

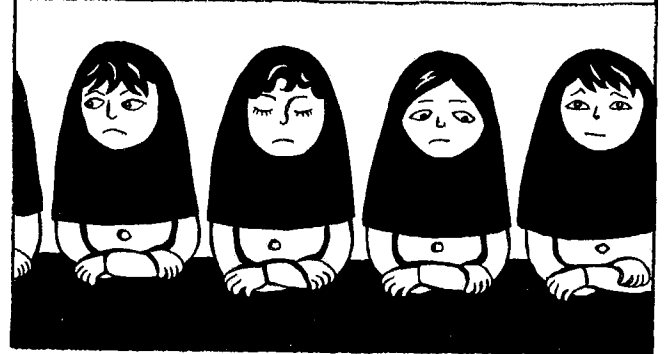


# THE VEIL

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.



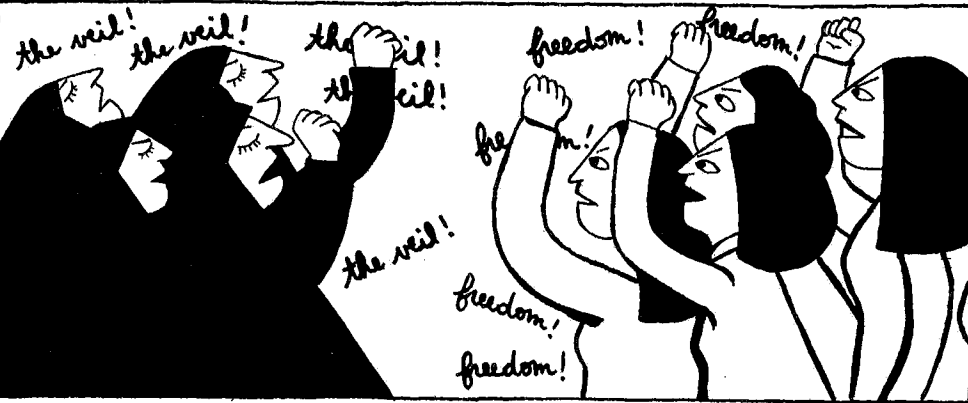
AND ALSO BECAUSE THE YEAR BEFORE, IN 1978, WE WERE IN A FRENCH NON-RELIGIOUS SCHOOL.



WHERE BOYS AND GIRLS WERE TOGETHER.



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



AND THEN SUDDENLY IN 1980...

ALL BILINGUAL SCHOOLS MUST BE CLOSED DOWN.

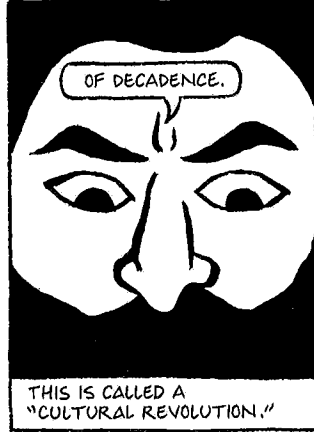


THEY ARE SYMBOLS OF CAPITALISM.



BRAVO!

WHAT WISDOM!



OF DECADENCE.

THIS IS CALLED A "CULTURAL REVOLUTION."

WE FOUND OURSELVES VEILED AND SEPARATED FROM OUR FRIENDS.



AND THAT WAS THAT...

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.



HAVE YOU SEEN THIS?

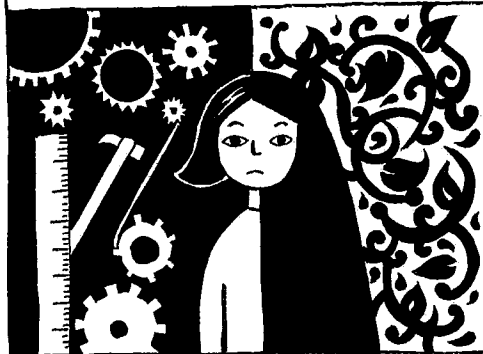
DON'T WORRY, DARLING.



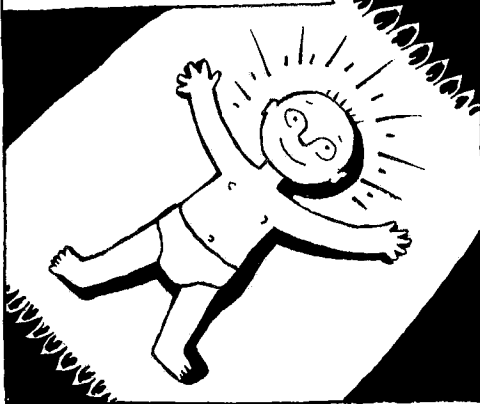
AND WORE DARK GLASSES FOR A LONG TIME.



