

Text: Excerpt from Sebastian Faulks, A Week In December (2009)

The novel describes the events in the lives of several London characters during a week in December 2007. Hassan al-Rashid, a Scottish Muslim studying at a London university, has recently been drawn into radicalism to the extent that he is willing to participate in a terrorist plot.

In the rear carriage of [the] Circle Line train Hassan al-Rashid sat staring straight ahead. Normally, without a book to read, he would move his head up and down so that the reflection of his face in the convex window opposite would develop panda eyes, elongate like an image in a fairground mirror and then pop. But this was not the day for such frivolity: he was on his way to buy the constituents of a
5 bomb.

Two white-skinned teenagers opposite him were kissing, sticking their tongues out and laughing when they touched. Although they were absorbed by one another, there was a challenge in their public intimacy. A black-skinned youth with feet in padded white trainers the size of small boats was leaning forward. From his earplugs came a hissing, thumping noise. Hassan could sense that this youth's
10 eyes, though looking down, were ready to lock on to those of anyone who caught them, so he was careful to keep his own gaze somewhere to the left of the hunched shoulders.

To Hassan's left, in the standing area by the central doors, were Japanese and European tourists. It was Sunday, Hassan thought; most of these people should have been in church, but these days Christians viewed cathedrals as monuments or works of art to be admired for their architecture and
15 paintings, not as the place where they could worship God. Their final loss of faith had happened in the last ten years or so, yet in the kafir world it had passed with little comment. How very strange they were, he thought, these people, that they had let eternal life slip through their hands.

Where Hassan had grown up in Glasgow, the Christians (he hadn't by then adopted the word 'kafir') blasphemed and drank and fornicated, though most of them, he knew, still more or less believed.
20 They were unfaithful in hotel rooms, but they got married in churches. They went on Christmas Day or when they buried a friend; they took their babies to be named there, and when they were dying they still sent out for a priest. Now you could read statistics in newspaper surveys which confirmed what anyone could see: that they'd given up God. And barely a kafir seemed to have noticed.

The conviction that the rest of the world lived in a dream was one that grew in Hassan each day. With
25 the exception of those in his group and some of the more committed members of the Pudding Mill Lane Mosque, he viewed everyone he knew as deluded. It was perplexing to him that people paid so little heed to their own salvation; he was puzzled by it in the way he might have been by the sight of a mother feeding whisky to a baby. There might have been some short-term benefit in the respite from crying, but it wasn't something that a reasonable person would do. Yet the truth of life, and of life after
30 death, was not exactly hidden.

Hassan licked his lips and swallowed. Although the individual parts that made up the bombs were easy enough to find and buy, he was aware that the grimmest corner shops these days had CCTV cameras. The purchase of even three or four bottles of soft drinks at once might be remembered by

the man at the counter, then recalled from the digital memory of the camera. He was therefore
 35 spreading his custom right across London, one bottle at a time. [...]

At Gloucester Road, Hassan stepped off the train and went up into the street. Batteries and
 disposable cameras were easy and cheap enough to find; the only thing he was having trouble with
 was hydrogen peroxide. But he had a plan for that.

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Annotations

- I. 1 Circle Line Underground train line in Central London
- I. 10 to lock on to G.: fest ins Auge fassen
- I. 16 kafir provocative Arabic word for a person who does not believe in God
- I. 19 to blaspheme to show contempt or disrespect for God
- I. 19 to fornicate to have sexual intercourse without the partners being married to each other; the word implies moral or religious disapproval
- II. 25-26 Pudding Mill Lane street in East London
- I. 26 deluded believing things that are not real or true
- II. 26-27 to pay so little heed to one's own salvation G.: dem eigenen Seelenheil so wenig Beachtung schenken
- I. 28 respite pause
- I. 38 hydrogen peroxide chemical compound which can be used for making explosives

Hilfsmittel

Den Prüflingen stehen einsprachige sowie für den schulischen Gebrauch geeignete zweisprachige Wörterbücher der Allgemeinsprache (Deutsch-Englisch/Englisch-Deutsch) zur Verfügung.