

Chapter 19

Sumayah felt satisfied by the thought that she had done her best to guide Hamid.

Ahmad approved of her efforts. He wrote to her, "...remember that struggle does not only mean war. You have managed to guide a deviated person."

One day, Sumayah visited Ahmad's mother and Hamid happened to see her enter the house. He waited at the roadside until she came out, and he said, "Excuse me. I don't want to annoy you, but I must talk with you."

"What do you want to talk about and why do you follow me?" demanded Sumayah.

Hamid said, "In fact, I would like you to talk and I will listen to you. I have found great comfort in your previous words."

Sumayah then asked, "What does your conscience tell you?"

"It tells me to reform; to give up vices and stick to the right path," was Hamid's reply.

"That is what I had expected would happen. Your inner goodness has been awakened", Sumayah confirmed.

Hamid complained, "Yet, I still feel as if I am lost."

Sumayah answered, "Why do you have such doubt? You based your worth on money. Now your money can serve you. It won't control your life." She then suggested him to read a few books. The bus arrived and Sumayah began to board it.

Hamid begged her to stay a bit longer to talk more.

Sumayah shook her head saying, "You should start reading those books, and you will learn a lot."

"Can I have your address to contact you when I face a difficulty?" Hamid asked.

"Oh no. That's not possible," she replied.

"But I feel as if you are my saviour. You are the light that illuminated my inner soul. I have much to tell you." Hamid pleaded.

Sumayah looked at him questioningly, "Such as...?"

"Well, private matters that I can't speak about at the roadside", Hamid said.

Sumayah boarded the bus and advised him, "I suggest you keep on reading worthy books. I am sure you shall learn a great deal."

Hamid stood at the bus stop for a moment, deep in thought. He wondered why he didn't follow her in order to learn where her house was. Was it dignity or honesty that stopped him? He went into a nearby bookshop, bought some books and returned home.

Looking through the window, Fitnah saw Hamid enter carrying a package. She thought the parcel was clothing. She never imagined that her husband would buy books one day. In the past few weeks Fitnah had noticed a change in her husband's behaviour. He stayed alone in his room more often than usual and seemed to have given up attending clubs, parties and theaters. She was at a loss to explain his new conduct. Fitnah reasoned that even his failure to get Sumayah could not have caused such a change. Fitnah also noticed that her maid, Nadia, had become pale and quiet. She was glad to see Nadia suffering from jealousy.

She called her to get some information. "Now Nadia, I want you to be frank. Tell me what are you hiding from me?"

Nadia looked surprised but said nothing.

"I have noticed that Hamid has been acting strangely recently," Fitnah remarked.

"What do you mean?" asked Nadia.

Fitnah said, "Oh don't play the fool. I know about the affair between you two. You know that I want to know everything about my husband. Now tell me what is the matter with him."

Nadia remained silent.

Fitnah persisted, "I won't tell him anything. I won't tell him you spy on him because it is in my interests that you do so."

Nadia began, "I only saw him by chance..."

Fitnah interrupted, "I know it was not by chance. Now tell me what you have seen."

"Well, I saw him in a park with a young lady. I could not believe my eyes. She looked decent and

respectable, but..." Nadia hesitated.

"But what," Fitnah said with excitement.

Nadia told her, "I saw them again and he was listening to her talk."

Fitnah demanded to know, "What did they say?"

"How do I know," Nadia replied, "I was outside the park. Then I saw him once again with her at a bus stop."

"Did he give her a lift?" Fitnah questioned.

Nadia replied, "I didn't see since I left for fear he might see me."

"Thank you Nadia. Go now, and tell me everything about him that you learn in the future."

Fitnah was pleased at the news. She imagined that her revenge plan had succeeded. She anxiously awaited Ahmad's return so that she could congratulate him on his choice. She decided to leave her husband unquestioned until Ahmad returned. She then turned her thoughts to her new lover, the young engineer.

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