

Fire in the Hole!

By Hanna Shirin Kermanshahi

I never liked those “thrilling” rides. I am terrified of roller coasters. You see, I have what I like to call a phobia of amusement parks. The very thought of my school offering tickets to Bell’s for a fieldtrip fills my mind with dread. Because of this, I’m usually stuck at a bench by “The Octopus,” my friends skipping, worry-free, through the gate of a ride that makes me sick just looking at it.

Well, there was a time when my family went to Branson, Missouri, for vacation. And, of course, as luck would have it, my family was going to spend a day at the amusement park there. As usual, as we walked through the park gates, my first thoughts were, *Okay, no sweat. I’ll just boycott all the rides, help Mom with the little ones, and hey, at least there’s cotton candy!* Staring wide-eyed at the huge, swinging pendulums, the coaster carts shooting forward and backward, and the spinning and twirling cups, I gulped.

“I hope.”

Throughout most of the day, I’d stood firm in my knowing that, if any ride’s speed accelerated to more than about five miles an hour with me on it, the air would be filled with an ear-piercing scream. So, to save half the visitors’ ears, I’d stayed safe, close by my mother’s side, where no one would beg me to brave “just this one ride!” But then they had to ask me. Dad and big sis, Rebecka, just had to manipulate me into going on that ride. After much pleading from the two, I, the innocent eight-year old, finally agreed to try the ride called “Fire in the Hole.”

Timidly inching my way to the entrance, I trembled, inside and out. But of course, every time I get myself out of the mess, Rebecka would quickly respond with a, “It’s not scary, trust me.”

Finally seated in the carts, I was even more nervous, because while I’d been waiting in line, I’d thought that I would suddenly race down the steps back to my mother, where I could finish my cotton candy. But now, there was no escape.

Not soon enough, the ride began at a slow, breezy pace as far as I could tell. As the ride went on, the speed barely increased. Now, it just so happens, that every time a petrified child rides ‘Fire in the Hole’ for the first time, she’s just starting to think, *Oh, this isn’t so bad, after all*, when the poor kid experiences the first drop. Well, that’s what happened to me. At the first drop, I clung to my father, screaming in his ear.

“DADDY!!!!!” The deafening cry filled the tunnel and echoed endlessly.

“Don’t make me do that again! It’s not going to happen again, is it, Daddy?” I panicked.

“No, no, it’s not...” he soothed. “Well... just a couple more times.” At that very moment, another screech was again heard.

“NOOOOOO!!!!!” That was my reaction to the second drop. “Daddy, Dad,” I panted, “I can’t do it again! *Please* don’t make me do it again! Just get me *off* this thing!” Instantly, the final burst of speed came with a

“Fire in the hole!” That was, without a doubt, the longest, most unbearable drop of all. And again, the same

“DADDY!!!!!” rang out through the ‘hole.’

Finally, the ride ended, and I sat there, dazed, my whole body shaking with fear. I was humiliated. Never in my life had I made such a noise. But what was the most humiliating part of the whole ride, you ask? In the first cart, just in front of me, sat my grandparents, unmoved.