

PANTHEON  BOOKS

THE COMPLETE
PERSEPOLIS



MARJANE SATRAPI



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To my parents

THE COMPLETE

PERSEPOLIS

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PANTHEON

INTRODUCTION

In the second millennium B.C., while the Elam nation was developing a civilization alongside Babylon, Indo-European invaders gave their name to the immense Iranian plateau where they settled. The word "Iran" was derived from "Ayryana Vaejo," which means "the origin of the Aryans." These people were semi-nomads whose descendants were the Medes and the Persians. The Medes founded the first Iranian nation in the seventh century B.C.; it was later destroyed by Cyrus the Great. He established what became one of the largest empires of the ancient world, the Persian Empire, in the sixth century B.C. Iran was referred to as Persia — its Greek name — until 1935 when Reza Shah, the father of the last Shah of Iran, asked everyone to call the country Iran.

Iran was rich. Because of its wealth and its geographic location, it invited attacks: From Alexander the Great, from its Arab neighbors to the west, from Turkish and Mongolian conquerors, Iran was often subject to foreign domination. Yet the Persian language and culture withstood these invasions. The invaders assimilated into this strong culture, and in some ways they became Iranians themselves.

In the twentieth century, Iran entered a new phase. Reza Shah decided to modernize and westernize the country, but meanwhile a fresh source of wealth was discovered: oil. And with the oil came another invasion. The West, particularly Great Britain, wielded a strong influence on the Iranian economy. During the Second World War, the British, Soviets, and Americans asked Reza Shah to ally himself with them against Germany. But Reza Shah, who sympathized with the Germans, declared Iran a neutral zone. So the Allies invaded and occupied Iran. Reza Shah was sent into exile and was succeeded by his son, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, who was known simply as the Shah.

In 1951, Mohammed Mossadeq, then prime minister of Iran, nationalized the oil industry. In retaliation, Great Britain organized an embargo on all exports of oil from Iran. In 1953, the CIA, with the help of British intelligence, organized a coup against him. Mossadeq was overthrown and the Shah, who had earlier escaped from the country, returned to power. The Shah stayed on the throne until 1979, when he fled Iran to escape the Islamic revolution.

Since then, this old and great civilization has been discussed mostly in connection with fundamentalism, fanaticism, and terrorism. As an Iranian who has lived more than half of my life in Iran, I know that this image is far from

the truth. This is why writing *Persepolis* was so important to me. I believe that an entire nation should not be judged by the wrongdoings of a few extremists. I also don't want those Iranians who lost their lives in prisons defending freedom, who died in the war against Iraq, who suffered under various repressive regimes, or who were forced to leave their families and flee their homeland to be forgotten.

One can forgive but one should never forget.

Marjane Satrapi

Paris, September 2002

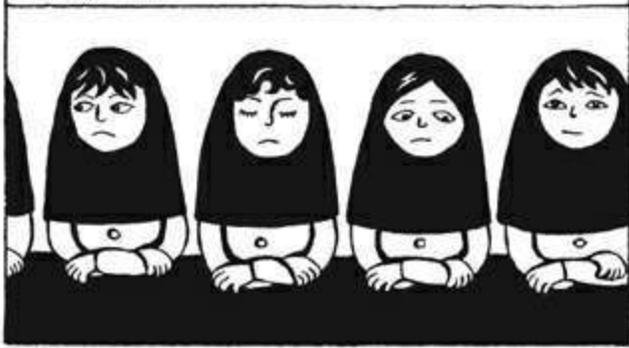


THE VEIL

THIS IS ME WHEN I WAS 10 YEARS OLD. THIS WAS IN 1980.



AND THIS IS A CLASS PHOTO. I'M SITTING ON THE FAR LEFT SO YOU DON'T SEE ME. FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: GOLNAZ, MAHSHID, NARINE, MINNA.



IN 1979 A REVOLUTION TOOK PLACE. IT WAS LATER CALLED "THE ISLAMIC REVOLUTION".



THEN CAME 1980: THE YEAR IT BECAME OBLIGATORY TO WEAR THE VEIL AT SCHOOL.



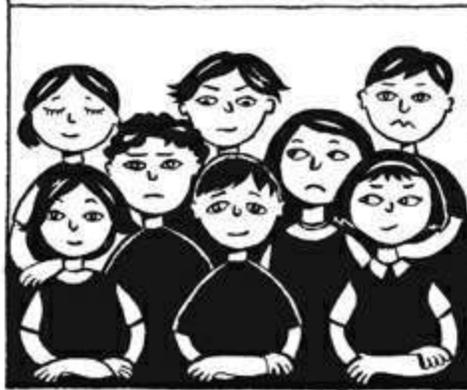
WE DIDN'T REALLY LIKE TO WEAR THE VEIL, ESPECIALLY SINCE WE DIDN'T UNDERSTAND WHY WE HAD TO.



AND ALSO BECAUSE THE YEAR BEFORE, IN 1979, WE WERE IN A FRENCH NON-RELIGIOUS SCHOOL.



WHERE BOYS AND GIRLS WERE TOGETHER.



AND THEN SUDDENLY IN 1980...

ALL BILINGUAL SCHOOLS MUST BE CLOSED DOWN.



THEY ARE SYMBOLS OF CAPITALISM.



OF DECADENCE.



THIS IS CALLED A "CULTURAL REVOLUTION."

WE FOUND OURSELVES VEILED AND SEPARATED FROM OUR FRIENDS.



AND THAT WAS THAT...



EVERYWHERE IN THE STREETS THERE WERE DEMONSTRATIONS FOR AND AGAINST THE VEIL.



AT ONE OF THE DEMONSTRATIONS, A GERMAN JOURNALIST TOOK A PHOTO OF MY MOTHER.



I WAS REALLY PROUD OF HER. HER PHOTO WAS PUBLISHED IN ALL THE EUROPEAN NEWSPAPERS.



AND EVEN IN ONE MAGAZINE IN IRAN, MY MOTHER WAS REALLY SCARED.



SHE DYED HER HAIR,



AND WORE DARK GLASSES FOR A LONG TIME.



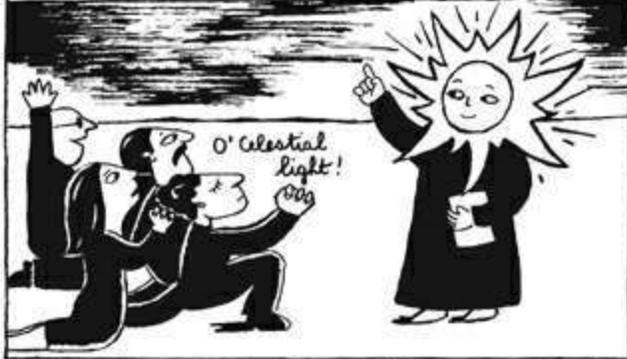
I REALLY DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO THINK ABOUT THE VEIL. DEEP DOWN I WAS VERY RELIGIOUS BUT AS A FAMILY WE WERE VERY MODERN AND AVANT-GARDE.



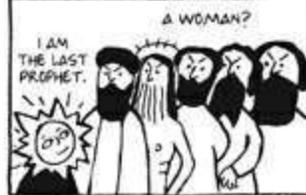
I WAS BORN WITH RELIGION.



AT THE AGE OF SIX I WAS ALREADY SURE I WAS THE LAST PROPHET. THIS WAS A FEW YEARS BEFORE THE REVOLUTION.



BEFORE ME THERE HAD BEEN A FEW OTHERS.



I WANTED TO BE A PROPHET...



BECAUSE MY FATHER HAD A CADILLAC.



AND, ABOVE ALL, BECAUSE MY GRANDMOTHER'S KNEES ALWAYS ACHED.



LIKE ALL MY PREDECESSORS I HAD MY HOLY BOOK.



THE FIRST THREE RULES CAME FROM ZARATHUSTRA. HE WAS THE FIRST PROPHET IN MY COUNTRY BEFORE THE ARAB INVASION.



I ALSO WANTED US TO CELEBRATE THE TRADITIONAL ZARATHUSTRIAN HOLIDAYS, LIKE THE FIRE CEREMONY,



BEFORE THE PERSIAN NEW YEAR, NOROUZ, ON MARCH 21ST, THE FIRST DAY OF SPRING.



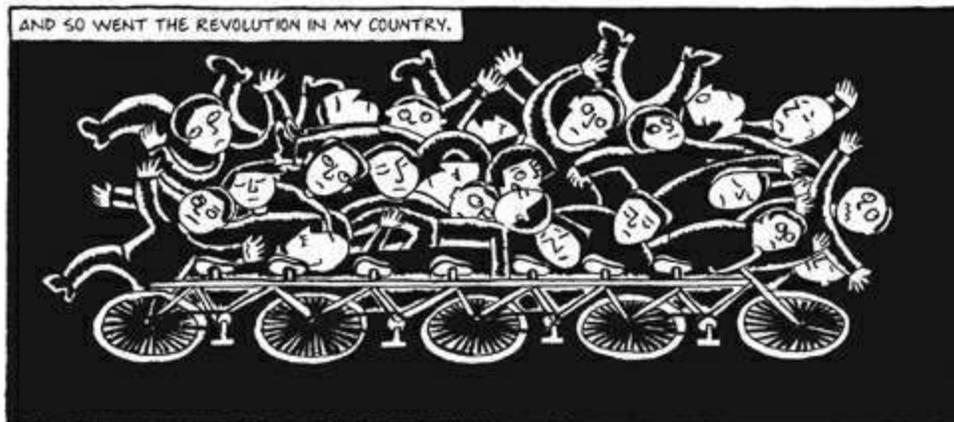
ONLY MY GRANDMOTHER KNEW ABOUT MY BOOK.







THE BICYCLE



"AFTER A LONG SLEEP OF 2500 YEARS, THE REVOLUTION HAS FINALLY AWAKENED THE PEOPLE."



"2500 YEARS OF TYRANNY AND SUBMISSION" AS MY FATHER SAID.

FIRST OUR OWN EMPERORS.



THEN THE ARAB INVASION FROM THE WEST.



FOLLOWED BY THE MONGOLIAN INVASION FROM THE EAST.



AND FINALLY MODERN IMPERIALISM.









THE FIREMEN DIDN'T ARRIVE UNTIL FORTY MINUTES LATER.



THE BBC SAID THERE WERE 400 VICTIMS. THE SHAH SAID THAT A GROUP OF RELIGIOUS FANATICS PERPETRATED THE MASSACRE. BUT THE PEOPLE KNEW THAT IT WAS THE SHAH'S FAULT !!!







THE WATER CELL





THE TRUTH IS THAT 50 YEARS AGO THE FATHER OF THE SHAH, WHO WAS A SOLDIER, ORGANIZED A Putsch TO OVERTHROW THE EMPEROR AND INSTALL A REPUBLIC.



AT THE TIME THE REPUBLICAN IDEAL WAS POPULAR IN THE REGION BUT EVERYBODY INTERPRETED IT IN HIS OWN WAY.

GANDHI IN INDIA



THE HINDUS AND THE MUSLIMS MUST MAKE PEACE TO OVERTHROW THE BRITISH.

ATATURK IN TURKEY



WE, THE TURKS, ARE SECULAR WESTERNERS. FOR PROOF, LOOK AT MY GREEN EYES.

SO THE FATHER OF THE SHAH WANTED TO DO THE SAME.



BUT HE WASN'T EDUCATED LIKE GANDHI, WHO WAS A LAWYER..



...NOR WAS HE A LEADER OF MEN LIKE ATATURK, WHO WAS A GENERAL.



HE WAS AN ILLITERATE LOW-RANKING OFFICER.



A BLESSING FOR THE VERY INFLUENTIAL BRITISH WHO SOON LEARNED OF HIS PROJECTS.



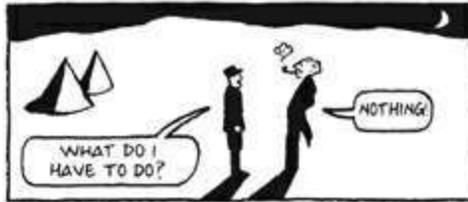
THE COUNTRY IS RICH

AND THE BOLSHEVIKS ARE NEAR.

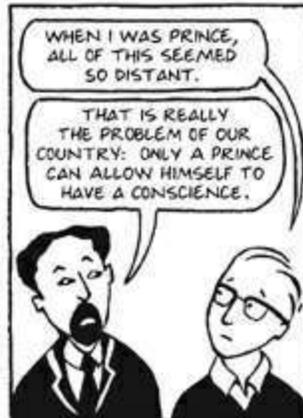
WHAT'S THAT SOLDIER'S NAME AGAIN?

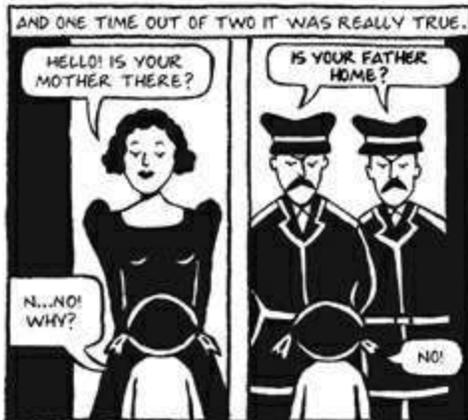
REZA! WE SHOULD GO MEET HIM.

IMMEDIATELY! PERSIA IS FULL OF OIL!











GIDDYAP!
GIDDYAP!



THE POOR MAN!!
PRISON HAD
DESTROYED HIS
HEALTH. HE HAD
RHEUMATISM.



ALL HIS LIFE HE
WAS IN PAIN.



COME ON. THAT
TIME IS PAST.



DO YOU WANT TO
PLAY MONOPOLY?



I WANT TO
TAKE A BATH.



WE CAN PLAY AFTER YOUR
BATH IF YOU WANT TO.

NO! I WANT TO
TAKE A REALLY
LONG BATH.

THAT NIGHT I STAYED A VERY LONG TIME IN THE BATH. I WANTED TO KNOW WHAT IT FELT LIKE TO BE IN A CELL FILLED WITH WATER.



WHAT ARE
YOU DOING?

MY HANDS WERE WRINKLED
WHEN I CAME OUT, LIKE
GRANDPA'S.



PERSEPOLIS



TO SURVIVE I TOOK IN SEWING AND WITH LEFTOVER MATERIAL, I MADE CLOTHES FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY.



LOOK HOW WELL DRESSED WE ALL ARE IN THIS PHOTO.



WHY ISN'T GRANDPA THERE? WAS HE IN PRISON?

YES, THE FATHER OF THE SHAH WAS VERY TOUGH BUT HIS SON WAS TEN TIMES WORSE.



YOU KNOW, MY CHILD, SINCE THE DAWN OF TIME, DYNASTIES HAVE SUCCEEDED EACH OTHER BUT THE KINGS ALWAYS KEPT THEIR PROMISES. THE SHAH KEPT NONE, I REMEMBER THE DAY HE WAS CROWNED. HE SAID:

I AM THE LIGHT OF THE ARYANS.
I WILL MAKE THIS COUNTRY
THE MOST MODERN OF ALL TIME.
OUR PEOPLE WILL REGAIN
THEIR SPLENDOR.



HE EVEN WENT TO THE GRAVE OF CYRUS THE GREAT, WHO RULED OVER THE ANCIENT WORLD.

CYRUS, REST IN PEACE, WE ARE LOOKING AFTER PERSIA.



ALL THE COUNTRY'S MONEY WENT INTO RIDICULOUS CELEBRATIONS OF THE 2500 YEARS OF DYNASTY AND OTHER FRIVOLITIES... ALL OF THIS TO IMPRESS HEADS OF STATE, THE POPULATION COULDN'T HAVE CARED LESS.



I AM SO HAPPY THAT THERE IS FINALLY A REVOLUTION BECAUSE THE SHAH...

I'M HUNGRY!



I BOUGHT YOU SOME BOOKS. YOU WILL SEE WHY THE PEOPLE ARE REVOLTING.

SHE WON'T TELL ME ABOUT GRANDPA.





HE TOOK PHOTOS EVERY DAY. IT WAS STRICTLY FORBIDDEN. HE HAD EVEN BEEN ARRESTED ONCE BUT ESCAPED AT THE LAST MINUTE.



WE WAITED FOR HIM FOR HOURS. THERE WAS THE SAME SILENCE AS BEFORE A STORM.



I THOUGHT THAT MY FATHER WAS DEAD, THAT THEY HAD SHOT HIM.



TODAY I WENT TO REY HOSPITAL WITH MY CAMERA.



PEOPLE CAME OUT CARRYING THE BODY OF A YOUNG MAN KILLED BY THE ARMY. HE WAS HONORED LIKE A MARTYR. A CROWD GATHERED TO TAKE HIM TO THE BAHESHTE ZAHRA CEMETERY.



THEN THERE WAS ANOTHER CADAVER, AN OLD MAN CARRIED OUT ON A STRETCHER. THOSE WHO DIDN'T FOLLOW THE FIRST ONE WENT OVER TO THE OLD MAN, SHOUTING REVOLUTIONARY SLOGANS AND CALLING HIM A HERO.



WELL, I WAS TAKING MY PHOTOS WHEN I NOTICED AN OLD WOMAN NEXT TO ME. I UNDERSTOOD THAT SHE WAS THE WIDOW OF THE VICTIM. I HAD SEEN HER LEAVE THE HOSPITAL WITH THE BODY.



WHAT? WHAT IS IT?

STOP IT!

WHO ARE YOU?

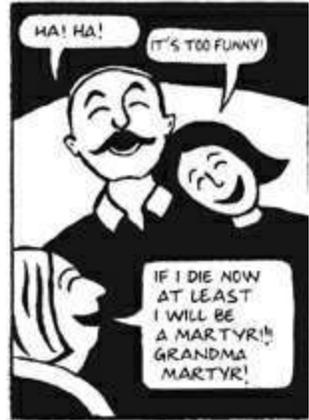
HIS WIDOW!



ARE YOU A ROYALIST?

NO, BUT MY HUSBAND DIED OF CANCER...







THE LETTER

I'D NEVER READ AS MUCH AS I DID DURING THAT PERIOD.

MY FAVORITE AUTHOR WAS ALI ASHRAF DARVISHIAN, A KIND OF LOCAL CHARLES DICKENS. I WENT TO HIS CLANDESTINE BOOK-SIGNING WITH MY MOTHER.

FER ME FRIEND KOUROSH.

WHY DOES HE SPEAK LIKE THAT?

IT'S JUST HIS KURDISH ACCENT.

HE TOLD SAD BUT TRUE STORIES: REZA BECAME A PORTER AT THE AGE OF TEN.

LEILA WOVE CARPETS AT AGE FIVE.

HASSAN, THREE YEARS OLD, CLEANED CAR WINDOWS.

GET DOWN FROM THERE, STUPID!

I FINALLY UNDERSTOOD WHY I FELT ASHAMED TO SIT IN MY FATHER'S CADILLAC.

THE REASON FOR MY SHAME AND FOR THE REVOLUTION IS THE SAME: THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SOCIAL CLASSES.

BUT NOW THAT I THINK OF IT... WE HAVE A MAID AT HOME !!!



THIS IS MEHRI.



SHE WAS EIGHT YEARS OLD WHEN SHE HAD TO LEAVE HER PARENTS' HOME TO COME TO WORK FOR US. JUST LIKE REZA, LEILA AND HASSAN.

WE HAVE TOO MANY CHILDREN, 14 OR 15 INCLUDING HER.

SHE WILL EAT WELL AT YOUR HOUSE.

WE WILL TAKE CARE OF HER.



SHE WAS JUST TEN YEARS OLD WHEN I WAS BORN...SHE TOOK CARE OF ME.



SHE PLAYED WITH ME.



AND SHE ALWAYS FINISHED MY FOOD.



SHE ALSO TOLD ME STORIES ABOUT JACKALS THAT SCARED ME.

AND IT CAME CLOSER!
AND IT CAME CLOSER!

IN OTHER WORDS, WE GOT ALONG WELL.

AT THE BEGINNING OF THE REVOLUTION, IN 1938, SHE FELL IN LOVE WITH THE NEIGHBOR'S SON. SHE WAS SIXTEEN YEARS OLD.



CAN YOU HELP ME LACE MY SHOES?

EVERY NIGHT THEY LOOKED AT EACH OTHER FROM THE WINDOW OF MY ROOM.



UNTIL THE DAY HE SLIPPED HER A LETTER.



LIKE MOST PEASANTS, SHE DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO READ AND WRITE ...



CAN YOU READ ME MY LETTER?

WHAT WILL YOU GIVE ME IN EXCHANGE?

MY MOTHER HAD TRIED TO TEACH HER BUT APPARENTLY SHE WAS NOT VERY TALENTED.



SO LET'S REPEAT. M AS IN...

CARROT!

SO I WROTE THE LETTERS FOR HER. ONE EACH WEEK FOR SIX MONTHS.



MY DEAR HOSSEIN, I MISS YOU A LOT. IT HAS BEEN THREE DAYS SINCE I SAW YOU AT THE WINDOW. I OFTEN TALK ABOUT YOU TO MY SISTER.

WHICH SISTER?

YOU!

I WAS VERY DEVOTED.



HER JEALOUSY WAS MORE THAN SHE COULD BEAR AND SHE TOLD MEHRI'S STORY TO MY UNCLE, WHO TOLD IT TO MY GRANDMA, WHO TOLD IT TO MY MOM. THAT IS HOW THE STORY REACHED MY FATHER...









WE HAD DEMONSTRATED ON THE VERY DAY WE SHOULDN'T HAVE: ON "BLACK FRIDAY." THAT DAY THERE WERE SO MANY KILLED IN ONE OF THE NEIGHBORHOODS THAT A RUMOR SPREAD THAT ISRAELI SOLDIERS WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SLAUGHTER.



