

# **INTERACT**

**A SHORT STORY**

**ARABIAN PENINSULA**

**SPRING 2017**

**HANOUF ALFEHAID**

*I once had everything, until I realized, I had nothing.*

***January 7, 2003 | 4:30 am***

*“Sabbir! Wake up now!”* Nazir Banik attempts to forcefully wake his son up who is sound asleep in the bed beside him.

*“I’m awake... I’m up”* Sabbir mutters as his eyes remain closed.

*“If you are not ready to leave in five minutes, we will be late! And if we are late, then good luck paying for this room!”* threatens Nazir.

*“I said I’m up!”*

Within ten minutes, Nazir and Sabbir are already in the back of a crowded Toyota pick up truck, amongst many other migrant workers, being driven to another day of work at a construction site run by AlMansour Construction Co. Sabbir and his father recently moved to Riyadh from Bangladesh to find work, as job opportunities in their country are extremely scarce. In order to help provide for his family, Sabbir was forced to leave his studies in Bangladesh to pursue job opportunities abroad, as many natives do. Through working in Saudi Arabia, Nazir was hoping to accumulate enough wealth to rent a house and provide adequate education for his wife and two daughters whom he left behind in Bangladesh.

***January 7, 2003 | 6:30 am***

*“Beep, beep, beep!”* Aryan Kumari groggily hits the snooze button on his alarm clock, and pulls himself out of bed. He glazes over his mess of a room, and picks up the first clean shirt and pants he lays his eyes on. In a matter of minutes, Aryan meets his father Pranav in the kitchen where they are responsible for preparing meals for the AlMansour household, in addition to the staff. Aryan and his father live in a small apartment, which is part of a larger compound for all house staff, located in the back of the AlMansour household. He had lived there since the age

of three when he and his father migrated from India 14 years ago, following his mother's passing, to work for Majid AlMansour. Ever since Aryan turned 16, he has been helping around the house and does mundane daily chores such as watering the garden, setting up the dining table, and cleaning the cars.

After Aryan and Pranav finish preparing the breakfast for everyone, they sit down to have breakfast themselves.

*"Baba, I'm so nervous about school today. I have my final exam, and I'm worried I did not prepare enough."*

*"Aryan, do not worry. I have seen you study, and you know I will be proud of you no matter what. As your mother used to say, just do your best—"*

*"I know, I know... since that is all I can do. I just wish she was here to say that to me."*

*"I wish that everyday as well, son."*

Aryan grabs his backpack, heads out the back door, and begins his twenty minute walk to his public school. On his way, his mind wanders to Sabbir, his best friend, as he questions why he must work instead of attending school with him.

***January 7, 2003 | 9:30 am***

*"Rashid! Rashid! Wake up, you are already late for school!"* says, Flora, one of the many housekeepers working in the AlMansour household. Rashid hastily awakens as his eyes dart to the clock resting on his bedside table, realizing he is late for school. He rushes to get dressed into the same navy blue and white uniform he's been wearing since he first entered the Riyadh Academy for Boys, one of Saudi Arabia's elite educational institutions. As Rashid prepares for

school, Flora descends into the kitchen to make sure Pranav has prepared and served for the family.

*“Rashid! Food is ready!”* calls Flora.

Rashid exits his room, walks through the hallway, passing by the room where his parents reside, and descends into the dining room, completely neglecting to even knock on their door. Rashid was certain his father, Majid, was still on an international business trip in Tokyo, and did not want to spark a conversation with his mother, Warda, as she would most likely attempt to lecture him on his grades and behavior.

As he sits at the end of a twelve place dining table, deep in thought, the house driver enters the room. *“Rashid, your car is ready.”* Rashid gets up from the table, grabs his school bag, and heads towards his Porsche. Despite being only seventeen, Rashid has been driving since he was fifteen, and hence was able to persuade his father to get it for him earlier. The car is put into drive, and Rashid drives off to school.

