

The Dark Square

In previous articles, I mentioned the things a Kuwaiti suffers while building his dream house, and I described the dark square which he will find himself trapped in. His wife will have dreams of all the halls, dining areas, bedrooms, guest rooms, and two apartments for the kids to live in someday far in the future when they get married and have families of their own. All of these are spaces that cost a lot of money and will probably never be used. They only serve to burden the man of the family, making him worry about maintenance and utilities costs, not to mention the need for servants to manage that much house. Despite all of this, the owner is going to build it anyway, so I want to give him some free advice. I hope nobody gets upset.

The toughest sides of this dark square are the wife, followed by the contractor who pours his greatest efforts into cutting corners and devising expensive variation orders. Next we have the design engineers with impractical "cut and paste" layouts which end up being far removed from usable living spaces. Along with this is are the construction plans and schedules which most developers, even the most expert, often fail to notice. Then, surprise surprise! The first pillars and ceilings are cast and problems with heights and elevations begin to appear, especially with stairs and columns bulging into the rooms. On top of that, we find our friend the structural engineer coming back around to stick in more pillars, a thousand pillars and a pillar.

Of course, the dark square cannot be complete without its fourth side, the bank. They encourage you to borrow, showing you "Borrow your salary in advance so you can buy a Lamborghini!" advertisements. Sometimes they get you into trouble with interest rate calculations so that, as much as you pay your debts, it continues to multiply. Other times the bank comes back and asks you for proof of your loan purchases because "the Central Bank needs it." It's a story with neither beginning nor end.