

Chapter 8

The next day, Sumayah told Ahmad about her relatives and mentioned Fitnah, saying, "She is my cousin. She is very beautiful; but I don't like her life- style."

Ahmad was surprised, since he knew that his fiancée's relatives were believers with good reputations.

Sumayah explained, "She grew up an orphan. Her father died when she was a child and my aunt spoiled her. She is carefree and careless. Fitnah married at a young age and went to Europe with her husband. They stayed there for three years and then returned home. Her husband failed to get his degree, but he is quite rich and can afford a luxurious life. My cousin has been misled by Western values and European civilization."

"Who is her husband?" Ahmad asked.

Sumayah replied, "I don't know him, but they say he is very rich."

"Wealth, ignorance and idleness are all dangerous factors, which can destroy a person" Ahmad said. Sumayah agreed, and added, "Beauty too. My cousin is very beautiful. I will show you her picture."

Sumayah brought out her photo album and selected one of the pictures. "This is Fitnah before she traveled to Europe."

Sumayah did not look at Ahmad's face, so she did not notice his surprise and dismay as he recognized the playgirl who, years ago, had tried to trap him. He wondered how such a girl could be in contact with, much less related to, his fiancée. He reflected that Fitnah probably remembered her failure and might harbour feelings of resentment. Ahmad was about to warn Sumayah to avoid her, but he hesitated, since Fitnah was now a married woman and was possibly leading a decent life.

He did not comment on the picture, and gave it back to Sumayah, who said, "See how attractive she is? I wish she had better morals."

Ahmad said, "She is beautiful. But I don't like such artificial beauty under which lies devilish motivations. Real beauty is pure and natural; not a beauty which is created by cosmetics."

"You are right", his future bride agreed.

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