

# The wedding day WARNING

*I'd never liked my niece's husband, but I was shocked when she told me the secret he'd been hiding. Little did I know, he was capable of much worse.*

**By Nour Norris, 43**

around the corner from each other and she came over most days and cooked for me, my husband and our four kids.

As we all sat down to enjoy the delicious meal, Khawla sighed and said: 'I wish Raneem was here to join us.'

Raneem was her 19-year-old daughter. She was still in Syria, and Khawla missed her desperately.

I missed her too. When she'd been a baby, I'd loved looking after her. I'd fed and dressed her, and she'd played with my hair as she'd napped.

But, just a few days later, Khawla texted me a photo of my niece holding her passport and visa with a message that read: *Raneem's moving to the UK!*

I was ecstatic. Soon after, we gathered at Khawla's house while she and her husband went to collect Raneem from the airport. When they pulled up outside, we waited at the front door excitedly.

We all cheered as it swung open and Raneem bounded in. 'Raneem, you look amazing!' I

said, hugging her.

As we caught up, she told me she was enrolling on an English course at the local college.

She started soon after and settled in quickly, making lots of friends.

But Khawla told me one person, Janbaz Tarin, wanted more than just friendship. Although Raneem wasn't interested, he bombarded her with calls and messages.

It was only when she met and married someone else that he finally left her alone. She fell pregnant, but by the time her son was born, her marriage had broken down.

Janbaz got back in touch and began pestering her again until, eventually, she agreed to go out with him. But Khawla was worried.

'I've asked to meet him,' she said. 'I'll come with you,' I told her.

When we met Janbaz and Raneem in a café, I immediately understood my sister's concerns. Janbaz held his head high, like he was looking down on us, and I didn't like his coldness and arrogance.

Although we couldn't understand what she saw in him, Raneem soon announced they were getting married.

We tried to talk her out of it,

but her mind was set. So all we could do was support her the best we could and try to be happy for her.

On their big day, I was surprised when I realised Janbaz's parents weren't there.

At first, Raneem looked happy, but by the end of the evening's celebration, her smile had faded.

'Is everything OK?' I asked.

She shook her head and repeated what Janbaz had just told her.

'Now you're my wife, the day you leave me is the day I kill you,' she recited.

'Raneem!' I gasped, horrified.

I'd been worried about her before, but now I was terrified.

Not long after the wedding, Janbaz travelled to his native

Afghanistan. But Raneem became concerned when she couldn't contact him.

In the end, she called his dad, and was hit with a bombshell.

Although Janbaz had told Raneem he was divorced with three kids, that wasn't true.

'He's still married!' Raneem sobbed. 'That's why his parents weren't at our wedding — he didn't have their blessing. And



Raneem called the police 13 more times. Then, on Khawla's advice, she took out a non-molestation order, meaning Janbaz had to stay away.

Finally, she began enjoying life again.

One evening, she and Khawla popped round to mine before going out for dinner at a shisha bar, and they both seemed in good spirits.

'Have fun!' I said as they left.

But soon after I'd gone to bed, my husband shook me awake and said: 'Janbaz has attacked Raneem.'

It had happened outside Khawla's house. Her husband had called to tell us, so I sprang

out of bed and raced over there.

When I arrived, the road looked like something out of a film — police cars were everywhere and flashing blue lights blinded me.

My heart was hammering as I spotted paramedics doing CPR on Raneem in the back of an ambulance.

Something was terribly wrong. Why wasn't the ambulance rushing Raneem to hospital? And what about Khawla?

'Where's my sister?' I cried, my eyes darting around for her. Hands held me back and I was led into the house.

Then an officer came inside and said: 'I'm so sorry, they've both gone.'

The shock was overwhelming. I felt numb.

They'd died from multiple stab wounds from a 12-inch

knife, after Janbaz had attacked them outside the house. Khawla was 49, and Raneem just 22.

Janbaz had fled the scene and it was three days before police found him, hiding in the storeroom of a shop, where he was arrested and charged with two counts of murder.

Our hearts broken, we laid Khawla and Raneem — mother and daughter — to rest in a joint funeral.

In time, Janbaz Tarin, 21, of Sparkhill, Birmingham, appeared at Birmingham Crown Court and admitted murdering my beloved

sister and niece.

The court heard he'd followed them to the shisha bar, where he'd slapped Khawla, grabbed Raneem's phone, then threatened to kill her.

CCTV footage showed him making a throat-cutting gesture.

Over the next two hours, Raneem contacted the police four times, and I listened as the court played her 999 calls.

'I'm terrified he's going to kill me,' she told the operator.

On her way back to Khawla's, she phoned again, begging for help, and was told that officers would visit her in the morning.

Then, on her final call, we heard her screaming as Janbaz jumped out from the bushes and began his frenzied attack.

When Khawla had stepped in to protect her daughter, it was her final act of love, as she was then stabbed to death.

Sitting in court, listening to their final moments was torture.

Janbaz was jailed for life to serve a minimum of 32 years, for what the judge called a 'brutal and heart-rending' attack. The case was then referred to the police watchdog for an investigation.

Afterwards, the grief hit me, and I didn't stop crying for two weeks.

Compounding my sadness, my marriage broke down. But I had to be strong, and enrolled at university to train as a counsellor, wanting to understand why some humans were capable of such terrible things.

When the jury-inquest began, West Midlands Police were found responsible for multiple failings, including not safeguarding Raneem, nor conducting a proper risk assessment. Incidents had been treated as one-offs, and a total of 36 officers hadn't logged Raneem's cries for help.

My sister and niece had been failed.

I don't want their deaths to be in vain, so I've launched my campaign — SecureLife: A future free from fear — to ensure every officer is trained to respond to domestic violence.

The pain of losing my big sister and my beautiful niece will never go away, but I'll do all I can to protect other women.