BUT IN FACT IT WAS REALLY OUR OWN WHO HAD ATTACKED US.



THE PARTY

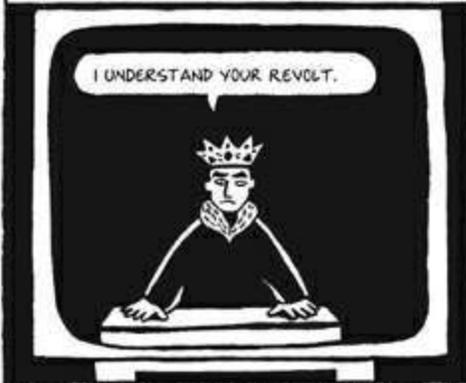
AFTER BLACK FRIDAY, THERE WAS ONE MASSACRE AFTER ANOTHER. MANY PEOPLE WERE KILLED.

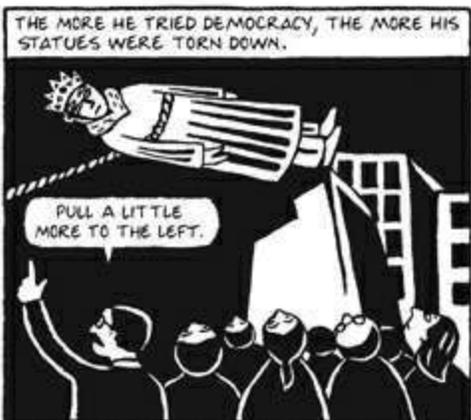
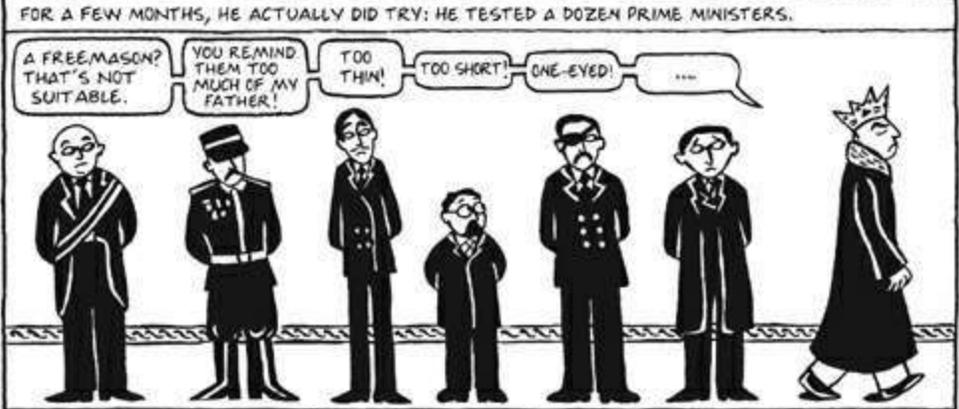


THE END OF THE SHAH'S REIGN WAS NEAR.



ONE DAY HE MADE A DECLARATION ON TV.





THE DAY HE LEFT, THE COUNTRY HAD THE BIGGEST CELEBRATION OF ITS ENTIRE HISTORY.





AFTER ALL THIS JOY, A MAJOR MISFORTUNE TOOK PLACE: THE SCHOOLS, CLOSED DURING THIS PERIOD, REOPENED AND...



CHILDREN, TEAR OUT ALL THE PHOTOS OF THE SHAH FROM YOUR BOOKS.

BUT SHE WAS THE ONE WHO TOLD US THAT THE SHAH WAS CHOSEN BY GOD!



TEACHER! SHE SAYS THAT THE SHAH WAS CHOSEN BY GOD!!!

SATRAPI! YOU SHOULDN'T SAY THINGS LIKE THAT. STAND IN THE CORNER!



THESE STRANGE PHENOMENA WERE EVERYWHERE.



HELLO DEAR NEIGHBORS.

HELLO.

HELLO! ALL THOSE DEMONSTRATIONS WERE REALLY TIRING BUT WE FINALLY SUCCEEDED.

LOOK! A BULLET ALMOST HIT MY WIFE'S CHEEK. LIBERTY IS PRICELESS.



OH!



WHAT NERVE! SHE ALWAYS HAD THAT NASTY SPOT. IF WE WEREN'T NEIGHBORS, HE WOULD HAVE SAID SHE'S A MARTYR RAISED FROM THE DEAD.

IT IS NOT IMPORTANT.

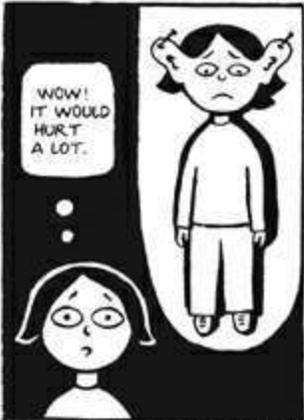
THE BATTLE WAS OVER FOR OUR PARENTS BUT NOT FOR US.



MY FATHER SAYS RAMIN'S FATHER WAS IN THE SAVAK*. HE KILLED A MILLION PEOPLE.

A MILLION?

* SECRET POLICE OF THE SHAH'S REGIME.







THE HEROES

THE POLITICAL PRISONERS WERE LIBERATED A FEW DAYS LATER. THERE WERE 3000 OF THEM.



WE KNEW TWO OF THEM.



SIAMAK JARI
 BORN
 FEBRUARY 20, 1945
 IN LURISTAN
 PROFESSION:
 JOURNALIST
 CRIME: WROTE
 SUBVERSIVE ARTICLES
 IN THE KEYHAN
 DATE OF IMPRISONMENT:
 JULY 1973
 RELEASED: MARCH 1979
 POLITICAL CONVICTION:
 COMMUNIST



MOHSEN SHAKIBA
 BORN
 NOVEMBER 22, 1947
 IN RACHT
 PROFESSION:
 REVOLUTIONARY
 CRIME:
 REVOLUTIONARY
 DATE OF IMPRISONMENT:
 APRIL 1971
 RELEASED: MARCH 1979
 POLITICAL CONVICTION:
 COMMUNIST





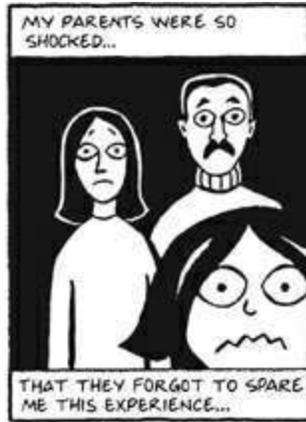




THEY WHIPPED ME WITH THICK ELECTRIC CABLES SO MUCH THAT THIS LOOKS LIKE ANYTHING BUT A FOOT.



NOT TO MENTION PUTTING OUT THEIR CIGARETTES ON OUR BACKS AND THIGHS.



MY PARENTS WERE SO SHOCKED... THAT THEY FORGOT TO SPARE ME THIS EXPERIENCE...



ANY NEWS OF AHMADI?

AHMADI... AHMADI WAS ASSASSINATED. AS A MEMBER OF THE GUERRILLAS, HE SUFFERED HELL. HE ALWAYS HAD CYANIDE ON HIM IN CASE HE WAS ARRESTED, BUT HE WAS TAKEN BY SURPRISE AND UNFORTUNATELY HE NEVER HAD A CHANCE TO USE IT... SO HE SUFFERED THE WORST TORTURE...



HOW DO YOU LIKE THIS?

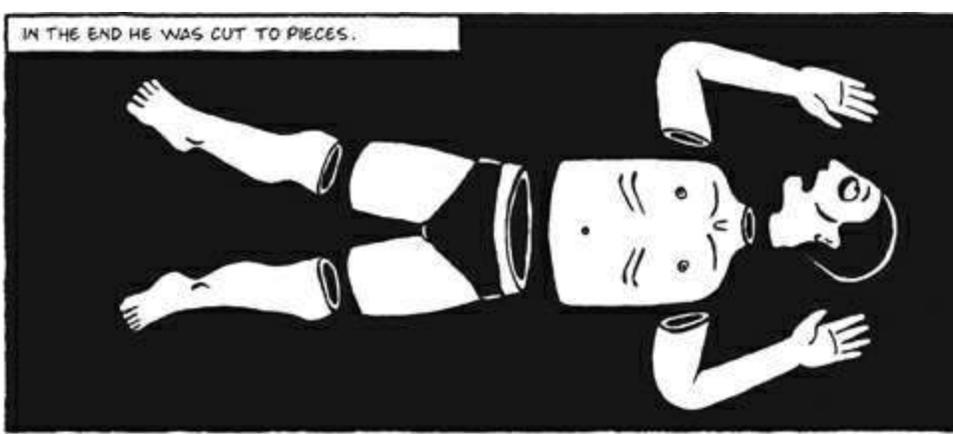
CONFESS! WHERE ARE THE OTHERS!

THEY BURNED HIM WITH AN IRON.



I NEVER IMAGINED THAT YOU COULD USE THAT APPLIANCE FOR TORTURE.

IN THE END HE WAS CUT TO PIECES.

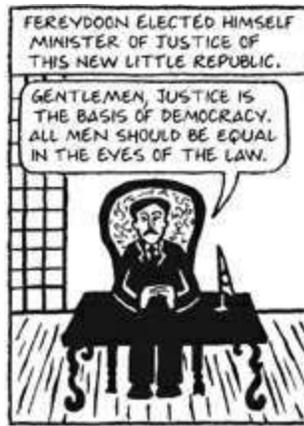






MOSCOW





I WANTED TO DO SOMETHING... BUT THERE WAS NOTHING I COULD DO...THEY ARRESTED HIM AND I RAN AWAY.



WHAT A STORY!

FOR DAYS AND DAYS I WALKED THROUGH THE FALLING SNOW. I CROSSED THE ALBORZ MOUNTAINS TO FIND REFUGE AT MY PARENTS' HOUSE IN ASTARA.



I WAS HUNGRY, I WAS COLD, BUT I CONTINUED.



I WAS NEARLY DEAD WHEN I ARRIVED.



MY GOD! ANDOSH!!!



WHAT'S GOING ON? WHO'S BOTHERING US AT THIS HOUR?

COME QUICKLY! IT'S OUR SON ANDOSH! HE HAS FAINTED!



WHAT IS HE DOING HERE? WHY DIDN'T HE STAY WITH HIS NICE UNCLE?







AFTER THE SEPARATION, I FELT VERY LONELY. I MISSED MY COUNTRY, MY PARENTS, MY BROTHERS. I DREAMT ABOUT THEM OFTEN.



I DECIDED TO GO HOME. I GOT A FALSE PASSPORT AND DISGUISED MYSELF.



I GUESS I WASN'T VERY CONVINCING. THEY SOON RECOGNIZED ME.



THEY PUT ME IN PRISON FOR NINE YEARS.



THEY SAY YOU WERE TORTURED TERRIBLY, LIKE SIAMAK, LALY'S FATHER.

YOUR FATHER TOLD YOU THAT?



NO, HE TOLD IT TO MOM AND I HEARD HIM.

WHAT MY WIFE MADE ME SUFFER WAS MUCH WORSE.



I TELL YOU ALL THIS BECAUSE IT'S IMPORTANT THAT YOU KNOW. OUR FAMILY MEMORY MUST NOT BE LOST. EVEN IF IT'S NOT EASY FOR YOU, EVEN IF YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND IT ALL.

DON'T WORRY, I'LL NEVER FORGET.





THE SHEEP





AFTER MY FRIEND'S DEPARTURE, A GOOD PART OF MY FAMILY ALSO LEFT THE COUNTRY.







AND THAT IS HOW ALL THE FORMER REVOLUTIONARIES BECAME THE SWORN ENEMIES OF THE REPUBLIC.

WASN'T ANOOSH GOING TO PICK ME UP?



WHAT? WASN'T HE SUPPOSED TO COME?

WELL...

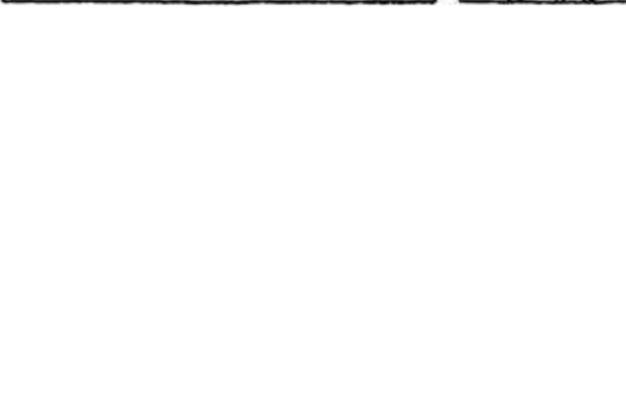


YES?

HE WENT BACK TO MOSCOW.



OH NO! THAT OLD TALE ABOUT BEING ON A TRIP HAD COME BACK...



HE HAD TO LEAVE QUICKLY... HIS WIFE CALLED HIM. HE ASKED ME TO TELL YOU GOODBYE...

HE DOESN'T EVEN TALK TO HIS WIFE.



DARLING! DID YOU HAVE A GOOD DAY AT SCHOOL?

YOU MUST BE HUNGRY.

WHERE IS ANOOSH?



DON'T YOU WANT TO EAT A LITTLE?

I'M NOT HUNGRY.



WHY DIDN'T HE STAY TO SAY GOODBYE TO ME?

HE WAS IN A HURRY, A BIG HURRY.









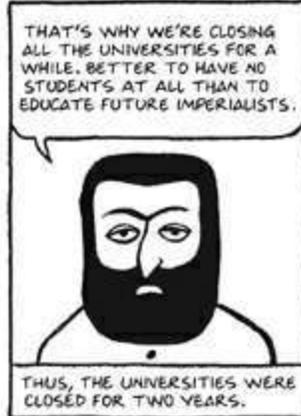
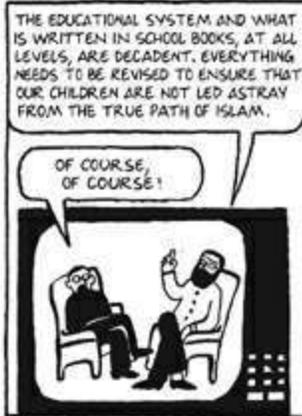
AND SO I WAS LOST, WITHOUT ANY BEARINGS... WHAT COULD BE WORSE THAN THAT?

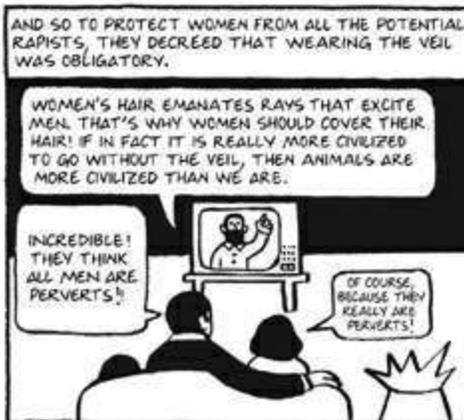


IT WAS THE BEGINNING OF THE WAR.

THE TRIP







IN NO TIME, THE WAY PEOPLE DRESSED BECAME AN IDEOLOGICAL SIGN. THERE WERE TWO KINDS OF WOMEN.

THE FUNDAMENTALIST WOMAN



THE MODERN WOMAN



YOU SHOWED YOUR OPPOSITION TO THE REGIME BY LETTING A FEW STRANDS OF HAIR SHOW.

THERE WERE ALSO TWO SORTS OF MEN.

THE FUNDAMENTALIST MAN



BEARD SHIRT HANGING OUT

THE PROGRESSIVE MAN



SHAVED WITH OR WITHOUT MUSTACHE SHIRT TUCKED IN

ISLAM IS MORE OR LESS AGAINST SHAVING.

BUT LET'S BE FAIR. IF WOMEN FACED PRISON WHEN THEY REFUSED TO WEAR THE VEIL, IT WAS ALSO FORBIDDEN FOR MEN TO WEAR NECKTIES (THAT DREADED SYMBOL OF THE WEST). AND IF WOMEN'S HAIR GOT MEN EXCITED, THE SAME THING COULD BE SAID OF MEN'S BARE ARMS. AND SO, WEARING SHORT-SLEEVED SHIRTS WAS ALSO FORBIDDEN.



THERE WAS A KIND OF JUSTICE, AFTER ALL.

IT WASN'T ONLY THE GOVERNMENT THAT CHANGED. ORDINARY PEOPLE CHANGED TOO.



LOOK AT HER! LAST YEAR SHE WAS WEARING A MINISKIRT, SHOWING OFF HER BEEFY THIGHS TO THE WHOLE NEIGHBORHOOD. AND NOW MADAME IS WEARING A CHADOR. IT SUITS HER BETTER, I GUESS.

AS FOR HER FUNDAMENTALIST HUSBAND WHO DRANK HIMSELF INTO A STUPOR EVERY NIGHT, NOW HE USES MOUTHWASH EVERY TIME HE UTTERS THE WORD "ALCOHOL."



AND THEIR SON SAYS HE PRAYS EVERY DAY!

IF ANYONE EVER ASKS YOU WHAT YOU DO DURING THE DAY, SAY YOU PRAY, YOU UNDERSTAND??



OK...

AT FIRST, IT WAS A LITTLE HARD, BUT I LEARNED TO LIE QUICKLY.



I PRAY FIVE TIMES A DAY.

ME? TEN OR ELEVEN TIMES... SOMETIMES TWELVE.



THINGS GOT WORSE FROM ONE DAY TO THE NEXT. IN SEPTEMBER 1980, MY PARENTS ABRUPTLY PLANNED A VACATION. I THINK THEY REALIZED THAT SOON SUCH THINGS WOULD NO LONGER BE POSSIBLE. AS IT HAPPENED, THEY WERE RIGHT. AND SO WE WENT TO ITALY AND SPAIN FOR THREE WEEKS...

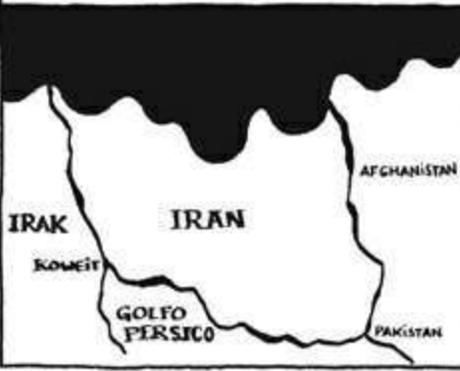


...IT WAS WONDERFUL.

RIGHT BEFORE GOING BACK, IN THE HOTEL ROOM IN MADRID.



THE TV SHOWED A MAP OF IRAN AND A BLACK CLOUD COVERING THE COUNTRY LITTLE BY LITTLE.



THE NEXT DAY MY GRANDMOTHER CAME TO PICK US UP AT THE AIRPORT.



SHE LOOKED WORRIED.





THE F-14s

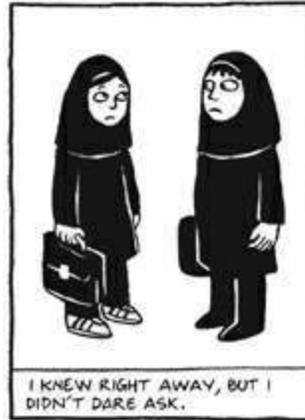








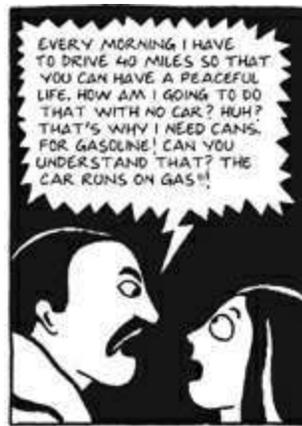






THE JEWELS







AFTER ABADAN, EVERY BORDER TOWN WAS TARGETED BY BOMBERS. MOST OF THE PEOPLE LIVING IN THOSE AREAS HAD TO FLEE NORTHWARD, FAR FROM THE IRAQI MISSILES.

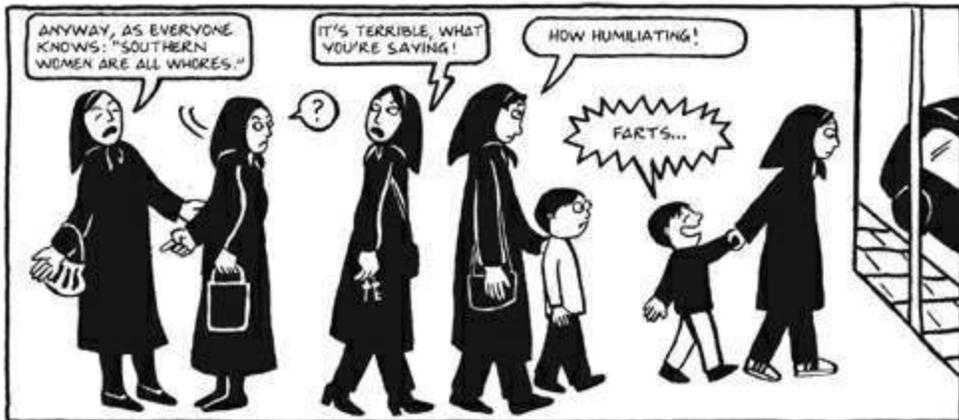






MALI AND HER FAMILY SPENT A WEEK WITH US. THAT'S HOW LONG IT TOOK TO SELL THE JEWELRY AND START OVER AGAIN. MALI'S MOTHER WAS BITTER AND HARD TO DEAL WITH (AND DEAF). BUT THEY WERE HAPPY AT OUR PLACE. THEN, ONE DAY, WE WENT TO THE SUPERMARKET.





