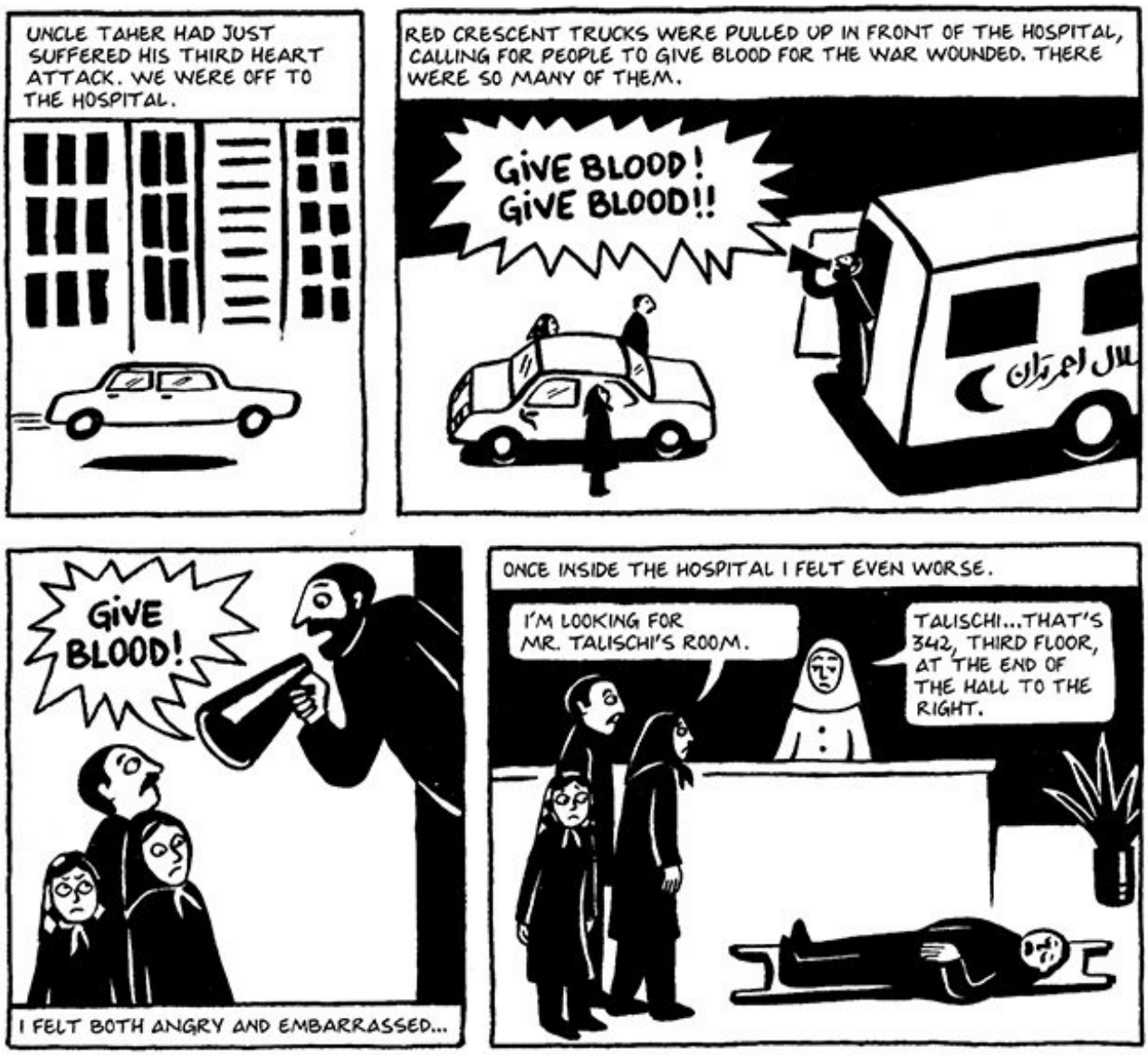
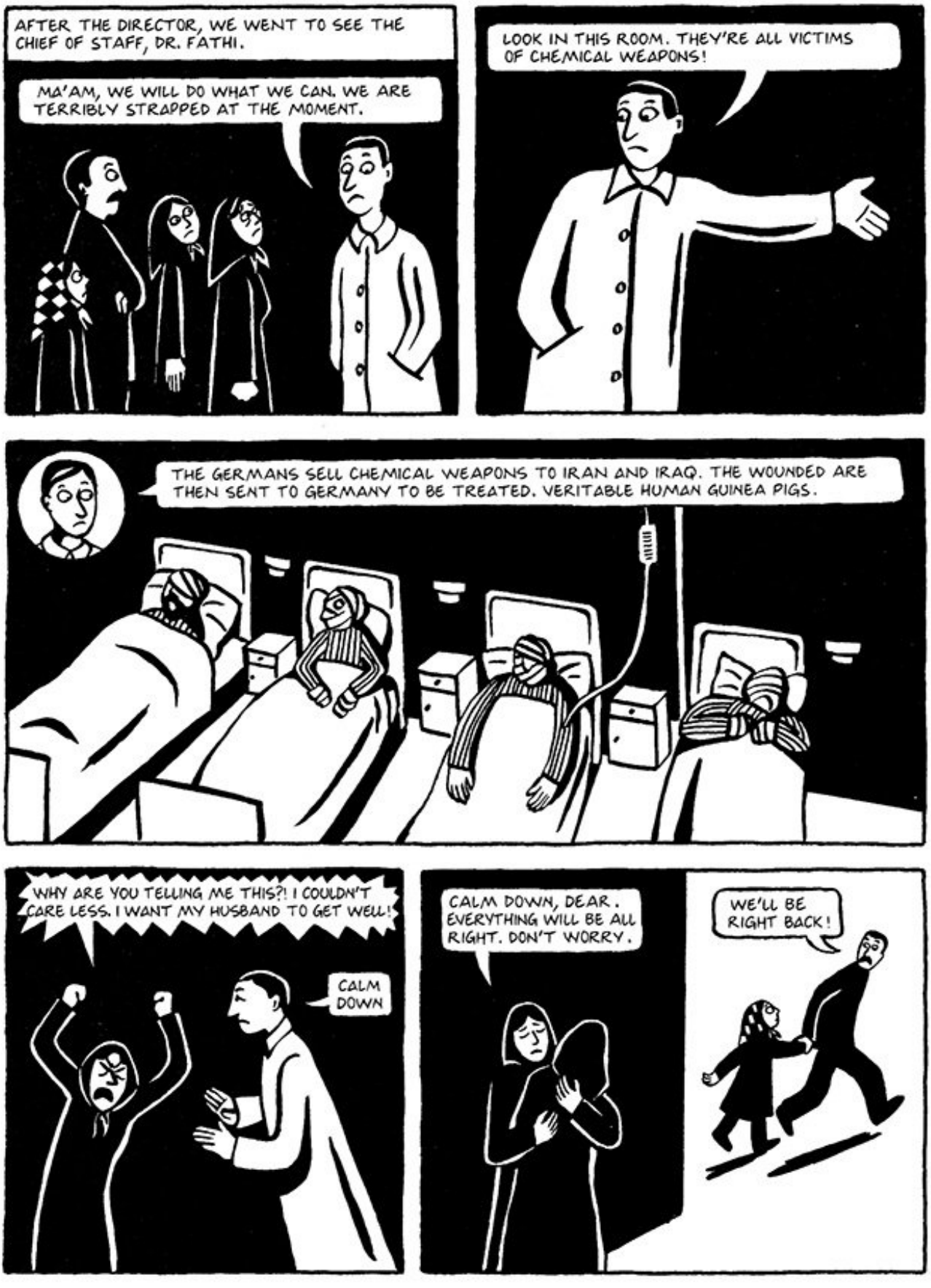
THE PASSPORT

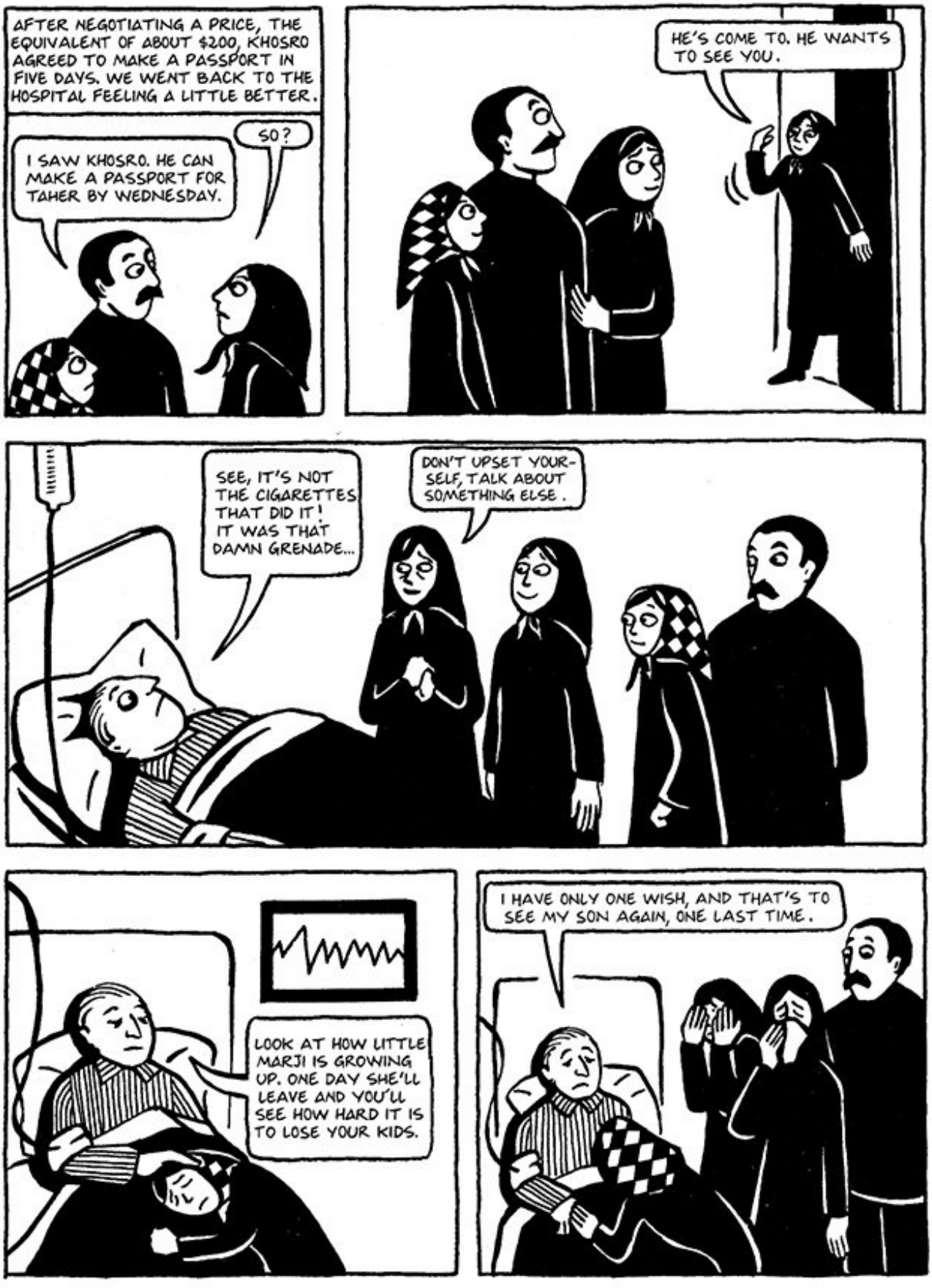
SOME DAYS LATER .
WHAT ARE YOU THINKING?
ABOUT TAHER. HIS SON LEAVING HAS DONE HIM IN. I'VE NEVER SEEN HIM LIKE THAT.
CAN YOU IMAGINE? A THIRTEEN, FOURTEEN-YEAR-OLD CHILD, ALONE IN A COUNTRY WHERE HE DOESN'T EVEN SPEAK THE LANGUAGE?
TCH..AT FOURTEEN YOU DON'T NEED YOUR PARENTS ANYMORE!