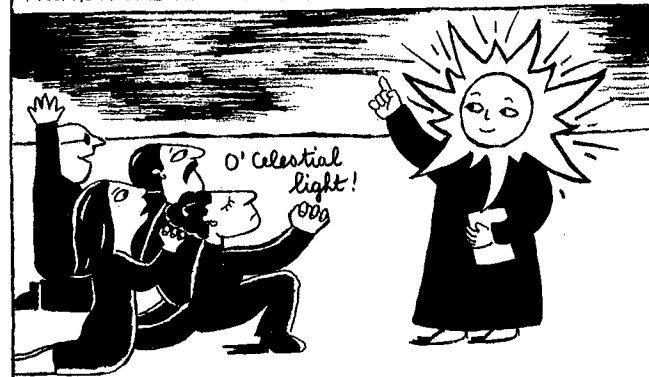
I REALLY DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO THINK ABOUT THE VEIL. DEEP DOWN I WAS VERY RELIGIOUS BUT AS A FAMILY WE WERE VERY MODERN AND AVANT-GARDE.



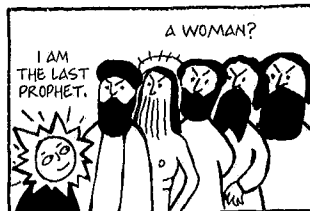
I WAS BORN WITH RELIGION.



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.

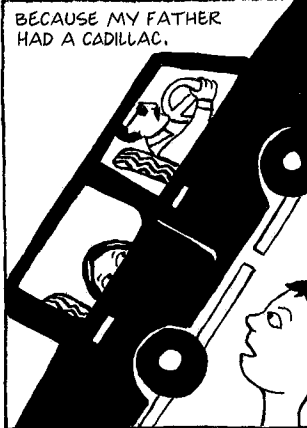


I WANTED TO BE A PROPHET...

BECAUSE OUR MAID DID NOT EAT WITH US.



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.



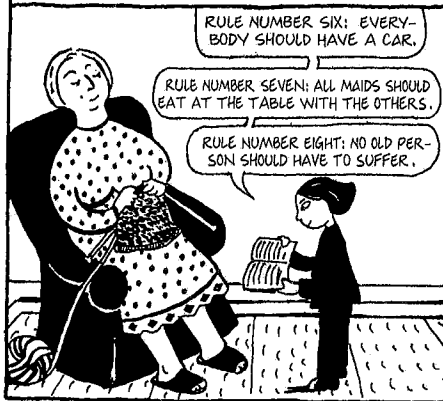
I ALSO WANTED US TO CELEBRATE THE TRADITIONAL ZARATHUSTRIAN HOLIDAYS. LIKE THE FIRE CEREMONY,



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



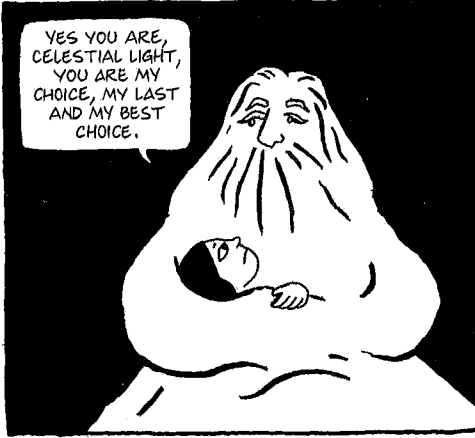
ONLY MY GRANDMOTHER KNEW ABOUT MY BOOK.



EVERY NIGHT I HAD A BIG DISCUSSION WITH GOD.



GOD, GIVE ME SOME MORE TIME. I AM NOT QUITE READY YET.



YES YOU ARE, CELESTIAL LIGHT, YOU ARE MY CHOICE, MY LAST AND MY BEST CHOICE.

EXCEPT FOR MY GRANDMOTHER I WAS OBVIOUSLY THE ONLY ONE WHO BELIEVED IN MYSELF.



WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GROW UP?



vion A-a

I'LL BE A PROPHET.



HAHA! HAHA! HAHA!