***January 7, 2003 | 4:30 pm***

Sabbir and Nazir worked tirelessly for the past 11 hours, and desperately needed a break that lasted longer than their twenty minute lunch. Just as their punch out time of 5 pm was nearing, the manager of the construction site called an impromptu meeting with all the site workers.

*“Listen, you will all come back at 11 pm sharp. There has been barely any progress today, and if you want to continue to be paid, you will come. If not, do not bother coming back.”*

So, Sabbir and Nazir dragged their bodies back to the pick up truck which would return them to their cramped living space, in which they were sharing with seven other Bangladeshi workers, only to be returning to work a few hours later.

***January 7, 2003 | 6:00 pm***

Aryan had just completed his various tasks around the AlMansour household, and began making his way towards ‘Rani Juice,’ a juice shop that is located at the exact middle point between Sabbir’s place and Aryan’s place. Despite Sabbir living in an informal area of Riyadh, he was not that far from the AlMansour’s luxurious mansion. The two young men have been meeting at this local joint since they met a year ago, and ever since Aryan has promised to help Sabbir keep up with his studies since he dropped out.

As Aryan sees the familiar bright pink sign with images of tropical fruits in the distance, he begins running with excitement to meet his best friend. To his surprise, Sabbir, who usually arrives before him, was nowhere to be found. A feeling of unease suddenly overwhelms him, and Aryan begins running to Sabbir’s place.

*“Sabbir!”* Aryan knocks heavily on the door.

*“Mr. Banik Is anyone home?!”*

Sabbir answers the door, and Aryan lets out a gasp.

*“Sabbir! What happened to you! Why do you look so tired?”*

*“Ha! It’s because I am. With God as my witness, this is too much, Aryan.”*

*“I’m so sorry. Do you still want to study today?”*

*“I really wish I could, but they are expecting me back at work tonight, so I really need some time to rest. Let’s keep going tomorrow, okay?”*

*“Okay... bye Sabbir! Good Luck!”*

Aryan turns around, and begins walking home. As he walks away he can't help but think of Sabbir, and wishes there was something, anything, he could do to help his best friend.

***January 7, 2003 | 7:30 pm***

*“Aywaaa ya Rashid!”*

*“Nawartna ib wijoudik! (You braced us with your presence!)”*

*“Dude you're so late!”*

Rashid was the center of attention at his school—being the son of a very powerful businessman comes with many acquittances. This afternoon he was surrounded by fifteen of his ‘closest’ friends in his duwaniyah, an all-men gathering space located in the back of the AlMansour household. Rashid, unlike any other in his school, was able to secure imported alcohol, meaning they no longer had to rely on the local alcohol that was made from dates, the ‘National Alcohol’ of Saudi Arabia.<sup>1</sup> With his father on a business trip and his mother constantly at social gatherings and malls, no one would bother Rashid or his friends, and so they drank all night long.

*“Gentlemen! Tonight is the night, but only three of you lucky men will be able to experience it with me!”* exclaimed Rashid.

The young boys jumped with excitement and enthusiasm, each hoping Rashid would pick them to join him in the late night races that took place in Northern Riyadh, near Diriyya.<sup>2</sup> Rashid was the only experienced driver amongst them, and the only one who could drive with the

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<sup>1</sup> Pascal Menoret, *Joyriding in Riyadh* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 137

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 139

elegance needed for these races. After deciding on three boys to accompany him, Rashid grabs a bottle of alcohol and races off into the night.

***January 7, 2003 | 11:30 pm***

Sabbir and Nazir have just begun their night shift at the AlMansour construction site.

*“Son, you want water?”*

*“Yes, please.”*

As Nazir made his way through the other end of the construction site to the water coolers, he was suddenly struck to the ground by a speeding car as it crashed by the water cooler. Within seconds the car went racing away, as Nazir was left bleeding on the ground barely conscious.

*“Baba! Baba! Someone help me please!”* yelled Sabbir in complete despair as he ran towards his father.