THE KEY

THE IRAQI ARMY HAD CONQUERED THE CITY OF KHORRAMSHAHR. THEIR ARMS WERE MODERN, BUT WHERE IRAQ HAD QUALITY, WE HAD QUANTITY. COMPARED TO IRAQ, IRAN HAD A HUGE RESERVOIR OF POTENTIAL SOLDIERS. THE NUMBER OF WAR MARTYRS EMPHASIZED THAT DIFFERENCE.

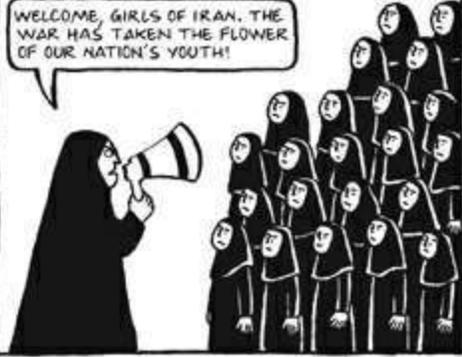


I AGREED WITH MY MOTHER. I TOO TRIED TO THINK ONLY OF LIFE. HOWEVER, IT WASN'T ALWAYS EASY: AT SCHOOL, THEY LINED US UP TWICE A DAY TO MOURN THE WAR DEAD. THEY PUT ON FUNERAL MARCHES, AND WE HAD TO BEAT OUR BREASTS.



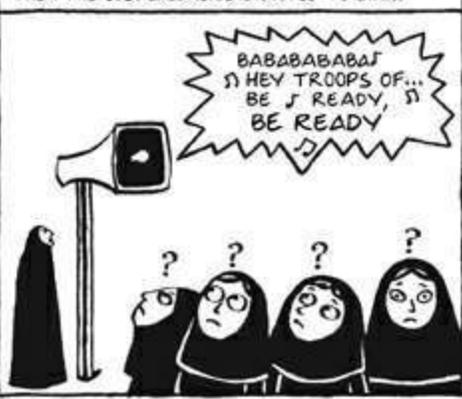
I REMEMBER MY INITIATION. IT WAS THE FIRST DAY OF CLASS AFTER SUMMER VACATION.

WELCOME, GIRLS OF IRAN. THE WAR HAS TAKEN THE FLOWER OF OUR NATION'S YOUTH!



THEN THE LOUDSPEAKERS STARTED TO SING.

BABABABABAJ
HEY TROOPS OF...
BE READY,
BE READY



LET'S GO CHILDREN, ON THE HEART!

WHACK!
WHACK!



AND ALL TOGETHER, WE BEGAN THE SESSION.



IT WASN'T AS BAD AS ONE MIGHT THINK. WE'D SEEN IT BEFORE.

HITTING YOURSELF IS ONE OF THE COUNTRY'S RITUALS. DURING CERTAIN RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES, SOME PEOPLE FLAGELLATED THEMSELVES BRUTALLY.



SOMETIMES EVEN WITH CHAINS.



IT COULD GO VERY FAR.



SOMETIMES IT WAS CONSIDERED A MACHO THING.

AFTER A LITTLE WHILE, NO ONE TOOK THE TORTURE SESSIONS SERIOUSLY ANYMORE. AS FOR ME, I IMMEDIATELY STARTED MAKING FUN OF THEM.



THE MARTYRS!
THE MARTYRS!



KILL ME!



SATRAPI! WHAT ARE YOU DOING ON THE GROUND?

I'M SUFFERING, CAN'T YOU SEE?

EVERY SITUATION OFFERED AN OPPORTUNITY FOR LAUGHS: LIKE WHEN WE HAD TO KNIT WINTER HOODS FOR THE SOLDIERS...



STOP THAT! OR I'LL CALL THE PRINCIPAL!!

...OR WHEN WE HAD TO DECORATE THE CLASSROOM FOR THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE REVOLUTION..



WHAT ARE THESE GARLANDS?

TOILET PAPER??



YOU'RE AS WORTHLESS AS YOUR DECORATIONS! YOU'RE WORTHLESS!! YOU HEAR ME?! WORTHLESS!!!...

POOPOO



WHO SAID THAT? WHO WAS IT? DOES SHE HAVE THE COURAGE TO STAND UP? IF NOT, YOU'LL ALL BE PUNISHED! WELL? WHO WAS IT??!!?

WE WERE COMPLETELY UNITED.



YOU'RE ALL SUSPENDED FOR A WEEK!

I THINK THAT THE REASON WE WERE SO REBELLIOUS WAS THAT OUR GENERATION HAD KNOWN SECULAR SCHOOLS. OBVIOUSLY, THEY CALLED OUR PARENTS IN.



GIRLS HAD TO MAKE WINTER HOODS FOR THE SOLDIERS, BUT BOYS HAD TO PREPARE TO BECOME SOLDIERS.

HI MRS. NASRINE. YOU DON'T LOOK WELL.

MRS. NASRINE WAS OUR MAID.

YOU SEE THIS?

IT'S A PLASTIC KEY PAINTED GOLD.

SO, TELL ME, WHAT'S WRONG?

YOU OK?

NO, MY CHILD. I'M NOT OK.

THEY GAVE THIS TO MY SON AT SCHOOL. THEY TOLD THE BOYS THAT IF THEY WENT TO WAR AND WERE LUCKY ENOUGH TO DIE, THIS KEY WOULD GET THEM INTO HEAVEN.

MY GOD!

IT'S OK, CRY LET YOURSELF GO.

I'LL MAKE SOME TEA.

I'VE SUFFERED SO MUCH. I RAISED MY FIVE KIDS WITH THE WATER OF MY TEARS, NOW THEY WANT TO TRADE THIS KEY FOR MY OLDEST SON...

ALL MY LIFE, I'VE BEEN FAITHFUL TO THE RELIGION. IF IT'S COME TO THIS... WELL, I CAN'T BELIEVE IN ANYTHING ANYMORE...

AND THE CHILD, WHAT DOES HE SAY?





THE KEY TO PARADISE WAS FOR POOR PEOPLE. THOUSANDS OF YOUNG KIDS, PROMISED A BETTER LIFE, EXPLODED ON THE MINEFIELDS WITH THEIR KEYS AROUND THEIR NECKS.



MRS. NASRINE'S SON MANAGED TO AVOID THAT FATE, BUT LOTS OF OTHER KIDS FROM HIS NEIGHBORHOOD DIDN'T.

MEANWHILE, I GOT TO GO TO MY FIRST PARTY. NOT ONLY DID MY MOM LET ME GO, SHE ALSO KNITTED ME A SWEATER FULL OF HOLES AND MADE ME A NECKLACE WITH CHAINS AND NAILS. PUNK ROCK WAS IN.



I WAS LOOKING SHARP.



THE WINE

AFTER THE BORDER TOWNS, TEHRAN BECAME THE BOMBERS' MAIN TARGET. TOGETHER WITH THE OTHER PEOPLE IN OUR BUILDING, WE TURNED THE BASEMENT INTO A SHELTER. EVERY TIME THE SIREN RANG OUT, EVERYONE WOULD RUN DOWNSTAIRS...



PUT YOUR CIGARETTE OUT. THEY SAY THAT THE GLOW OF A CIGARETTE IS THE EASIEST THING TO SEE FROM THE SKY.

BUT WE'RE IN THE BASEMENT HERE!



AND ONCE IT WAS OVER...



WELL? WELL?

NO ONE'S ANSWERING!

I'M FINE!

OH THOSE POOR PEOPLE! LUCKY NOTHING HAPPENED TO YOU!

HE WANTS TO TALK TO YOU!

AFTER THE BOMBS AND THE INSTINCTIVE FEAR OF DEATH, YOU'D THINK OF THE VICTIMS AND ANOTHER KIND OF ANXIETY SEIZED YOU.

IT WASN'T JUST THE BASEMENTS. THE INTERIORS OF HOMES ALSO CHANGED. BUT IT WASN'T ONLY BECAUSE OF THE IRAQI PLANES.

MOM, WHAT'RE YOU DOING?

THE MASKING TAPE IS TO PROTECT AGAINST FLYING GLASS DURING A BOMBING AND THE BLACK CURTAINS ARE TO PROTECT US FROM OUR NEIGHBORS.

WHAT NEIGHBORS?



ACROSS THE STREET, THEY'RE TOTALLY DEVOTED TO THE NEW REGIME. A GLIMPSE OF WHAT GOES ON IN OUR HOUSE WOULD BE ENOUGH FOR THEM TO DONDUCE US!



YOU KNOW TINDOSH'S DAD?

TINDOSH, YEAH. WHAT ABOUT HIM?



THE OTHER NIGHT, TWO GUARDIANS OF THE REVOLUTION PATROLS PAID THEM A VISIT.



SOMEONE TOLD US YOU WERE PLANNING A PARTY, YOU KNOW THAT IT'S STRICTLY FORBIDDEN!

UM...



...THEY FOUND RECORDS AND VIDEO-CASSETTES AT THEIR PLACE. A DECK OF CARDS, A CHESS SET. IN OTHER WORDS, EVERYTHING THAT'S BANNED.

GET YOUR ASS IN THE CAR. MOVE!

EXCUSE ME, SIR. SHUT UP, SLUT!



...IT EARNED HIM SEVENTY-FIVE LASHES.



HIS WIFE CRIED SO MUCH THAT THEY FINALLY LET HER OFF WITH A HEFTY FINE. BUT HE CAN'T WALK ANYMORE...NOW YOU SEE WHY I'M PUTTING UP THE CURTAINS. WITH THE PARTIES WE HAVE ON THURSDAYS AND THE CARD GAMES ON MONDAYS, WE HAVE TO BE CAREFUL.



IN SPITE OF ALL THE DANGERS, THE PARTIES WENT ON. "WITHOUT THEM IT WOULDN'T BE PSYCHOLOGICALLY BEARABLE," SOME SAID. "WITHOUT PARTIES, WE MIGHT AS WELL JUST BURY OURSELVES NOW," ADDED THE OTHERS. MY UNCLE INVITED US TO HIS HOUSE TO CELEBRATE THE BIRTH OF MY COUSIN. EVERYONE WAS THERE. EVEN GRANDMA WAS DANCING.



**DAMN!
POWER OUTAGE!!**

**BE CAREFUL
WHERE YOU
STEP!!!**



AWWWW! NO MORE MUSIC!

DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT!
I'LL GO GET THE ZARB.



A ZARB IS A KIND OF DRUM. MY FATHER
PLAYED IT VERY WELL. LIKE A PRO.



WE HAD EVERYTHING. WELL,
EVERYTHING THAT WAS FORBIDDEN.
EVEN ALCOHOL, GALLONS OF IT.



MY UNCLE WAS THE VINTNER.
HE HAD BUILT A GENUINE WINE-
MAKING LAB IN HIS BASEMENT.



MRS. NASRINE, WHO WAS ALSO
HIS CLEANING LADY, CRUSHED
THE GRAPES.

GOD
FORGIVE ME!
GOD
FORGIVE ME!

SUDDENLY, SIRENS STARTED TO WAIL...



...AND MY AUNT DID TOO.



I FOUND MYSELF WITH THE NEWBORN BABY WE HAD BEEN CELEBRATING IN MY ARMS.

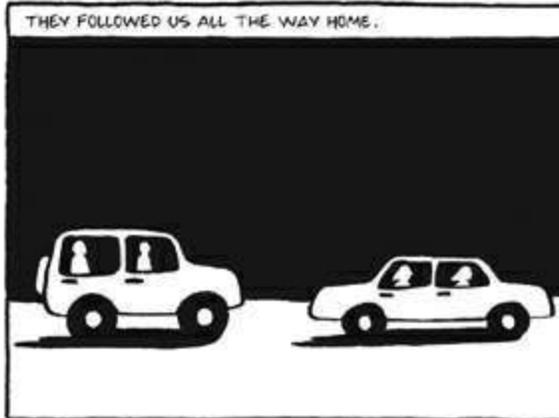


HER MOTHER HAD ALREADY ABANDONED HER.



SINCE THAT DAY, I'VE HAD DOUBTS ABOUT THE SO-CALLED "MATERNAL INSTINCT."









THE CIGARETTE

THE WAR HAD BEEN GOING ON FOR TWO YEARS. WE WERE USED TO IT. I WAS GROWING UP AND I EVEN HAD FRIENDS OLDER THAN ME.

YESTERDAY ON THE NEWS THEY SAID WE DESTROYED 13 IRAQI PLANES. RIGHT AFTER ON THE BBC, I HEARD THAT IN FACT THE IRAQIS HAD SHOT DOWN TWO OF OURS.



IT'S PERFECTLY CLEAR. EVERY DAY THEY TELL US THAT WE'VE DESTROYED TEN PLANES AND FIVE TANKS. IF YOU START FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE WAR, THAT MAKES SIX THOUSAND PLANES AND THREE THOUSAND TANKS DESTROYED. EVEN THE AMERICANS DON'T HAVE AN ARMY THIS BIG.



I GET IT. I'M GOING TO TELL MY DAD THAT ONE.



BRINGGG...



HEY, THERE'S THE BELL. DON'T YOU HAVE CLASS?



NO, WE'VE GOT PHYSICAL EDUCATION BUT WE'RE NOT GOING. WE'RE GOING FOR BURGERS.

BURGERS?

THEY ALSO HAVE HOT DOGS.

ALL YOU NEEDED WAS SOME MONEY.



YEAH! AT KANSAS ON JORDAN AVENUE.

DON'T LOOK AT ME LIKE THAT. WE'LL CLIMB THE WALL.

THE WALL??!!



HA HA HA HA!
HA HA HA!

IF I WANTED TO BE FRIENDS WITH 14-YEAR-OLDS, I HAD TO DO IT.



I WASN'T CHICKEN, SO I FOLLOWED THEM.

I HAD ALREADY BROKEN THE RULES ONCE BY GOING TO THE DEMONSTRATION IN '79. THIS WAS THE SECOND TIME.

JORDAN AVENUE WAS WHERE THE TEENAGERS FROM NORTH TEHRAN (THE NICE NEIGHBORHOODS) HUNG OUT. KANSAS WAS ITS TEMPLE.



IF SOME PUBLIC PLACES HAD SURVIVED THE REGIME'S REPRESSION, EITHER IT WAS TO LEAVE US A LITTLE FREE SPACE, OR ELSE IT WAS OUT OF IGNORANCE. PERSONALLY, THE LATTER THEORY SOUNDED MORE LIKELY: THEY PROBABLY HADN'T THE SLIGHTEST IDEA WHAT "KANSAS" WAS.



DID YOU SEE HIS HAIR? JUST LIKE ROD STEWART!

YEAH, IF HE GETS CAUGHT, HE'LL GET A BUZZ CUT!

...IN SPITE OF EVERYTHING, KIDS WERE TRYING TO LOOK HIP, EVEN UNDER RISK OF ARREST.

MY FRIENDS WEREN'T ACTUALLY THAT INTERESTED IN THE HAMBURGERS...



WE LET THE BOYS KNOW THAT THEY COULD FOLLOW US BY A FEW SIGNS.

FOLLOW THE OTHERS, I MEAN. I WAS TOO YOUNG TO INTEREST THEM.



...THE SIRENS WENT OFF.

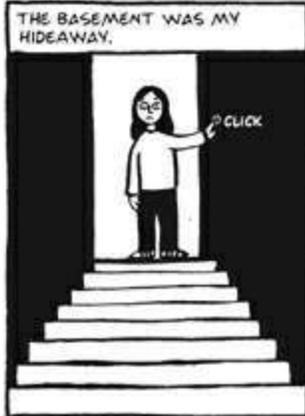


WE HAD BEEN TOLD THAT IF WE WERE IN THE STREET DURING A BOMBING, WE SHOULD LIE DOWN IN THE GUTTER FOR SAFETY.



HA! YOU CHICKEN!







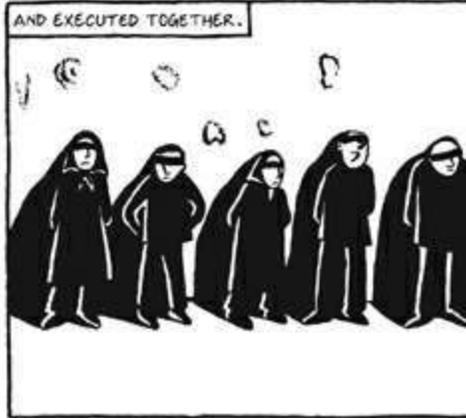
* A SHIITE HOLY CITY IN IRAQ



THEY EVENTUALLY ADMITTED THAT THE SURVIVAL OF THE REGIME DEPENDED ON THE WAR.



WHEN I THINK WE COULD HAVE AVOIDED IT ALL... IT JUST MAKES ME SICK. A MILLION PEOPLE WOULD STILL BE ALIVE.





THE PASSPORT

JULY 1982. WE WERE AT MY AUNT'S PLACE. THE INTERNAL WAR HAD BECOME A BIGGER ISSUE THAN THE WAR AGAINST IRAQ. ANYONE SHOWING THE SLIGHTEST RESISTANCE TO THE REGIME WAS PERSECUTED.

THERE MUST BE A LOT OF PEOPLE IN THE OPPOSITION IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD. WE HEAR GUNSHOTS EVERY DAY.

TAHER, STOP SMOKING!

THE STRESS I GET FROM EVERY GUNSHOT I HEAR IS MUCH WORSE FOR ME THAN THE CIGARETTES.

SINCE HE HAD SENT HIS OLDEST SON TO HOLLAND, UNCLE TAHER HAD HAD TWO HEART ATTACKS. HE WAS ABSOLUTELY FORBIDDEN TO SMOKE.

THE BUTCHER TOLD ME HE'S SEEN KIDS EXECUTED IN THE STREET WITHOUT EVEN HAVING BEEN JUDGED. THE SHAME OF IT.

WHEN I THINK ABOUT IT, I'M GLAD THAT MY SON IS SAFELY ABROAD. BUT WITH THE BORDERS CLOSED, HOW AM I EVER GOING TO SEE HIM AGAIN?

THE BORDERS WERE CLOSED FOR THREE YEARS BETWEEN 1980 AND 1983.

HOW MANY TIMES DID I SAY TO MY WIFE, "COME ON, LET'S JOIN HIM." SHE DIDN'T WANT TO. SHE INVOKED HER COUNTRY, HER FAMILY, ETC, ETC.

ANYWAY, I'M ALREADY 59. BUT THOSE POOR 20-YEAR-OLDS WHO GET SLAUGHTERED. THEY KILL ME... THEY KILL ME!

MY UNCLE TAHER WAS SO SAD THAT IT HURT TO LOOK AT HIM. NO ONE DARED SAY A WORD.



UNCLE TAHER HAD JUST SUFFERED HIS THIRD HEART ATTACK. WE WERE OFF TO THE HOSPITAL.



RED CRESCENT TRUCKS WERE PULLED UP IN FRONT OF THE HOSPITAL, CALLING FOR PEOPLE TO GIVE BLOOD FOR THE WAR WOUNDED. THERE WERE SO MANY OF THEM.



I FELT BOTH ANGRY AND EMBARRASSED...

ONCE INSIDE THE HOSPITAL I FELT EVEN WORSE.







WE WENT TO SEE AN ACQUAINTANCE OF MY FATHER'S, KHOSRO. HIS BROTHER AND MY UNCLE ANDOSH WERE IN PRISON TOGETHER DURING THE REIGN OF THE SHAH.



EBI, THE BROTHER OF ANDOSH? COME IN! COME IN!

SINCE THEY SHUT DOWN MY PUBLISHING COMPANY, I'VE BEEN PRINTING FAKE PASSPORTS. BIG SELLERS. YOU WANT ONE?



NOT ME, MY BROTHER-IN-LAW.

WHEN THEY LET HIM OUT, MY BROTHER STARTED GOING TO COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY DEMONSTRATIONS. HE TOLD ME THAT THE CHIEF OF THE NEW EXECUTIONERS WAS HIS TORTURER IN THE SHAH'S PRISON. HE SAID "KHOSRO, I CAN'T TAKE ANY MORE." I MADE HIM A FAKE PASSPORT AND HE SOUGHT POLITICAL ASYLUM IN SWEDEN.



LOOK, EBI, A WHOLE MONTH'S WORK, JUST FOR THE STAMP.



HOW MUCH TIME WILL IT TAKE TO MAKE A PASSPORT?

A WEEK.



CRR...



YOU CAN COME IN. THEY'RE FRIENDS.

THIS IS NILDOFAR. HER BROTHER WAS MY MESSENGER BOY. THEY ARE LOOKING ALL OVER FOR HER BECAUSE SHE'S A COMMUNIST. I LET HER STAY IN MY BASEMENT.



SHE'S EIGHTEEN, THE SAME AGE AS MY DAUGHTER, MANDANA.



KHOSRO'S DAUGHTER HAD LEFT WITH HER MOTHER RIGHT AFTER THE REVOLUTION.

THEY'VE BEEN SEARCHING THE HOUSES OF EVERYONE IN HER FAMILY. THIS IS THE ONLY PLACE SHE'S SAFE.

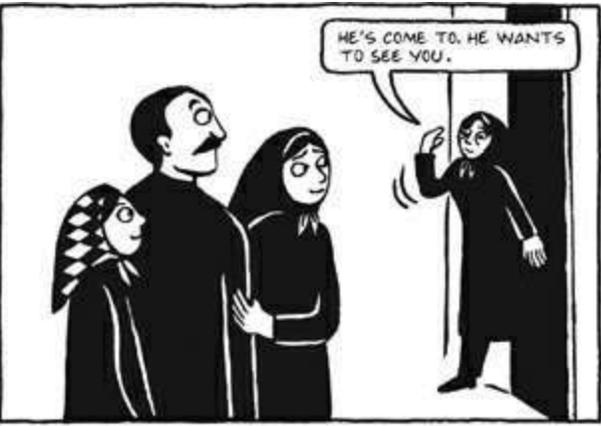


AFTER NEGOTIATING A PRICE, THE EQUIVALENT OF ABOUT \$200, KHOSRO AGREED TO MAKE A PASSPORT IN FIVE DAYS. WE WENT BACK TO THE HOSPITAL FEELING A LITTLE BETTER.



