



ANAB'S
MIDNIGHT
HORROR...

A true story

Zainab's Midnight Horror

Zainab awoke in the middle of the night feeling uncomfortably warm and thirsty. The heat in India's monsoon season made sleeping through the night almost impossible. Her husband, Saifuddin, however lay sound asleep next to her.

Zainab thought that a cold glass of water might help so she got up and quietly crept to the kitchen. She didn't switch the lights on as the moonlight was streaming in through the open grills and was enough to guide her. The cold

tiled floor felt good under Zainab's warm feet so Zainab lingered a little bit longer.

It was then that she saw a small shadow dart down the wall towards her. Zainab instinctively stepped back but felt something soft under her foot and then a sharp pain pulsating through her foot and up her leg. The glass in her hand fell crashing to the ground as she tried to steady herself. She looked down and saw a small lizard scurrying away with deadly markings on its back. Zainab knew then that she had been bitten by a poisonous lizard.

Already Zainab was beginning to feel light-headed. She had to get to Saifuddin. He would know what to do as he treated patients for ailments in their village. Zainab tried to make

her way back to the bedroom but the venom was making her feel groggy. She knocked the stand on which the matki was placed bringing it crashing to the ground. The loud noise awoke Saifuddin who came running out of the bedroom towards Zainab.

“Lizard...poisonous...bite...foot,” stammered Zainab as she saw Saifuddin.

Saifuddin understood immediately what had happened. He quickly led Zainab to the couch and sat her down. He ripped a piece of cloth from Zainab’s dupatta and bound her foot tight to stop the venom from spreading. Then he told Zainab to keep herself awake and not to succumb to the sleepiness from the venom.



Zainab tried but was already beginning to doze off.

Saifuddin was worried. He knew that if Zainab fell asleep she may not ever wake up. He had to keep her awake until first light when he could take her to the hospital. The heavy rains at night now made travel impossible. He threw cold water on Zainab to revive her and awoke their four children, telling them to make as much noise as possible to keep their mother awake. All four children smashed steel pots and pans together near their mother and tried to talk with her and play games with her to keep her from falling asleep.

At first light, Saifuddin bundled the whole family into their small car and drove as fast as the

bumpy roads would allow him to. The hospital staff knew Saifuddin so rushed to attend to Zainab administering her with anti-venom. Within a few hours Zainab was back at home, feeling tired, but otherwise ok.

“No more midnight strolls in the dark for me,” she whispered to Saifuddin as they turned in that night. But Saifuddin was already fast asleep!