Twenty-five minutes later, an ambulance finally shows up taking Sabbir to the hospital in critical condition.

***January 7, 2003 | 11:32 pm***

*“Shit!”* yelled Rashid.

Realizing what had just happened, Rashid puts the car in reverse and drives home as fast as he can. As his mind was racing with guilt at the thought that he might have killed someone and in fear of the circumstances that might ensue, Rashid threatens his friends.

*“Listen, none of you will repeat this to anyone ever. Do you understand me?! If I find out that this gets out, I swear to god I will kill each and every one of you! Understood?!”*

***January 7, 2003 | 11:50 pm***

Rashid picks up his phone with trembling hands and quickly calls his father.

*“Baba, I have to tell you something.”*

*“What do you want Rashid? I told you I am busy. Make it quick.”*

*“I got into an accident.”*

*“My boy, just go tell the driver to take your car to the shop. I’ll get you a new one by tomorrow.”*

*“No baba, listen please.... I think I killed someone.”*

After what seems like an eternity to Rashid, his father responds.

*“When and where did this happen?”*

*“Around 20 minutes ago, it was at your construction site. The one near Diriyya. I think I hurt a construction worker.”*

*“What in God’s name have you done?! I’ll deal with this. Is that all?”*

*“Yes. I’m sorry.”*

*Dial tone...*

***January 7, 2003 | 12:00 pm***

As the ambulance pulls up to the emergency room of the hospital, Nazir is rolled out on a stretcher and rushed through to surgery. As the doors close behind him, Sabbir drops to the ground and holds himself at an attempt to stop himself from crying. After a few moments, he gathers the courage to dial Aryan’s number to ask for help, as he is the only other person he knows in this city.

***January 7, 2003 | 12:10 pm***

*“I’ll be right there.”*

Aryan shuts the phone, and rushes to explain to his father what had happened so he could drive him to the hospital. As he makes his way to the kitchen, he can’t help but overhear Rashid talking to his father.

*“Maybe 20 minutes ago, it was your construction site. The one near Diriyya. I think I hurt a construction worker.”*

Aryan couldn't move, he stood in the corner in complete shock for what seemed like hours. He could not believe what he had heard. With a blink of an eye, he was right in front of Rashid.

*“How could you?”* Aryan yells.

*“What?! What do you want?!”* yelled Rashid, without so much as turning around to look at who was speaking.

*“I heard you. I know what happened.”*

Rashid goes quiet as his eyes fall on Aryan. Suddenly, Rashid falls to the ground with tears streaming down his face. When Aryan finally looks into Rashid’s eyes, he can’t help but feel empathy towards him.

*“That man you think you killed, he's my best friend's father. I'm on my way to the hospital now, if you want to join. I think it will make you feel better to see and understand what actually happened. You should not ignore this.”*

After giving it some thought, Rashid responds.

*“Ok.”*

**January 7, 2003 | 12:30 am**

*“I cannot believe that you did this without asking me. Aryan, this is too much. It will take all that’s in my power to not attack him in the middle of the ER.”*

*“I know, Sabbir, trust me. But it is better that you two talk.”*

*“Why?! Please explain to me how this spoiled Saudi will ever understand me or my father!”*

*“Please, Sabbir, I know you are in pain, but imagine his pain as well. You have to try and understand what prompted him to act this way. I know how guilty he feels.”*

**January 7, 2003 | 12:45 am**

*“You live in a huge mansion! What do you know about my life?! I live in a small room with my father, in an even smaller apartment with seven other people. I had to leave my mother and my two younger sisters behind in Bangladesh just to come here to find work. I had to leave my school and my friends just to move to a city where I knew no one and did not even speak the language. Before we even arrived, the visa process was a nightmare. If it were not for my father’s friend, we would not have been able to even get in. Back in Bangladesh, my father and I signed a work contract, which basically secured our salaries and work hours. We were supposed to work from 7 am to 5 pm, 6 days a week, and get paid Dh 800. When we showed up, we were forced to sign contracts that lowered our salaries to Dh 500 and we have no actual set work hours. They call us in whenever they want, and if we refuse, we are out of a job. We work hard under the scorching heat during the day, and push through at night with barely any energy left. I have never felt so tired— mentally, physically, and*