I SAW KHOSRO. HE CAN MAKE A PASSPORT FOR TAHER BY WEDNESDAY.

SO?



HE'S COME TO. HE WANTS TO SEE YOU.



SEE, IT'S NOT THE CIGARETTES THAT DID IT! IT WAS THAT DAMN GRENADE...

DON'T UPSET YOURSELF, TALK ABOUT SOMETHING ELSE.



LOOK AT HOW LITTLE MARJI IS GROWING UP. ONE DAY SHE'LL LEAVE AND YOU'LL SEE HOW HARD IT IS TO LOSE YOUR KIDS.



I HAVE ONLY ONE WISH, AND THAT'S TO SEE MY SON AGAIN, ONE LAST TIME.

TWO DAYS LATER, NILOUFAR, THE EIGHTEEN-YEAR-OLD COMMUNIST, WAS SPOTTED.



ARRESTED...



AND EXECUTED.



KHOSRO FOUND HIS HOUSE RANSACKED...



FLED ACROSS THE MOUNTAINS TO TURKEY...

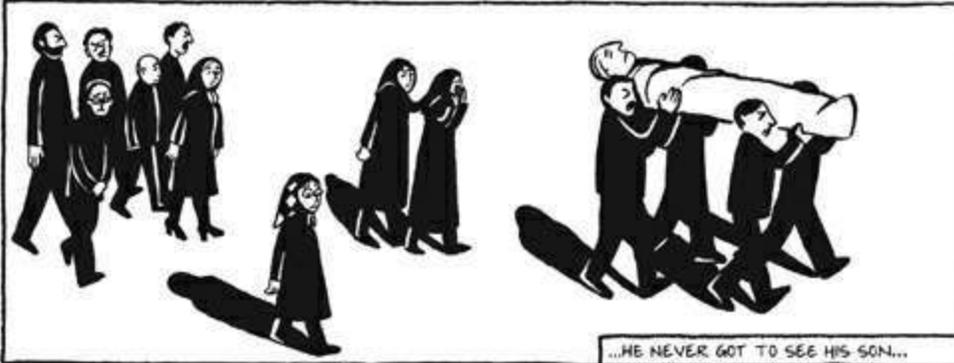


AND SOUGHT ASYLUM WITH HIS BROTHER IN SWEDEN.



HE NEVER GOT TO MAKE THE PASSPORT.

THREE WEEKS AFTER THESE EVENTS, UNCLE TAHER WAS BURIED. HIS REAL PASSPORT ARRIVED THE SAME DAY...



...HE NEVER GOT TO SEE HIS SON...



FIRST THING AFTER THEY GOT TO ISTANBUL, THEY WENT TO BUY THE POSTERS.











FOR A YEAR NOW, THE FOOD SHORTAGE HAD BEEN RESOLVED BY THE GROWTH OF THE BLACK MARKET. HOWEVER, FINDING TAPES WAS A LITTLE MORE COMPLICATED. ON GANDHI AVENUE YOU COULD FIND THEM SOMETIMES.





AT THE COMMITTEE, THEY DIDN'T HAVE TO INFORM MY PARENTS. THEY COULD DETAIN ME FOR HOURS, OR FOR DAYS. I COULD BE WHIPPED. IN SHORT, ANYTHING COULD HAPPEN TO ME. IT WAS TIME FOR ACTION.

I'M SORRY MA'AM! I'LL NEVER DO IT AGAIN...

GET IN THE CAR!



MA'AM, MY MOTHER'S DEAD. MY STEPMOTHER IS REALLY CRUEL AND IF I DON'T GO HOME RIGHT AWAY, SHE'LL KILL ME...



SHE'LL BURN ME WITH THE CLOTHES IRON!



SHE'LL MAKE MY FATHER PUT ME IN AN ORPHANAGE



MAYBE SHE BELIEVED ME, MAYBE SHE JUST PRETENDED TO. BUT, MIRACULOUSLY, SHE LET ME GO.

BACK HOME...

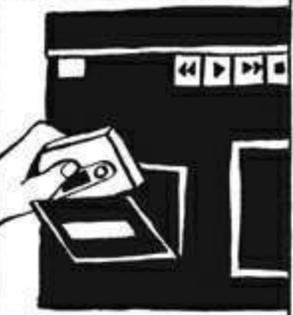
MARJI! WHAT HAPPENED? HAVE YOU BEEN CRYING?

NO MOM. I'M JUST TIRED. I'M GOING TO MY ROOM.



THERE WAS NO WAY I COULD TELL THE TRUTH. SHE NEVER WOULD HAVE LET ME GO OUT ALONE AGAIN.

I GOT OFF PRETTY EASY, CONSIDERING. THE GUARDIANS OF THE REVOLUTION DIDN'T FIND MY TAPES.



♪ WE'RE THE KIDS IN AMERICA WHOAO ♪



TO EACH HIS OWN WAY OF CALMING DOWN.

 **THE SHABBAT**



MOM'S PESSIMISM SOON WON OUT OVER DAD'S OPTIMISM. IT TURNED OUT THAT THE IRAQIS DID HAVE MISSILES. THEY WERE CALLED "SCUDS" AND TEHRAN BECAME THEIR TARGET.



WHEN THE SIRENS WENT ON, IT MEANT WE HAD THREE MINUTES TO KNOW IF THE END HAD COME.

WE'RE NOT GOING TO THE BASEMENT?

IT WOULDN'T MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE!!



CONSIDERING THE DAMAGE THEY DO, WHETHER WE'RE IN THE BASEMENT OR ON THE ROOF, IT'S THE SAME THING.



THE THREE MINUTES SEEMED LIKE THREE DAYS. FOR THE FIRST TIME, I REALIZED JUST HOW MUCH DANGER WE WERE IN.



I DON'T WANT TO DIE!

YOU WON'T DEAR. I PROMISE YOU!



NOW THAT TEHRAN WAS UNDER ATTACK, MANY FLED. THE CITY WAS DESERTED. AS FOR US, WE STAYED. NOT JUST OUT OF FATALISM. IF THERE WAS TO BE A FUTURE, IN MY PARENTS' EYES, THAT FUTURE WAS LINKED TO MY FRENCH EDUCATION. AND TEHRAN WAS THE ONLY PLACE I COULD GET IT.



SOME PEOPLE, MORE CIRCUMSPECT, TOOK SHELTER IN THE BASEMENTS OF BIG HOTELS, WELL-KNOWN FOR THEIR SAFETY. APPARENTLY, THEIR REINFORCED CONCRETE STRUCTURES WERE BOMBPROOF.



ONE EXAMPLE WAS OUR NEIGHBORS, THE BABA-LEVYS. THEY WERE AMONG THE FEW JEWISH FAMILIES THAT HAD STAYED AFTER THE REVOLUTION. MR. BABA-LEVY SAID THEIR ANCESTORS HAD COME THREE THOUSAND YEARS AGO, AND IRAN WAS THEIR HOME.



...THEIR DAUGHTER NEDA WAS A QUIET GIRL WHO DIDN'T PLAY MUCH, BUT WE WOULD TALK ABOUT ROMANCE FROM TIME TO TIME.

...ONE DAY A BLOND PRINCE WITH BLUE EYES WILL COME AND TAKE ME TO HIS CASTLE...

OH YEAH! ME TOO!

SO LIFE WENT ON...

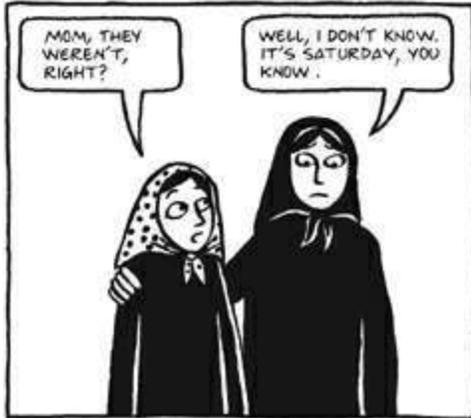




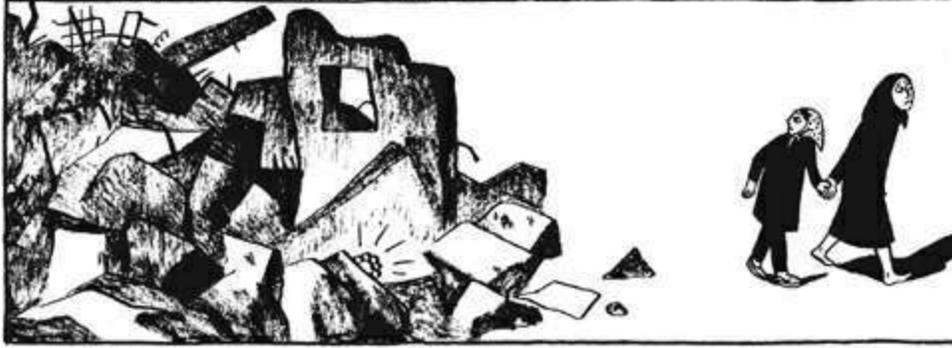
I DIDN'T WANT TO LOOK UP. I LOOKED AT MY TREMBLING LEGS. I COULDN'T GO FORWARD, LIKE IN A NIGHTMARE...

LET THEM BE ALIVE. LET THEM BE ALIVE. LET THEM...





WHEN WE WALKED PAST THE BABA-LEVY'S HOUSE, WHICH WAS COMPLETELY DESTROYED, I COULD FEEL THAT SHE WAS DISCREETLY PULLING ME AWAY. SOMETHING TOLD ME THAT THE BABA-LEVYS HAD BEEN AT HOME. SOMETHING CAUGHT MY ATTENTION.



I SAW A TURQUOISE BRACELET. IT WAS NEDA'S. HER AUNT HAD GIVEN IT TO HER FOR HER FOURTEENTH BIRTHDAY...



THE BRACELET WAS STILL ATTACHED TO... I DON'T KNOW WHAT...



NO SCREAM IN THE WORLD COULD HAVE RELIEVED MY SUFFERING AND MY ANGER.

THE DOWRY



AFTER I WAS EXPELLED, IT WAS A REAL STRUGGLE TO FIND ANOTHER SCHOOL THAT WOULD ACCEPT ME. HITTING THE PRINCIPAL WAS A VERITABLE CRIME. BUT THANKS TO MY AUNT, WHO KNEW SOME BUREAUCRATS IN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM, THEY MANAGED TO PLACE ME IN ANOTHER SCHOOL. AND THERE...







BUT HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT FOR SURE? MAYBE THEY JUST EXECUTED HER!



NO, YOUR MOTHER'S RIGHT. TRADITIONALLY, WHEN A GIRL GETS MARRIED, THE HUSBAND IS SUPPOSED TO PAY HER A DOWRY.



IF THE GIRL DIES, THE HUSBAND HAS TO GIVE THE DOWRY TO HER FAMILY.



THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED WITH NILOUFAR. AFTER SHE WAS EXECUTED, TO MAKE SURE HER AWFUL FATE WAS UNDERSTOOD, THEY SENT 500 TUMANS* TO HER PARENTS.

500 TUMANS FOR THE LIFE AND VIRGINITY OF AN INNOCENT GIRL.



I HAD NO IDEA.

*EQUIVALENT TO \$5.00



ALL NIGHT LONG, I THOUGHT OF THAT PHRASE: "TO DIE A MARTYR IS TO INFECT BLOOD INTO THE VEINS OF SOCIETY." NILOUFAR WAS A REAL MARTYR, AND HER BLOOD CERTAINLY DID NOT FEED OUR SOCIETY'S VEINS.



ONE WEEK LATER...

MARZI, CAN YOU COME HERE FOR A FEW MINUTES? WE WANT TO TALK TO YOU.



I WENT TO SEE THE PRINCIPAL TODAY. SHE ASSURED ME THAT SHE HAD NOT SENT A REPORT THIS TIME. BUT CONSIDERING THE PERSON YOU ARE AND THE EDUCATION YOU'VE RECEIVED, WE THOUGHT THAT IT WOULD BE BETTER IF YOU LEFT IRAN.

WHAT?



YOUR MOTHER AND I HAVE DECIDED TO SEND YOU TO AUSTRIA.

WHY AUSTRIA?



FIRST OF ALL, BECAUSE IT'S EASIER TO GET AN AUSTRIAN VISA, AND SECOND BECAUSE MY BEST FRIEND LIVES IN VIENNA. DO YOU REMEMBER HER? ZOZO? SHERINE'S MOM?

YEAH, YEAH, BUT I DON'T SPEAK GERMAN!



THERE'S A FRENCH SCHOOL IN VIENNA. ONE OF THE BEST IN EUROPE!

AND WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO THERE?



YOU'RE GOING ON AHEAD OF US. WE HAVE SOME BUSINESS TO TAKE CARE OF. WE'LL JOIN YOU A FEW MONTHS FROM NOW!



BUT I'M ONLY FOURTEEN! YOU TRUST ME?

YOU'RE FOURTEEN AND I KNOW HOW I BROUGHT YOU UP. ABOVE ALL, I TRUST YOUR EDUCATION.



I REPEATED WHAT THEY HAD TOLD ME OVER AND OVER IN MY HEAD. I WAS PRETTY SURE THEY WEREN'T COMING TO VIENNA.



I STAYED UP ALL NIGHT AND WONDERED IF THE MOON SHONE AS BRIGHTLY IN VIENNA.



THE NEXT DAY I FILLED A JAR WITH SOIL FROM OUR GARDEN. IRANIAN SOIL.



I TOOK DOWN ALL OF MY POSTERS.



I INVITED MY GIRLFRIENDS OVER TO SAY GOODBYE.



HERE, I'M GIVING YOU MY MOST PRECIOUS THINGS, SO THAT YOU WON'T FORGET ME.



I NEVER REALIZED HOW MUCH THEY LOVED ME.



AND I UNDERSTOOD HOW IMPORTANT THEY WERE TO ME.

ON THE EVE OF MY DEPARTURE, MY GRANDMOTHER CAME TO SPEND THE NIGHT AT OUR HOUSE.

CAN I SLEEP WITH YOU?
THAT'S WHY I'M HERE!



I WATCHED MY GRANDMA UNDRESS. EACH MORNING, SHE PICKED JASMINE FLOWERS TO PUT IN HER BRA SO THAT SHE WOULD SMELL NICE. WHEN SHE UNDRESSED, YOU COULD SEE THE FLOWERS FALL FROM HER BREASTS.



IT WAS SOMETHING TO SEE

GRANDMA, HOW DO YOU HAVE SUCH ROUND BREASTS AT YOUR AGE?

EVERY MORNING AND NIGHT, I SOAK THEM IN A BOWL OF ICE WATER FOR TEN MINUTES.



SHE ACTUALLY DID, AND I KNEW IT. I JUST WANTED TO HEAR HER SAY IT.

I'LL MISS YOU.

OH, I'LL COME SEE YOU.



SHE TOO WAS LYING TO ME.

LISTEN, I DON'T WANT TO PREACH, BUT LET ME GIVE YOU SOME ADVICE THAT WILL ALWAYS HELP YOU.



IN LIFE YOU'LL MEET A LOT OF JERKS. IF THEY HURT YOU, TELL YOURSELF THAT IT'S BECAUSE THEY'RE STUPID. THAT WILL HELP KEEP YOU FROM REACTING TO THEIR CRUELTY. BECAUSE THERE IS NOTHING WORSE THAN BITTERNESS AND VENGEANCE... ALWAYS KEEP YOUR DIGNITY AND BE TRUE TO YOURSELF.



I SMELLED MY GRANDMA'S BOSOM. IT SMELLED GOOD. I'LL NEVER FORGET THAT SMELL.





I COULDN'T BEAR LOOKING AT THEM THERE BEHIND THE GLASS. NOTHING'S WORSE THAN SAYING GOODBYE. IT'S A LITTLE LIKE DYING.



I COULDN'T JUST GO.



I TURNED AROUND TO SEE THEM ONE LAST TIME.



IT WOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER TO JUST GO.



THE SOUP

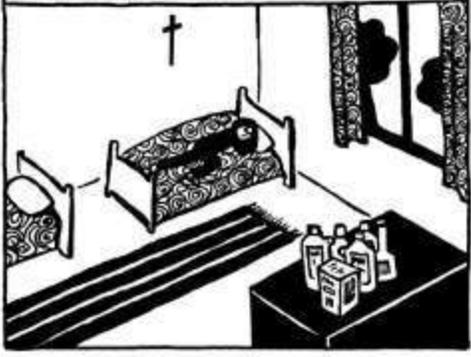
NOVEMBER 1934. I AM IN AUSTRIA. I HAD COME HERE WITH THE IDEA OF LEAVING A RELIGIOUS IRAN FOR AN OPEN AND SECULAR EUROPE AND THAT ZOZO, MY MOTHER'S BEST FRIEND, WOULD LOVE ME LIKE HER OWN DAUGHTER.



ONLY HERE I AM! SHE LEFT ME AT A BOARDING HOUSE RUN BY NUNS.



MY ROOM WAS SMALL, AND FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE I HAD TO SHARE MY SPACE WITH ANOTHER PERSON.



I HADN'T MET HER YET. I ONLY KNEW THAT HER NAME WAS LUCIA.



I WONDERED WHAT SHE WOULD LOOK LIKE.



EUROPE, THE ALPS, SWITZERLAND, AUSTRIA. FROM THIS I DEDUCED THAT SHE WOULD BE LIKE HEIDI.



THIS WAS OKAY WITH ME. I REALLY LIKED HEIDI.

I HAD BEEN IN VIENNA ELEVEN DAYS. ZOZO AND HER DAUGHTER SHIRIN, WHOM I HAD KNOWN DURING MY CHILDHOOD, HAD COME TO GET ME AT THE AIRPORT.



SHIRIN WAS AS I REMEMBERED HER. HOWEVER, I DETECTED SOMETHING UNKIND IN THE LOOK HER MOTHER GAVE ME.



YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED MUCH. WELL, YES! NOW YOU HAVE LONG HAIR!!

YOU HAVEN'T EITHER. YOU'RE THE SAME.



IT'S GOING TO BE COOL TO GO TO SCHOOL WITHOUT A VEIL, TO NOT HAVE TO BEAT ONESELF EVERY DAY FOR THE WAR MARTYRS...



HAVE YOU SEEN THESE? THEY'RE REALLY FASHIONABLE. THEY'RE TO PROTECT YOUR EARS FROM THE COLD. DO YOU WANT TO TRY THEM ON?

NO THANKS!



THIS IS MY RASPBERRY-SCENTED PEN, BUT I HAVE STRAWBERRY AND BLACKBERRY ONES, TOO.



DO YOU WANT TO PUT ON SOME LIPSTICK? I LOVE PEARLY PINK. IT'S VERY IN!!!

HMPHH...



WHAT A TRAITOR! WHILE PEOPLE WERE DYING IN OUR COUNTRY, SHE WAS TALKING TO ME ABOUT TRIVIAL THINGS.



... I LIVED WITH THEM FOR TEN DAYS. THERE WERE FIGHTS DAILY.

HI SWEETHEART! HERE, THESE ARE FOR YOU!



YOU INCOMPETENT IDIOT! I WORK MYSELF TO THE BONE SO THAT YOU CAN THROW MONEY AWAY ON FLOWERS!

BUT ZOZO, IT'S OUR WEDDING ANNIVERSARY.



YOU CAN GIVE ME WHAT-EVER YOU WANT THE DAY YOU'VE EARNED SOME MONEY. I'VE HAD ENOUGH!!



IN TEHRAN, ZOZO WAS HER HUSBAND HOUSHANG'S SECRETARY,



IN VIENNA, SHE BECAME A HAIRDRESSER.

IT WAS SHE, BY THE WAY, WHO CUT OFF MY LONG HAIR.



AS FOR HOUSHANG, ZOZO'S HUSBAND, HE WAS A CEO IN IRAN,



BUT IN AUSTRIA, HE WAS NOTHING.



THANKS TO A DOZEN BAD INVESTMENTS, HOUSHANG HAD LOST ALL HIS CAPITAL. "YOU GAMBLERED IT AWAY!" I HEARD THAT IN THE COURSE OF ONE OF THEIR HABITUAL QUARRELS.

I SAW YOU AT THE CAFÉ WITH THOSE TWO BASTARDS! THEY'D HAVE TO STEAL THE CLOTHES OFF YOUR BACK FOR YOU TO RECOGNIZE THEIR INGRATITUDE!



I WAS ASHAMED. I'D NEVER HEARD MY PARENTS BICKER OVER MONEY.

PROBABLY BECAUSE MY FATHER WASN'T INCOMPETENT.

AND AFTER THESE TEN DAYS...



MARJANE, I SPOKE TO YOUR MOTHER.

OUR APARTMENT, AS YOU'VE NO DOUBT NOTICED, IS TOO SMALL. I FOUND YOU A BOARDING HOUSE IN A BEAUTIFUL PART OF VIENNA, NEAR RATHAUS.



IT'S RUN BY NUNS. THE MOTHER SUPERIOR AND SEVERAL OF THE SISTERS SPEAK FLUENT FRENCH.



WHEN DO WE GO? RIGHT AWAY. GO PACK YOUR BAG.



NUNS. I WAS ACQUAINTED WITH THEM. I WAS AT THE ÉCOLE JEANNE D'ARC* IN TEHRAN. THE NUNS I ENCOUNTERED THERE WERE FEROCIOUS.



