

Chapter 20

Hamid continued to read the books he had bought. Slowly he acquired spiritual and religious knowledge. He enjoyed reading the books Sumayah had recommended, and he hoped to meet her again. Wherever Hamid went, he took a book along with him.

The next time he visited the park he saw Sumayah again and greeted her politely. Hamid asked her to allow him to sit next to her and she did not object. Hamid began the conversation by saying, "I have read the books you advised me to read. They have given me much to think about."

"That is wonderful," Sumayah replied, "How do you feel now?"

"I feel as if I were newly born. All my ideals have changed," he said with passion.

Sumayah nodded approvingly, "That is good. Forget your past and think of the future."

"I am trying to rid myself of the past, but..." Hamid looked down.

"What is it?" Sumayah asked.

"My wife, whose ring saved me from a scandal when you refused to call the police. Her lifestyle reflects my past." Hamid replied slowly.

Sumayah inquired, "Can't you reform her?"

Hamid sighed, "I can hardly do that. She is quite deviated. She..."

Sumayah guessed, "Is she an unfaithful wife?"

"Yes. She is like a butterfly, always chasing her wishes and desires," Hamid confessed.

Sumayah thought for a moment and said, "An unfaithful wife is harmful for you. Why don't you give her up?"

Hamid said, "As a matter of fact. I love her."

Sumayah disagreed, "You are mistaken. If you truly loved her, you would not let her behave in such a way. You only feel the powerful influence of her physical beauty. You love your house, yet do you allow strangers access to it? You love your money, do you allow others to share it with you? This feeling towards her is not of love. Love is something sacred that overwhelms a pure, innocent soul. If you think carefully you will find that you actually dislike her because of how she is."

Hamid confessed, "I fear her."

Sumayah explained, "That means you do not love her. A lover does not fear his beloved. The weak fear the strong. Now you are no longer weak, because faith and virtue are stronger than vice and indecency. You are now a believer. Try to free yourself of her influence."

Hamid said, "As long as I am with her, I can't get rid of my past. I must leave her."

"I advise you to try to reform her," Sumayah said.

Hamid replied mournfully, "It is impossible."

Hamid changed the subject, "Can I ask who the old man was who was with you in the airport?"

"You saw me there?" Sumayah was surprised, "That was my father. We had gone to see off Ahmad."

"Who is this Ahmad you have just mentioned?" Hamid inquired.

"He is my fiancé. We are engaged," she answered.

Hamid was very amazed by this information and had much to think about as he slowly drove home.

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