



POWERED BY THE YOUTH™

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In times less civilised than the era of The Wheel of The Youth, there would be The Youths putting themselves through hoops of degrees and high hopes of changing the world and wasting their lives believing they could “make a difference.” Since “youth is wasted on the young”, over years of anger brewed within those who grew out of being young, it was decided that it would be best if The Youths are drained for something more tangible, something less wasteful.

Intrinsically prompted to “experience” life, The Youths would dissipate valuable energy and spend up precious time on things as inconsequential as love, optimism, and failure. On closer examination, it appeared that these urges were satiable by The Youths having seemingly endless reserves of energy, a luxury others were not afforded.

The Experienced, as the bitter oldies called themselves, unanimously decided that the waste of energy could not be as freely allowed as it was in the 21st century, when resources used to be plentiful. Elaborate plans to terminate The Youths until they become the minority age group were brewing in the pipeline for some time. However, they were dismissed when the elders came to the conclusion that this would only cause the remnants to extinguish their youthful reserves completely, in a scenario worse than the original.

After much deliberation, The Experienced decided to drain young men and women of the very essence that defined them — their youth. The elders deemed youthfulness an unfair advantage not equally distributed and thought it ought to be stopped. The Youths were already well accustomed to practicing the repetitive. Therefore, it only took little thought to come up with the revolutionary system that

powers the world today.

Thus, came what historians call the ultimate installation for power. Rotating turbines are the fundamentals to generating electrical energy and are usually turned by high pressured steam, strong wind, or water currents. Revolts for renewable energy were started by the young anyway, so it was acceptable to assume that the life force of The Youths was fair game.

With no time wasted, huge wheels connected to turbines were set up. The greater the population of Youths in an area, the larger and more outlandishly constructed the wheels were. The most difficult aspect was the designing, the engineering; The Youths, easily malleable by methods of decent advertising and marketing, were not too hard to assemble. After all, being susceptible to being told what to do by someone with authority is only very human.

Even as the construction was ongoing, every billboard had the words POWERED BY THE YOUTH™ plastered over — in more sober fonts were the words “Be part of the global change” and “For the greater good”. The advertising sold The Youths promises of having a purpose in life with zero risk of failure.

When the

finalised structure was assembled, The Youths flocked with filled out forms to start working.

Alvi had known his father and his grandfather devoted their “golden days” at the POWERED BY THE YOUTH™ industry. Over the course of only two generations, POWERED BY THE YOUTH™ had such a stronghold on people's minds that it was reinforced as the norm.

Without any other options, a 10-year-old Alvi was to enrol himself into a 10 year contract with a company that obliged him to run inside a wheel for 10 hours a day next to about a 100 other Youths in each wheel. Benefits included regular meals and a continuous supply of water through a pipe. The retirement plan was to be shifted to smaller-containers-houses with a mate, given Alvi was not deformed in the process, producing offspring to carry on the cycle, and acquiring jobs to facilitate the industry.

The idea of having a great chunk of his life devoted to making sure there is energy for every television to be kept on even when no one is watching or keeping the night light on even during the day didn't really appeal to

him. Yet, thinking back to his school days and only learning propaganda, he could only shudder in acceptance.

A year ago in Alvi's class was a stubborn rebellious girl, the typical “problem child”, who asked all the right questions at the wrong time. Her rants always started with her story about her great grandfather naming her Khatera, which meant memory, and she was to remember the times before being reduced to hamsters.

Perhaps openly advocating anarchy wasn't the brightest thing Khatera could do; especially, in schooling systems where teachers were hired only if they were known advocates of Powered by The Youth™. However, can questions from a bright eyed 9-year-old be that repulsive?

During a history class, Khatera spouted out wanting to spend her life as she pleased. The teacher, a withering old woman in her late 60s, left the class only to come back bearing a book that looked older than her, titled Plans for The Youth. She handed Khatera the book. She smiled, a sinister glint in her eyes, before calmly saying, “When The Youths went beyond manageable proportions and they couldn't be converted into something decent because of their grandiose plans for life, there was a point The Experienced considered turning them into organ farms and reducing bodies to essential oils. Unfortunately, now the delinquents are just allowed to let themselves rot. There is no 'LIFE' to live outside the system.”

Khatera's “free spirit” felt caged ever since. It served as a valuable lesson for Alvi. Villains aren't always created from sin, but from having human desires that fall outside the strict regulations of social structure; desires that often times are no harm to anyone around. All these thoughts that plagued Alvi's growing mind couldn't help him, starting soon he too would wear the badge with letters in all caps screaming POWERED BY THE YOUTH™.

