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Part 5: An Obstacle

Warqa sat thinking of her friend's proposal. She asked herself happily, 'should I agree, and become her brother's wife? Will he help me to understand Islam and lead me to the right path? How lucky I am!' She almost scolded herself for not agreeing immediately, as no obstacle stood in the way. She spent some time daydreaming and then her grandmother awoke. Warqa assisted her and then she sat down, anxious to tell her the happy news. She began by saying, “Dr. Miyad has been here; she just left."

“Oh," said her grandmother indifferently.

“She had something special to ask me."

“What was that? " asked her grandmother.

“A marriage proposal."

Warqa's grandmother looked annoyed and said, “ What does it have to do with you?”

“It concerns her brother.”

“What relationship is there between you and her brother?" said her grandmother angrily.

Amazed at her anger, Warqa said, “She wants me to marry him."

“What was your answer?"

Warqa was confused by her attitude and told her, “I postponed the answer until I could consult you."

Her grandmother turned her face away and said, "No. This marriage must not take place."

"But why not, grandma?"

Her grandmother did not answer her, so Warqa insisted, "Why shouldn't it –please tell me why you disapprove, because I am convinced that I should accept this proposal." Still her grandmother didn't speak.

"Why don't you talk to me? Perhaps you are mistaken," said Warqa

"I am not mistaken," said her grandmother. "I know what I am saying and you must give up this idea. It will not happen, so do not mention it again."

Warqa was silent for a moment and then said, "Don't I have the right to know why? It is not easy for me to decide without knowing the reason for your refusal."

"Of course, you have the right to know. Are you ready to hear?"

Warqa nodded, and her grandmother said, "However, after hearing what I have to say, you must end your relationship with Dr. Miyad."

Warqa was shocked at the idea and said, "But why? She is my best friend!"

"Then don't insist upon knowing the reason."

After a moment Warqa agreed, "All right. I am ready to hear what you have to say." "When you were a child, your father died, as you know. But you never learned how he died. He had a good friend, and they decided to go into business together. They opened a workshop making unbreakable plates.

He was happy and optimistic about the business, but did not have the necessary funds. Because of his experience, your father's friend was to provide the technical skill. In order to raise the money for the project, your father had to sell half of the fertile land that he owned.

"However, the half was less than that officially approved for selling. So the landlord, Mr. Hamid, bought that half on the condition that the whole area be registered in his name. He was to give us half of the produce of the land, while your father retained the right to buy it back when the debt was repaid. The land could not be sold to anyone else, because it was in Mr.Hamid's name."

"The money was not sufficient for the workshop and your father mortgaged his house on the condition that Mr. Hamid would get half of the land's produce. Your father and his friend became the night watchmen for the factory. One morning, I went to the factory, where I saw a crowd of people at the entrance and a police car was parked there also.

I entered the building and to my surprise and horror, your father lay on the floor, dying. I rushed to his side. His partner was crying crocodile tears. I bent over your father to talk to him, but he did not speak. He was taken to the hospital and on the way he opened his eyes, looked at me and said the name of his murderer: Abdul Majid Muhammad Rajie, Dr. Miyad's father."

Shocked and dismayed, Warqa cried out, "Oh no, it could not be her father!"

"Yes, her father, I was one of the witnesses in court, but one witness was not enough proof. He proved to the court that he was not at the factory at any time that day that the murder occured. He lied and,

heated often. The crime was recorded as a robbery." "Was anything stolen?"

"Yes, of course," her grandmother replied. "Money and important documents were taken from a safe. So we lost the land and the right to buy it back, as well as the ownership of the house. Mr. Hamid managed to produce papers proving his ownership of the property, but we could not get it back. With regard to the house, Mr. Hamid has been patient and understanding all these years. He has an aim, but only God knows what it is.

"I knew that Abdul Majid had twins, a boy and a girl. That is why I asked the doctor what her father's name was. She ignored my question. I asked a nurse what Dr. Miyad's father's name was and she told me. Now, are you ready to marry the son of the man who murdered your father?"

