

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.



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.



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

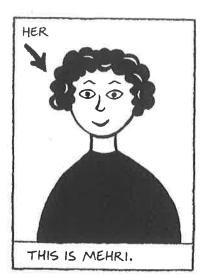


THE REASON FOR MY SHAME AND FOR THE REVOLUTION IS THE SAME: THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SOCIAL CLASSES.



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















AT THE BEGINNING OF THE REVOLUTION, IN 1978, SHE FELL IN LOVE WITH THE NEIGHBOR'S SON. SHE WAS SIXTEEN YEARS OLD.



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...



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



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!



MEHRI HAD A REAL SISTER, ONE YEAR YOUNGER, WHO WORKED AT MY UNCLE'S HOUSE.



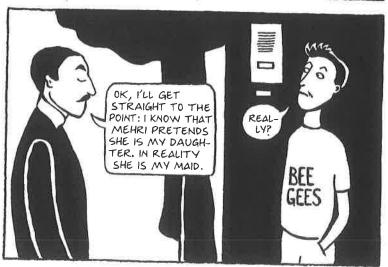




HER TEALOUSY WAS MORE THAN SHE COULD BEAR AND SHE TOLD MEHRI'S STORY TO MY UNCLE, WHO TOLD IT TO MY GRANDMA, WHO TOLD IT TO MY MOM. THAT IS HOW THE STORY REACHED MY FATHER ...























WHEN I FINALLY UNDERSTOOD THE REASONS FOR THE REVO-LUTION I MADE MY DECISION.







FOR ONCE SHE DIDN'T INSIST ON COMING WITH US.



















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.

