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My wife's best pal

Sanjay K Bose

My senile computer makes weird noises when it actually works. However, it has never been known to have slithered, only that I did hear slithering noises when I switched it on to check on my emails, early in the morning.

Closer investigation revealed a snake neatly tucked between the computer and the fridge, giving me a rather nasty look, being disturbed from its beauty sleep so early. Not being the strong and silent type, my screams at discovering the snake were probably heard for miles. They did succeed in getting my wife up who generously volunteered to keep an eye on the restive reptile while I went to call up the campus security for help.

When I came back, I discovered my wife warily watching a blameless expanse of the living room floor without a trace of the repulsive reptile. Without her glasses or her contact lenses, asking her to watch anything, was indeed asking for trouble. Only that, by now the problem was compounded by the fact that we did not know where the reptile had vanished. The security people who responded to my SOS call, were obviously old hands at this and soon discovered the snake under the fridge.

They took care of the snake all right but when they left, our house looked like a battlefield. The fridge lay on its side like a mortally hurt warrior oozing milk, eggs and the previous night's leftovers from its wounds. Of course, it has never ever been the same ever since.

I should be thankful and grateful to God that the episode went as smoothly as we didn't really expect it to. Interestingly, in a virtual preview that took place some time ago, the security guys summoned to kill the snake turned out to be apostles of non-violence and men of great religious fervour. Thus, after upbraiding me for my violent tendencies, they almost went to the extent of prostrating themselves before the ugly reptile. I was so greatly touched by the whole incident that I never quite agreed with my wife's unkind assessment about their hidden fear which kept them from going near the two large snakes I had discovered.

My wife, of course, is more experienced than I am in such matters. One can say she has mastered the art of yelling whenever she happens to spot her best pals, I mean the creepy crawlies, irrespective of size, shade and age.

Once on spotting one such pal, she almost hit the roof. Only that the neighbours had other ideas and almost got me arrested for domestic violence, luckily the cockroach who caused this mayhem escaped quietly.

Of course, my darling daughter and I have got used to this by now, so when she screamed from the bathroom one evening, some years ago, the first thought that occurred to us was, whose slippers would we use to dispatch the insect. When I did get there, armed with my wife's sandal, I discovered her sharing the bathroom with a small python that had calmly draped itself across the doorway. Apparently, she did not notice it when she entered the dark bathroom. No wonder she got a shock of her life when she switched on the lights. Walking past it was not something she was willing to risk, not even with me giving her moral support armed with one of her own sandal.

I have had my fill of snakes with my morning tea and would be quite happy if I do not have to face one of my wife's so called pal ever again. All I can say is, the next time I bump into one, I'll probably sleep through such episodes with dogged determination.



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