YOU'LL COME SEE US ON WEEKENDS. WE'LL GO ICE-SKATING.

YEAH, YEAH.

DESPITE EVERYTHING, I WAS HAPPY TO LEAVE THEIR HOUSE. IN THIS WAY, I'D BE RID OF ZOZO THE MEAN AND SHIRIN THE INANE.

* JOAN OF ARC SCHOOL

THE ONLY ONE I WAS GOING TO MISS WAS HOUSHANG. I SAW IN HIM A PROTECTOR.



TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF.

YES, UNCLE HOUSHANG.

HE SAW IN ME AN ALLY.



OKAY! THAT'S ENOUGH. LET'S GO!



AND WE LEFT...



#ALDI IS A SUPERMARKET AND LINKS MEANS LEFT IN GERMAN.

IT HAD BEEN FOUR YEARS SINCE I'D SEEN SUCH A WELL-STOCKED STORE.



THE FIRST AISLE I HEADED FOR WAS THE ONE WITH SCENTED DETERGENTS.



WE COULDN'T FIND THEM IN IRAN ANYMORE.



I FILLED THE CART WITH ALL KINDS OF PRODUCTS.



EVEN TODAY, AFTER ALL THIS TIME, YOU CAN ALWAYS FIND AT LEAST A DOZEN BOXES OF GOOD-SMELLING LAUNDRY POWDER IN MY HOUSE.

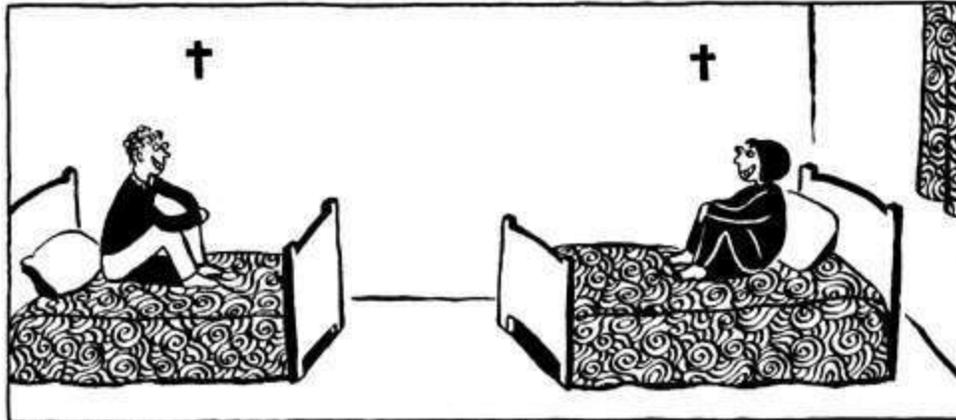
GIVEN MY RESTRICTED BUDGET, I TOOK TWO BOXES OF PASTA.



I DIDN'T KNOW YET THAT THIS WOULD BE MY ONLY FOOD DURING THE FOUR YEARS TO COME.

I HANDED OVER A 100 SHILLING BILL. LUCKILY, IT WAS ENOUGH, OTHERWISE I WOULD HAVE BEEN ASHAMED.





I OFFERED HER SOME OF THE PISTACHIOS I'D BROUGHT WITH ME, A PRESENT FROM MY UNCLE. THEY ARE A SPECIALTY OF IRAN THAT IS OFTEN GIVEN WHEN SOMEONE IS GOING ABROAD. WE CONSIDER OUR PISTACHIOS TO BE THE WORLD'S BEST...



... AS WE CONSIDER MANY OF OUR THINGS TO BE.

LUCIA MADE ME A KNORR SOUP, "CREAM OF MUSHROOM."



I DIDN'T LIKE IT MUCH.



MAGST DU FERNSEHEN? FERNSEHEN?



* WINDOW IN FRENCH.

FERNSEHEN?



DAS IST EIN FERNSEHEN. AH! TV! IT'S THE SAME THING.



TV! FERNSEHEN! YA! YA! FERNSEHEN!



I WAS HAPPY. I WAS SPEAKING GERMAN.

SO WE WENT TO THE TV ROOM, WHICH WAS ON THE GROUND FLOOR.



EVERYONE WAS WATCHING A MOVIE. THEY SEEMED TO BE ENJOYING THEMSELVES. EXCEPT ME! I WAS HEARING "ACHS" AND "OCHS," "ICHS" AND "MICHS," BUT NOTHING THAT I COULD UNDERSTAND.



I DECIDED TO LEAVE DISCREETLY.



SHE DIDN'T EVEN ANSWER ME.

TYROL



AND THEN THERE WAS THE FIRST MATH TEST. I DISTINGUISHED MYSELF BY MY HIGH LEVEL.

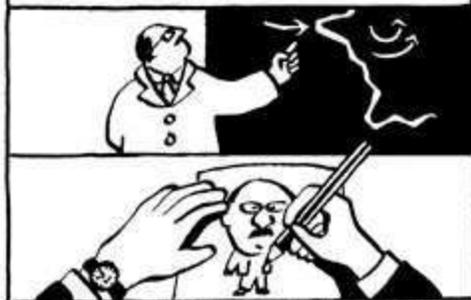


SATRAPI! BRAVO! EXCELLENT WORK. JUST ONE MISTAKE COST YOU HALF A POINT. YOU GOT A 49.5 OUT OF 20.

OH SHIT!

THIS GRADE WON ME A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF ATTENTION. I WAS VERY POPULAR WHEN IT CAME TO MATH HOMEWORK.

THEN I BEGAN TO DRAW CARICATURES OF THE TEACHERS. I HAD GOTTEN INTO THIS HABIT WITH MY TEACHERS IN IRAN.



THE DIFFERENCE BEING THAT THEY WERE ALL VEILED, THEREFORE MUCH EASIER TO DRAW.

THESE PORTRAITS ALSO BROUGHT ME SOME GOODWILL.



BESIDES, MY MISTAKES IN FRENCH MADE ME SOMEONE OF INTEREST. IT HAD BEEN THREE YEARS SINCE I'D PRACTICED MY FRENCH, AFTER THE CLOSING OF THE BILINGUAL SCHOOLS BY THE ISLAMIC GOVERNMENT.



WHAT DO YOU CALL THAT THING, YOU KNOW, LIKE A RULER?

WHAT THING?

* I MEANT A TRIANGLE.



OH, THAT THING! YOU KNOW, A DICK!

OH, RIGHT! WE CALL IT A DICK.

A DICK?

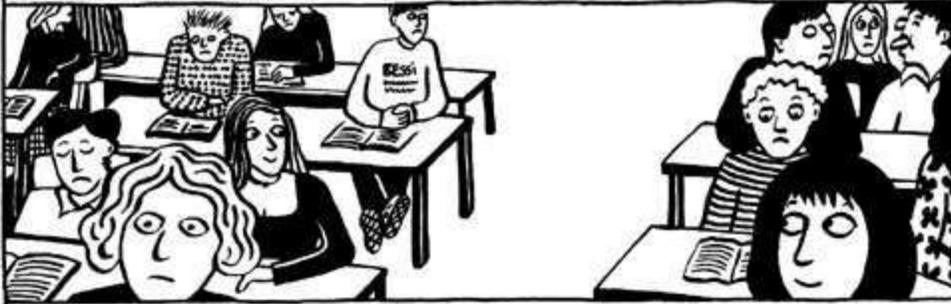


CAN YOU LEND ME YOUR DICK?

HA! HA! HA! HA!

WELL, AT LEAST I EXISTED.

THINGS EVOLVED. AFTER SOME TIME, JULIE, THE SULLEN GIRL IN THE SECOND ROW, TOOK AN INTEREST IN ME. SHE WAS AN EIGHTEEN-YEAR-OLD FRENCH GIRL, IN A CLASS WHERE THE AVERAGE AGE WAS FOURTEEN.



I UNDERSTOOD LATER THAT HER RESERVE CAME FROM THE FACT THAT SHE CONSIDERED THE OTHERS TO BE SPOILED CHILDREN. BUT I WAS DIFFERENT. I HAD KNOWN WAR.

SHE INTRODUCED ME TO MOMO. HE WAS TWO YEARS OLDER.



THIS IS MARJANE. SHE'S IRANIAN. SHE'S KNOWN WAR.

WAR?

DELIGHTED!

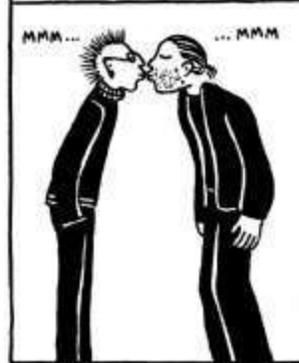


YOU'VE ALREADY SEEN LOTS OF DEAD PEOPLE?

UM... A FEW.

COOL!

MOMO GREETED PEOPLE IN HIS OWN WAY.



MMM...

... MMM

SO IT WAS HE WHO KISSED ME ON THE MOUTH FOR THE FIRST TIME.



... THROUGH MOMO, I GOT TO KNOW THIERRY AND OLIVIER, TWO SWISS ORPHANS WHO WERE LIVING IN AUSTRIA WITH THEIR UNCLE, A DIPLOMAT.



I'M ALSO A BIT OF AN ORPHAN.

YOUR PARENTS ARE DEAD?

NO, THEY'RE IN IRAN.

THE FACT THAT I WAS LIVING WITHOUT MY PARENTS ALSO SUITED JULIE.

AN ECCENTRIC, A PUNK, TWO ORPHANS AND A THIRD-WORLDER, WE MADE QUITE A GROUP OF FRIENDS. THEY WERE REALLY INTERESTED IN MY STORY. ESPECIALLY MOMO! HE WAS FASCINATED BY DEATH.



CHRISTMAS VACATION WAS APPROACHING. EVERYONE WAS TALKING ABOUT THEIR PLANS.



FRIDAY, DECEMBER 22, 1984. THE STREETS WERE PACKED. THE HOLIDAY FRENZY HAD INFECTED EVERYONE. I THOUGHT OF THIERRY WHEN HE TALKED ABOUT IT BEING "GOOD FOR BUSINESS."



MY STREET, THOUGH, WAS DESERTED. THERE WEREN'T ANY STORES.



WHEN I GOT BACK, I FOUND LUCIA. STILL FAITHFUL TO HER POST.





LUCIA'S PARENTS WERE INCREDIBLE. THEY WERE UNLIKE ANYONE I'D EVER MET. HER TYROLEAN AUSTRIAN FATHER WORE PANTS MADE OF LEATHER. HER TYROLEAN ITALIAN MOTHER HAD A MUSTACHE. ONLY HER SISTER REMINDED ME OF HEIDI.



THEIR GERMAN WAS DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND.

AND INDEED WE WENT TO CHURCH FOR MIDNIGHT MASS.



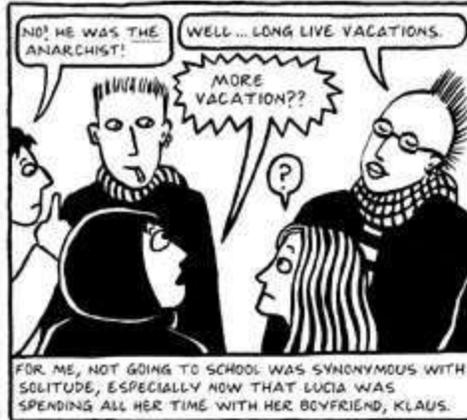
IT ENDED AT THREE IN THE MORNING!



* DEAR



PASTA



SO THEY WENT OFF SKIING AND I SET MYSELF TO READING. I STARTED WITH BAKUNIN. I LEARNED THAT HE WAS RUSSIAN, THAT HE HAD BEEN EXCLUDED FROM THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL* AND THAT HE REJECTED ALL AUTHORITY, ESPECIALLY THAT OF THE STATE.



ASIDE FROM THAT, I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND MUCH OF HIS PHILOSOPHY, AS SURELY MOMO DIDN'T EITHER.

THEN, I STUDIED THE HISTORY OF THE COMMUNE.



I CONCLUDED THAT THE FRENCH RIGHT OF THIS EPOCH WERE WORTHY OF MY COUNTRY'S FUNDAMENTALISTS.

THEN, I TURNED MY ATTENTION TO SARTRE, MY COMRADES' FAVORITE AUTHOR.

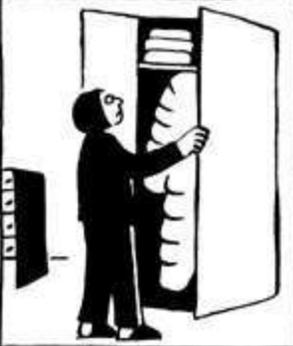
"THE NOTION OF CONSCIOUSNESS COMES FROM MAN'S LIVED EXPERIENCE."



I FOUND HIM A LITTLE ANNOYING...

* FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF COMMUNIST COOPERATORS.

WHEN I'D HAD ENOUGH OF READING, I WENT TO THE SUPERMARKET.



IT WAS SO COLD THAT I HAD THE BRIGHT IDEA OF WEARING MY SKI SUIT, BROUGHT FROM TEHRAN, TO GO OUT.



DECKED OUT LIKE THIS IN VIENNA, I FELT LIKE I WAS ON THE SLOPES OF INNSBRUCK, CLOSE TO MY FRIENDS.



I WAS SO BORED THAT TO BUY FOUR DIFFERENT PRODUCTS, I WOULD GO TO THE SUPERMARKET AT LEAST FOUR TIMES.



IF I'D HAD ANYTHING FUN TO DO, I DON'T THINK I WOULD EVER HAVE READ AS MUCH AS I DID.



TO EDUCATE MYSELF, I HAD TO UNDERSTAND EVERYTHING. STARTING WITH MYSELF, ME, MARJI, THE WOMAN. SO I THREW MYSELF INTO READING MY MOTHER'S FAVORITE BOOK.



I READ "THE SECOND SEX" SIMONE EXPLORED THAT IF WOMEN PEED STANDING UP, THEIR PERCEPTION OF LIFE WOULD CHANGE.



SEATED, IT WAS MUCH SIMPLER. AND, AS AN IRANIAN WOMAN, BEFORE LEARNING TO URINATE LIKE A MAN, I NEEDED TO LEARN TO BECOME A LIBERATED AND EMANCIPATED WOMAN.



"THE MANDARINS," BY SIMONE DE BAVAR.
NO! BEAUVOIR.

SHE HAD READ ME SOME EXCERPTS, BUT I WAS A LITTLE YOUNG.



...??
...؟؟؟
...؟؟؟

SO I TRIED. IT RAN LIGHTLY DOWN MY LEFT LEG. IT WAS A LITTLE DISGUSTING.

AND THEN CAME THE DAY, THE FAMOUS DAY IN THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY WHEN I WAS PREPARING MY ETERNAL SPAGHETTI.



I WAS VERY HUNGRY, SO HUNGRY THAT ONE PLATE WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ENOUGH.



I WENT DOWNSTAIRS WITH MY POT TO WATCH TV IN THE REFECTORY.



I LOVED THAT. AT MY PARENTS' HOUSE, IT WAS STRICTLY FORBIDDEN. "INSPECTOR DERRICK" WAS ON. THE NUNS LIKED IT A LOT.



WHEN SUDDENLY THE MOTHER SUPERIOR BLOCKED MY LINE OF VISION.



THE MOTHER SUPERIOR NO LONGER WANTED TO SEE ME, SO I WAS CALLED BEFORE HER ASSISTANT.





HAPPILY, MY PARENTS KNEW MY TASTES.



THE PILL







ARMELLE HAD A GOOD JOB AT THE UNITED NATIONS. SHE TRAVELED FREQUENTLY.

I STOCKED THE REFRIGERATOR. STUDY HARD! JULIE, DON'T CUT CLASS!

OKAY.

MARTIN AND ARMELLE GOT TO KNOW EACH OTHER IN VIENNA. THEY WORKED TOGETHER, WERE BOTH DIVORCED AND CARRIED ON A PLATONIC RELATIONSHIP.

HAVE A GOOD TRIP!

WHEN I GET BACK I WANT THE HOUSE TO BE CLEAN AND TIDY.

YES, MA'AM.

IT WAS JULIE WHO HAD EXPLAINED IT TO ME.

I DON'T THINK THEY'RE SLEEPING TOGETHER. IF THEY WERE, I WOULD KNOW.

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT IT?

NO SOONER WAS HER MOTHER GONE...
... THAN JULIE ORGANIZED A PARTY FOR THE DAY AFTER WITH HER FRIENDS FROM THE CAFE SCHELTER.

HOW LONG WILL YOU BE GONE?

SIX DAYS. IF YOU NEED ANYTHING, CALL MARTIN.

YOU'VE SEEN HOW ANNOYING SHE IS... IT'S FOR SURE! SHE'S NOT FUCKING.

I DIDN'T YET HAVE ANY EXPERIENCE THAT WOULD HAVE ALLOWED ME TO MAKE THE CONNECTION BETWEEN ARMELLE'S CHARACTER AND HER SEX LIFE.





AND THE PARTY WAS NOT WHAT I IMAGINED. IN IRAN, AT PARTIES, EVERYONE WOULD DANCE AND EAT. IN VIENNA, PEOPLE PREFERRED TO LIE AROUND AND SMOKE.



AND THEN, I WAS TURNED OFF BY ALL THESE PUBLIC DISPLAYS OF AFFECTION. WHAT DO YOU EXPECT, I CAME FROM A TRADITIONALIST COUNTRY.

AROUND FOUR IN THE MORNING, THE LAST GUESTS FINALLY LEFT. I WAS SO SLEEPY.



I WANTED TO REMOVE MY MAKE-UP, BUT IT WASN'T COMING OFF WITH WATER.



I WENT TO ASK JULIE FOR SOME MAKEUP REMOVER, BUT APPARENTLY SHE AND ERNST WERE ALREADY ASLEEP IN OUR ROOM.

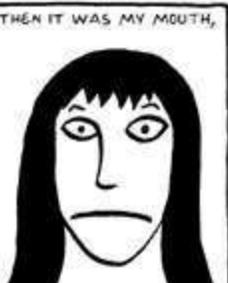
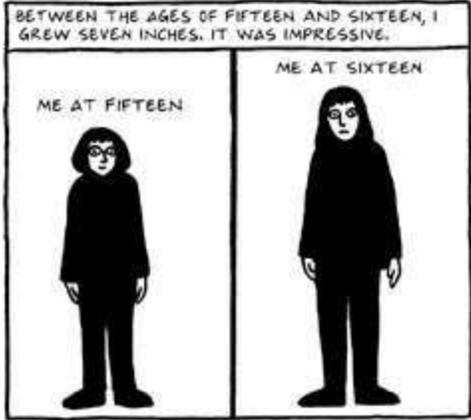


WHEN SUDDENLY





THE VEGETABLE



IN SHORT, I WAS IN AN UGLY STAGE SEEMINGLY WITHOUT END.

AS IF MY NATURAL DEFORMITY WASN'T ENOUGH, I TRIED A FEW NEW HAIRCUTS. A LITTLE SNIP OF THE SCISSORS ON THE LEFT.



AND A WEEK LATER, A LITTLE SNIP OF THE SCISSORS ON THE RIGHT.



I LOOKED LIKE COSETTE IN "LES MISÉRABLES."



SO I COATED MY HAIR WITH GEL,



I ADDED A THICK LINE OF EYELINER,



A FEW SAFETY PINS,



WHICH WERE REPLACED BY A SCARF. IT SOFTENED THE LOOK.



IT WAS BEGINNING TO LOOK LIKE SOMETHING.

HAVE YOU SEEN HOW BEAUTIFUL SHE IS NOW?

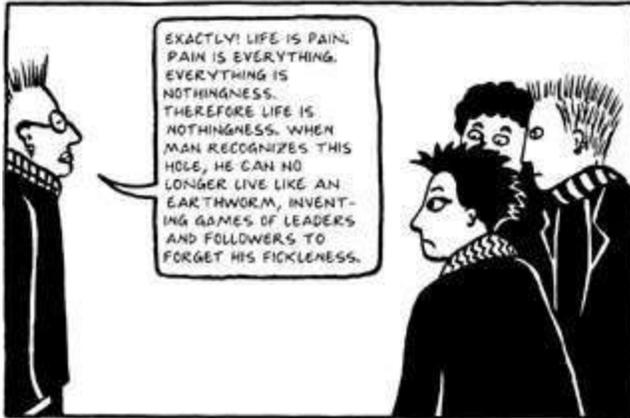


TO MY ENORMOUS SURPRISE, MY NEW LOOK EVEN PLEASSED THE HALL MONITORS. IT SHOULD BE SAID THAT THEY WERE VERY YOUNG.



THAT'S HOW I BECAME THE SCHOOL'S OFFICIAL HAIRCUTTER.





IT WAS ALWAYS THIERRY WHO ROLLED THE JOINTS WHILE WE KEPT AN EYE OUT FOR THE MONITORS SO WE WOULDN'T BE CAUGHT BY SURPRISE.



I DIDN'T LIKE TO SMOKE, BUT I DID IT OUT OF SOLIDARITY. AT THE TIME, TO ME, GRASS AND HEROIN WERE THE SAME THING.

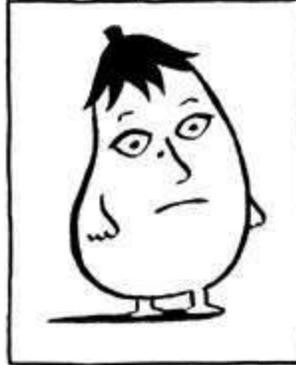
EACH TIME I WAS OFFERED A JOINT, I REMEMBERED THIS CONVERSATION MY PARENTS HAD ABOUT MY COUSIN KAMRAN.