*emotionally. And now I have to worry about my father, the only family I have here. How much is it going to cost to save his life. So, you see Rashid, you know nothing.<sup>3</sup>*

*“Sabbir, I had no idea. I’m so sorry, but it is not my fault.”*

*“It is your father’s company, is it not?”*

*“Yes, but I am not my father.”* replied Rashid, as he lowered his head.

Sensing the uncomfortable silence that followed, Aryan interrupts, *“What bothers me the most is that the foreigners are doing all the work, you guys are the ones who are moving this country forward. I swear without your hard work, Riyadh would still be a desert. Saudis are so lazy. Why don’t they acknowledge your hard work? Why don’t you have better rights? I just don’t understand,”* interrupted Aryan.

*“You’re right,”* answered Rashid. *“I understand completely, I’m really sorry. Trust me, I am truly aware of how the country would be without foreigners. I’m so sorry, I really understand where you’re coming from. So, thank you Sabbir. And thank you to your father.”*

*“Thank you does nothing to help us. While you are sitting up there in your palace, with your servants, cars, food, clothes, and money.... I am down here, with nothing. Just look at your expensive watch! You don’t wear it to tell the time— you wear it to show people your value, and that you have money at your disposal. Just like Adam Smith says in his ‘version of the labour value theory; it represents his command over the working time of others incorporated in the commodities he can buy.’<sup>4</sup> Why do you even care about such material objects?! If this country is*

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<sup>3</sup> Khalaf, Sulayman, and Saad Alkobaisi. "Migrants' strategies of coping and patterns of accommodation in the oil-rich Gulf societies: evidence from the UAE." *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 26, no. 2 (1999): 271-298

<sup>4</sup> Varul, Matthias Z., and Theeb Aldossry. "A time to pray, a time to play? : Everyday life in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia between the temporalities of religion, tradition and consumerism." *Time & Society* 25, no. 3 (2016): 471-92.

*so serious about keeping the Westerners out, then why do you invite consumerism into your country?! Why do you hire people like us to build shops from America?! How many malls do you even need?! Why cant you build your own malls, with your own shops?!"*

At this moment, Rashid stands up and exits through the hospital doors. He pulls out a pack of cigarettes, lights one up, and takes a deep breath.

***January 7, 2003 | 01:15 am***

Sabbir and Aryan decide to check up on Rashid, who is still outside. They find him seated in the corner of the parking lot.

*"Rashid.... are you okay?"* asks Aryan.

*"I don't know. I don't understand. I thought this meant progress. At least, that is what my father always tells me. He says that ever since oil wealth was discovered, there has been rapid technological and economical advancements in an effort to make Saudi Arabia more modern. These new projects will modernize Saudi Arabia by promoting tourism to help us find alternative source of income. So I assumed that I was also helping my country by buying all these things... but I am slowly realizing that it is not true..."* confessed Rashid.

*"Also, Aryan, I'm so sorry. I can't believe we have been living in the same house our whole lives, and yet I do not remember the last time I properly spoke to you. I'm so embarrassed right now, I really am sorry."*

*"It's ok, Rashid. I understand. I've seen you, and I know your life. I know how your parents are, and how they neglect you. I don't blame you, but you also can not blame yourself. The only reason your mother spends so much time at social gatherings and malls is*

*because it is the only accepted social space women can feel an ounce of freedom in.<sup>5</sup> Because Saudi Arabia is an Islamic society, everything is defined by religion, and social life is defined by cultural tradition, hence women are extremely marginalized. I don't think you see it that way.<sup>6</sup> I'm guessing that to you, treating women this way is normal, because I know that is what your father used to tell you.”* replied Aryan.