SHE'S CRAZY.

MY PARENTS WERE CALLED IN BY THE TEACHER.



YOUR CHILD IS DISTURBED. SHE WANTS TO BECOME A PROPHET.



WHAT ABOUT IT?

DOESN'T THIS WORRY YOU?



NO! NOT AT ALL!

NONETHELESS, MY PARENTS WERE PUZZLED.



SO TELL ME, MY CHILD, WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GROW UP?

A PROPHET.



I WANT TO BE A DOCTOR.



THAT'S FINE MY LOVE. THAT'S FINE.



I FELT GUILTY TOWARDS GOD.

YOU WANT TO BE A DOCTOR? I THOUGHT THAT...



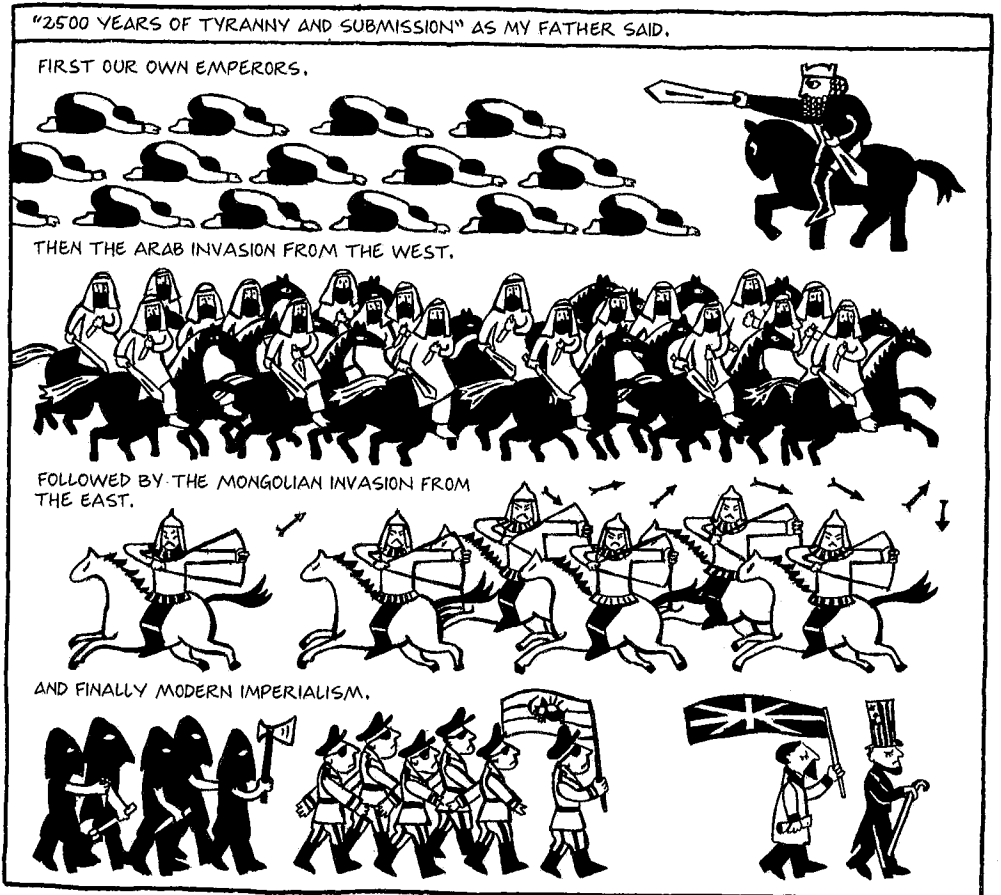
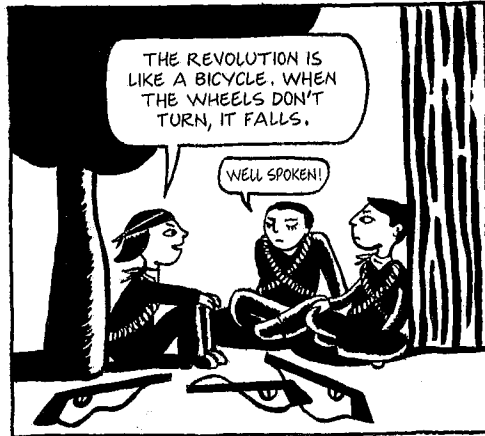
NO, NO, I WILL BE A PROPHET BUT THEY MUSTN'T KNOW.