POOR BOY, HE'S STUCK HIMSELF SO MANY TIMES HE'S BEGUN TO LOOK LIKE A VEGETABLE.

THIS KIND OF THING ALWAYS HAPPENS TO THE MOST FRAGILE ONES.



BECOMING A VEGETABLE WAS OUT OF THE QUESTION.



SO I PRETENDED TO PARTICIPATE, BUT I NEVER INHALED THE SMOKE.



AND AS SOON AS MY FRIENDS' BACKS WERE TURNED, I STUCK MY FINGERS IN MY EYES TO MAKE THEM GOOD AND RED.

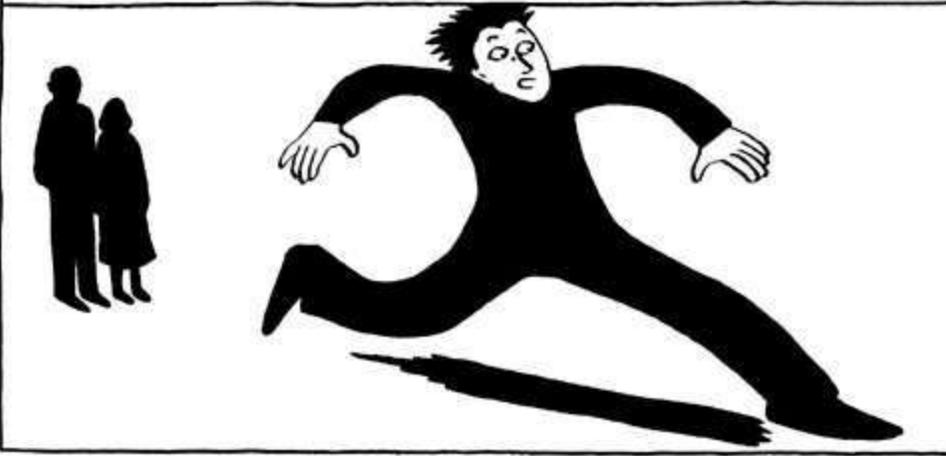


THEN, I IMITATED THEIR LAUGHTER.



I WAS QUITE BELIEVABLE.

THE HARDER I TRIED TO ASSIMILATE, THE MORE I HAD THE FEELING THAT I WAS DISTANCING MYSELF FROM MY CULTURE, BETRAYING MY PARENTS AND MY ORIGINS, THAT I WAS PLAYING A GAME BY SOMEBODY ELSE'S RULES.



EACH TELEPHONE CALL FROM MY PARENTS REMINDED ME OF MY COWARDICE AND MY BETRAYAL. I WAS AT ONCE HAPPY TO HEAR THEIR VOICES AND ASHAMED TO TALK TO THEM.

- YES, I'M DOING FINE. I'M GETTING GOOD GRADES.
- FRIENDS? OF COURSE, LOTS!
- DAD ...
- DAD, I LOVE YOU!

- YOU HAVE SOME GOOD FRIENDS?
- THAT DOESN'T SURPRISE ME, YOU ALWAYS HAD A TALENT FOR COMMUNICATING WITH PEOPLE!
- EAT ORANGES. THEY'RE FULL OF VITAMIN C.
- US TOO, WE ADORE YOU. YOU'RE THE CHILD ALL PARENTS DREAM OF HAVING!



IF ONLY THEY KNEW ... IF THEY KNEW THAT THEIR DAUGHTER WAS MADE UP LIKE A PUNK, THAT SHE SMOKED JOINTS TO MAKE A GOOD IMPRESSION, THAT SHE HAD SEEN MEN IN THEIR UNDERWEAR WHILE THEY WERE BEING BOMBED EVERY DAY, THEY WOULDN'T CALL ME THEIR DREAM CHILD.

I FELT SO GUILTY THAT WHENEVER THERE WAS NEWS ABOUT IRAN, I CHANGED THE CHANNEL.



IT WAS TOO UNBEARABLE.



DID YOU WATCH TV YESTERDAY? YOU MUST BE WORRIED.

NO, IT'S OKAY! I TALKED TO MY PARENTS. THEY'RE FINE.



I WAS LYING. I KNEW NOTHING AND I DIDN'T WANT TO KNOW MORE.

I WANTED TO FORGET EVERYTHING, TO MAKE MY PAST DISAPPEAR, BUT MY UNCONSCIOUS CAUGHT UP WITH ME.



I EVEN MANAGED TO DENY MY NATIONALITY.



DURING A PARTY AT SCHOOL.



HI, I'M MARC. I GRADUATED LAST YEAR. YOU'RE NEW! WHAT'S YOUR NAME?

MARJANE. I'VE BEEN HERE A YEAR.



AND WHERE ARE YOU FROM MARIE-JEANNE?

I'M FRENCH.

OH REALLY? YOU HAVE A FUNNY ACCENT FOR A FRENCH GIRL.

OH! I HAVE TO FIND MY FRIENDS. BYE.



I SHOULD SAY THAT AT THE TIME, IRAN WAS THE EPITOME OF EVIL AND TO BE IRANIAN WAS A HEAVY BURDEN TO BEAR.

IT WAS EASIER TO LIE THAN TO ASSUME THAT BURDEN.



WHO'S THAT GUY?

MARC? HE'S ANNA'S BROTHER, THE GIRL IN THE STRIPED SWEATER. HE'S A JERK FROM BOURGE. YOU SHOULDN'T TALK TO THOSE PEOPLE.



AND WHEN I GOT BACK THAT NIGHT, I REMEMBERED THAT LINE MY GRANDMOTHER TOLD ME: "ALWAYS KEEP YOUR DIGNITY AND BE TRUE TO YOURSELF!"

OH GRANDMA ...



UNFORTUNATELY, IT ALL CAME OUT IN THE END. A FEW DAYS LATER IN A CAFE NEAR SCHOOL.

SHE TOLD MY BROTHER THAT SHE WAS FRENCH.

AND YOUR BROTHER BELIEVED HER?



WHAT DO YOU THINK? HAVE YOU HEARD THE WAY SHE TALKS?

HAVE YOU SEEN HER FACE?



BUT YOUR BROTHER WAS HITTING ON HER OR WHAT?

OF COURSE NOT!!

AH, THAT'S A RELIEF. CONSIDERING HOW UGLY SHE IS, IT WOULD BE REALLY UNFAIR IF SHE GOT A GUY LIKE MARC.



HA, HA, HA! I WOULD COMMIT SUICIDE IF MY BROTHER WAS GOING OUT WITH A COW LIKE THAT!



I DON'T KNOW IF YOU'VE NOTICED, BUT SHE NEVER TALKS ABOUT EITHER HER COUNTRY OR HER PARENTS.

WELL, OF COURSE! SHE LIES WHEN SHE SAYS THAT SHE'S KNOWN WAR. IT'S ALL TO MAKE HERSELF SEEM INTERESTING.



ANYWAY, HER PARENTS CLEARLY DON'T CARE ABOUT HER, OR THEY WOULDN'T HAVE SENT HER ALONE.

THAT WAS TOO MUCH. I SAW RED.



YOU ARE GOING TO SHUT UP OR I AM GOING TO MAKE YOU!
I AM IRANIAN AND PROUD OF IT!



SHE IS COMPLETELY CRAZY.



I WANTED TO DIE.

WHERE WERE MY PARENTS TO TAKE ME IN THEIR ARMS, TO REASSURE ME?



BUT REALLY, I HAD NOTHING TO CRY ABOUT.



I HAD JUST REDEEMED MYSELF.



FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A YEAR, I FELT PROUD.

I FINALLY UNDERSTOOD WHAT MY GRANDMOTHER MEANT. IF I WASN'T COMFORTABLE WITH MYSELF, I WOULD NEVER BE COMFORTABLE.



THE HORSE

JULIE AND HER MOTHER HAD LEFT VIENNA. NOW I WAS LIVING IN A WOHN-
GEMEINSCHAFT. THE WOHN-
GEMEINSCHAFT IS A COMMUNAL APARTMENT. I COULD STAY FOR FOUR MONTHS.

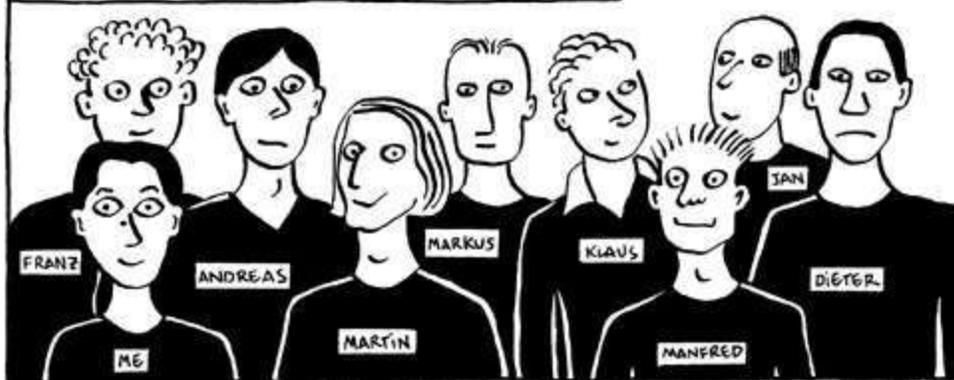


IT WAS FULL OF LIGHT. I HAD
A DOUBLE-BED, A BUREAU
AND A DESK. FOR THE FIRST
TIME IN A LONG TIME I HAD
MY OWN SPACE.



IT WAS REALLY NICE.

MY EIGHT HOUSEMATES WERE EIGHT MEN, ALL HOMOSEXUALS.





EVEN THOUGH IT HAD BEEN NINETEEN MONTHS SINCE I HAD SEEN MY MOTHER, THE FIFTEEN DAYS OF WAITING WERE VERY LONG. THE DAY OF HER ARRIVAL, I BATHED LIKE NEVER BEFORE.



I IRONED MY CLOTHES FOR THE FIRST TIME,



I MADE MYSELF AS BEAUTIFUL AS I COULD BEFORE GOING TO MEET HER AT THE AIRPORT.



I SAW FROM AFAR A WOMAN WHO LOOKED LIKE HER, THE SAME SILHOUETTE, THE SAME WALK, BUT WITH GRAY HAIR. MY MOTHER WAS A BRUNETTE.



WHEN THIS WOMAN GOT CLOSE, THERE WASN'T ANY DOUBT. IT WAS REALLY HER. BEFORE I LEFT HOME, MOM ONLY HAD A FEW GRAY HAIRS. IT'S INCREDIBLE WHAT TIME DOES TO YOU.



I DIDN'T KNOW IF SHE HADN'T RECOGNIZED ME, OR HADN'T HEARD ME.

IN ANY CASE, SHE DIDN'T STOP.



SHE HADN'T RECOGNIZED ME, AND WITH GOOD REASON: I'D ALMOST DOUBLED IN HEIGHT AND SIZE.



IT FELT STRANGE TO TAKE HER IN MY ARMS. OUR PROPORTIONS HAD BEEN REVERSED.



RECOUNTING NINETEEN MONTHS IN A FEW DAYS ISN'T EASY. WE HAD TO TALK A LOT TO MAKE UP FOR LOST TIME. OUR CONVERSATIONS WERE ALWAYS DISJOINTED.



TELL ME, HOW'S DAD? WHAT'S HE DOING?

OH, HE TAKES CARE OF THE GAS IN TEHRAN'S BUILDINGS.



IT FRUSTRATES HIM A LITTLE. YOU KNOW, YOUR FATHER SPECIALIZED IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF STEEL FACTORIES, BUT DURING WARTIME THERE'S NO POINT IN BUILDING.



IS HE HAPPY ANYWAY?

YES, HE'S OKAY. HE MISSES YOU ENORMOUSLY, BUT HE'S HAPPY THAT YOU'RE LIVING HERE, FAR FROM THE PROBLEMS.



MOM, WHERE'S YOUR NECKLACE?

MY MOTHER ALWAYS WORE A GOLDEN PENDANT THAT DAD HAD GIVEN HER FOR THEIR TENTH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY.



I LEFT IT IN IRAN. YOU SEE, WE DON'T HAVE THE RIGHT TO TAKE ANYTHING OF VALUE OUT OF THE COUNTRY.

I LEARNED LATER THAT SHE HAD LIED TO ME.



YOU DON'T LIKE WHAT I MADE?

NO, NO, I LOVE IT. I'M JUST NOT VERY HUNGRY.

THERE AGAIN, SHE WAS LYING. AFTER THIS DAY, SHE NEVER AGAIN LET ME DO THE COOKING.



HERE - A LETTER FROM YOUR FATHER. I'M NOT THE ONE WHO OPENED IT, IT'S THE CUSTOMS IN TEHRAN. THEY CHECK EVERYTHING!



IN THE LETTER, HE WAS OVERJOYED BY THE THOUGHT THAT I HAD A PEACEFUL LIFE IN VIENNA.

I HAD THE IMPRESSION THAT HE DIDN'T REALIZE WHAT I WAS ENDURING.

WE OFTEN WENT WALKING, MY MOTHER AND I.

HOW'S OUR COUNTRY DOING?

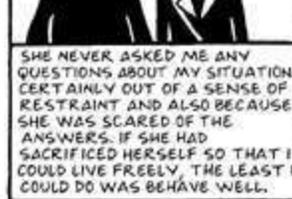
SIGH! STILL THE SAME, BOMBINGS, ARRESTS, WE'RE SO USED TO IT THAT THE CALM HERE MAKES ME A LITTLE NERVOUS.



DO YOU REMEMBER OUR NEIGHBORS, THE KIANIS? THEY BOUGHT A HOUSE IN DEMAVEND.* WHEN WE HEAR THAT THERE'S GOING TO BE AN AIR STRIKE, WE TAKE REFUGE AT THEIR HOUSE. THE AIR IS VERY PURE UP THERE. WE HAVE A GOOD TIME.



HOW GOOD IT FEELS TO WALK WITHOUT A VEIL ON MY HEAD, WITHOUT THE WORRY OF BEING ARRESTED OVER TWO LOCKS OF HAIR OR MY NAIL POLISH.



SHE NEVER ASKED ME ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT MY SITUATION, CERTAINLY OUT OF A SENSE OF RESTRAINT AND ALSO BECAUSE SHE WAS SCARED OF THE ANSWERS. IF SHE HAD SACRIFICED HERSELF SO THAT I COULD LIVE FREELY, THE LEAST I COULD DO WAS BEHAVE WELL.

* A MOUNTAINOUS CITY NORTH OF TEHRAN.

SO WHEN WORDS FAILED US, GESTURES CAME TO OUR AID.

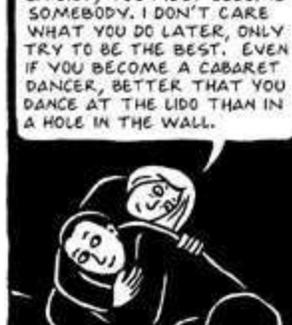


I LOVE MY MOM.

SHE LOVES YOU, TOO.



I'M HAPPY TO SEE YOU SO WELL-SETTLED HERE. NOW YOU MUST MAKE AN EFFORT, YOU MUST BECOME SOMEBODY. I DON'T CARE WHAT YOU DO LATER, ONLY TRY TO BE THE BEST. EVEN IF YOU BECOME A CABARET DANCER, BETTER THAT YOU DANCE AT THE LIDO THAN IN A HOLE IN THE WALL.



WHILE WE'RE ON THE SUBJECT, DID YOU KNOW YOUR UNCLE MASSOUD IS LIVING IN GERMANY?

IN GERMANY? BUT THAT'S NEXT DOOR. HE DIDN'T WANT TO COME VISIT US?



HE'S VERY DEPRESSED. IN IRAN, HE WAS SOMEBODY: "MR. CHARTERED ACCOUNTANT!" IN GERMANY, THEY THINK HE'S A TURK... AT OUR AGE, IT'S DIFFICULT TO START OVER AT ZERO.



I REMEMBER THE DAYS WHEN WE TRAVELED AROUND EUROPE. IT WAS ENOUGH TO CARRY AN IRANIAN PASSPORT; THEY ROLLED OUT THE RED CARPET. WE WERE RICH BEFORE. NOW AS SOON AS THEY LEARN OUR NATIONALITY, THEY GO THROUGH EVERYTHING, AS THOUGH WE WERE ALL TERRORISTS. THEY TREAT US AS THOUGH WE HAVE THE PLAGUE.







I SPENT TWENTY-SEVEN DAYS BY HER SIDE. I TASTED THE HEAVENLY FOOD OF MY COUNTRY, PREPARED BY MY MOTHER. IT WAS A CHANGE FROM PASTA.



SHE STROKED MY HAIR EVERY NIGHT TO PUT ME TO SLEEP.



IT RELAXED ME TO TALK TO HER. IT HAD BEEN SO LONG SINCE I'D BEEN ABLE TO TALK TO SOMEONE WITHOUT HAVING TO EXPLAIN MY CULTURE.

از این آدمای لات پرسیدم
صداشون میبویست. میفکری
از این آدمای آلمانی
فوقی بلدی تا سرچینش کنی
رفیقته دهنده نمی
باشی. لاریج
از این هم هست.



THE EVE OF HER DEPARTURE.

MY DEAR, YOU WON'T INSULT DR. HELLER, RIGHT?

I PROMISE.



BUY YOURSELF FRUITS AND VEGETABLES. YOU MUST EAT WELL. IT'S NOT FOR NOTHING THAT WE SAY "A HEALTHY MIND IN A HEALTHY BODY!"



LOOK! I MADE SOME SKETCHES INSPIRED BY OUR WINDOW-SHOPPING. I'LL MAKE YOU SOME OUTFITS. YOU'RE IN NEED OF SOME NEW DRESSES.

EVER SINCE MY ARRIVAL IN AUSTRIA, I HADN'T BOUGHT MYSELF ANYTHING AND, GIVEN MY GROWTH SPURT, MY CLOTHES NO LONGER FIT ME.

THEN CAME THE DREADED DAY OF DEPARTURE. I WAS SAD BUT, WELL, I'D BEGUN TO GET USED TO SEPARATIONS.



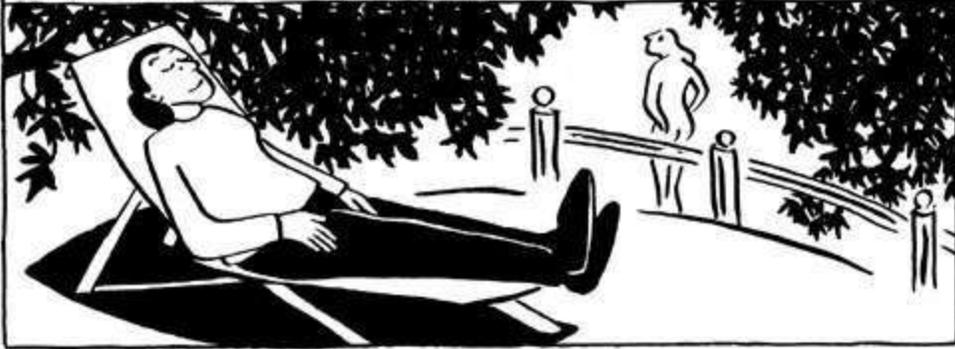
MY MOTHER LEFT.



I'M SURE THAT SHE UNDERSTOOD THE MISERY OF MY ISOLATION EVEN IF SHE KEPT A STRAIGHT FACE AND GAVE NOTHING AWAY. SHE LEFT ME WITH A BAG OF AFFECTION THAT SUSTAINED ME FOR SEVERAL MONTHS.

HIDE AND SEEK

FRAU DOCTOR HELLER'S HOUSE WAS AN OLD VILLA, BUILT BY HER FATHER, A 1930S SCULPTOR OF SOME RENOWN. THE BIG TERRACE THAT LOOKED OUT ON THE GARDEN WAS MY FAVORITE PLACE. I SPENT SOME VERY PLEASANT MOMENTS THERE.



ONLY THE EXCREMENT OF VICTOR, FRAU DOCTOR HELLER'S DOG, DISTURBED THIS HARMONY.

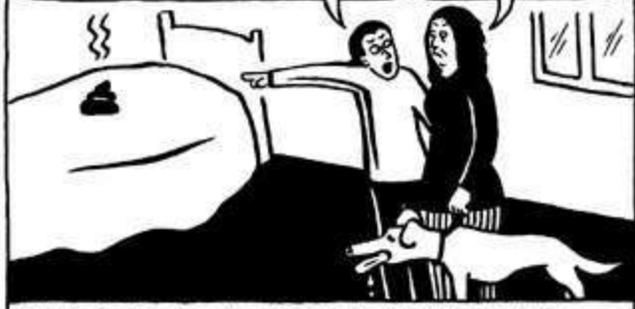


ON AVERAGE, HE DEFECATED ONCE A WEEK ON MY BED.



DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA? IT'S THE FIFTH TIME IN A MONTH! IT'S UNACCEPTABLE! WHY DON'T YOU TRAIN HIM?

YES, WELL! I'M GOING TO HAVE THE SHEETS CHANGED.

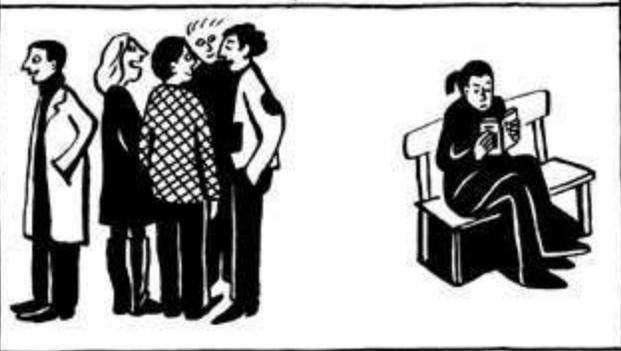


I OFTEN FORGOT THAT HE WAS TOO OLD TO LEARN ANYTHING.