Aryan continues, *“you guys, look at these malls in a positive sense, disregarding the consumerist aspect of it. This westernization is hopefully going to make society much more open, and more liberal. Take the concept of time, and divide it into Islamic time and Western time. Islamic time is how our current society is defined; our lives revolve around the prayers five times a day, and the other religious practices we must succumb to. Malls are opening up a whole new space of time; leisure time. This is not relative to the notions of Islamic time, and hence women have now created their own time and space in which they can exercise complete freedom.<sup>7</sup> Women are reversing ‘the victory of space over time.’<sup>8</sup>”*

*“Just as my mother has been neglecting me, I think I have been neglecting her too.”* sighed Rashid. *“I see how easy it is for me now, because of who my father is, but more importantly because I am a man. I have my drivers license, and I'm not even 18 yet. I don't need permission for anything, whereas she needs permission from me, her son, just*

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<sup>5</sup> Le Renard, Amelie. "Engendering Consumerism in the Saudi Capital." In *Saudi Arabia in Translation*, 314-31. Cambridge University Press, 2015.

<sup>6</sup> Varul, Matthias Z., and Theeb Aldossry. "A time to pray, a time to play? : Everyday life in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia between the temporalities of religion, tradition and consumerism." 471-92.

<sup>7</sup> Varul, Matthias Z., and Theeb Aldossry. "A time to pray, a time to play? : Everyday life in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia between the temporalities of religion, tradition and consumerism." 471-92.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

*to go out of the house if my father is not home, and she needs a male guardian at all times. I have done nothing to help her, except continue to enforce such harsh rules. I can't believe I have been blind to my own mother's suffering. I can't believe my father is so corrupted. How could he limit his wife like that? He has taken away her hopes, dreams, and freedom for what? Financial security? Stability? These things must mean nothing to her if she is unable to use them for her own gain, or rather for her own personal development as an individual."*

*"You know, Rashid, it is not only women who are subject to such inequalities, but anyone who is not Saudi. It is the same for me. We are not taken seriously, and we are looked down upon as less educated. I am simply a number out of the thousands of migrant workers in this city," says Sabbir. "Just yesterday my father was telling me that he wanted to bring my mother and sister to live in Riyadh with us. We got into a fight because I did not agree. My father and I are already regarded as dirt in this country. How can I let my mother and sisters feel the same way? I cannot allow my family to be living in a region which completely undermines their capabilities, and strips them of all opportunities. I want them to be free to dream, to hope, to travel, and most importantly to think for themselves."*

**January 7, 2003 | 02:30 am**

*"Do you even know why it is considered a sin, Rashid?" asked Sabbir.*

*"Yes, because it is written in the Quran."*

*"But do you know why it was written in the Quran?"*

*“Why are you asking me this! Are you trying to tell me I am a bad Muslim, because I’m not!”*

*“Rashid, please. He is not insulting you, he is just trying to help you understand your actions.”* mediated Aryan.

*“Look what you did to my father! So listen to me! In the Quran, alcohol is khamr, right?”*

*“Are you really telling me that in the Quran, alcohol is alcohol? What does that even mean!”* yelled a confused Rashid.

*“What I mean is that the root of the word khamr actually means ‘to cause mental confusion or to disturb the mind’<sup>9</sup> and therefore it is considered a grave sin, or haram. So what I am trying to say is that I understand the situation you were in, and although I can blame you for drinking alcohol, I cannot blame you for what happened to my father. All I can do now is pray to Allah that he is okay.”*

*“May Allah protect him and guide him back to health.”* said Aryan.

*“May Allah protect him and guide him back to health, and thank you Sabbir. I did not expect anyone to be so understanding in this situation.”* followed Rashid.

Since Aryan grew up with Rashid, he witnessed how his parents forced Islam on to him, and how Rashid rejected it because of that very reason. He did not want to be told what to believe in.

