

## Chapter 9

Meanwhile, Fitnah was still scheming about how to get revenge. She felt that her husband did not deeply care for her, but just enjoys himself, yet she knew that she could handle him when she decided what role he would play in her little drama. Finally Fitnah devised a plan in which Hamid could help her achieve her aim. She slept soundly that night and woke up feeling quite happy. She rang the bell to summon her maid, who helped her to bath and dress. Fitnah put on her best silk robe, perfumed herself and walked out of her room.

Her maid was surprised, "Are you expecting visitors, mistress?"

Fitnah replied, "Oh, no. How could I greet anyone while I'm wearing these house garments?"

Nadia then asked, "Where are you going?"

Fitnah answered, "To see my husband".

The maid was vexed and Fitnah felt great humiliation when she reflected that her rival was her maid. Yet she considered the great wealth of her husband and knew it was best for her to endure the odd situation.

She knocked at Hamid's door and entered, saying, "May I come in?"

Hamid was just about to leave the home, but he changed his mind upon seeing Fitnah.

"Am I disturbing you?" Fitnah smiled.

Hamid replied, "Not at all. You are always welcome."

"It looks as if you have an important engagement", she told him.

"You are more important than anyone else", Hamid said, embracing her.

"Oh, thank you! You are such a good-hearted man", Fitnah flattered her husband.

In fact, Fitnah was well-aware of his good nature and that she could easily influence him.

They sat down and she began talking about some friends.

She was saying, "There is a great struggle going on between the rich man and the artist. Both are determined to get a beautiful girl that I know. Yet I think neither of them will succeed."

"Why not?" Hamid asked.

Fitnah explained, "Years ago there was a similar situation, and she chose someone else."

"Then she is married."

"Oh, no" Fitnah said. "He was her boyfriend for some time, and she gave him up a few months ago."

His curiosity aroused, Hamid asked why.

Fitnah surmised, "Perhaps she is looking for someone more rich, even richer than her present suitor."

"Where do they meet her?" her husband asked.

"Well, at several places. She is clever enough at attracting men to her. Sometimes she claims she is married or engaged. She also often pretends to be a decent girl and a pious Muslim."

Hamid was intrigued by the description of this girl.

Fitnah left his room without saying anything more about her. She returned to her room and thought to herself, 'I can lose nothing in this game. It makes no difference to me whom Hamid has affairs with. In any case, his other mistresses are of no use to me, while this one will help me achieve my revenge.

Yes, I will get back at Ahmad, his belief and his morals. This proud beauty, my cousin, can be trapped by Hamid's immense wealth and charm. All women adore money. Since I cannot bring Sumayah to my group, I'll at least show Hamid the way to her. I don't care whether Sumayah or Nadia is his lover. As long as his wealth is under my control, I won't feel jealous. Hamid is nothing to me. Sumayah is a simple-hearted girl, and she has never heard words of love from a stranger.

It will be very flattering to her and surely she will soon give in to Hamid's declarations of love. I think she may soon regret her engagement. The last time I spoke with her, she was very quiet. My words have affected her. I'll go on talking until I take off the mask that Ahmad has covered her with. Now I must know where she spends her free time. It's best that I wait until Ahmad leaves again for Europe. If he is nearby, he will spoil my plans.'