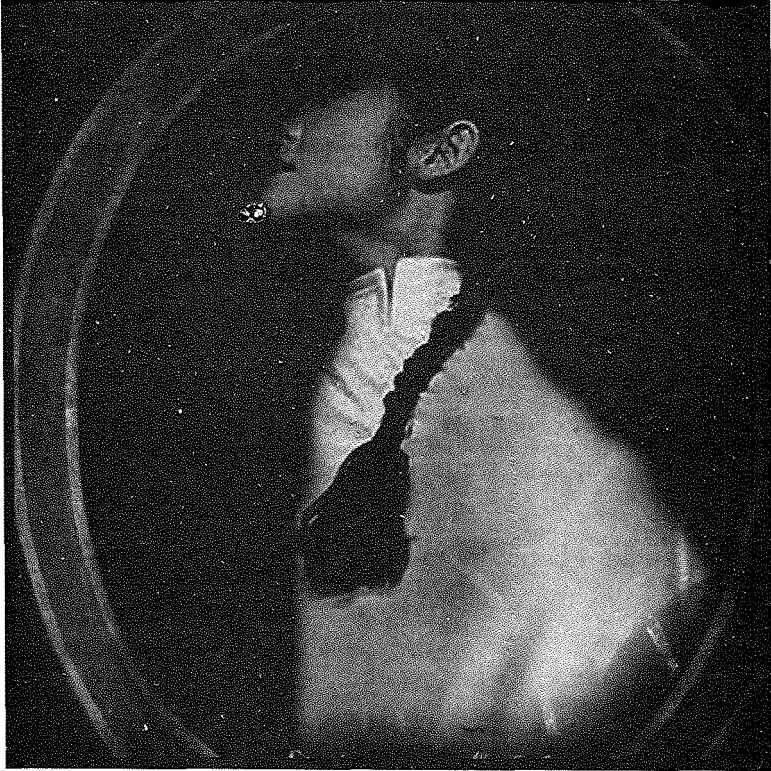
The house was ominously dark. I approached it with trepidation. My friend went straight to bed while I locked up. I prepared for bed too, gathering my toiletries to go to the bathroom. I was pulling out pajamas from my backpack when I heard a knock on the door. I went to answer it, thinking our other friends decided to call it a night as well.

Another knock. More insistent this time. I hollered, "*Sandali!*(Just a minute.)"

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You can imagine my shock when I opened the door and found nobody there!

I called out the names of my friends, thinking they were hiding in the bushes trying to scare me out of my wits. But there was no one there. Nor did I hear any more noise, save for the echo of my voice coming back to me. I felt the cold breeze brush



against my skin. Goosebumps broke out all over my body and I felt the hair on my arms and neck standing on end.

I slammed the door shut and ran back to the room. My friend, awakened by the noise of the door, sat up in bed, wiping the sleep from her eyes with the back of her hand.

“Are they back?,” she asked.

I said no.

“Oh okay, I thought I heard the door,” she said and went right back to sleep.

This is crazy, I thought. It must’ve been the wind. It could’ve been a tree branch. With fear slowly draining out of me, I stepped into the bathroom.

I was bent at the sink, washing my face, when I felt something cold brush against my nape. I closed my eyes, hummed loudly to myself and worked faster than usual. My heart was beating a mile a minute.

I opened my eyes and straightened up.

My mistake.

I should’ve just bolted right out of there after washing up.

For what I saw as I opened my eyes, standing right beside me in the mirror, was a girl, her face a bloody contortion of horror and pain. Her eyes were sunken and pleading, her hair disheveled.

I reeled, I could feel the veins in my temple throbbing and my heart leaping to my throat. My mind went totally blank. I just stared at her as she stared right back at me. I could feel blood rushing in my ears. I froze, unable to scream nor run. I couldn’t even blink!

Then she was gone. Just like that. Like somebody snapped a finger and she was gone and I was once again alone in the bathroom, the sound of running water from the faucet breaking the silence and spilling over the sink.

In a daze I turned off the faucet and sprinted out of the bathroom. I jumped. Upon reaching the bedroom, I jumped into bed and covered myself with blankets and pillows. I didn’t try to

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think or analyze what happened in the bathroom. The sooner her image was out of my mind, the better. I didn't even close my eyes for fear that I might see her in my mind's eye. I didn't sleep until I heard my friends come back.

When I woke up, one of my friends told me that we had to move to another house. Apparently, our reservation was only for one day and one night. I gladly packed up my bags.□

# WHISPER IN THE DARK

By Gerrilyn Cadiz

**This story happened when I was still working for a television station somewhere in Makati.**

Our office is located on the third floor of a shabby, ancient-looking building. It is probably the oldest building on that stretch. So much so that at night, when all the lights therein and in the neighboring buildings have been turned off, and the streets were empty, save for one or two passing cars, it looked positively creepy.

From the beginning, when I started working there, I'd already heard rumors among the other tenants in the building and the guards, especially those in graveyard shift, that the building was haunted.

According to the stories, there were all sorts of *white ladies* all over the place, and that some of them had taken to hanging out at elevators. What nonsense, I laughed. I mean, if these were really spirits, wouldn't they just fly/glide/float to wherever they wanted to go?

I worked with the company's Creative Team and oftentimes

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I would work beyond office hours, usually with another writer and two editors. We would stay until around midnight and sometimes when we were too tired or too sluggish to go home, we would spend the night there.

Our bedroom of choice: the recording studio, with its powerful aircon and soft, carpeted floor. If we knew we were working late, we would bring pillows and extra jackets so we would



be comfortable. One of the editors even brought her comforter from home and we frequently shared it.

On that particular night, we were working on a special that our boss needed to preview the following day. We had a quick

dinner and as usual, the guard on duty was there with us. He stayed in the conference room watching the 26-inch colored television. I couldn't be so sure now but I think he was glued to HBO that night.

We were in the other part of the office, in the post-production room. We were busy editing the TV special when the guard suddenly appeared behind us.

"What is it?" we asked him, a little surprised and peeved by his all-too sudden appearance.

"It's just the four of us here, right?" he asked. We nodded.

Well the guard claimed that he saw somebody enter the rest room and because he needed to go himself, he went to check if the girl was done. He said he even heard the toilet flush. But after a couple of minutes and no girl came out, he knocked on the door. Nobody answered. He twisted the knob and discovered it was unlocked. He peeked inside. There was no one in there.

We just looked at each other and told him he was probably spooked by whatever he was watching and that he was just imagining things. We told him we were used to working overnight often, but we haven't had a paranormal experience yet.

He just scratched his head and said, "Okay, maybe you're right."

But we could tell he wasn't convinced.

At around 2 a.m., my eyes began to get heavy and I was ready to cut out for the night. I asked the two editors if they were gonna sleep already but they said they were only halfway through and that there was still much work to be done.

I was never much of a martyr so I decided to leave them to their work and headed off to "bed."

Thinking that they might play a prank on me, as they usu-

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ally do, I decided to lock the door of the recording studio. I figured they could always knock their knuckles off on the door. That sometimes wakes me up.

I laid the comforter on the floor, turned down the temperature of the AC and turned the lights off. I wrapped the comforter around me and I was soon off to Slumberland.

I didn't know how long I had been sleeping. I remembered my subconscious being totally alert even though I was still groggy from sleep. Somewhere in the distance, I heard voices— a deep baritone and a soft giggly one like a girl's.

Then one of them, or maybe both of them did, said my name. "Ge..." he/she murmured. My eyes flew open and I bolted upright, like I was shocked into wakefulness. I felt a scream rise from the pit of my stomach as I surveyed my surroundings— the lights were all on and the AC was blowing air so cold I could almost see my breath.

I hurriedly gathered the comforter around me and ran out of there. I found my officemates and the guard in the kitchen, drinking hot coffee. I didn't dare tell them what happened till morning.

# DOPPELGANGER

By Gianna G. Maniego

**Doppelganger is a German word meaning “double walker.”** In the realm of the supernatural, doppelganger refers to the ghostly double, or “shadow-self” that accompanies every human being throughout his life, providing sympathetic company and giving advice by either implanting ideas or through some sort of osmosis.

