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Part 8: A Conspiracy

Warqa felt better, since she thought she had put an end to the matter. She felt she had won that round of battle and she was in good spirits the next morning.

Her mood surprised her grandmother, who had expected her to be angry about the previous day's discussion. Warqa was anxious to see Dr. Miyad and tell her the details, but the doctor was busy with an urgent case and Warqa returned home. Her grandmother met her at the door and whispered," Go to your room and keep quiet."

Surprised, Warqa said, "What is the matter?"

"Sh! go up there quickly and don't come down until I call you."

Warqa went upstairs. She was disturbed, since she did not know what was upsetting her grandmother. She looked at her watch, which seemed to be standing still.

After an hour had passed, Warqa heard the front door close and her grandmother called her. Warqa went quickly downstairs and found her grandmother sad and pale.

Warqa was terrified. "What is wrong, grandma? By God, tell me what has happened!"

"Do you know who was just here?'

"It was Mr. Hamid, the man who took away our land."

"What did he want?"

"He wants his right to the mortgaged house. We have no papers to prove we repaid the money, since all the papers were stolen, as I told you. He said he had been waiting until you finished college. Now he wants his money, unless..." she left the sentence unfinished.

"Unless what?" asked Warqa.

"Unless you agree to marry his son. Then he would give us back the land and the house."

"What did you tell him?"

"Allah helped me give him the right answer. I told him that you are already engaged so that he would not think about it any more."

"How could you do that?" asked Warqa. "He will find out it is not true."

Her grandmother told her, "Now you must agree to Mahir as soon as possible. In any case, Mahir is much better than the landlord's playboy son."

Warqa moaned as if in pain and did not speak. After a while she said, "I won't marry Mahir. Let Mr. Hamid take everything–I don't want the land or the house. I will sacrifice all for the sake of my religion."

Her grandmother burst into exaggerated cries of despair. She insulted Warqa, using every unkind word she knew. Warqa tried hard to calm her and then she went to her room and lay on her bed, miserable and exhausted.

The next morning, Warqa did not come downstairs as usual. Her grandmother thought she was still sleeping, so she waited for some time before going up to her room to awaken her. She went up to Warqa's bed and called her softly, but she was shocked when she touched Warqa's hand and found it was hot and she saw that Warqa was taking quick, shallow breaths. Warqa opened her eyes and looked at her grandmother, who asked her quickly, "What is wrong Warqa dear?"

"I don't know."

"Shall I call a doctor?"

"Yes please. I don't feel well." Her grandmother did not know who to call, and she phoned Mr. Mahir to ask him to bring a doctor. She reached him at his office and told him, "Oh Mr. Mahir, please come quickly and help Warqa. She is very sick."

"What is the matter with her?" he asked rather indifferently.

"She is sick and needs a doctor. "

"Doctors are not in their clinics in the mornings."

"You can find one. Not all of them work in hospitals," Warqa's grandmother persisted.

"I am quite busy with some clients. Wait until the afternoon and if she is still sick, call me."

Distraught, Warqa's grandmother hung up the telephone. She tried some herbal remedies, but nothing helped Warqa. That afternoon, she telephoned Mahir again, but she was told that he had gone out of

town on business and would not be back until the next day. She recited some Qur'anic verses and different prayers by Warqa's beside.

In the evening Warqa's condition worsened, and her grandmother was at a loss as to what to do. She called Mahir's office, but in vain. She did not try to call anyone else, but when she saw how sick her granddaughter was, she cursed herself and said, “I have killed my granddaughter with my own hands! I must do something to save her."

She dialed the number of the hospital and asked to speak with Dr. Miyad. The nurse who had answered the telephone told her that the doctor was asleep, but Warqa's grandmother insisted upon speaking to her. The nurse promised to give the doctor Warqa's phone number and she hung up. The telephone rang almost immediately, and

Warqa's grandmother tearfully told the doctor about Warqa's condition, begging her to come quickly to save her.

Dr. Miyad noted her address and promised to come immediately.

After a short while the doorbell rang. Warqa's grandmother, forgetting all about her hatred, opened the door for Dr. Miyad and welcomed her. She showed the door to Warqa's room and Dr. Miyad expressed grave concern for Warqa's health. "I must have assistance," Dr. Miyad said.

"She is critically ill."

"Where can you find another doctor at this late hour?"

"My brother is in the car outside."

"Oh please ask him in. He may be able to save her," Warqa's grandmother urged.

Dr. Miyad asked her brother to come in. He examined Warqa and diagnosed her sickness. They agreed that she should be taken to the hospital, but Warqa's grandmother was terrified. "Is she that sick? Is she dying? Woe to me, I have killed her!"

The doctor said, "It is vitally important that she be taken to the hospital. Won't you agree?"

"Of course I will,” said the grandmother quickly.

An ambulance was requested and it soon came. Dr. Miyad promised to take care of Warqa and so her grandmother remained at home. Dr. Miyad reassured her and said she would stay in touch by phone.

Warqa responded well to treatment but she was still unconscious. Dr. Miyad and her brother were by Warqa's bed when they heard her murmur: "It is not possible that their father is a murderer...Oh, Miyad can't be the daughter of a killer ...please, grandma, make that silly man Mahir go away... let them have

the house...how can I refuse her brother, I only saw him twice...I don’t want...

Dr. Miyad looked pale and turned to her brother, "You heard what she said, didn't you?"

"Yes. It seems she had a reason for her refusal."

"What shall we do now?" asked Miyad.

"Let her recover first and we can settle the matter later.”

Two days later Warqa was much better and Miyad was in her room when she awoke and looked around in amazement. She saw her friend, but closed her eyes again in disbelief, thinking she was dreaming. Dr. Miyad took her hand and said, "How do you feel now, dear sister?"

Warqa opened her eyes and asked weakly, "Are you really Dr. Miyad, or am I dreaming?"

"Oh no, you are not dreaming. Thank God you are well again."

"Where is my grandmother? "

"She is at home. I told her I 'd take her place and stay with you. I will send for her now to come see you."

"How was I brought here?" Warqa asked.

"You are tired now, so rest. I will tell you all about it tomorrow. I will go phone your grandmother now.”

"Please don't leave me alone; I am afraid.”

"You are getting well. Why are you scared?”

"I am not afraid of sickness," Warqa explained, "I am afraid of people."

"I won't be away for long, just a few minutes."

At that moment the door was opened by her grandmother, who rushed toward her.

Dr. Miyad said, "She is all right and has asked about you." The grandmother kissed her gently and Warqa asked, "How did you get here, grandma?"

"The doctor who was with Miyad the day you became ill brought me.”

Dr. Miyad was proud of her brother and said, "My brother, Sinad, is wonderful, isn't he?"

Warqa didn't understand, so she closed her eyes and said nothing.

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