*“Rashid, I know you are not very religious, but the reason why Sabbir is this way is because he is a good Muslim. In order to be a good Muslim, you have to have faith in Allah, pray five times a day, make sure you pay your zakat, to fast the entire month of Ramadan (and not pretend to fast like you usually do), and once in your life you must attend Hajj. Once you do all these things to prove to yourself and to Allah that you are good, Allah will provide you with all*

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<sup>9</sup> Michalak, Laurence, and Karen Trocki. "Alcohol and Islam: an overview." *Contemp. Drug Probs.* 33 (2006): 523-561.

*that you need to become the best version of yourself. I know this makes you feel uncomfortable, but you also need to read the Quran. Do not let anyone interpret what is written for you. You must come to your own interpretation.”*

As soon as the last phrase came out of Aryan’s mouth, Rashid went silent.

*“My own interpretation...”* he muttered to himself.

***January 7, 2003 | 03:12 am***

*“We need to disrupt the system!”* exclaimed an excited Rashid as if he had found the ultimate solution for all their worries. Sabbir and Aryan simply looked at each other puzzled. They did not comprehend what Rashid was referring to.

*“Let’s just imagine it. Imagine a whole new Riyadh,”* explained Rashid.

After taking a few moments to reflect, Aryan responds.

*“Well, in my Riyadh there would be no Sharia Law. I think it is being manipulated by those in power to maintain their authority over the civilians. They are transferring their power to the religious police, who in turn abuse this privilege and innocent civilians. It is being used to keep us quiet, loyal, and uneducated. Freedom of religion is what we should strive for.”*

*“Yes, exactly! With freedom of religion, we no longer have to follow the religious practices or cultural traditions unless we want to. We can be free to wear what we want, and do what we want, whenever we want. We can be a society of individuals! Like you said, Sabbir, everyday can be leisure time. We can create our own temporality of time that does not refer to religion.”* continued Rashid.

*“Ideally, that would also mean equal rights for all— women, migrant workers, foreigners, and anyone who feels belittled by the system currently in place.”* answered Sabbir.

*“That would mean gender segregation would cease to exist, allotting women the freedom they deserve. I think the most important part of this equality is the openness it provides in terms of education. I don’t think privatizing education is correct, it should be free to all. There should be educational institutions which are open to all students regardless of age, class, or race— every single individual in this country should be given the same opportunities. Other than men and women integrating, Saudis and non-Saudis need to integrate within these schools as well. Imagine the endless possibilities for development if the state acknowledged the minds of foreigners.”* followed Aryan.

*“The only thing standing in our way is this system, and how it misrepresents different factions of the society,”* interrupted Sabbir.

*“Well, the absolute monarchy should be overruled. I kind of like that idea. We could hold democratic elections, although I don’t know if I think that would be the best idea. That would still mean one person would be in power,”* stated Rashid.

Aryan responds, *“Rashid is right. Too much power can make you sick, just like too much alcohol can. Power is a disease of the mind. We need a political system that ensures corruption cannot be sustained by limiting the amount of power given to one individual.”*

***January 7, 2003 | 03:34 am***

As the boys lay seated, deep in discussion, in the corner of the parking lot, they notice a doctor approaching them. Sabbir rushes to stand up, and nervously awaits as he nears towards them.

*“Mr. AlMansour?”*

Sabbir could not help but wonder why the doctor was acknowledging Rashid, and not him.

*“Yes, doctor. Please, tell me.”*

*“The operation was a success. The patient is now in intensive care, but he needs to be isolated for a few more hours before we allow any guests. However, we expect a full and speedy recovery.”*

The moment Sabbir heard the news, all previous thoughts escaped his mind, and he was unable to contain his tears of joy.

*“Thank you! Thank you, doctor! You saved my father’s life!”* exclaimed a sobbing Sabbir.

The doctor smiled, thanked Rashid and the boys, and turned back towards the hospital. Within the blink of an eye, Sabbir’s knuckles are clenched as he brings his arm to a collision with Rashid’s eye, knocking Rashid to the ground.