They are invisible, usually standing behind the person, and never casting a reflection. It is said to be bad luck to see your doppelganger. Though mischievous and sometimes malicious, they never show themselves to friends or relatives of the person because this causes great confusion to them.

Well, almost never.

Anita Rodriguez (not her real name) used to be a skeptic.

Even growing up in one of the notoriously haunted spots in New Manila — Balete Drive — she paid little attention to the various ghost stories and urban legends surrounding the place.

These things were a waste of time, she’d often tell her

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friends whenever they indulged in a round of ghost story-telling. Now that she was a successful graphic artist in her 20s, she had even less time for such flights of fancy.

Pooh, she thought. When it comes to ghosts, Anita had one policy: Don't know, don't see, don't care. She didn't believe in ghosts. Not even the one that supposedly haunted her own home. The one that supposedly looked, talked and acted like her.

"Hey Annie, did you bring it?" her cousin Jessica accosted her at the buffet table, during a family gathering. It was the birthday of her Lolo Jaime and all her relatives were in attendance at the Big House in West Triangle.

Anita looked at her with a blank expression: "Wha..?"

"Don't you remember?" Jessica insisted, more than a little peeved.

"I called you up yesterday to remind you about the album of Eliza, the one with the debut pics. I wanted to show Mom the gown she wore so that we can have a similar one made for Trisha. I told you I'd drop by for it, but you said you'd bring it along when you came to the house this afternoon," Jessica patiently explained to her cousin. "So where is it?"

"You called up the house yesterday? What time was this?" Annie repeated, not quite comprehending the question.

"YESSSS!!!! You answered! I don't remember exactly what time, but I'm pretty sure it was around lunchtime. I know because you even got mad at me for interrupting what you were doing. I think you were cooking carbonara for lunch," Jessica answered, somewhat exasperated already.

"Jess...there was NO ONE in the house yesterday. My mom and dad are still in Cebu, and the maid is on vacation. I spent the night at Toni's (her best friend) and came straight here today," she informed her cousin, before turning her attention to the lechon

in front of her.

Her cousin was left speechless, mouth hanging open in disbelief.

Another time, she and Toni were at another friend's party. When they arrived, Toni zeroed in on the desserts at the buffet table in the dining room. Annie lagged behind to say hi to a group of friends she hadn't seen in quite some time.

After a while, Toni felt a hand tapping her on the shoulder.

"What're you eating? *Pahinge*(Give me)," Annie said, opening her mouth so that her friend can spoonfeed her some of the ice cream Toni was eating.

"*Uy sarap*(Wow, delicious)! Ube's my favorite!," Annie said in between mouthfuls.

"O, you changed?" Toni asked, noticing that Annie was wearing a different shirt.

"Yeah, the other shirt was too tight," her friend replied before wandering off to join the crowd on the patio.

Toni got another scoop of ice cream (Annie finished her share) and just as she was about to spoon it into her mouth, felt another tap on her shoulder.

"*Hoy! Takaw. Ang daya mo, inuubos mo yung ice cream. Enge naman. Kaya pala hindi kita mahanap diyan, nandito ka pala sa buffet table. (Hey! You're such a glutton, you're not sharing the ice cream. Give me some! No wonder I couldn't find you, you're hiding here at the buffet table),*" Annie jokingly scolded her friend.

"*Ano ka, inubos mo na nga yung sa akin kanina ah (You must be joking! You already finished my share awhile ago!)*" Toni retorted, also in jest. "*O, you changed again!! Akala ko ba masikip yang shirt na yan (I thought that shirt was too tight for you)?*"

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“What are you talking about? This is the shirt I wore when we arrived, don’t you remember. I haven’t changed my shirt. Why would I change my shirt? And for your information, I got to this buffet table just now. Isn’t there any other ice cream flavor? I hate *ube*.” Annie wondered aloud as she surveyed the other deserts. “Hmmm...I’ll just get *leche flan*.”

“But you WERE here, not 10 minutes ago! You finished



all my ice cream because you said *ube* was your favorite! *Ano ka ba*(What are you thinking)?” Toni answered, starting to get spooked by what her friend was saying.

“Hello?? I’ve been with Chino and Mark in the *sala* since we arrived. They were asking about you, so I decided to go and

look for you. Ask them *pa*,” Annie said rather indignantly.

“Then who finished my ice cream?!?!” Toni shrieked, totally freaked out.

Annie shrugged. She and Toni ran out of the dining room

The turning point for Annie, the incident that finally convinced her there are some things that cannot be explained came one early morning, as she was coming home from a night on the town.

It was around 4 a.m. and Annie and her cousins Eliza and Jessica were tiptoeing home to Annie’s home after a “gimmick” in Makati.

All three had drunk quite a bit but were still fairly sober.

“Shhhhhh!!!” Annie shushed her two cousins, who were trying to stifle their giggles. “You’ll wake Mama. *Lagot tayo pag nalaman nyang 4 na tayo umuwi. Ang alam lng nya hanggang 2 lang tayo.*(We’re dead if Mama finds out we came home at 4 a.m. I told her we’d be home by 2.)

As the three groped their way around the garden to the front door, Annie searched her bag for her key to the front door.

“Oh no!” she hissed. “I forgot my key! We’ll have to ring the doorbell! *Sana si Manang ang magbukas*(Let’s hope it’s Manang who opens it).”

“Go on, ring the bell,” she instructed Eliza, who was in front.

Just as Eliza was about to ring the doorbell however, the door opened.

“*Ay salamat*(Thank goodness)! I’m soooo sleepy. What are you waiting for?” Annie, who was directly behind Eliza nudged her cousin.

When Eliza wouldn’t budge, she shoved her harder. Grab-

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bing her cousin's arm, she noticed how cold it was. She peered into her cousin's face, which was half-illuminated by moonlight. What she saw made her blood grow cold.

Eliza stood frozen, all color drained from her face, her expression one of shock and horror. She pointed mutely at the door, which stood ajar. A moment later, she slumped in a dead faint.

When she came to, she realized she was now in the sala of Annie's house, and all the lights were on.

"What happened? Are you okay?" both Annie and Jessica asked, alarmed. Their cousin no longer looked pale. More like grey around the edges. And she looked like she was about to throw up.

Stuttering, she related what happened when the door opened.

"I was about to ring the doorbell...like you said, Annie...when suddenly the door opened on its own. Thinking it was Manang waiting up for us...I stepped up to it. I was about...to greet...whoever opened the door...but when I looked up...when I looked up...IT WAS YOUR FACE I SAW RIGHT IN FRONT OF ME! I don't remember much after that."

The three girls looked at each other for a split second before fleeing to the bedroom to hide under the covers.

Annie stopped being a skeptic after that.

# VISIONS AT VINZON'S HALL

By Joel P. Salud

**Joey (not his real name) is your typical 23-year-old young intellectual** – a hard-nosed, matter-of-fact Nietzschean disciple with an ego that would make the USS Titanic look like it was built by Matchbox®.

As a UP Diliman philosophy and political science dean's lister, he cannot be anything else but downright snooty, and a skeptic through and through. He did not want to admit he was a cynic, however. Self-styled geniuses and freethinkers never make such claims. As far as Joey was concerned, his mind was big enough for every possible idea and concept.

Everything but ghosts.

It was a rowdy afternoon at Vinzon's Hall, quite unusual for a Saturday.

The student center was bursting at the seams with students from every college in UP, sitting in corners in their torn jeans and sandals, books in hand. The lobby was so packed that day that Joey could not concentrate on what he was reading – a book by Engel.

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Raul, a friend and classmate, was supposed to meet him at the hallway near the entrance of the building. But it's been an



hour already, and there was no sign of Raul. Surprisingly, even though there were many people in the hall, he saw no one that he actually knew.

Bored and irritated by the hollow rumblings of students around him, he decided to pack his bags and leave for the second floor. There, he thought, he could live and read in peace.

The second floor of Vinzon's Hall was relatively quiet and peaceful, the perfect place to read and concentrate, he thought.

Joey hadn't read a fairly good book in weeks, and this bothered him immensely. A voracious reader, he would spend almost half his monthly allowance on reasonably priced books.

