

letters so you can collect the stamps off the envelopes. I knew one of my uncles, God of mercy on his soul, was a businessman and he had letters coming in from all over the world. I went to his home and found a whole treasure of letters and different stamps, but he thought I was too young to appreciate this treasure. A few days later, and after a number of arguments, my cousin Sami Ibrahim Al Rabia came to visit us along with five albums of the rarest stamps. "I heard what happened between you and uncle," he said, "and if a boy of your age would fight so fiercely to have some stamps, then you're probably the best person to keep mine."

I was nine and Sami was eighteen, and he had lung cancer. I remember visiting him in Al Sabah Hospital before he passed away. He gave me a metal box with the picture of a deer engraved on the lid; it was full of more stamps. Not long afterwards, Sami died. I've kept the beautiful box, never emptying it, and even adding to its collection. I still look at them from time to time and I remember Sami, a kind person who left us too early. As I look through the rare and beautiful stamps, I tell Sami, this collection will find a place to commemorate his name. After all, he is the rightful owner, and I am just the keeper.