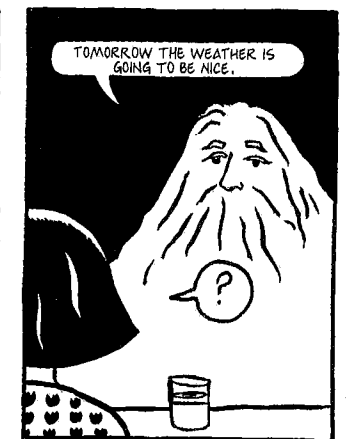
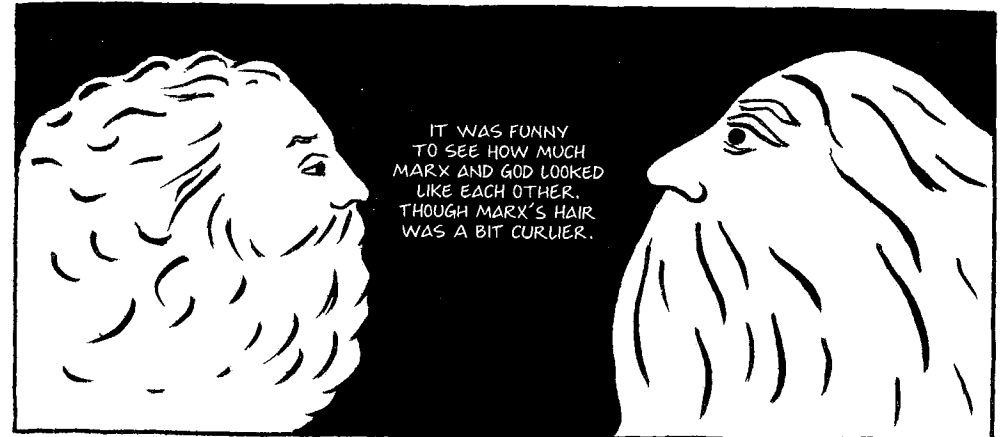
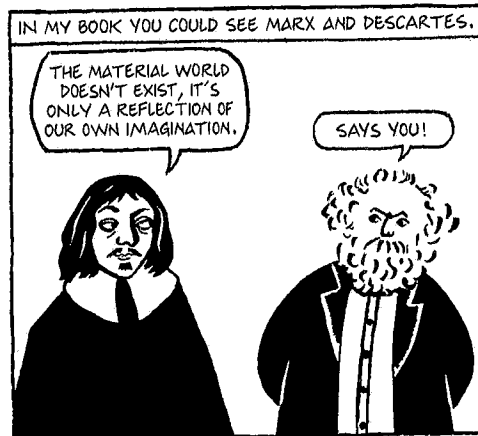
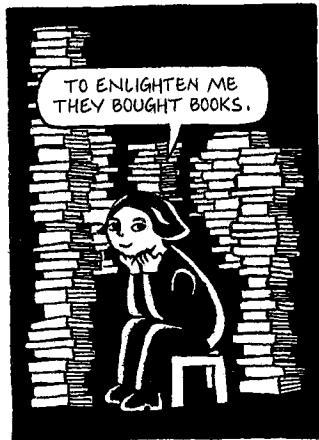


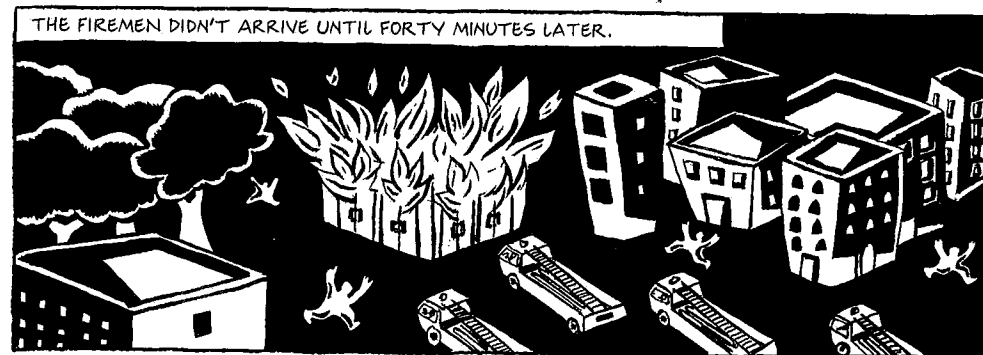
I WANTED TO BE JUSTICE, LOVE AND THE WRATH OF GOD ALL IN ONE.