Much of his student life was spent this way – his face buried inside the pages of a book. Forget the parties and the usual “gimmicks” young people usually indulged in. For bookworm Joey, relaxing with a good book was the only way to have fun.

He immediately slumped in one corner, and in just a few minutes, he was already on his fourth chapter. He could feel the cold stone wall on his back, which made his left collar bone ache a bit. He decided to wear his jacket to ease the cramp.

As he was taking his jacket out of his knapsack, he heard a deep ethereal sound coming from the men's comfort room. Sort of like a hushed, yet deep, airy whisper.

It sounded like the voice of a young woman gasping for breath. But it couldn't be. Maybe, some couple is making out in the john. What a drag, he thought.

A few minutes later, Joey saw someone come out of the men's comfort room.

It was Raul.

Joey motioned to his friend to come and join him.

As Raul polished the cold slab under him, Joey asked, “Was someone else with you in the john? I swear I heard a woman's voice in there.”

Raul shrugged his shoulders.

“I was the only one there, pare. *Kaw naman*. I wish Rachel was there!” Joey laughed, put down his book and took a sip from his canned iced tea. “Wish on, bro!”

“Hey, *pare*, I've heard stories about ghosts in Vinzon's Hall. You know, that young coed whom they say committed suicide in

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one of the comfort rooms? It could've been her... asking for you!" Raul teased.

"Yeah! Yeah! Sure, Raul," Joey quipped.

He was somewhat irritated.

"Of all the people to believe in ghosts! Man! You're so gullible I can't believe you're my friend!"

"Hey! Take it easy, pare. I was just kidding around."

"*Lokohin mo lolo mong panot*(Go fool your hairless grandpa)!" Joey, the perpetual *pikon*(sore loser), howled, smiling. "I'll just go to the john."

Joey went straight to one of the cubicles. He did not tell Raul, but that day, Joey was suffering from diarrhea. As he sat on one of the bowls, he felt something press on his head, as if smoothing or patting it. At the same time he felt a cold, unruly current stroke his nape. That was quite unusual; it was summer. Joey resisted the temptation to look up and see what or who was smoothing his head.

His curiosity, however, got the better of him.

When Joey looked up, he saw a young girl hanging by her neck, her eyes nearly bulging from their sockets, her face a deathly pale from the immense strain from the rope. And the ones stroking his head were the soles of her feet swaying and rubbing against it.

He sat frozen. He could not take his eyes away from the young girl hanging from the ceiling.

A few seconds later, the girl's face moved, slowly, and turned toward Joey. Her bulging eyes looked straight into Joey's face, as if asking him to save her.

At that, Joey unfroze. Pulling up his pants, he rushed out of the comfort room, his zip still down, his face sickly white

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from fright. He could not speak for several minutes. After a while, he managed to calm down.

But he never used that comfort room again. □

# EXPERIENCED the EXTRAORDINARY?



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# MY CURSE

As told to Jherry Barrinuevo

**Is it a gift or a curse? Maybe for some it is a gift,** but for me it is a curse.

You see, I'm like that kid in the movie.

I see dead people.

It all started when I was a kid.

Even at the young age of four, I could already see weird things that people around me did not see.

There were times when I would run to my mother screaming and pointing out to her a spot where I see something or someone.

I thought these things were normal. But as I grew up, I realized that it wasn't. It wasn't normal *I* wasn't normal.

I knew there was either something special or something wrong with me.

Others call me a clairvoyant. Others say I'm a psychic, one who has a third eye.

But whatever term you use, there's only one way to describe it.

I see dead people.

## Part 1: A whisper from the dead

**My grandmother was a faith healer, a powerful one, according to my titas and my cousins.**



She was probably the one from whom I inherited my ability to see and sense the supernatural. And this would explain the affinity I shared with her.

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My *lola* and I were so close. I would spend endless hours by her side, watching her as she performed and cured her patients.

I would see her extract bugs and other disgusting stuff from the mouths of my *lola*'s patients as she healed them.

I would often peek into her *baul* (chest) and wonder at the weird stuff it contained like potions, herbs and a hanky which bore a pentagram. She identified all these things to me.

It was a very painful experience for me to witness her death in the hospital.

I saw how doctors tried to revive her, their desperate efforts to bring her back to life. But their efforts were futile. It was really my *lola*'s time to leave this world.

My family and I grieved at my *lola*'s hospital bed, especially me, because I was her pet. I cried and cried, because I knew I would never see her again, never be able to talk to her again.

Little did I know I was wrong.

My family became busy preparing for her burial. They argued over where to bury her, what coffin to use, and what my grandmother would wear inside her coffin.

I was there listening to them argue about the dress. Suddenly, while the rest of my family stood bickering, I heard a whisper, a whisper which did not come from the people who were talking. It was my *lola*'s voice!

I listened very carefully to what the voice was saying. She was telling me that what she wanted to wear was a green polka-dot dress, the one that had butterfly sleeves like the *ternos* that former First Lady imdela Marcos used to wear.

Though my hair stood on end, I relayed the message that my *lola* gave me.

“Mom, does *Lola* have a green polka-dot *terno*,” I asked

my mom.

“How did you know your *Lola* had that dress,” my mother asked in astonishment.

“She whispered it to me. She wants you to put that one on her Mom,” I answered.

At that my family stopped arguing and decided that the green polka-dot dress would be the dress my lola got to wear.

## Part 2: My near death experience

### **One time, I had a wild night with my friends.**

We had gone to a party where we drank till we dropped and smoked marijuana. Pretty soon I was inebriated, alcohol and grass mixing inside my system.

As we drove home I suddenly felt bad. I felt weird.

All of a sudden, I blurted out that someone will die that night. Having said that, I had difficulty breathing.

Then...it was gone.

I felt myself getting lighter and lighter. I looked at myself and realized I was floating in the air!

I looked down and suddenly saw my body lying prostrate in the back of the car, a friend of mine crying over my unconscious form.

“Is that me?” I asked curiously.

Suddenly, I saw two faceless beings saying, “Come with us.”

In the distance, I could see my uncle gesturing.

“That’s funny, he’s dead,” I thought. I tried to figure out what my uncle was gesturing about. Then I realized, he was telling

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me not to go with the two faceless beings.

So I told them I didn't want to go with them. They told me to justify why they shouldn't take me with them.

First of all, I said, I want to be with my family, but the beings didn't accept that. Then I said I was still too young. That didn't convince them either. *Then* I told them that I had not finished what I had to do, that I wanted to do more. This did the trick.

In an instant, I was back in my body. I felt severe chest pains. My friends quickly drove me to a hospital.

My body was unconscious, but my mind was awake and alert and watching everything that was happening.

I could see the two faceless beings guarding me. I saw my body being placed on a stretcher, and how doctors pumped my seemingly lifeless body, trying to revive it.

After what seemed like an eternity, I was revived and the two faceless beings left me.

That night a doctor came into my room and asked the nurse what happened to me.

The nurse told the doctor that I had a heart attack. But the doctor did not believe it. He said I was just high on drugs.

The next morning I told my friends that I saw everything that happened. I related each and every detail of the night before. They were all amazed because they were certain that I was asleep and unconscious that night. □

# THE VILLAGE SPECTRE

By Gianna G. Maniego

**The sleepy old village of Kamigin** (not its real name), where our former househelp hailed from is just like any old rural settlement in the hinterlands of Cebu. Free from the pollution-soaked air of the urban jungle, and far from the madding crowd, Kamigin is the idyll place to take a breather.

Except that this tranquil old hamlet comes alive with ghostly moans and hair-raising wails as soon as darkness descends on it.

According to our househelp, Laila, the moans and wails come from the ghost of her neighbor, a woman who died a heinous death at the hands of her deranged husband.

Clarita was a devoted housewife to her husband Reynaldo, and a dedicated mother to her three children, Arlyn, Buboy and Carlito.

They lived near the outskirts of Kamigin, a stone's throw from where the village *herbolario*, who was incidentally Laila's uncle, lived, and right beside Laila's house.

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Naldo was a *pahinante*, a dock worker at the piers in Cebu. He was muscular, burly in fact and possessed with great stamina.



