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Woman held for allegedly poisoning husband

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Children are bundles of joy and every man craves to be a father, wanting to return home every day and welcomed. For those who knew him enough, that was what forty-year-old Zarma Ali Musa was yearning for, too, which was unfortunately short-lived as he died after taking poisoned 'Kunun Tsamiya' (tamarind porridge), which was allegedly given to him by his wife of eight years.

The atmosphere at the family house of the late Zarma Ali Musa, a taxi driver, was sober during the week. Late Musa had decided to take a second wife after eight years of marriage which did not produce any issue. But it did not go down well with his wife. Allegedly, it was claimed that after several attempts by Fati to convince her **husband** not to take a second wife failed, she then decided to poison him.

Neighbours said very early that fateful Saturday morning, Fati was said to have prepared the porridge for her unsuspecting **husband**. The deceased started complaining of stomach upset immediately after taking it and so could not make it to the venue of the wedding. His friends and well-wishers who had planned to accompany him went on and contracted the marriage on his behalf, our correspondents learnt. It was also discovered from relations that Musa married Fati after an earlier marriage of hers had failed. "They had no child and the **husband** had been planning to get married to another woman who would bear him a child, but she had always opposed him," a source close to the family said.

In contrast to what neighbours said earlier about the incident, a sibling of the deceased, Aisha Muhammed, told Weekly Trust that her late brother was given the porridge at night before the wedding and was rushed to the hospital when he started complaining of stomach pains before he was confirmed dead on the morning of the wedding. Aisha said late Musa always complained to her about several threats from his wife anytime he thought of taking a second wife. "I've been advising him to disregard her statements because women can say a lot of rubbish whenever it comes to the issue of polygamy because of jealousy," she said.

She recalled, "On the day of wushewushe, (a Kanuri traditional event usually carried out on the eve of the wedding solemnization, where the bride is usually decorated with henna), he came to my house and said 'my wife said that if I was bent on marrying a new wife, then I would not live to witness it.' Again, I advised him to disregard her threats. So I went along with him to our family house where arrangements were been concluded for us to go and attend the wushewushe at the bride's family house. I went in to my mother's room, which is located beside the room occupied by my late brother's wife. I told my mother to bring out the wrappers kept in her possession, which were meant to be handed over to the bride's family. Fati, who was within earshot, grumbled. And I looked back saying there is nothing she can do."

Aisha also said that on the eve of the wedding, Fati called the deceased: "I went close and stood outside the room with one of my In-laws. We could hear her urging him to drink something. When he came out, he coughed a bit, but I did not suspect anything because I thought whatever transpired in the room was between **husband** and wife. So, I called him aside and asked what she told him. He said she did not tell him anything, but gave him some porridge to drink. I scolded him for drinking it. Immediately, he started coughing, saying he felt like he wanted to vomit and went into the toilet. After staying for a while, he came out trembling. I then asked him whether he was having diarrhea. Then he asked 'was it kunu that Fati gave me to drink?'"

"We decided to take him to a hospital but she was against it. Bintu, my elder sister, insisted that we must take him to the hospital. While we were outside discussing how to take him to the hospital, she then told our mother not to agree with us. She said she knows a mullah who can cure him and told our mother to take him there, saying she was going to call one of her friends who would serve as guide. But we all refused and my brothers took him to a private hospital," Aisha added. According to her, the deceased was later confirmed to have died of poison by doctors at the hospital after the wedding was contracted on his behalf.

According to some female family sources who spoke to our correspondents, the accused was anxious after the incident. "When his body was brought and doctors told the family that he was poisoned, we the female members

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of the family became angry because she had always threatened to deal with him.”

She said male members of the family were against their decision to report the issue to the police, saying we should hand over everything to God Almighty. “But we insisted that if they think that they are entitled to take decisions regarding our late brother, we also have the right to decide on the issue. We insisted that she must be made to pay for her action,” she said.

On hearing of the death of Musa, the new bride, Falmata fainted. According to family sources, Falmata is at present on admission at the private hospital where late Zarma was first rushed to. She was unconscious for three days. Weekly Trust learnt that the bride’s father has vowed to take up the matter. It was also disclosed that as at last week Wednesday when some members of the deceased’s family went to visit her at the hospital, her condition had improved.

All efforts to speak to Fati, the suspect as at the time of filing this report was unsuccessful as our reporters were prevented from seeing her at the state police headquarters where she is presently being **held**. While the State Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), ASP Isah Azare, said investigations are still going on to determine if the suspect actually poisoned her **husband**, he added that the police are yet to receive a medical report from the doctor who examined the deceased.

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