*“You see! Even he does not acknowledge my existence! It is my father in the hospital, not yours! Why would he talk to you! Does he not see I am his son!”*

Rashid, laying on the ground, looks up at Sabbir and says, *“Aryan, would you please explain to him.”*

While Rashid stepped outside alone earlier that night, he had called his father informing him that he was at the hospital with the man he thought he killed. Rashid had arranged for the medical bills to be taken care of, so the doctor innocently assumed the patient was a relative of Rashid.

**January 7, 2003 | 03:50 am**

*"The material. That needs to go as well."* says Aryan, while still attempting to formulate his thoughts.

*"What do you mean? What is the material?"* asks Sabbir

*"Well, the material for me is everything that is artificial. Everything that has been designed with the intent to manipulate the consumer into buying a 'lifestyle'<sup>10</sup>"* responded Aryan.

*"The high level of consumption here is not the only issue. The material is tied to so many cultural and social norms in Riyadh. I remember how I used to overhear my mother a few years back complaining to my father about how the other women used to stare at her. They would watch her every move, and analyze every material object or artifact she had on. It was their way of determining her value, or social presence. So if we get rid of the material, then we get rid of the judgement and the need to maintain a good reputation,"* added Rashid.

*"But what if the power of consumerism is what can help us change this society? Back in Bangladesh, I read about this guy called Karl Marx on the internet. He was talking about consumerism, and this idea of the consumerist strategy, which is that 'we can in effect will a change in society through our purchasing choices.'<sup>11</sup> The reason being is that 'for Marxists, consciousness and society are not forged in the realm of ideas, but in the material conditions of our world... Therefore, to truly effect a fundamental change, we must change the material conditions and structures of society, not merely change our ideas.'<sup>12</sup> Saudi Arabia can be labeled*

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<sup>10</sup> Du Gay, Paul , S. Hall, L. Janes, H. Mackay, and K. Negus. "The Sony Walkman." In *Design Studies: A Reader*, 350-53. London: Bloomsbury , 2016.

<sup>11</sup> Nance, Kevin Harriman & Kevin. "The Environment, Consumerism, and Socialism." *In Defence of Marxism*. October 21, 2014. Accessed May 01, 2017. <http://www.marxist.com/the-environment-consumerism-and-socialism.htm>.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

*as semi-capitalist, in my opinion, as those in power are lining their pockets with profit and undermining the working class. In this ideology, the power is in the working class. We are the ones doing the actual labor, so if we stop, production stops as well.*<sup>13</sup>” lectured Sabbir.

“*You got it, Sabbir! Give the power to the working class!*” responded Aryan, with great enthusiasm.

“*Why the working class? Don’t you think we have more power, as the youth? Keep in mind, guys, that the majority of the population in Saudi Arabia are considered as part of the youth. So why not create a union to represent the youth. We would not only include Saudis, but Indians, and Bangladeshis as well! All youth citizens and residents in Saudi Arabia will be allowed to join— regardless of race, sex, or class. Together, we can stand up to the state.*” suggested Rashid.

The young men looked at each other, and felt an overwhelming sense of responsibility to provide a better future for all those who are oppressed in the current system. They all knew that this night was simply the beginning of their long journey ahead. As they each made a promise to fulfill this goal, Sabbir offers a last word of advice.

“*As my father used to always say to me, ‘there is power in unity and numbers.’*<sup>14</sup>”

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<sup>13</sup> Nance, Kevin Harriman & Kevin. "The Environment, Consumerism, and Socialism." *In Defence of Marxism*. October 21, 2014. Accessed May 01, 2017. <http://www.marxist.com/the-environment-consumerism-and-socialism.htm>.

<sup>14</sup> Nittle, Nadra Kareem. "Memorable Quotes From Martin Luther King." *ThoughtCo*. Accessed May 06, 2017. <https://www.thoughtco.com/notable-quotes-martin-luther-kings-speeches-2834937>.

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