Naldo could carry as much as two sacks of rice on his shoulders at the same time.

Being the breadwinner of the family, he worked long and hard at the docks to earn a living for his family. Clarita, on the other hand, cooked *kakanin* and banana cue for Arlyn and Buboy to sell in the afternoons to augment the family income.

It was a hard life, but they didn't complain. Their needs weren't that much anyway.

One day, tragedy struck.

As Naldo was hefting a sack of rice from the warehouse to the ship that was to carry the cargo to Manila, he heard a shout. As he turned, he was struck with full force on the head by the heavy iron hook that was attached to one of the ship's riggings. The blow cracked open his skull and many of those who witnessed the accident at the pier believed he was struck dead.

Bleeding and unconscious, Naldo was rushed by his fellow *pahinantes* to the nearest hospital, but the hospital could do little except to offer first aid: that is, try to stanch the blood. The blow bruised Naldo's brain and he had to undergo surgery immediately. So he was brought to the general hospital in Cebu City, where surgeons labored to save his life.

By some miracle of fate, Naldo survived the ordeal. As soon as he was well enough, he went home to his wife and kids, seemingly none the worse for wear, except for the large bandage on his head.

Wrong.

The blow had damaged Naldo's brain so severely that he suffered from constant headaches and memory lapses. Sometimes he did not even recognize his wife and kids.

At other times, he suffered from delusions. He would scream and shout that demons were after him and that everyone around him was a demon out to get him.

Although he didn't really hurt anyone yet, his outbursts were becoming more and more violent and more frequent.

*"Ipa-confine mo na siya sa ospital Clarita. Baka hindi mo siya ma-control mamaya maging bayolente at pati kayong mag-iina saktan.* (You should put him in the hospital Clarita. You might not be able to control him later on, he might become violent and turn on you and your kids)," the neighbors advised Clarita.

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The neighbors had gotten leery of Naldo. They were afraid he would take leave of his senses totally and attack even them.

But Clarita didn't have the money to send him to a mental hospital. Since Naldo's accident, she had taken on the role of breadwinner of the family, becoming the village washerwoman and doing the laundry of her neighbors. At lunch, she also sold *ulam* (viand). But she could barely make ends meet.

As the weeks passed, Naldo became increasingly violent. Once, he tried to attack Arlyn with a kitchen knife, saying she was poisoning his food. The child managed to scamper out of reach and fled to the house of Laila. She refused to serve food to her father after that.

Another time, he threw Buboy down the stairs of their house because he thought his son was going to kill him.

Soon enough, it was only Clarita who had the nerve to go near Naldo. Everyone tried to stay out of his way for fear he would attack them.

One day, Naldo came down with a fever. He shivered and moaned piteously throughout the night. For three days and three nights, he suffered from high fever. All that time Clarita slept not a wink, tending to her delirious husband.

She couldn't sleep.

First of all, she was the only one left at home because she sent the children to Laila's. They were too scared to stay.

Second of all, though she wouldn't admit it to anyone, she feared for her life. She firmly believed that her husband had totally lost his mind and could no longer recognize anyone. He would attack her if she let her guard down. She had to be ready if ever he tried to attack.

But after going three days without sleep, she was totally exhausted. She began nodding off to sleep.

“*Hayup ka!!! Kampon ni Satanas!!! Papatayin kitaaaaaaa!!!* (You animal!!! You devil’s spawn!!! I’m gonna kill you!!!)” Naldo’s bloodcurdling scream jolted Clarita awake.

Looking up, she saw the deadly blade of their meat knife slashing towards her. She barely had time to ward off the blow. The knife grazed her arm, cutting a deep gash on her forearm. Bleeding profusely, she pleaded with her husband, at the same time shouting for help from her neighbors.

“*Naldo! Naldo wag! Si Clarita ito, asawa mo! Hindi ako demonyo! Mga kapitbahay, saklolo!! Papatayin ako ni Naldo!! Tulungan ninyo akoooo!!!!* (Naldo, don’t! It’s me, Clarita, your wife! I’m not the devil! Help, somebody, Naldo is trying to kill me. Help meeee!!!)” she shouted, over and over again, while trying to ward off her husband’s deadly blows.

With each blow, Clarita could feel her strength slowly dwindling away. With one mighty shove, she sent Naldo sprawling and ran towards the door. She’d gotten as far as the stairs before Naldo grabbed her hair and pulled her back.

Clarita stumbled and landed on her back. Naldo, crazed now from the fever and from his delusions, pounced on her and began stabbing. Once, twice, so many times, Clarita already lost count. With each stab, she could feel her life ebbing away from her.

Someone knocked Naldo away. It was her uncle, Renato, who heard her cries and rushed to help. But Naldo was twice as brawny as Renato, plus he was totally crazed with the lust to kill.

As they wrestled, Clarita gathered up her remaining strength and hobbled down the stairs to seek help from her neighbors.

She crawled out onto the street, shouting weakly for assistance. But none would come. The neighbors were too scared

.....  
to help.

Reaching the sari-sari store across the road, she rapped on the window of the closed store.

“*Tulongan ninyo ako, mga kapitbahay, parang awa nyo na* (Help me, please, I beg of you),” she wailed. But the window stayed closed.

Clarita crawled to the herbolario’s house, leaving a trail of blood on the street. Upon reaching the steps of the herbolario’s house, she slumped down, her strength totally gone.

Meanwhile, Renato finally managed to knock out Naldo by hitting him on the head with a chair. He quickly tore up a sheet and used the strips to tie up the unconscious killer. Satisfied that Naldo would not be able to escape, he fled to look for Clarita.

He found her still slumped on the steps of the herbolario’s house. He rushed over to her, to pull her up. But it was too late.

Clarita was already dead. She had 21 stab wounds, including one on her left ribcage which nicked the lower part of her heart.

The whole village mourned the death of Clarita. The neighbors felt guilty that they didn’t have the guts to come to her aid. Her children were sent to relatives in Cagayan de Oro.

And Naldo? He was locked up by the police who finally arrived on the scene after a neighbor ran to the nearest town to ask for help. He later stood trial for his wife’s murder, but he was not meted the justice he deserved because he pleaded insanity.

Instead of getting the electric chair, he got sent to a mental institution.

Soon, the controversy died down and life returned to normal in Kamigin.

One night, as the village slept, a sound like feet dragging

could be heard on the street. It stopped in front of the sari sari store.

Then the villagers heard someone sobbing. Softly at first. Then it got louder and louder until it became a steady wail.

“*Tulongan ninyo ako, mga kapitbahay, parang awa nyo na* (Help me, please, I beg of you).”

The villagers felt their hairs stand on end. It was the voice of Clarita, begging for help.

A few brave souls ventured to peep out of their windows, but what they saw made their blood run cold and sent them scurrying under the blankets.

There, on the bench in front of the store, sat an apparition. The ghostly figure was that of a woman, her face contorted in pain, blood dripping from various cuts she had on her body. The blood left a silvery trail in the moonlight.

After what seemed like an eternity, the spectre stood up and slowly dragged itself to the herbolario’s house, where it draped itself on the steps, moaning and lamenting her fate.

The villagers could not sleep, as all through the night the wailing continued. Finally, at the crack of dawn, it stopped.

The sleepy villagers opened up their windows and surveyed the scene.

Everything was peaceful. No vestiges remained of the events that transpired the night before.

The villagers heaved a collective sigh. They had survived the ordeal. They decided to offer up prayers for the soul of Clarita.

That night, the village prepared for bed. As soon as darkness settled on the hamlet, the foot-dragging began again.

Later on, the familiar sound of someone wailing resounded over the village.

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The whole night-long ordeal was repeated.

The villagers knew this would go on for as long as they lived. It was their penance for abandoning their neighbor to her death.

Eventually, Laila's family moved out of the village and did not hear anymore news about the village. But as far as she knows, the ghost of Clarita still haunted the village of Kamigin.

Who knows? She may still be there.

*"Tulungan ninyo ako, mga kapitbahay, parang awa nyo na..."* □

# THE HOUSE THAT CRIES IN THE NIGHT

Anonymous

**In a small village in the coastal suburb of Nasugbu, Batangas** rests a four-year-old murder mystery. As a result, two weary souls reportedly roam the village, seeking eternal justice and peace.