Warqa bitterly replied, "I won't marry him, but I will remain friends with Dr. Miyad," she cried quietly and thought about her friend. She spent a very sad day thinking about all she had heard. She said to herself, 'what is their guilt in their father's crime? If their father was a criminal, why should they pay for his misdeed? What can I say to Dr. Miyad? How can I explain my refusal of her brother's proposal? Should I tell her the truth? Perhaps they know nothing about this matter; how can I explain it to them?"

She remembered that she was to meet Dr. Miyad the following day. She felt that if she lost the doctor's friendship, it would be a great loss. Warqa spent a sleepless night. The next morning she visited her grandmother, who was planning to leave the hospital the same day, without the doctor's permission. Warqa could not make her change her mind. She searched for Dr. Miyad, but to no avail. Dr. Miyad was on 24-hour leave. Warqa could not leave without saying good-bye to her dear friend, so she decided to write a letter to her to express her gratitude. She wrote:

Dear Dr. Miyad,
I don't know what to tell you. I am facing a dilemma and I can find no solution. My grandmother insists on leaving today, so there is no chance to see you. It is as if Almighty Allah has deprived me of His paradise. I am very sad and broken-hearted about my sudden departure. May Allah help me.

Please don't be angry about my behavior. I have been forced to act thusly. As for your brother, I hope he will find someone better be his wife. I have no particular reason for refusing him. It is just Allah's will.

If you still think of me as a sister, please write to me.

Your sincere sister Warqa

Warqa gave the letter to a nurse and begged her to give it to Dr. Miyad, than she left the hospital with her grandmother.

The days dragged on. Since her grandmother was not completely well. Warqa had to look after her in addition to attending to her college studies. She was sad and anxious to hear from Dr. Miyad. Her grandmother sometimes saw tears in Warqa's eyes, but she never asked about them. A week passed,

and a letter arrived from the doctor which said :

Dear Warqa,
Assalamu alaikum.

I was very stunned by your letter. Now that the shock is over, I am writing to you. It was hard for me to see you leave without a good-bye. I cannot give up your friendship so easily. You are like a sweet-smelling flower that should fill the spring air with its beautiful scent. If such a flower lacks the hand, which waters it and the shade, which keeps away the sun's rays, it may not blossom and may fade away before it fulfills its role in life.

I feel a spiritual pull towards someone who needs my help. It is my duty to respond, and I am ready to help. You have indeed become a sister to me, and you have brought me happiness. I wanted you to become my brother's wife, but suddenly, without any warning, you disappeared and left only a few written lines. The shock was too great to tolerate, so it took me some time to answer your letter.

I thought the matter over and found I must strengthen our friendship. You should know that I am still your loving sister. I won't ask for an explanation for fear it may hurt you. You are so dear to me. Please keep writing to me at the hospital address. May Allah keep you well and safe.

Miyad

Warqa felt a little happier after reading the letter. She decided not to tell her grandmother about the letter. That night, she wrote to her friend:

Dear Miyad,

God only knows how I long to see you and how sorry I am about this situation. I have indeed been thirsty and in need of water. I found a spring to give me water and it was you. Then time's cruel hand denied me water. I am again suffering from terrible loneliness, though I have always needed someone who would value my feelings; someone I can talk openly to and confide in, who can lead me on the right path and allow me to rest under his shade.

When I first saw you, I thought of you as the real sister of my dreams. I loved you and felt at ease with you. I really appreciated your friendship. Then life changed the game and I was deprived of you. I am again sad and lonely. Life is unkind to me - it takes whatever is dear to me and this war has no truce.

I suffered so until I received your letter this morning. It gave me hope again. You drew me towards yourself and then to my Creator, hence it is difficult to keep away from you. I rejoiced at your letter and learnt another lesson of sacrifice and unselfishness, a practical stance, which pays no heed to personal gain. I thank God first and then you, dear sister. I am still ready to meet with you at any time and anywhere that you suggest.

Your sister forever,

Warqa

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