YOU ARE REALLY VERY UPTIGHT!



ALL MY FRIENDS HAD LEFT OUR SCHOOL. JULIE WAS IN SPAIN, THIERRY AND OLIVIER HAD GONE BACK TO SWITZERLAND AND MOMO HAD BEEN EXPELLED. I WAS ALONE AT SCHOOL, BUT I DIDN'T CARE.



MY LACK OF INTEREST IN OTHERS MADE ME MORE INTERESTING.



EVER SINCE I'D SEEN MY MOTHER, I DIDN'T NEED ANYONE.



WELL, ALMOST.

NO. MY BOYFRIEND'S COMING TO GET ME.

DO YOU WANT TO WALK HOME TOGETHER?



HIS NAME WAS ENRIQUE. I'D MET HIM THROUGH DIETER, ONE OF MY FORMER HOUSEMATES.



ENRIQUE WAS HALF-AUSTRIAN, HALF-SPANISH.



WHAT DO YOU SAY ABOUT GOING TO AN ANARCHIST PARTY THIS WEEKEND?

OF COURSE! I'D LOVE TO.

ENRIQUE WAS TWENTY AND PLAYED THE PIANO.



I LIKED HIM A LOT.

THERE'LL BE ABOUT TWENTY OF US, IT'LL BE COOL.

DO YOU KNOW ALL OF THEM?

YES.

LEARNING THAT HE KNEW REAL ANARCHISTS ONLY INTENSIFIED MY FEELINGS FOR HIM.

"A REVOLUTIONARY ANARCHISTS' PARTY!" IT REMINDED ME OF THE COMMITMENT AND THE BATTLES OF MY CHILDHOOD IN IRAN. EVEN BETTER, IT WOULD PERHAPS ALLOW ME TO BETTER UNDERSTAND BAKUNIN.



FINALLY THE BIG DAY ARRIVED.



AFTER AN HOUR AND A HALF ON THE ROAD, WE ARRIVED IN THE MIDDLE OF THE FOREST.



IN THE DISTANCE I SAW A GROUP OF ADULTS CHASING ONE ANOTHER AND SHOUTING:



WHAT A DISAPPOINTMENT... MY ENTHUSIASM WAS QUICKLY REPLACED BY A FEELING OF DISGUST AND PROFOUND CONTEMPT.

SO THESE ARE THE ANARCHISTS?

WHAT DO YOU THINK?



AT THIS INSTANT, MY LOVE FOR ENRIQUE SUFFERED A DEVASTATING BLOW.

COME, WE'RE GOING TO JOIN IN THE GAME.



COME ON, YOU'LL SEE, WE'LL HAVE A GOOD TIME!

I'M NOT REALLY IN THE MOOD FOR A PARTY.



ENRIQUE INSISTED. I FINALLY GAVE IN.

WE PLAYED HIDE-AND-SEEK.



THEN VOLLEYBALL.



TO WRAP UP THE PARTY, WE GRILLED SAUSAGES WHILE SINGING JANIS JOPLIN.



THE SAUSAGES AND THE MUSIC WERE GOOD... I WAS IN LOVE AGAIN.



THEN WE WENT INSIDE TO GO TO SLEEP.



GOOD NIGHT ALL.

SWEET DREAMS!

WE'RE ALL GOING TO SLEEP HERE?

IT EMBARRASSED ME TO SLEEP WITH ENRIQUE IN FRONT OF ALL THESE PEOPLE. I CAME FROM A CULTURE WHERE EVEN KISSING IN PUBLIC WAS CONSIDERED A SEXUAL ACT.



HERE, MARJANE, LET ME INTRODUCE YOU TO INGRID.

DELIGHTED TO MEET YOU, MARJANE. THERE'S A ROOM UPSTAIRS. YOU CAN SLEEP THERE IF YOU LIKE.

YES, THANKS, THAT'S KIND OF YOU.



SHE'S VERY CUTE, YOUR GIRLFRIEND.

I KNOW.

GOOD NIGHT, LOVE-BIRDS.

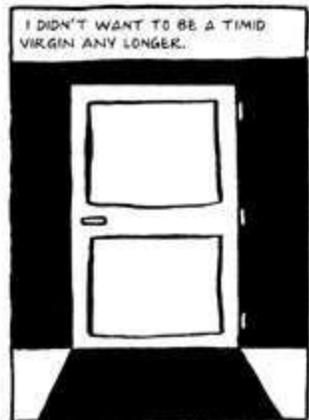


UNTIL THAT NIGHT, MY RELATIONSHIP WITH ENRIQUE WAS STRICTLY PLATONIC. I HAD GROWN UP IN A COUNTRY WHERE THE SEX ACT WAS NEVER CONSUMMATED UNTIL AFTER MARRIAGE. FOR ENRIQUE, IT WASN'T A PROBLEM. WE SATISFIED OURSELVES WITH TENDER KISSES.



BUT THIS NIGHT WAS DIFFERENT. I FELT READY TO LOSE MY INNOCENCE.

AND TOO BAD IF NO IRANIAN EVER MARRIES ME. I LIVE IN EUROPE AND I'LL MARRY A EUROPEAN!



I DIDN'T WANT TO BE A TIMID VIRGIN ANY LONGER.





I LOST TOUCH WITH ENRIQUE BUT HIS ANARCHIST FRIENDS ADOPTED ME. MY LIFE WAS SPLIT BETWEEN THEM, MY SCHOOL, AND FRAU DOCTOR HELLER'S HOUSE.



THE COMMUNAL LIFE WENT HAND IN HAND WITH THE USE OF ALL KINDS OF MOOD ENHANCERS: WEED, HASH,...



I TRIPPED EVERY WEEKEND, AND YOU COULD SEE IT ON MY FACE.

MY PHYSICS TEACHER, YONNEL ARROUAS, WAS WORRIED ABOUT ME.

MARJANE, ARE YOU OKAY? YOU CAN TALK TO ME IF YOU'D LIKE.



AT HOME, THERE'S A WAR. I'M SCARED FOR MY PARENTS. I'M ALONE AND I FEEL GUILTY. I DON'T HAVE MUCH MONEY. MY UNCLE WAS ASSASSINATED. I SAW MY NEIGHBOR DIE IN A BOMBING...



I SENSED THAT HE DIDN'T BELIEVE ME. HE MUST HAVE THOUGHT THAT I WAS EXAGGERATING.

I PERSISTED ANYWAY. I NEEDED TO TALK SO MUCH.

THEN, I LIVE IN THIS CRAZY WOMAN'S HOUSE, MY BOYFRIEND...

ENOUGH, IT'S OKAY. WOULD YOU LIKE TO COME OVER FOR LUNCH AT OUR HOUSE ON SATURDAY? MY MOTHER WILL BE THERE, TOO.



I ACCEPTED.

AT HIS HOUSE, I PLAYED WITH HIS TWINS, JOHANNA AND CAROLINE.



I SPENT A LONG TIME TALKING TO MRS. ARROUAS, MY TEACHER'S MOTHER, A FRENCHWOMAN OF JEWISH-MOROCCAN ORIGINS.

I UNDERSTAND HOW HARD IT IS FOR YOU. YOU HAVE TO MAKE THREE TIMES THE EFFORT OF ANYONE ELSE TO SUCCEED! THAT'S THE IMMIGRANT LOT!! IT WAS THE SAME FOR ME, WHEN I ARRIVED IN FRANCE.



BE STRONG. ALL WILL GO WELL FOR YOU. I HOPE TO SEE YOU SOON.



BUT WE NEVER SAW EACH OTHER AGAIN. YONNEL'S WIFE DIDN'T LIKE ME. SHE MUST HAVE THOUGHT THAT I WAS MAKING UP STORIES. SO I WAS NEVER AGAIN INVITED OVER.

AFTER MY ROMANTIC DISAPPOINTMENT WITH ENRIQUE, I UNDERSTOOD JULIE BETTER WHEN SHE TALKED ABOUT THE NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF A PLATONIC AFFAIR ON HER MOTHER. I HAD GRASPED THE NECESSITY OF A CARNAL RELATIONSHIP. BUT AFTER THIS INCIDENT, WHAT WAS I TO DO? I FELT EVEN MORE UNLOVABLE AND HAD EVEN LESS SELF-CONFIDENCE.

AND THEN ONE DAY A NEW STUDENT ARRIVED IN MY CLASS. HIS NAME WAS JEAN-PAUL. I LIKED HIM.

MARIANE, WOULD YOU LIKE TO GRAB A DRINK THIS WEEKEND?

YOU AND ME?

WHO ELSE?

WHEN?

WELL, THIS WEEKEND. SATURDAY PERHAPS.

WE ARRANGED TO MEET AT CAFE DE L'EUROPE AT SIX O'CLOCK.

I PUT ON MY BEST CLOTHES. I WAS SO EXCITED THAT I GOT THERE AN HOUR EARLY.

HE WAS HALF AN HOUR LATE.

AT LAST!

HI! WHAT ARE YOU READING?

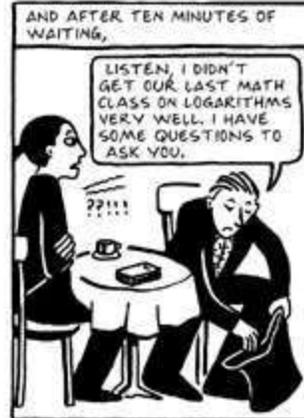
OH, IT'S YOU! I HADN'T NOTICED.

HAVE YOU BEEN HERE LONG?

NO, I JUST GOT HERE.

...

...



THE FOLLOWING WEEKEND, I WAS BACK AT THE COMMUNE.

WHERE WERE YOU THE PAST TWO WEEKS? WHY DIDN'T YOU COME SEE US?

ONE OF MY TEACHERS INVITED ME OVER, AND LAST WEEK I SAW A FRIEND.



INGRID, MY FORMER ENEMY, HAD NOW BECOME A GREAT FRIEND. SHE TAUGHT ME TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION. WITH HER, I SPENT MY TIME EITHER MEDITATING,

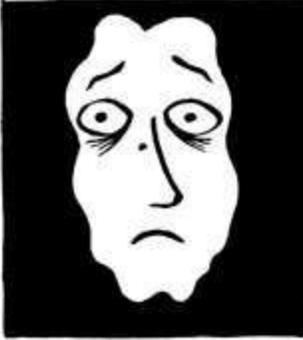


OR TRIPPING.



I DIDN'T ALWAYS LIKE IT, BUT I BY FAR PREFERRED BORING MYSELF WITH HER TO HAVING TO CONFRONT MY SOLITUDE AND MY DISAPPOINTMENTS.

LITTLE BY LITTLE, I BECAME THE PORTRAIT OF DORIAN GRAY. THE MORE TIME PASSED, THE MORE I WAS MARKED.

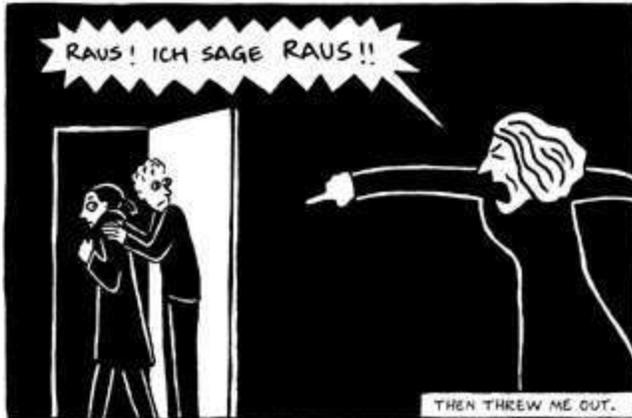


BUT THIS KIND OF DECADENCE WAS PLEASING TO SOME. AND THAT'S HOW I MET THE FIRST GREAT LOVE OF MY LIFE.



HIS NAME WAS MARKUS. HE WAS STUDYING LITERATURE. AT LEAST I WAS SURE THAT HE DIDN'T WANT TO SEE ME BECAUSE OF HIS MATH PROBLEMS.







* I HAD JUST READ HIS THREE ESSAYS ON THE THEORY OF SEXUALITY.

MARKUS AND I DIDN'T KNOW WHERE TO GO. WE OFTEN ENDED UP IN HIS CAR, WHERE WE SMOKED JOINTS TO DISTRACT OURSELVES.

LISTEN, I HEARD OF A CAFE WHERE WE CAN BUY CHEAP HASH. DO YOU WANT TO GO SEE? I CAN'T FIND ANYWHERE TO PARK.

OF COURSE!

HERE'S 200 SHILLINGS.



NO, IT'S OKAY, I'VE GOT MONEY.

I WENT IN. I WAS VERY, VERY SCARED. IT WAS THE FIRST TIME THAT I'D SET FOOT IN SUCH A SORDID PLACE.



BUT IT WASN'T A BIG DEAL. AFTER ALL, I WAS DOING IT FOR LOVE.



EXCUSE ME, I WANT TWO BAGS FOR 200 BUCKS.



FOLLOW ME.



HERE.

THANKS.



MARKUS WAS PROUD OF ME. SO PROUD THAT HE TOLD THE WHOLE SCHOOL THAT HIS GIRLFRIEND HAD CONTACTS AT CAFE CAMERA.



THIS IS HOW, FOR LOVE, I BEGAN MY CAREER AS A DRUG DEALER. HADN'T I FOLLOWED MY MOTHER'S ADVICE? TO GIVE THE BEST OF MYSELF? I WAS NO LONGER A SIMPLE JUNKIE, BUT MY SCHOOL'S OFFICIAL DEALER.

THE CROISSANT

LUCKILY, I HAD BENEFITED ENOUGH FROM A SOLID EDUCATION TO NEVER DRIFT TOO FAR. IT WAS THE END OF MY LAST YEAR. I WAS GOING TO TAKE THE FRENCH BACCALAUREATE.



WHEN I STUDIED WITH THE OTHERS, I REALIZED THAT I HAD MANY GAPS. I NEEDED A MIRACLE TO PASS.

AND THIS MIRACLE HAPPENED ONE NIGHT IN JUNE, DURING MY SLEEP.



HEY, MARJI, THE SUBJECT ON THE BAC, IT WILL BE MONTESQUIEU'S "SLAVERY OF THE NEGROES."

THE NEXT MORNING I CALLED MY MOTHER,



WHO CALLED GOD, WHO IN TURN SENT HIS MESSAGE TO THE EXAMINER.



EACH TIME THAT I ASKED MY MOTHER TO PRAY FOR ME, MY WISH WAS GRANTED.

DO YOU LIKE THE 18TH CENTURY?

YES.



DO YOU LIKE MONTESQUIEU?

YES.



YOU HAVE THIRTY MINUTES TO PREPARE "SLAVERY OF THE NEGROES."

I GOT A 17, THE BEST GRADE IN SCHOOL.



THEN CAME SUMMER. TO BE TRUTHFUL, I WASN'T MAKING ANYTHING BY DEALING BECAUSE I WAS DOING IT AS A FAVOR. SO I SET OUT TO FIND SOME ODD JOBS.



IT WAS SOMETIMES BORING.



SOMETIMES FUN.



ONE DAY I SAW AN AD IN A NEWSPAPER: "CAFÉ SOLE IS LOOKING FOR A WAITRESS, THREE EUROPEAN LANGUAGES REQUIRED."



YOU SPEAK GERMAN, ENGLISH AND FRENCH. THAT'S GOOD. HAVE YOU EVER WORKED IN A BAR?



YES!
GOOD! YOU START TOMORROW. BUT WATCH OUT! THE CUSTOMER IS ALWAYS RIGHT!

CAFÉ SOLE WAS LOCATED IN THE BEST NEIGHBORHOOD IN VIENNA, I WAS PAID DECENTLY, BUT IT WASN'T ALWAYS EASY WITH THE CUSTOMERS. SOMETIMES, I REALLY WANTED TO SLAP THEM.



"THE CUSTOMER IS ALWAYS RIGHT." "THE CUSTOMER IS ALWAYS RIGHT"...

* I LIED.

NONETHELESS, I HAD AN ALLY. IT WAS SVETLANA, THE YUGOSLAVIAN CHEF.



WHAT'S THE MATTER, SWEETIE?
SOME MORON PINCHED MY BUTT.

TELL ME, WHAT DID HE ORDER, THIS SON-OF-A-BITCH?



A WIENER SCHNITZEL.



GOD FORGIVE ME!
RAAK PTOUH!
THERE! JUSTICE IS DONE.

SHE REALLY MADE ME LAUGH. THANKS TO HER, I WAS ABLE TO WORK THERE WITHOUT HAVING TO INJURE A FEW MEN WHERE IT COUNTS.

I WAS SO BUSY I DIDN'T NOTICE WHEN THE START OF THE SCHOOL YEAR ARRIVED.



MARJANE SATRAPI!
THE PRINCIPAL
WANTS TO
SEE YOU.

I SAW THAT YOU HAD THE BEST SCORE FOR THE FRENCH BAC. ALL MY CONGRATULATIONS.



THANK YOU, SIR.
HAVE A SEAT.



IF YOU WILL, THE USAGE OF CERTAIN SUBSTANCES DOES NOT HAVE THE SAME EFFECT ON EVERYONE. IN CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS, IT CAN LEAD TO DEPLORABLE CONSEQUENCES.



LET ME EXPLAIN MYSELF. WE HAVE A REAL PROBLEM WITH THE CONSUMPTION OF CANNABIS IN THIS SCHOOL.



WHOEVER PROCURES IT FOR THE STUDENTS OF THIS ESTABLISHMENT COULD BE SEVERELY PUNISHED.



YOU ARE INTELLIGENT AND I TRUST I WON'T HAVE TO SPEAK TO YOU ABOUT THIS A SECOND TIME.

NO, YOU WON'T HAVE TO.



REMEMBER YOURSELF, SATRAPI, I'M COUNTING ON YOU!

YES, YES.

I WAS VERY SCARED. IT WAS THE END OF MY CAREER.

ADMITTEDLY, I WASN'T SELLING DRUGS ANYMORE, BUT I HAD STARTED TAKING MORE AND MORE. AT FIRST, MARKUS WAS VERY IMPRESSED,

ANOTHER ONE?? YOU'RE TOO STRONG!



THEN, HE STARTED TO LECTURE ME,

IN THE NAME OF GOD! LOOK AT WHAT YOU'RE BECOMING.



AND FINALLY, HE DISTANCED HIMSELF.



THIS DECADENT SIDE, WHICH HAD SO PLEASED HIM AT FIRST, ENDED UP PROFOUNDLY ANNOYING HIM.

I SHOULD SAY THAT I WAS SMOKING TOO MANY JOINTS. I WAS CONSTANTLY TIRED AND I OFTEN FELL ASLEEP.

THE DEFINITE INTEGRAL OF FUNCTION F ON...



MARJANE, ARE YOU OKAY?



WHAT?
DO YOU FEEL WELL?



WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO SAY, SIR? THAT I'M THE VEGETABLE THAT I REFUSED TO BECOME?



THAT I'M SO DISAPPOINTED IN MYSELF THAT I CAN NO LONGER LOOK AT MYSELF IN THE MIRROR? THAT I HATE MYSELF?...

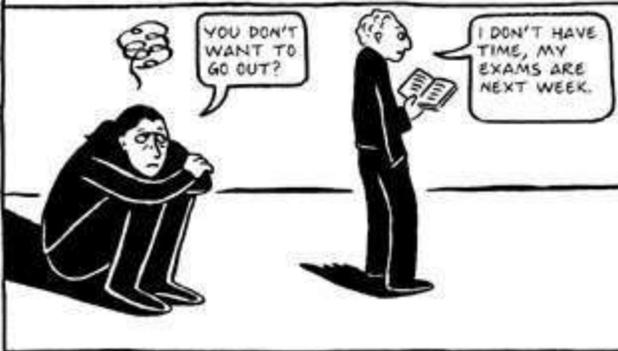


EVERYTHING'S FINE, SIR. I'M A LITTLE SICK, I FEEL VERY TIRED.



I REMAINED IN THIS STATE FOR THE REST OF THE SCHOOL YEAR, BUT THANKS TO THE REGISTERED LETTERS, SENT TO GOD EVERY DAY BY MY MOTHER, I GRADUATED BY THE SKIN OF MY TEETH. I WAS RELIEVED.

IT WAS 1988. MARKUS HAD STARTED STUDYING THEATER. I HAD REGISTERED AT THE FACULTY OF TECHNOLOGY, BUT I NEVER WENT.



YOU DON'T WANT TO GO OUT?

I DON'T HAVE TIME, MY EXAMS ARE NEXT WEEK.

THIS SAME YEAR, I BECAME AWARE THAT THE PRESIDENT OF AUSTRIA WAS NAMED KURT WALDHEIM.

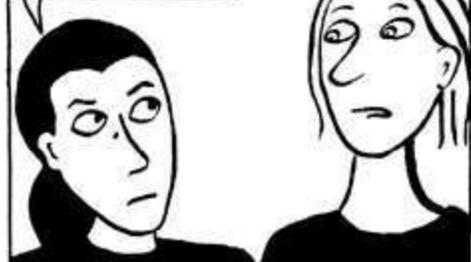


THROUGH MARKUS, I HAD GOTTEN TO KNOW SOME OTHER STUDENTS. WE WOULD OFTEN GET TOGETHER AT THE CAFE HAWELKA, WHERE WE DISCUSSED POLITICS.



IT'S THE RETURN OF NAZISM, IT'S SERIOUS.

WE SHOULDN'T EXAGGERATE. WALDHEIM WAS ELECTED A YEAR AND A HALF AGO. IF THERE HAD BEEN ANY RADICAL CHANGES, WE WOULD HAVE KNOWN.