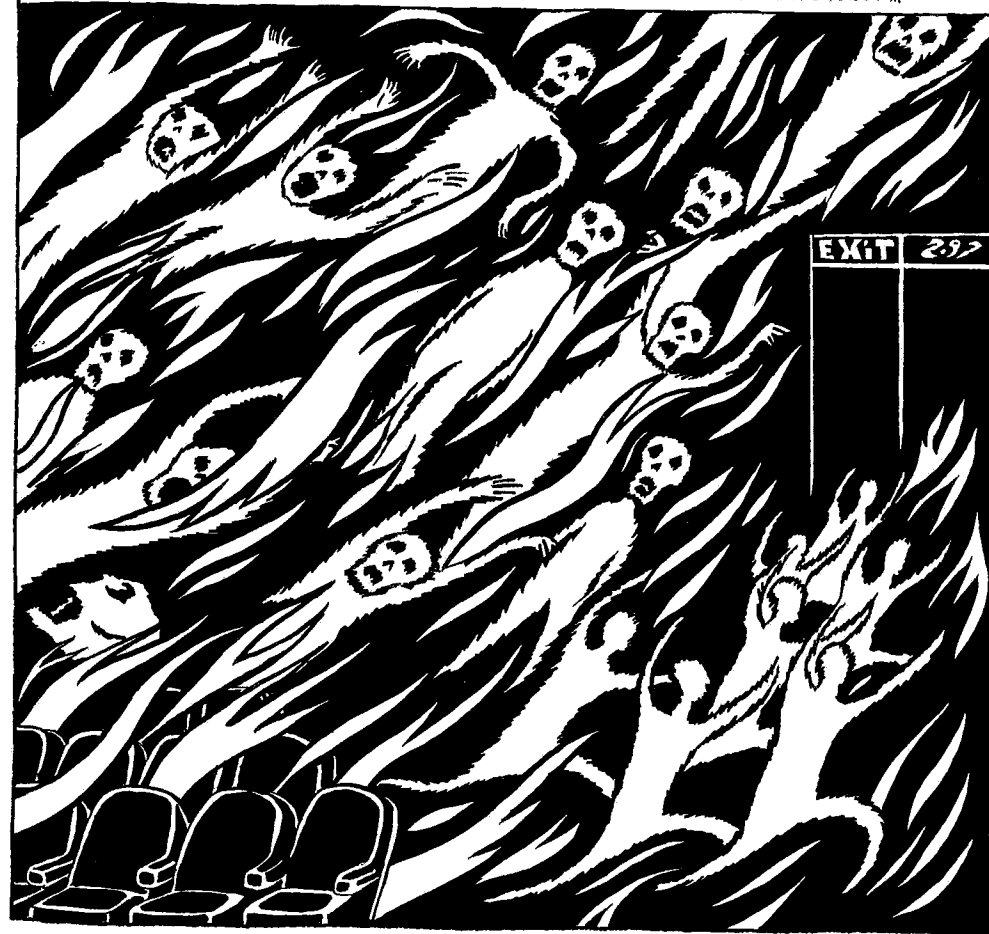
# THE BICYCLE







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!!!





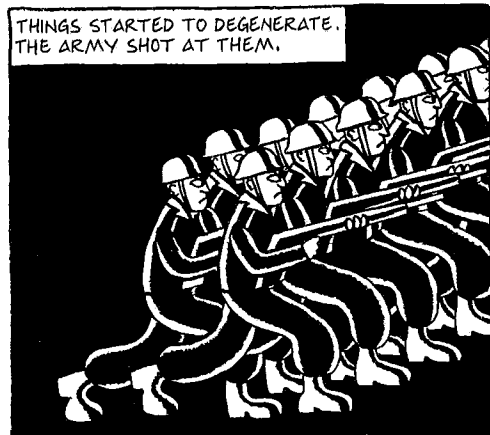


# THE WATER CELL

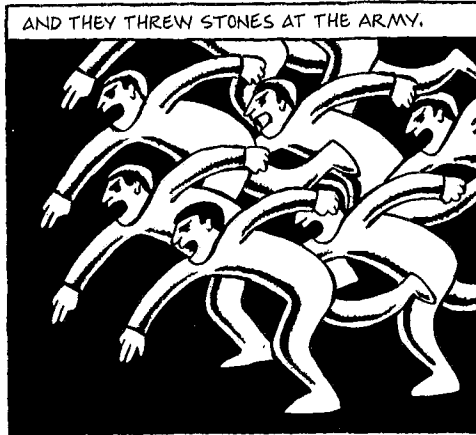
MY PARENTS DEMONSTRATED EVERY DAY.