It was midsummer of 1999. The sleepy town was jarred awake by the brutal murder of Marita\*, a 40-year-old housewife whose husband was an overseas Filipino worker, and Jennifer, her 18-year-old daughter, in their own house. The main suspect was Corazon, a lesbian friend. The motive: money.

No one among the neighbors heard the cries of the mother and daughter as they were shot to death. The killings occurred past midnight, while most of the residents were fast asleep, allowing the murderer to escape stealthily.

Only one neighbor witnessed the killer trying to escape, but he could only manage a loud bark to alert the others.

Upon learning of the tragedy that had befallen his family, the wife's husband, Tony, came home from abroad. He took charge of the case, seeking help from neighbors and friends to trace the

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whereabouts of the lesbian.

After several months, the authorities finally tracked down Corazon and took her into custody. She was sentenced to life imprisonment. And the case was declared solved.

Tony sold their house and left the village.

Unfortunately, some technicality let the murderer off the hook. As a result, Corazon now roams about town, a free person, despite the heinous crime she committed.

Four years after the incident, the hauntings began.

The Martinez family, who bought the house from the husband, began hearing unfamiliar noises in the wee hours of the night. Though they tried to locate the source of the sound, they could not find it.

They sounded like voices of women weeping, sobbing loudly and asking for help.

*“Saklolo.”*

As the days passed, they began hearing loud screams even in the middle of the day, and the sound of hurried footsteps echoing throughout the house.

Then the lights began to go on and off.

“It’s horrible when the lights turn on and off without anyone doing it. We don’t even know where the footsteps echoing inside the house come from... I feel that we are not alone in this house,” Joseph, the son, told his friends.

The boy also revealed having unusual dreams about a lady who wept in the middle of the night, but he couldn’t tell what the lady wanted from him.

“She just stares at me, crying, without a sound... I can’t tell you how she looks. I can’t even describe the color of the dress she is wearing,” Joseph said.

His Eliza, on the other hand, reported that she felt a strong presence in the patio in the backyard as she moved around the



garden. It was a shadowy figure she could see from the corner of her eye. But when she turns in the direction of the figure, there's no one there.

“I am not scared because there is no reason to be. If there is really a sign or existence of ghosts in this house I'm willing to face them and ask what they want,” she explained.

She is certain the presence she senses belongs to Marita and Jennifer, hungry for real justice but who couldn't find the right medium to be heard.

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“Even the passersby notice that there is something strange in the house. The whole place seems so pathetic and everything is in disarray. Unlike before where the garden in front of the house was filled with beautiful flowers that bloom in summer,” a neighbor observed.

It seems as if the whole house is mourning the death of its former occupants.

Some residents are so frightened to disclose what they know about the incident, claiming that what is past should be left in the past.

There are some who suspect that there is another story behind the killings. But no one’s talking.

The mystery lingers to this day. The souls of Marita and Jennifer still haunt the house, unable to rest until the real story of their brutal death is revealed.□

# MODEL

Anonymous

**Most girls dream of becoming either an actress or a model someday.** They dream of seeing their faces on TV or the big screen, the object of envy of most people.

This is the story of one such girl.

It was a rainy afternoon. Staffers of a production house in Makati were grumbling about not being able to catch a ride home that night. They anticipated it was going to be another long day for them as they were screening for models for an advertising campaign.

The director, a foreigner, was a meticulous client who was quite hard to please. He would often go through several screenings and VTRs in search for just the right “face” to put in his commercial, which were, in truth, mini-opuses for him.

That particular day, they were looking for fresh faces for a softdrink ad. It was a full-blast ad campaign, so the model who would be chosen would not only be in the 15-, 30, and 60-second TV commercials, but will also be plastered on giant billboards, posters and full-spread ads the company was planning to put out.

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Needless to say, the director was more demanding than usual.

It was just after lunch, and already the reception area of the production office was filled to the brim with models and wannabe models. Not to mention a whole coterie of stage moms, talent agents, and personal assistants.

The secretary was at her wits' end trying to accommodate all of them. In the end, she gave up and sought sanctuary in the office pantry.

At around 3 p.m., a pretty young lady walked in.

She was the perfect China doll. Fair, mestiza skin, Chinky eyes and long black hair. She was about 5'6" and slim. She moved about the room gracefully, smiling at everyone and no one in particular.

She said her name was Roweena and that she'd always wanted to be a model.

Many of the staffers of the production company wondered why they'd never seen her before. She explained that she had just transferred to the Philippines from abroad.

Ohhh...no wonder, they thought. A face like hers would have been snapped up by advertising agencies and plastered all over television and the print media.

As the day wore on, Roweena proved to be friendly and cooperative. Being the last to come to the screening, and a walk-in talent at that, she had a long wait before facing the cameras. But she didn't mind, and showed no signs of impatience, in sharp contrast to many of the other models there.

While the others complained loudly about the long wait, about the cramped quarters and about their melting makeup, Roweena chatted amiably with the production assistants, asking about the commercial, the director, etc.

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Finally, at around 6 p.m., it was her turn to face the cameras. The production staff was not disappointed. She registered beautifully on the screen! And she seemed totally at home in front of the camera. Plus she seemed capable of just about anything the director asked her to do. He told her to jump, she did a little



cheerdancer's jump. He told her to dance, she shimmied like a disco dancer.

She's perfect, everyone thought. The director seemed to think so too.

Towards the end, the director called for a group shot of all the models. So everyone lined up, including Roweena, and gave

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the cameraman their best smiles.

Finally, the shoot was over! They could all go home.

As they all filed out of the office, the staffers talked about Roweena and made bets that she would be the lucky one chosen for the ad campaign.

After a day or two, the director called. He had made up his mind to pick Roweena, but he needed to show his client the VTR she made.

But when they showed the reel that Roweena was supposed to be in, there was nothing but exposed film. They checked the other reels, they all seemed okay, except for Roweena's tape.

How weird, they all thought. And how *malas*(unlucky).

Oh wait, there's still the group shot they took at the end of the shoot.

But when they checked it out, their hairs stood on end and goosebumps popped up all over their body.

Everyone was in the shot, except Roweena! In the spot where she was supposed to be was a gap, like someone cut out of a picture.

They checked their models' files. Her file could not be found.

Then they learned that similar incidents happened in other production houses and advertising agencies in Makati.

Apparently, Roweena was a young girl who dreamed of becoming a model, but was not able to make it because she was struck down by cancer at the age of 22.

It seems Roweena's ghost is deadset on breaking into the modelling business.

Even from beyond the grave. □

# SOMEONE WATCHING OVER ME

By Gerrilyn Cadiz

My sister isn't one to believe in things that go bump in the night. But that changed when she attended an out-of-town seminar and came face-to-face with an otherworldly presence.

My sister said it was more like a retreat than a seminar, really. It was held at one of the vacation houses owned by the company she worked for. It was far from the main road and could only be reached by private vehicles. No public transportation passed by. But you can take a tricycle from the main road and just direct the driver to the house.

It was far from the maddening noise of the city and was nestled amidst mountain ridges that accounted for the breezy afternoons and chilly nights.

However, she found it creepy that the trees had all these crosses on them. One of her officemates said it's because the trees were used for the Station of the Cross during the Lenten season.

It was a week-long seminar. The days were spent with the usual team-building exercises and activities. At night, they would

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have bonfires and tell encouraging or inspirational stories.

It was during one of these bonfires that she first heard about the “resident.”



Some of her officemates, especially those who been with the company for years and had previously attended these seminars, recounted their encounter with the lodge's apparition. How it would suddenly pass them by on the stairs; how it would appear at the door of the dining area as if checking on them.

But the manager, who had been with the company for almost 10 years, would quickly debunk the stories and call them

“nonsense.” And my sister, as I’ve said earlier, was not one to easily believe such talk. So, she and their manager had a good time laughing the stories off.

The third night of the seminar, as they were all preparing to go to bed, one of her officemates came rushing to her room. The officemate told her she heard something moving, rustling, inside her closet and asked my sister to accompany her to check it out.

