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WORLD RABIES DAY - 28th SEPTEMBER

STORY

A Midnight Mercy: The Humane Euthanasia of a Rabid Dog

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In the silent, rain-soaked hours of a late monsoon night in Hazaribagh, a distress call broke the stillness. Local residents, frightened and helpless, reported the alarming condition of a familiar stray dog, a once-friendly soul who had become aggressive, confused, and visibly ill. He had collapsed near a local restaurant where he was often seen lounging during the day, a place where he was lovingly fed by the restaurant's owner, Mr. Navjyoti.

This dog wasn't just another stray. To the people in the neighborhood, he was a gentle companion, a constant presence in the daily rhythm of their lives. Mr. Navjyoti, in particular, had formed a quiet bond with him over the years, offering food and occasional pats. But now, the dog's behavior had drastically changed. He was foaming at the mouth, growling without reason, and lunging at people unpredictably. Tragically, before collapsing, the dog had bitten at least 20 people, including children and the elderly.

Veterinarian Dr. Deepak Kumar, known for his dedication to animal welfare, arrived on the scene with his team. The dog, a brown mongrel with glazed eyes and trembling legs, was showing all the signs of advanced rabies. Though the dog occasionally calmed down, it quickly reverted to aggressive and unstable behavior. The clinical signs, including excessive drooling, erratic movements, confusion and partial paralysis, strongly indicated an advanced stage of rabies. There was no doubt the symptoms matched late-stage rabies, a condition where the virus has already reached the brain. By this point, there is no treatment, no cure, only suffering.

Faced with the dog's suffering and the growing public danger, Dr. Kumar made the difficult decision to perform euthanasia. It wasn't just a medical choice; it was an act of mercy. Rabid animals endure unbearable pain, and allowing them to live not only prolongs their torment but also puts many lives at risk. Dr. Kumar stressed that while euthanasia may seem cruel, it is in fact a deep act of compassion when an animal is suffering with no chance of recovery, and when public safety is at risk.

At 2:17 AM, under the dim glow of streetlights, the dog was gently euthanized. As the dog's breathing slowed and eventually stopped, the team paused for a moment of silence, not just to honor the

life lost, but to acknowledge the deep sadness of a preventable tragedy. A moment of silence followed, honoring both his life and the lives that may have been saved. Mr. Navjyoti, visibly heartbroken, stood by, a man who had once cared for the dog now witnessing his final moments.

Rabies kills thousands every year in the country, even though it is entirely preventable. Organizations and municipal bodies are working through sterilization and vaccination programs like Animal Birth Control (ABC), but more support and public awareness are needed.

While the dog's story ended in sorrow, it also serves as a reminder: true compassion includes preventing suffering, even when it means making the hardest decisions.