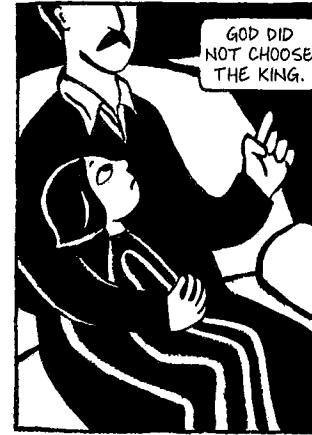
THINGS STARTED TO DEGENERATE. THE ARMY SHOT AT THEM.



AND THEY THREW STONES AT THE ARMY.



AFTER MARCHING AND THROWING STONES ALL DAY, BY EVENING THEY HAD ACHEs ALL OVER, EVEN IN THEIR HEADS.



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.



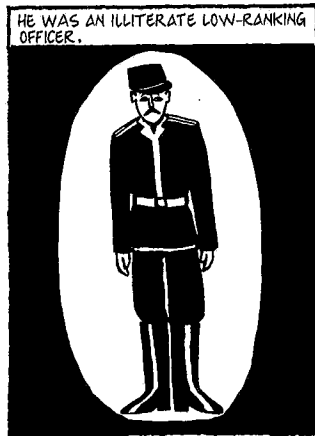
SO THE FATHER OF THE SHAH WANTED TO DO THE SAME.



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!



WELL REZA, SHINING YOUR BOOTS?



WHEN YOU ARE EMPEROR, YOUR SECRETARY OF STATE WILL SHINE THEM FOR YOU.



EMPEROR, ME?

BUT OF COURSE, MY FRIEND. IT'S MUCH BETTER THAN BEING PRESIDENT.



BUT THERE ALREADY IS AN EMPEROR! I WANT TO CREATE A REPUBLIC.

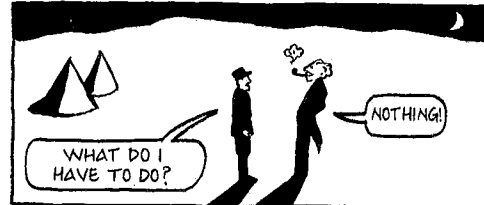
THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS ARE AGAINST IT AND THEY'RE RIGHT. A VAST COUNTRY LIKE YOURS NEEDS A HOLY SYMBOL.



YOU WILL HAVE EVERYTHING. POWER, SHOE SHINERS...

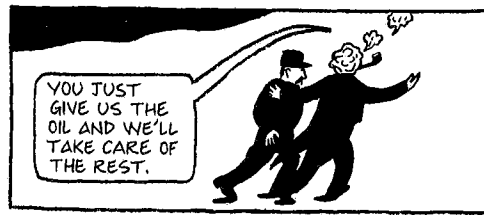


AND EVEN MORE. ANYTHING YOU WANT IN CASH!



WHAT DO I HAVE TO DO?

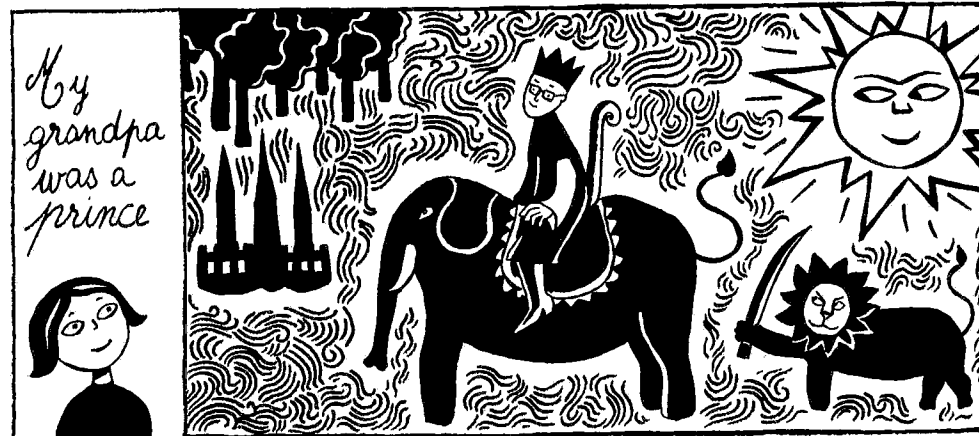
NOTHING!