It was my sister who opened the closet door and there, lying on top of a bunch of clothes was a salamander. Her officemate freaked out. Nothing like a reptile to scare the wits out of somebody. Anyway, since both of them were afraid of the reptile, they decided to leave it alone. My sister then asked her officemate to just sleep in her bedroom. The salamander might attack her, they thought.

My sister and her officemate went back to her room and got ready for bed. After a few hours of chit-chat, they went to sleep.

My sister is a light sleeper. A movement on the bed would easily wake her up. She woke up in the middle of the night with a sense of unease. She wasn’t exactly sure what woke her up. But she felt a chill even before she opened her eyes. Her mind registered that maybe she had forgotten to close the windows. And so even though her lids were heavy with sleep, she willed them open.

And there, hovering above her was a face!

She felt a scream rise to her throat. She wanted to kick her officemate, who was happily snoring beside her, into wakefulness. She wanted to raise her hands in alarm, wanted to flail her arms at the spectre. But fear paralyzed her.

The face was that of a woman. She had wide sunken eyes, gaunt cheeks and an empty hollow mouth. It screamed at her, a

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high piercing sound that could've come from the very pits of hell.

Then her officemate turned and in an instant, the apparition was gone and my sister, trembling, woke her officemate up. She told her what happened and though as scared as my sister, they went to the next room to crash another officemate's room. My sister huddled close to her officemate, fearful that the wraith would come back. They didn't sleep a wink that night.

The company stopped having its seminars at that house shortly after that. A few months after the incident, my sister resigned. Though she would not admit that it was probably the experience that pushed her to do it. □

# PRAYER FOR A GHOST

By Gerrilyn Cadiz

**My family and I used to live in an apartment in Manila.** The apartment was very old. We liked to think it had character. More than that, it had a ghost.

Nobody in our neighborhood wanted to admit they knew about the ghost in our new house. We'd heard the talks though.

But since the rent was quite low compared to most apartments in the area, my parents chose to "conveniently ignore" the rumors and attributed them to the overactive imaginations of our neighbors.

But our "housemate" would not be ignored.

The first night, we felt the presence immediately.

We were in our respective rooms when our three dogs started howling. I quickly got up to check what was causing the commotion. My parents also went out to investigate.

We saw all three dogs circling around and howling at some unseen entity. My mom yelled at the dogs to stop and herded them to our room.

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For weeks, things went on that way. The dogs would suddenly go berserk and bark at something; their fangs bared as if ready for attack. Then, they would whimper, as if scared into submission, and then run off, their tails behind their legs.

One day, after my dad, my younger sister and I went off to work and my brother to school, my mom set off to clean the house. She had just finished cleaning the bedrooms and decided to do the same to the sala when she heard something fall on the floor.

Suddenly, my brother's toy cars came zooming to the sala from his bedroom. She quickly ran out of the house and ran to the nearby sari-sari store. The owner told my mom it must be some spirit who wanted prayers.

She told us what happened that night, and said she thought she would faint from fear.

You could just imagine the agitation the whole incident caused in our household. My parents decided we should start looking for a new house and move out. But it wasn't that easy to find reasonably-priced apartments in Manila. They're either too expensive or too cramped.

So we decided to stay put till we found a new house, one that didn't have so much "character".

It's funny. The house we just moved out of had a ghost too. I'm beginning to suspect Parañaque's full of earthbound spirits. Either that or they're following me around. Of course, they're both crazy assumptions.

Then it happened again. To me.

My younger sister and brother went to sleep over at their friends' houses. I share a room with my sister so that meant having the whole room and the television all to myself.

I retired early. I turned on the television and picked up the

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book I'd been trying to finish that week. I do that a lot — watch TV and read at the same time. Or watch TV and write.

I don't remember falling asleep, but I do remember a shrill



scream waking me up. I quickly wiped the sleep from my eyes with the back of my hands. The TV was still on, some 70s-looking slasher flick was on.

I turned it off at once and pulled the plug. My father always insisted we pull the plug of whatever appliance we've used as a safety measure.

I then turned the lights off and went under the covers. Sud-

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denly, I felt the temperature in the room drop. It's not like I have an aircon in the room and I didn't think I set the electric fan on Number 3.

Then I saw her. She was sitting at the foot of my bed.

In the dimness of the room, she appeared to be illuminated. It was the image of an old woman, wearing a floral dress and a pair of eyeglasses. She had short, graying hair and a pert nose. She appeared to be smiling although I couldn't be so sure. I blinked and then she was gone.

The following day, our landlady visited us, having heard all the strange stories about the house. I then told her about what I saw the previous night. She looked shocked and her eyes became watery.

"That's my mother," she said. "Her death anniversary's next week."

We had a mass said for her and the bizarre goings-on stopped. □

# THE HOUSE OF THE UNHOLY

By Louie Magdamit

Residents of this subdivision in Parañaque often relate how the engineer who designed and developed the village they lived in hasn't left his home, which is situated near the subdivision gate. Not even after his death, several years now.

The engineer was a distinguished old gentleman who usually dressed all in white, from his shirt and trousers to his shoes.

According to the story, the engineer developed the land for Air Force servicemen assigned to the Villamor Air Force back in the 1930's. The land was as an extension of Villamor Air Base. It was his grand plan to design identical houses for families of airmen just a stone's throw away from the airbase.

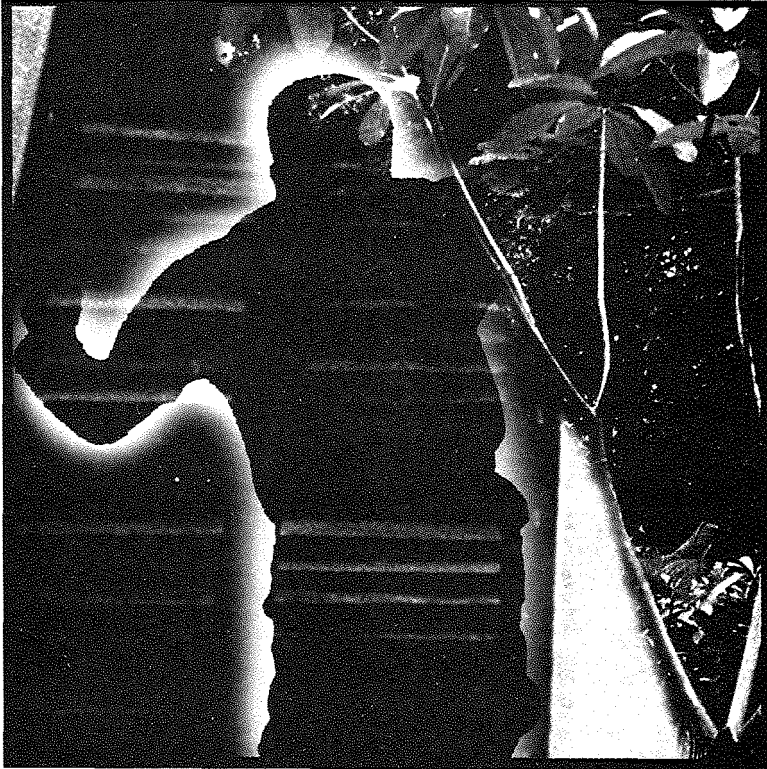
The engineer became a popular figure around the village. He would often be seen, strolling down the streets of the subdivision in his familiar white garb.

His wife, however, was a different story. She was very unpopular, known for her hot temper and snooty airs. Her househelp often cowered in fear whenever she ordered them around. Rumors that she beat them for the slightest infraction of the rules

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also followed in her wake.

Helpers, who were employed at the house would come and go, most of them leaving in haste. Some of them simply disappeared, never to be heard from nor seen ever again.



Residents reported that suspicious activities were happening at the house.

For several years, the engineer and his family prospered. But then disaster struck and his business faltered. It was a big blow for the engineer. He was crushed and devastated.

Soon, they had to sell their home. They settled in a room

in the tenements.

The reversal of fortune affected the engineer's sanity. Burdened by the weight of his problems, he leaped from the top floor of the tenement building and smashed his head on the pavement.

Years after his death, several residents reported sightings of him in the village. They would see him, dressed in his usual white, roaming the streets of the village, surveying his realm.

