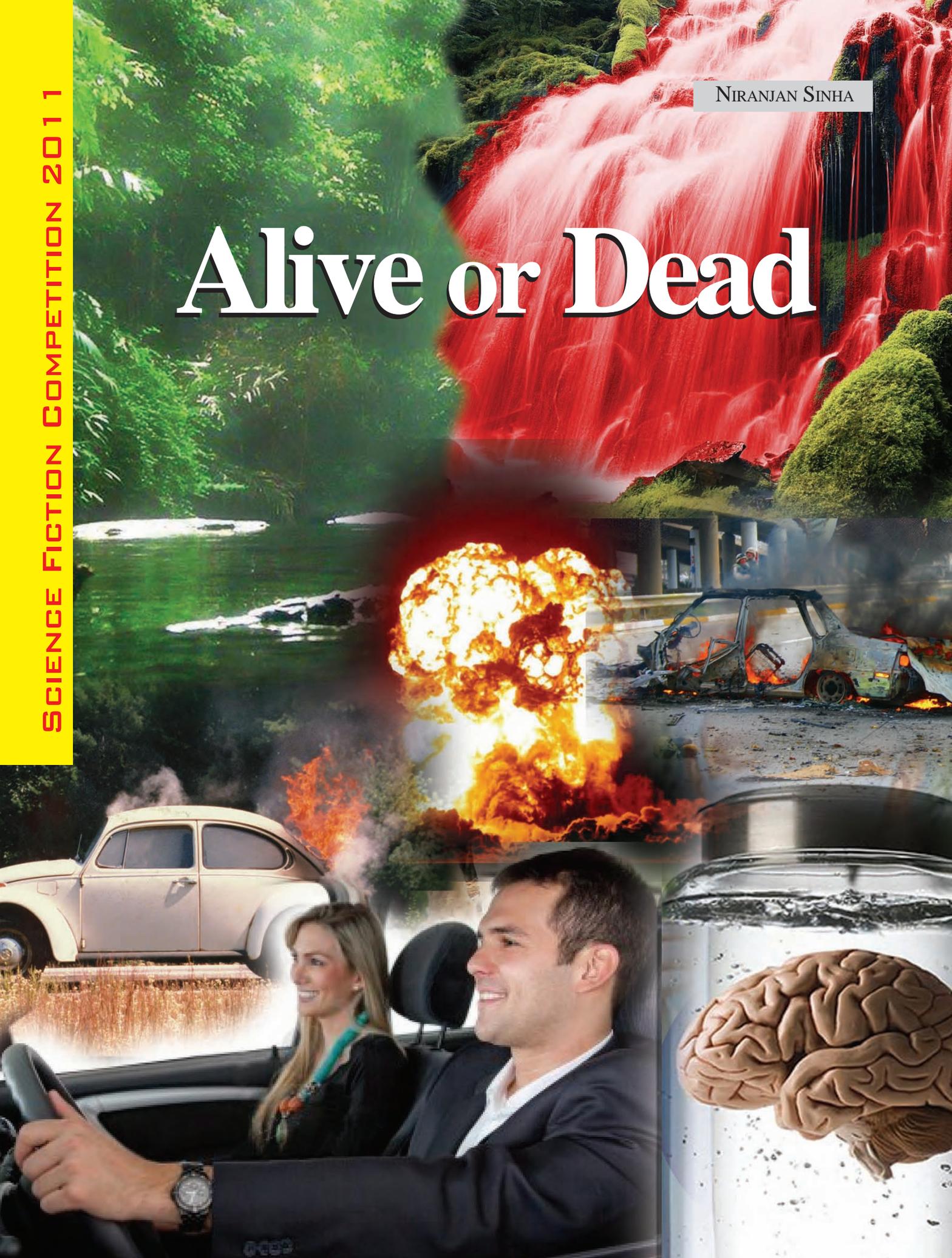


SCIENCE FICTION COMPETITION 2011

NIRANJAN SINHA

Alive or Dead



Am I in a hospital bed? Is my head is plastered and my eyes, face, ears, nose all under the plaster? No, I do not think so. Plaster cannot be done in that manner..

SUDDENLY I have a feeling that I have lost something. Something very vital, but I am not sure what it is. Moreover, I can only make out that I am captive at a place where light, sound or odour cannot penetrate. A very peculiar world that is completely colourless, soundless and odourless. I do not know why I have been kept in such a place. I do not even know who has kept me there and for what purpose. Who are they? Are they my friends or foes? I am thinking ceaselessly but am not able to reach any conclusion.