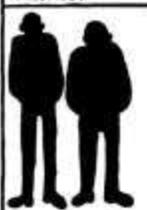


HOW CAN YOU SAY THAT? WE'VE GONE FROM SOCIALISM TO NAZISM.

PERSONALLY, I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND THIS DIFFERENCE. THE FIRST TIME I SAW SKINHEADS WAS IN 1984. AT THE TIME, I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW WHAT IT MEANT. AND I DIDN'T SPEAK MUCH GERMAN. SO I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND WHAT THEY WANTED WITH ME. I SENSED THAT THEY WERE HOSTILE, BUT HAVING GROWN UP WITH THE GUARDIANS OF THE REVOLUTION, I KNEW WHAT TO DO IN THIS KIND OF SITUATION ...



I KEPT A LOW PROFILE.



SINCE THEN, I HADN'T NOTICED THEIR NUMBERS GROWING.

ASSHOLES, THEY'RE EVERYWHERE. YOU THINK THAT THERE AREN'T ANY WHERE I COME FROM? THEY'RE TEN TIMES MORE FEARSOME THAN YOURS. IN IRAN, THEY KILL THE PEOPLE WHO DON'T THINK LIKE THE LEADERS!



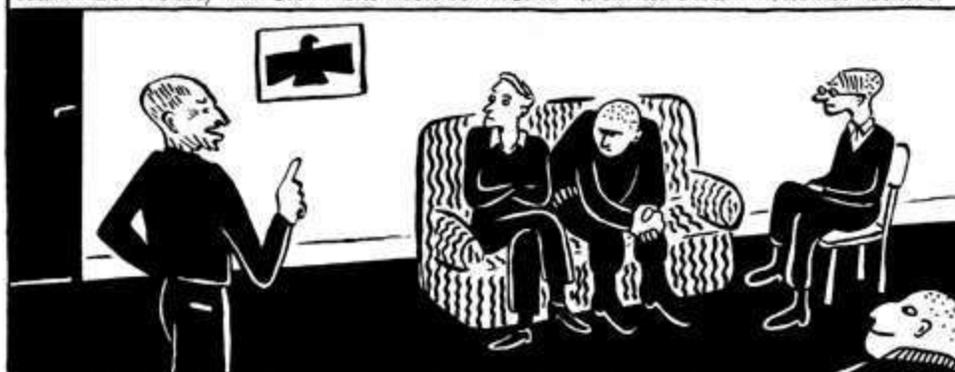
IT'S INTERESTING TO HAVE AN OUTSIDE OPINION.

YES, IT'S TRUE.

DURING THIS PERIOD, THE STUDENTS IN QUESTION, LIKE MOST YOUNG VIENNESE, WERE VERY POLITICIZED. THEY DEMONSTRATED EVERY SO OFTEN AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT IN POWER. SOMETIMES I JOINED THEM.



THEY SAID THAT THE OLD NAZIS HAD BEEN TEACHING "MEIN KAMPF" IN THEIR HOMES TO NEW NAZIS SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE 80S, THAT SOON THERE WOULD BE A RISE IN THE EXTREME RIGHT THROUGHOUT EUROPE.



IT'S CRAZY HOW PEOPLE ARE ALL COWARDS. AND HERE WE ARE IN VIENNA. CAN YOU IMAGINE HOW IT MUST BE IN THE TYROL!!

BUT I'VE BEEN TO THE TYROL, I THOUGHT THEY WERE VERY NICE.



MY FRIEND'S FATHER EVEN MADE ME A FRAME ...



IT'S BECAUSE YOU'RE A GIRL. IF YOU WERE A BOY WITH FRIZZY HAIR AND YOUR SKIN WAS A LITTLE DARKER, IT WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN LIKE THAT.



I ASKED MYSELF IF THEY WOULD HAVE SAT BESIDE ME IF I HAD BEEN A FRIZZY-HAIRED AND DARK-SKINNED BOY?



NEVERTHELESS HE, LIKE I, TRIED TO SAVE OUR RELATIONSHIP. WE HAD BEEN TOGETHER ALMOST TWO YEARS. THE NIGHT BEFORE MY BIRTHDAY,

I'VE BEEN INVITED TO GRAZ BY A FRIEND.

THAT'S GOOD.



IT DOESN'T BOTHER YOU THAT I WON'T BE CELEBRATING MY BIRTHDAY WITH YOU?

NO, NOT AT ALL.



IT'LL BE GOOD FOR YOU.

IT WAS GOOD TIMING AFTER ALL. MAYBE THIS VACATION WAS GOING TO SAVE OUR RELATIONSHIP.



YOU'RE GOING TO MISS ME, YOU'LL SEE...



GOOD, I'M GOING TO SLEEP AT YOUR HOUSE TONIGHT. MY TRAIN IS AT 7:30 TOMORROW.

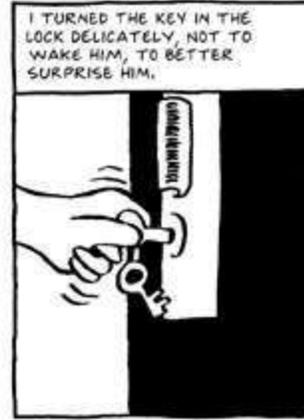
WAIT, YOU'RE CLOSER TO THE STATION THAN I AM. IF YOU COME OVER, YOU'LL MISS YOUR TRAIN.



YES, YOU'RE RIGHT!

WHEN YOU GET BACK, WE'LL CELEBRATE TOGETHER.







IT WAS LIKE A BAD AMERICAN MOVIE. ONE OF THOSE FILMS WHERE THE SURPRISED MAN WRAPS HIMSELF IN A SHEET OUT OF MODESTY AND SAYS:

WAIT, I CAN EXPLAIN EVERYTHING!



...IT'S NOT WHAT YOU THINK ...



... I LOVE YOU, MARIJANE, YOU MUST BELIEVE ME, I LOVE YOU ...



IF THAT'S HOW IT IS, GET OUT! GO ON, BEAT IT!!



SO, BY ORDER OF THE TRAITOROUS MARKUS, I BEAT IT. I NEVER SAW HIM AGAIN.

THE VEIL

MY BREAKUP WITH MARKUS REPRESENTED MORE THAN A SIMPLE SEPARATION. I HAD JUST LOST MY ONE EMOTIONAL SUPPORT, THE ONLY PERSON WHO CARED FOR ME, AND TO WHOM I WAS ALSO WHOLLY ATTACHED.



I HAD NO FAMILY OR FRIENDS. I HAD COUNTED ON THIS RELATIONSHIP FOR EVERYTHING. THE WORLD HAD JUST CRUMBLING IN FRONT OF MY EYES.



EVERYTHING REMINDED ME OF MARKUS. THIS BEDSPREAD, IT WAS HIS BIRTHDAY PRESENT TO ME.



THIS POSTER, HE BOUGHT IT FOR ME AT THE PICASSO SHOW AT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART.



HIS T-SHIRT, OH, HIS T-SHIRT!



WHERE WAS MY MOTHER TO STROKE MY HAIR?

WHERE WAS MY GRANDMOTHER TO TELL ME THAT LOVERS, I WOULD HAVE THEM BY THE DOZEN?

WHERE WAS MY FATHER TO PUNISH THIS BOY WHO DARED HURT HIS DAUGHTER? WHERE?

IN THIS ROOM, EVERYTHING
EVOKED MARKUS. I COULDN'T
STAND IT ANYMORE.



SO I GOT DRESSED,

I TOOK MY BAG,



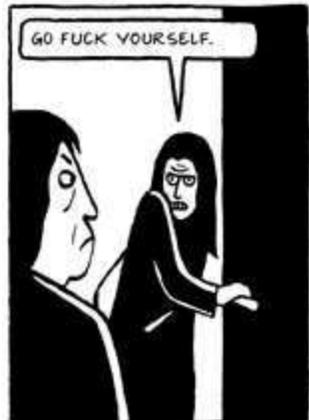
MY PASSPORT, THE PLANE TICKET
MY PARENTS HAD GIVEN ME
TO VISIT THEM AT CHRISTMAS,
AND A LITTLE MONEY.



WHERE ARE YOU GOING LIKE THAT?

ADIEU!

YOU'RE NOT GOING TO GET
OUT OF THIS SO EASILY!



GO FUCK YOURSELF.



THIEF! I'M GOING TO
CALL THE POLICE!
I AM GOING TO DO
THIS AND THAT ...

CLACK



IT WAS NOVEMBER 22, MY BIRTHDAY. IT WAS BITTERLY COLD. I STAYED ON A BENCH, IMMOBILE ...
I WATCHED THE PEOPLE GOING TO WORK ...



... THEN COMING BACK ...



NIGHT FELL ...



"NIGHT BRINGS GOOD COUNSEL," MY GRANDMOTHER ALWAYS TOLD ME.

IN EFFECT, SHE CLEARED UP A LOT OF POINTS. SUDDENLY, I HAD A REVELATION.

MARKUS IS A REAL BASTARD.



ALL THOSE TIMES WHEN, ON THE PRETEXT OF NOT FINDING A PARKING PLACE, HE MADE ME GO DOWN INTO CAFE CAMERA ...



... HE KNEW THAT COPS CAME BY FROM TIME TO TIME ON RAIDS.



IT WOULDN'T HAVE BOTHERED HIM IF I HAD BEEN ARRESTED.

AND THE TIME WHEN HIS MOTHER MEANLY TOLD ME OFF...



... HE COULD HAVE TAKEN MY DEFENSE INSTEAD OF SENDING ME HOME! ...



... NOT TO MENTION THE FIRST TIME WE WENT OUT TO A NIGHTCLUB TOGETHER, WHEN HE ASKED ME TO PAY FOR GAS AND ONCE THE GAS WAS PAID FOR HE TOLD ME:

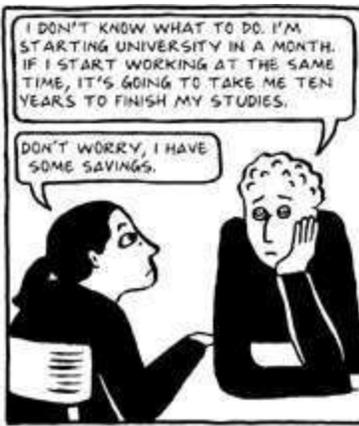
WHAT I LOVE ABOUT YOU, IT'S YOUR REBELLIOUS SIDE AND YOUR NATURAL NONCHALANCE.



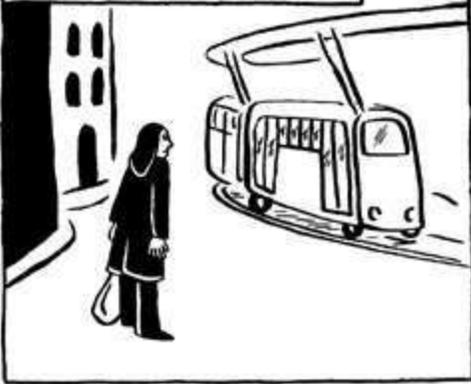
REPPRESSED AS HE WAS, HE MUST HAVE IDENTIFIED WITH MY REBELLIOUS SIDE.

HOW COULD I HAVE BEEN SO BLIND? WHAT RELATIONSHIP? WHAT LOVE? WHAT SUPPORT? WHAT AN ASSHOLE!!!





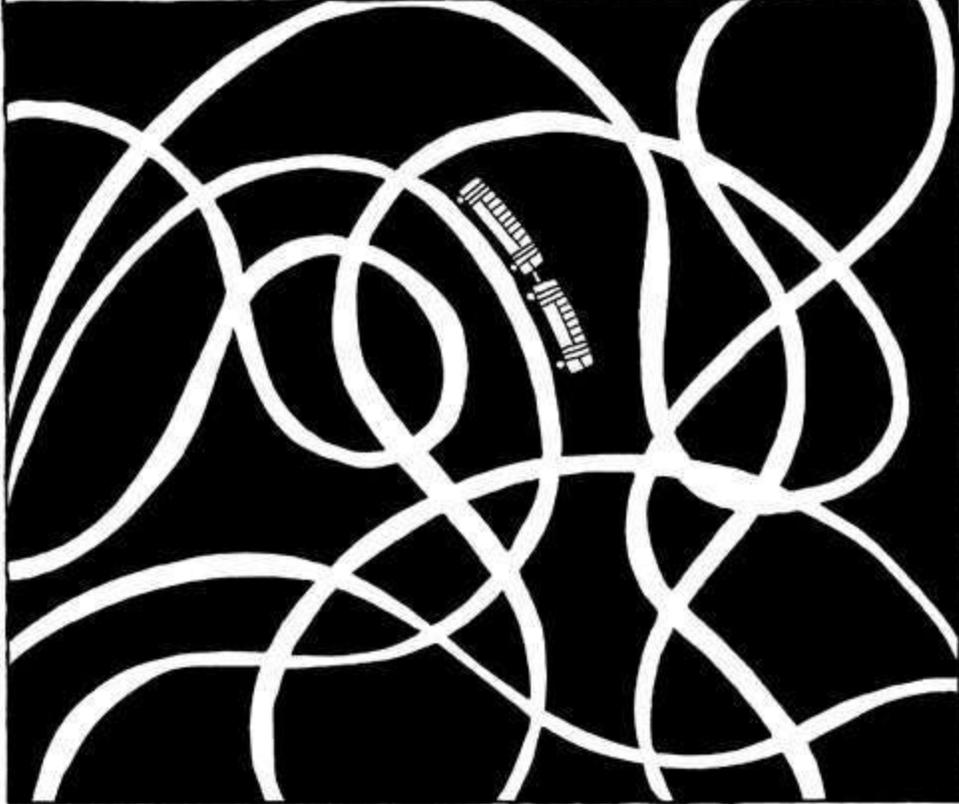
IN THE MORNING, I TOOK THE TRAM.



INSIDE, THERE WERE TWO SPOTS THAT WERE VERY WARM, BECAUSE THEY WERE ABOVE THE MOTOR. I FELL ASLEEP ON ONE OF THESE SEATS. IT WAS PEACEFUL.



FOR ALMOST A MONTH, I LIVED AT THIS RHYTHM: THE NIGHT PROSTRATE AND THE DAY LETTING MYSELF BE CARRIED ACROSS VIENNA BY SLEEP AND THE TRAMWAY.



VERY QUICKLY, MY SAVINGS VANISHED. I WAS BROKE.



IT'S INCREDIBLE HOW QUICKLY YOU CAN LOSE YOUR DIGNITY. I FOUND MYSELF SMOKING BUTTS,



LOOKING FOR FOOD IN TRASH CANS,



I, WHO BEFORE COULDN'T EVEN TASTE FROM OTHERS' PLATES.

SOON, I WAS RECOGNIZED AND THROWN OUT OF ALL THE TRAMS.



SO I HAD TO FIND A WELL-HIDDEN PLACE TO SLEEP AT NIGHT. NIGHTS ON THE STREET COULD END VERY BADLY FOR A YOUNG GIRL LIKE ME.



I DIDN'T HAVE ANYONE. MY ENTIRE EXISTENCE HAD BEEN PLANNED AROUND MARKUS. IT'S SURELY FOR THIS REASON THAT I FOUND MYSELF WANDERING LIKE THIS.

IT WAS UNTHINKABLE THAT I GO BACK TO SEE ZOZO.

I DON'T CARE. OUR APARTMENT IS TOO SMALL.



NOR INGRID.

YOU DROPPED US FOR A GUY WHO WASN'T EVEN WORTH IT.



AS FOR FRAU DOCTOR HELLER, LET'S NOT EVEN TALK ABOUT HER. SHE REPRESENTED ABSOLUTE EVIL IN MY EYES.



I SPENT MORE THAN TWO MONTHS ON THE STREET IN THE MIDDLE OF WINTER.



IT WAS VERY COLD.



I GOT SICK.



I STARTED TO COUGH A LITTLE,



THEN A LITTLE MORE,



THEN A LITTLE MORE STRONGLY,



MY COUGH BECAME CONTINUOUS,



UNTIL I SPIT BLOOD,



AND ENDED UP . . .



I WOKE UP IN A HOSPITAL. IT WAS A MIRACLE. IF I HAD FAINTED DURING THE NIGHT, NO ONE WOULD HAVE NOTICED AND THE GLACIAL COLD WOULD SURELY HAVE PREVENTED ME FROM FULFILLING MY DESTINY.

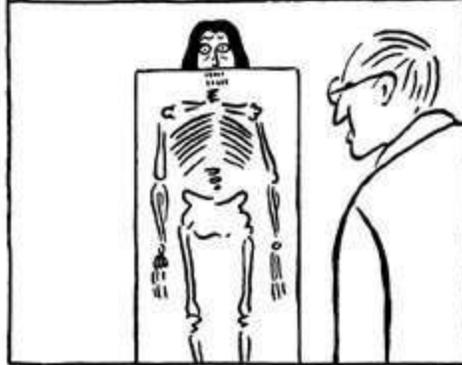


I HAD KNOWN A REVOLUTION THAT HAD MADE ME LOSE PART OF MY FAMILY.

BREATHE, BREATHE



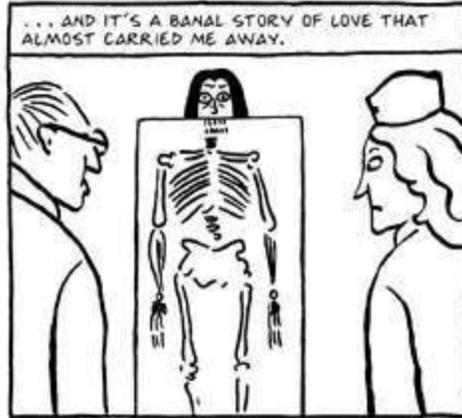
I HAD SURVIVED A WAR THAT HAD DISTANCED ME FROM MY COUNTRY AND MY PARENTS...



PEDAL AS FAST AS YOU CAN.



... AND IT'S A BANAL STORY OF LOVE THAT ALMOST CARRIED ME AWAY.







MY FATHER'S VOICE WAS SOFT AND SOOTHING:

- DAD, IT'S YOU?
- MY DARLING, WE LOOKED FOR YOU EVERYWHERE.
- CAN I COME BACK?
- OF COURSE, WHAT A QUESTION.
- DAD, PROMISE ME TO NEVER ASK ME ANYTHING ABOUT THESE THREE MONTHS.
- I PROMISE YOU... HERE'S YOUR MOTHER.

MY MOTHER'S VOICE WAS TENDER, TOO.

- I AM VERY HAPPY...
- MOM, PLEASE, DON'T CRY.
- THESE ARE TEARS OF JOY.
- MOM...
- COME HOME, DARLING, WE ARE WAITING FOR YOU...
- MOM...
- NO ONE WILL ASK YOU ANY QUESTIONS. IT'S A PROMISE.



THE FIVE DAYS PASSED LIKE THE WIND AND THE CIGARETTES DIDN'T GET THE BETTER OF ME. I GOT DRESSED,



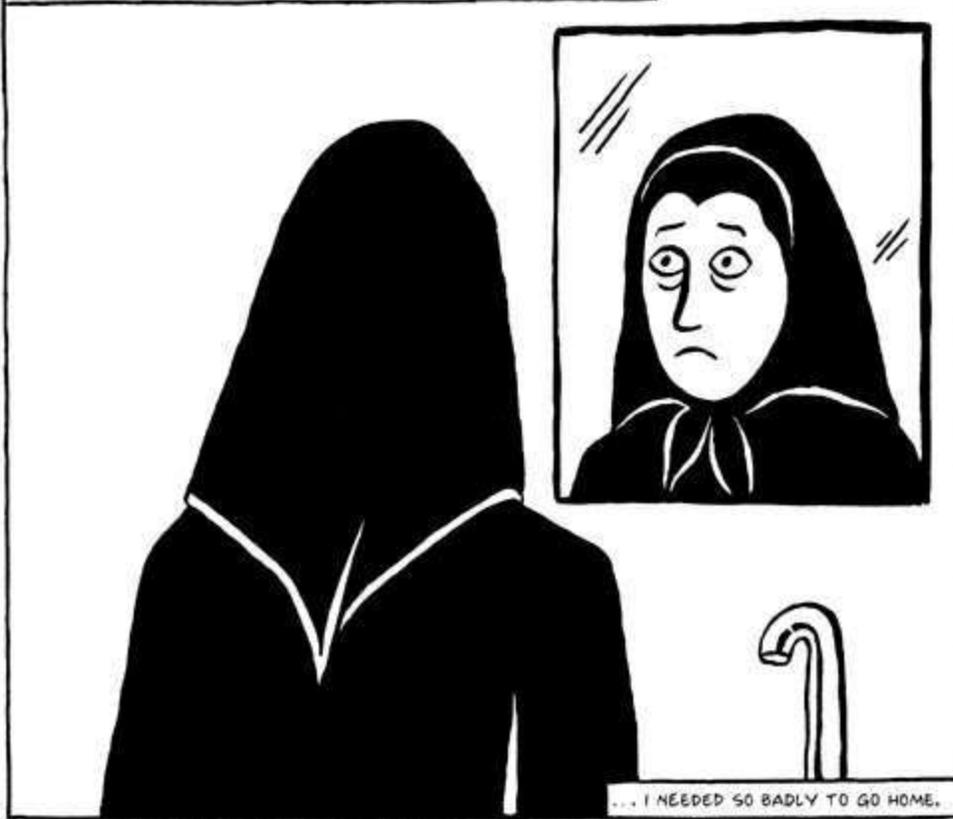
I PACKED MY BAG...



... I AGAIN PUT ON MY VEIL ...



... AND SO MUCH FOR MY INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIAL LIBERTIES ...



... I NEEDED SO BADLY TO GO HOME.