Soon enough, his tale became legend. Stories of him were passed down from generation to generation: how he died, why he died, and his wife's cruelty. He was the village's resident ghost.

He would often be seen as a headless figure dressed all in white. People would catch sight of him at his former home. Even tricycle drivers stationed at the back of the house would report seeing the old man.

Its new owners would sometimes see the apparition standing on the terrace of his previous room.

The ghost would even show itself to the guests of the new owners. Guests would feel uneasy staying in the house, especially in the bathroom, where many guests reported that they felt they were being watched. Most of them had trouble sleeping. They said, they felt that somebody was leaning over them in bed.

As such the house kept being sold and passed on from one set of owners to another.

One day, the new owners of the house decided to have the basement renovated. Construction workers were digging in the basement when they stumbled upon what seemed to be a burial plot. As they dug a little deeper, they uncovered several bones. Bones which looked human. Spooked residents theorized that the bones belonged to the missing househelp.

After a few years, the villagers got used to their village ghost.

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Unfortunately, the ghost attracted other spirits to the subdivision. Vacuumed by the negative force brought by the engineer's presence, spectres from neighboring areas flocked to the subdivision and soon invaded the engineer's former home, including an incubus and a succubus.

The incubus preyed on the women in the house, while the succubus preyed on the men.

A househelp was once seen being abused by the mischievous spirit. It took off the victim's clothes then proceeded to sexually assault her. The victim felt icy cold and was left in a daze. She was incoherent for weeks after that.

Today, the sightings and the strange goings on continue at the engineer's house.

The one they call the House of the Unholy.□

# DECAPITATED

By Jonathan Celeste

This sounds like an urban legend, but I swear all of it is true.

I was about 12 years old and it was nearly All Saints Day.

I was really excited because my uncle and aunt and cousins from the province were coming to Manila to visit us. They had hired a passenger jeep to ferry them all to our house in Masangkay, Sta. Cruz, Manila.

But it was a long, five-hour drive from Pangasinan to Manila and they left in the afternoon. That meant they would be arriving at around 12 midnight or 1 in the morning.

It was already past 11 in the evening and the October night was really really cold. Pretty soon I got tired of waiting for my relatives and went up to the room I shared with my sister. My sister was about 18 or 19 then.

To pass the time, I got out some books, intending to read until my relatives got to our house. I was too excited to sleep because I was very eager to see my aunt and uncle. It had been a while since I saw them.

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I was so excited that each vehicle that passed our house would instantly lure me to the window for a peep.

After a while though, my adrenaline rush wore off and I began to feel tired. I grew sleepy, so I decided to just finish reading my book.



While I was reading on the bed I shared with my older sister, I saw a shadow cross the page of the book. Someone was peeking through our window!

I looked up and peered at our window. I couldn't see clearly because of the curtains that covered the window. Curious to see what it was, I slowly stood up and went near the window to check

it out.

When I recognized what it was I was seeing I froze in my tracks. Then I let out a loud scream!

AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!!!!

I saw the head of a man wearing a pair of black-rimmed eyeglasses. The thing was, it was not connected to a body!

His eyes, they were red and they looked like they were gonna pop out of their sockets. His hair was bedraggled and scraggly, and HE WAS STARING RIGHT AT ME!!!

Then in an instant, it was gone!

My sister woke up because I was screaming my head off. She saw me by the window. I was trembling like mad and I was white as a sheet! My hands were clammy and when she tapped me on the shoulder I clung to her arm like it was a lifesaver.

My mom and dad rushed up the stairs to find out what was happening. I tried explaining what I saw but couldn't get past "*May ulo, may ulo* (There's a head, there's a head)!"

Finally I just broke down and cried. My sister gave me a glass of water to calm me down.

Quite comforted by the presence of my family, I began to narrate what really happened. I told them that I saw a man's head peeking into the room from the window. Our room was on the second floor.

My father was quick to dismiss my story. He said I was probably dreaming or maybe it was just a cat. But, how could a cat float on air?

My mom said she believed me and told me to go to bed. She hugged me until I fell asleep.

My relatives finally arrived while I was asleep.

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The following day, at the breakfast table everyone asked how I was.

After eating, my mom said she told our neighbors about my experience the previous night and this is what they told her:

Several years ago, a drunken man and his buddy had a heated argument over some financial matter. The younger one, a heavyset man in his early 20s, left the drinking session. The older one, a skinny man in his late 30s, was too drunk he was almost rolling on the floor. He didn't notice the other man leaving but continued to laugh raucously and rile the younger man.

When the younger man came back to the drinking session, but this time he was wielding a butcher's knife. He attacked his drinking buddy and laid down the latter's head on the pavement near our house. He drew the butcher's knife and chopped off the head of the old man!

Since no one was there to witness the crime, he managed to get off scot-free.

Since then, strange things had been happening and people passing the area at midnight would feel their hairs rising on the back of their necks and feel ice-cold air blasting at them.

My mother said it was probably the head of the man who got decapitated that I saw.

As time passed, the horror of that night faded in my mind and soon enough I forgot all about the incident.

Except ever October, when an ice cold wind would brush against my skin. □

# A NIGHT OF TERROR AT SUBIC

By Jherry Barrinuevo

**One day, my friends and I decided to go on a three-day vacation in Subic.** Leaving all our cares in Manila, we proceeded to enjoy the wonders of the former American naval base. We went to various pretty places.

We visited the Bat Kingdom, swam in the beach, and of course shopped at the numerous Duty-free outlets.

We stayed at a famous condominium, so we were assured of getting a good night's sleep, which we enjoyed — but only for the first two days.

On the third day, the last night before we headed back home to Manila, we decided to have a fun night. We divided ourselves into groups and each group prepared a presentation. Since I was tasked to videotape the whole thing, I was not assigned to any group.

Everyone was excited to perform. After a short rehearsal, the groups performed their presentation. There were those who sang, while others preferred to dance. We all enjoyed watching the presentations.

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For my part, I enjoyed watching the festivities through the lens of the videocam.

When the presentations finally came to an end, we decided to give an award for the best group. After a short delibera-



tion, we decided to award the honor to the third group. Everyone cheered for them (they were the crowd favorites).

After the excitement died down someone suggested we view the presentations on the TV while we drank a few rounds of beer. So we slipped the tape into the VCR and sat back to enjoy and laugh at our friends' shenanigans.

As we watch, the screen suddenly turned blank.

What the....?

We were all perplexed by what happened to the tape.

“*Sigurado kang natape mo un*(Are you sure you taped that part)?” my friends asked me.

“*Oo naman*(Of course!)” I said. “*Wala namang naging problema nung tine-tape ko yang part na yan*(There were’nt any technical problems as I was taping that part).”

In the middle of our argument, Cherry, one of our girl friends began crying. We turned toward her in surprise to find out why she was crying. Then she fell into a dead faint.

Panicked, we sprang into action trying to revive her.

She was stiff as a board, and she lay very, very still. We decided to carry her to the room. Normally, she was very easy to carry, being a bit small and thin. But to our surprise, it took five of my friends to carry her.

Upon reaching the room she regained consciousness. She suddenly began wailing. Ed, one of my friends who was psychic said she might have been possessed.

Then he confessed that he invited spirits to come to the house, to give us a scare so that we could have a thrilling night. He said the spirits he had called were the ones possessing our friend—two women, a dwarf, and a big, bad and dark man.

He said he would cast out the spirits. He began praying. He tried to talk to the spirits and asked them to leave our friend’s body.

Outside we formed circles and prayed for protection. Ed said the spirits requested three girls to enter the room.

When the three girls entered they cried as they watched my friend screaming. They continued crying as they went out of

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the room. Soon, they too began acting weird.

We realized that some of the spirits transferred to them and are now possessing our friends' bodies. Later, they toyed with us, transferring from one body to another.

Funny though, the spirits spared me, and my friends who were in the circle, praying.

When I saw what was happening I fled to the comfort room to pray alone. But to my shock, as I was praying I heard sounds of laughing and giggling inside the restroom with me.

The hairs on the back of my neck stood and I got goosebumps.