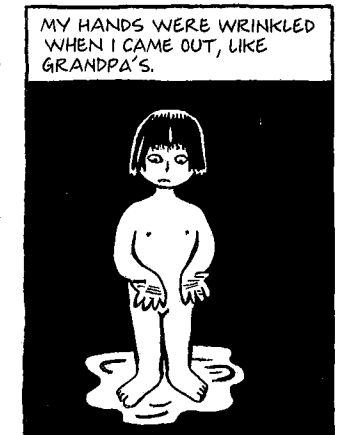
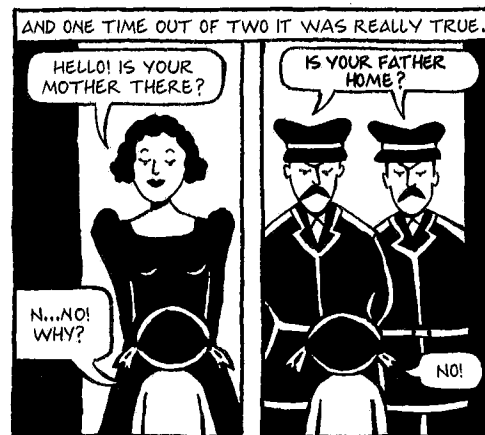


YOU JUST GIVE US THE OIL AND WE'LL TAKE CARE OF THE REST.



AND THAT'S HOW HE BECAME KING AND NATURALLY HIS SON SUCCEEDED HIM. GOD HAS NOTHING WHATSOEVER TO DO WITH THIS STORY.







# PERSEPOLIS

ONE DAY AFTER SCHOOL...

HI, MOM.

HI. GO AND LOOK IN THE GUEST ROOM. THERE'S A SURPRISE FOR YOU.

GRANDMA!  
ARE YOU LEAVING ALREADY?

NO, I'M JUST CHANGING.

MOM TOLD ME THAT GRANDPA HAD BEEN IN PRISON.

HMM, HOW WAS SCHOOL...

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.

IT MUST HAVE BEEN VERY HARD ON YOU.

OH, MY BACK! CAN I HELP YOU?

NO, I'M OK. AS YOU SAY, IT WAS VERY HARD FOR ME BUT ALSO FOR YOUR MOTHER AND FOR YOUR UNCLES.

THE SHAH'S FATHER TOOK EVERYTHING WE OWNED. I LIVED IN POVERTY.

WHAT? YOU MEAN YOU WERE POOR TOO?

OH, YES. SO POOR THAT WE HAD ONLY BREAD TO EAT. I WAS SO ASHAMED THAT I PRETENDED TO COOK SO THAT THE NEIGHBORS WOULDN'T NOTICE ANYTHING.

MMM! MOM IS COOKING SOMETHING GOOD!

COME ON! SHE IS JUST BOILING WATER AGAIN.

EVEN 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.



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



YOUR DAUGHTER SAYS SHE IS HUNGRY!



WAAAAAHHH PHOTO!



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.



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.



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



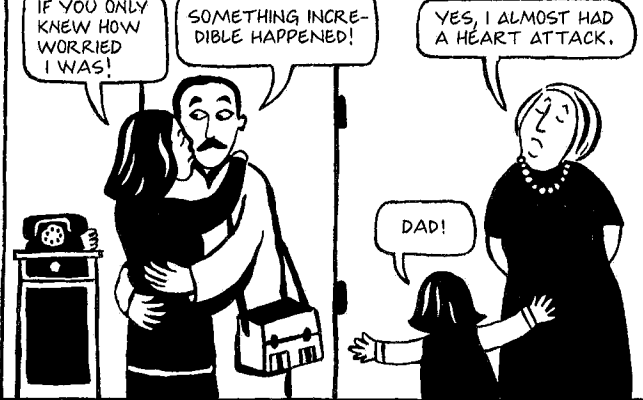
HELLO, I'M HOME!



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.



IF YOU ONLY KNEW HOW WORRIED I WAS!



I WAS SURE YOU WERE DEAD!



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?



ARE YOU A ROYALIST?



# THE LETTER

