

**E**XHIBITIONS always fascinate me. The crowd, the noise, the gay atmosphere and the bargains. It is like being in a big super bazar where you can get anything—from bangles to Pochampalli sarees.

Though my husband was not very keen I persuaded him with a variety of arguments, the most compelling of which was that I had made up my mind to go anyway.

At the exhibition, my two kids were thoroughly enjoying themselves with their quota of candies, balloons and toys. I had my hands full too and it was my husband who suggested that we should round off the visit by going to the entertainment section. My son was all excitement but his initial reaction got watered down to mild apprehension when he saw the Merry-go-round whirling at great speed with shouting and gesticulating adults.

"It is more fun to watch", said my son diplomatically, trying to hide his fright but we were out to make him shed his timidity. We moved on to the next section and my husband said to my son, "Look at all the children on the giant-wheel. There is nothing to it". My husband was trying to inject some courage into the boy but he clung to my saree and wouldn't budge from his determination not to go on the moving wheel.

"This kind of timidity will do him no good when he grows up," said my husband. "Just imagine a college students demonstration in which he is sulking in the background. He

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needs a dose of courage and now is the time to give it."

He turned to my son and said, "Look at your younger sister. She is brave and ready to go up the giant wheel". That was a vulnerable point and his male ego having been hurt, my son said "all right" rather re-

# Getting butterflies in the stomach

By Mini

signedly. But he clung close to us, tenaciously.

After a wait at the make-shift counter we were safely lodged in one of those swinging seats which, in spite of their sturdy looks, always give me a feeling of instability. Even at

that late time my son was pleading with his father to withdraw from what must have been a foolhardy misadventure to him. My husband, stern-faced, said: "Don't worry. I am here and after just one round you will feel on top of the world. You will want to go up again and again".

As the seats went up one notch after another to accommodate the other waiting people, I was sorry to see my son's face white with fear. He was desperately clinging to both of us and waiting for the worst to happen. Finally, when the giant-wheel with its full complement of passengers started rotating, my son let out a scream. It got drowned in the screams from other children and teen age girls. "Just shout and let go steam," my husband said, taking the cue from the others and it worked like magic. As the wheel inexorably picked up speed, my son let go of us and holding to the cross-bar with one hand, was waving and shouting and thoroughly enjoying himself. I was glad that the transformation was so swift and complete.

Shifting my eyes to my husband I was appalled to see his face. His eyes were closed and his left hand was fiercely gripping the sides of the seat while with his right he was holding his forehead in the manner of



one afflicted by sea-sickness. I could see he was shaken and as the wheel went up and "dropped" with speed, his face looked like it had been drained of all blood. "Don't shout," he shouted at my son and the agony of the ups and downs was clearly reflected on his face. "What is the matter, daddy," asked my son innocently. "You also shout like I do and you will also enjoy yourself". My husband stared in anger at my son and as we reached the apogee for the umpteenth time he closed his eyes waiting for the ordeal to end. At last, it did come to an end.

I kept a discreet silence and waited for his nerves and tension to touch normalcy. I cautioned my son to keep silent for a while, as I was afraid that in his irrepresible mood he might say something and get slapped.

My husband broke the ice. "You know, there is no guarantee that the nuts and bolts are in their proper places. If something goes wrong we will all be catapulted through space. It is not safe to send children up the giant-wheel because..."

"You get butterflies in the stomach," I completed and in return, got a cold stare which foretold the coming tantrums!