I ran outside and rejoined my friends in praying. Some of my friends were crying and laughing, acting every inch like possessed people.

Later, my psychic friend told me he had convinced the malevolent to leave. We felt him leave the room. Shortly after, we heard the door bang against the wall.

Unfortunately the remaining ghosts didn't want to leave.

It was getting late so while Ed stayed with Cherry to try to convince the spirits to leave, we fled the room and tried to get some sleep.

All through the night, we could hear doors banging downstairs. Finally, in the morning everything grew quiet. The ghosts finally left.

When she came to her senses, Cherry said she could not remember a thing.

On our way back to Manila, we talked about our experience and we knew we would never forget that terrifying night in Subic. □

# THE HOWLING AT BENITEZ HALL

By Joel P. Salud

**It was about 11 in the evening, and the air was damp and heavy with rain.**

The evening sky covered the city like a dark gray blanket even though it was nigh on midnight.

The wind was cold, bitter and crisp, almost vindictive as it howled and made the branches of the old acacia trees that lined the edge of the University of the Philippines Sunken Garden whistle.

Two friends, Alma and Christine (not their real names), both young creative writing instructors at the Diliman campus, were stranded in front of Benitez Hall.

They hadn't expected it to rain so hard that day. There was nothing in the news about an incoming storm. There were no warnings from PAGASA, as usual.

After alighting from the jeepney, they ran as fast as they could towards the huge wooden door of Benitez Hall where a security guard was sitting quietly, writing something on a small

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piece of paper.

Christine, who lived nearby, asked the security guard to let them into the building since the rains were getting more furi-



ous. The two teachers needed a place to stay for the night, or at least, until the rains subsided.

After presenting their IDs, the guard let them in. By that time both Alma and Christine were already soaking wet.

The guard accompanied them into one of the rooms situated at the left wing of the old building. The guard called Obet, the caretaker of the building, and asked if he had the keys to the

classrooms. As the caretaker opened the door, a whiff of frosty air blew toward the faces of the two instructors. Which was strange Christine thought, noticing that all the windows were closed.

As the two instructors went in, Christine, who was more spiritually sensitive of the two, felt a certain presence brush near her shoulder. At first she did not mind it. It's probably a wayward breeze, she said to herself.

Benitez Hall, or the college of Education, was one of the oldest buildings on campus. Aside from being the building where some of the best professors in UP were honed, Benitez Hall is likewise infamous because of its ghost sightings.

In its former incarnation, it was an interrogation camp of the Japanese Army during World War II. Most UP graduates know that it is the most haunted building on campus.

Christine and Alma settled down, took off their wet business jackets. They put together two tables to use as beds. Since they did not have blankets, the two used the jackets.

As Christine was about to hand the jackets to Alma, she heard footsteps coming from the corridor, on the other side of the door. At first, she thought it was the guard, but she noticed that the footsteps were made by someone with rubber soles, like slippers. The guard was wearing leather shoes.

Both knew theirs were the only ones in the building aside from the guard.

Christine went to the door. She tried to open it, but the door remained tightly shut. Feeling something eerily strange about the goings on, she motioned to Alma to help her open the door.

But though both of them combined their strengths and pulled with all their might, they could not budge the door.

They started yelling, calling for the guard. Despite their shouts and calls for help though the guard did not come.

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But Christine could still hear the footsteps from the other side of the door. After about three minutes, the sound of foot-falls stopped. She peeked through the peephole to see who it was on the other side. All she saw was the color red.

Alma, scared stiff because of the ghost stories she heard in the past about Benitez Hall, started banging on the door and kicking it.

A few seconds later, the door opened and the guard rushed in the classroom, asking what happened.

Christine asked, "Is there anyone in the building aside from us?"

The guard shrugged his shoulders.

"We heard footsteps, someone wearing slippers."

"Obet already left. There's no one in the building but us," the guard confirmed.

"Is this building really haunted?" Alma asked.

"I've been guarding this building for the past six months," the guard said. "Yes, I've heard stories of people who died in Benitez Hall. I also heard ghost stories from the former guard. I don't believe these ghost stories. All I know is that a student died here once. A friend of mine who used to be assigned to guard Benitez Hall said he saw a person floating in the air dressed in white, with **BIG RED EYES!**"

At that Christine slumped down in a dead faint. □

# URBAN LEGENDS

Anonymous

**Among the many ghost stories that abound in Metro Manila,** there are those that have evolved into what many call the “urban legend.”

What is an urban legend?

An urban legend is a story derived from real life, but with elements of over the top horror. It is a way of expressing one’s fears, in a totally exaggerated way as to appear ridiculous. Urban legends are often widely circulated. Whether these stories are true or not, no one can tell with absolute certainty.

But one thing’s for sure, they make for great copy.

Schools, particularly are favorite settings for urban legends. This is because most schools date way back to the Second World War, when most institutions were used as garrisons, prisons and torture chambers.

It is said that the ghosts of the soldiers and innocent civilians who have shed their blood in these places will forever walk the halls of these institutions.

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Following is a sampling of the urban legends circulating around the schools. Is your school one of them?

## **University of the Philippines, Diliman**

**A girl was on the way to the dorm**, the only remaining passenger on the jeep she was on.

She had taken this route many times before, so she was surprised when the driver suddenly changed his course. Alarmed, she told the driver to drop her off at her dorm.

After a few minutes, they returned to the original route and the driver dropped her off at the dorm.



But before letting her leave, he gave her a few words of advice:

*“Ineng, pag-uwi mo hubarin mo agad iyang mga damit mo at kung pwede sunugin mo agad. Iniba ko yung ruta para makaiwas sa disgrasya. Kanina kasi pagtingin ko sa salamin, wala kang ulo(Miss, when you get home, take off your clothes immediately and burn them. I changed the route to avoid any accidents. I got spooked because when I looked at you in the rear-view mirror, you didn’t have a head!)”*

## Adamson University

**A girl was by the sink in one of the comfort rooms in the building, washing her face.**

When she looked in the mirror, she saw that on her face, instead of droplets of water, were little drops of blood. And standing behind her was a man. A headless man in a soldier’s uniform.

Every year, students would encounter various but similarly scary experiences in that toilet. According to research, the St. Vincent de Paul building, where the comfort room was, is the oldest building of and was used as an execution station by the Japanese army during World War II.

Rumor has it that countless heads had been chopped off in the toilet itself.

## Ateneo de Manila University

In the Sacred Heart Novitiate building, the story of the “stairs” is one that forces retreat-goers to go around in the “safety” of groups.

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Legend has it that late one night, a group of students went downstairs to go “exploring” after the others had gone to sleep.

The frightening thing was that no matter how long they kept going down the flights of stairs from the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor dorm hall they occupied, they could not seem to find the ground floor landing.

Even more sinister was that they kept passing the same eerie painting of Christ at each floor landing, over and over again.

## **College of Saint Benilde**

**This happened few years ago in the College of Saint Benilde.**

During an early morning class, a girl dressed all in black entered room M-409 where a class was going on. The class didn't mind the girl, thinking that she was only sitting in. Suddenly, in the middle of the teacher's lecture, the girl stood up, walked towards the front wall and, to the shock of everyone, vanished into the blackboard.

The incident , which was reported in the school paper, still scares students who take classes in the said room.

## **Feati University**

**At 10 pm one night, one ROTC cadet was relieving himself in one of the comfort rooms** at the third floor of the Paterno building.

He was just about finished when he made out the unmistakable figure of a woman dressed in white floating in the air. The vision made him scream in intense fright, catching the attention of his other companions. Upon their arrival, the ghostly apparition

tion was still there.

It was seven in the evening at another instance, when a janitor getting ready to go home noticed a mysterious lady enter one of the restrooms at the third floor. He followed the lady to warn her that the part of building was strictly prohibited. He entered the restroom and saw no one there.

According to stories, the Paterno Building, which had existed even before the outbreak of World War II, was used as a garrison by the Japanese during the war. □

*\*All the names of characters in the book have been changed to protect the privacy of the individuals.*

*\*\* If YOU have any ghost stories, feel free to share them with us. Email us at [psicom@vasiu.com](mailto:psicom@vasiu.com)*

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