I try thinking about the outside world, try to recollect my relatives, my home, my town, but all is blank. I try to remember my name, sometimes it flashes in my mind, but again it is lost in a moment. I try to think about my age. I feel it may be twenty-four years or may be less than that, or may be more. I do not know why all these things are coming into my mind? May be this is an outcome of the environment and exclusive loneliness. Why am I imprisoned? Where have they kept me? Is this place on the face of the Earth? Or is it under the bottomless pit of the ocean? Or have they thrown me in to the deep space? I do not know, but I *have* to know everything, otherwise I will go mad. Really, I am horrified now.

I cannot remember the past, which is almost hazy. I can only remember a horrible sound of an explosion, which may be an accident, but I am not very sure. I try to concentrate, to recover the memory of that particular moment, but this attempt only stops my thought-process. I can only feel that I am drowning in the oblivion. I can only assess that after the explosion, I might have lost my sight and thrown into the world of darkness, or am I dead? But a dead man cannot think, but I am thinking. Sometime I feel very weak, but the dead cannot feel anything.

Yes...something more flashes before me. I think that before that horrible sound of explosion, Runa and me were riding in my small but beautiful solar-powered car. Runa is my girl friend. I am a rough driver. Runa used to complain about that, but I know she also enjoyed the thrill of rough

driving. On that particular day, Runa had already cautioned me against driving in such a dangerous manner, but I did not care. I believe that the accident was not due to my rough driving. Accidents do happen and nobody can prevent an accident. Is it so?

I feel, if there was an accident, then definitely Runa was also injured, but it is a funny thing that nobody told me anything about Runa's condition. Nobody also enquired about me, about my health, as if I have got no friend, no relative, nobody in this world. But it is not so. I feel something has happened, which is very serious, but I am not able to guess what it is.

Am I in a hospital bed? Is my head is plastered and my eyes, face, ears, nose all under the plaster? No, I do not think so. Plaster cannot be done in that manner.

Sometimes, I feel tired. This may be due to anxiety and tension. Sometimes all the earthly thinking is lost, un-earthly scenes are reflected on the screen of my mind. Whether they come from my sub-conscious mind or they come from another world, I am not able to identify.

I feel that I am walking through a deep old forest. It seems that I am the first man who has entered into this ancient deep forest. It is such a dense forest that the rays of the sun are afraid of entering into it. Dark, completely dark, but still I can feel the old trees standing there for centuries. I am afraid some mysterious beast is going to jump upon me from the very darkest corner of the forest.

At every step I am feeling the horror of a bodyless spirit or something very much unknown to me, which is trying to influence my consciousness. I am feeling helpless. The next moment I feel that a storm starts and the forest is in turmoil, but that heavy storm is not able to touch me. In the flash of lightning that horrific object suddenly becomes visible. It is after me. Suddenly, the whole old dark and deep forest with all its horrors just vanishes like magic!

I feel that I am standing in a vast barren field, where no man has ever stepped on. There is a small narrow stream, but there is no water, instead, fresh blood is flowing through the stream. Again

I am horrified. On another occasion, I am standing on a mountain that is covered with white snow. I am the only living creature there. The environment is so good and pleasant making me feel extremely happy.

Everywhere I walk, there is snow, white and super-white snow. Then there are also various kinds of flowers, red, blue, green, yellow, violet etc., all the colours are reflected in the background of white snow. But the most peculiar thing is that there is no plant. A long stick has come out of the snow and on the top of the stick a flower is perched. An unknown aroma is coming out of the flowers. The aroma is intoxicating. I feel as if I am moving through the strange Garden of Eden.

I am definite now that gradually there has been serious change in my inner-self. I do not know whether it is good or bad! But the change is a fact. Now I seem to getting back some power, some energy...slowly. Now I feel I am beginning to understand my identity. But then why am I so nervous, why so much afraid? Why am I am shivering?

'To Know Thyself' is the highest and practically the end of knowledge, which a man wants to acquire. After that there is nothing to know. Then reaching that point why am I so scared? Is it not worth to come across the ULTIMATE KNOWLEDGE?

But with this new knowledge I am now feeling completely helpless. Now I know my identity... I am not a human being!

I am an organ of a human being, but without the human body. Of course, I am a very vital organ. I am going to weep, but my tears will never touch the mother Earth, my sorrows will never be communicated to the other human beings, this will affect me and me only, because I AM A LIVING BRAIN, kept in a nice glass jar.

I am not yet dead, because they are nourishing me artificially. Perhaps, after the car accident they could salvage only my brain, which was still then alive. Alive! I do not know exactly whether I am ALIVE or DEAD or IMMORTAL!

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