GET REAL. UP TO A CERTAIN AGE, YOU NEED YOUR PARENTS, THEN LATER, THEY NEED YOU.
?
YOU'D BE BETTER OFF WITHOUT NAIL POLISH. YOU COULD GET ARRESTED.
I'LL PUT MY HANDS IN MY POCKETS.
PRETTY STUBBORN GIRL, HUH?
WHERE DO YOU SUPPOSE SHE GETS THAT?
SOMETIMES IT SCARES ME HOW BLUNT SHE IS.
IT'LL HELP HER LATER ON. YOU'LL SEE.
I AM SO LUCKY TO BE MARRIED TO A MAN LIKE YOU. YOU'RE SO SENSITIVE. THE KINDEST MAN ON EARTH.
HOW CAN YOU BE INSENSI-TIVE TO THE WOMAN YOU LOVE?
RRING... RRING...
IT ALWAYS RINGS AT THE WRONG TIME!
GOOD LORD, AGAIN!
WHAT?


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.
GIVE BLOOD! GIVE BLOOD!!
هلال احمر ایران
GIVE BLOOD!
I FELT BOTH ANGRY AND EMBARRASSED...
ONCE INSIDE THE HOSPITAL I FELT EVEN WORSE.
I'M LOOKING FOR MR. TALISCHI'S ROOM.
TALISCHI...THAT'S 342, THIRD FLOOR, AT THE END OF THE HALL TO THE RIGHT.
342

342
SHHH
THEY THREW A GRENADE...THEY WANTED TO ARREST SOME COMMUNISTS WHO WERE HIDING NEAR OUR PLACE, AND THEY THREW A GRENADE...TAHER COULDN'T DEAL WITH IT... WHEN I CAME INTO THE LIVING ROOM, HE WAS LYING ON THE FLOOR...
342
HE NEEDS OPEN HEART SURGERY, BUT THEY'RE NOT EQUIPPED HERE. THEY TOLD ME THAT HE HAS TO BE SENT TO ENGLAND.
TO DO THAT, HE NEEDS A PERMIT. THEY GAVE ME THE NAME OF THE HOSPITAL DIRECTOR. IF HE AGREES, TAHER WILL GET A PASSPORT SO HE CAN GO.
SINCE THE BORDERS WERE CLOSED, ONLY VERY SICK PEOPLE (IF THEY GOT A PERMIT FROM THE HEALTH MINISTRY) WERE ALLOWED TO LEAVE.
IT'S ON THE 4TH FLOOR, NUMBER 406.
ONLY MY AUNT WAS ALLOWED IN. SHE HAD A BIG SURPRISE. THE DIRECTOR WAS HER FORMER WINDOW WASHER. SHE ACTED AS IF SHE DIDN'T RECOGNIZE HIM TO AVOID OFFENDING HIM.
MY HUSBAND HAD HIS THIRD HEART ATTACK. HE NEEDS MEDICAL CARE OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY.
HMM...
WE'LL DO OUR BEST. IF GOD WILLS IT, HE'LL GET BETTER. EVERYTHING DEPENDS ON GOD.
I NEED YOUR AUTHORIZATION SO HE CAN GET A PASSPORT!
IF GOD WILLS IT.
ALL THAT CREEPY WINDOW WASHER HAD TO DO TO BECOME DIRECTOR OF THE HOSPITAL WAS TO GROW A BEARD AND PUT ON A SUIT! THE FATE OF MY HUSBAND DEPENDS ON A WINDOW WASHER! NOW HE'S SO RELIGIOUS THAT HE WON'T LOOK A WOMAN IN THE EYE. THE PATHETIC FOOL!


AFTER THE DIRECTOR, WE WENT TO SEE THE CHIEF OF STAFF, DR. FATHI.
MA'AM, WE WILL DO WHAT WE CAN. WE ARE TERRIBLY STRAPPED AT THE MOMENT.
LOOK IN THIS ROOM. THEY'RE ALL VICTIMS OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS!
THE GERMANS SELL CHEMICAL WEAPONS TO IRAN AND IRAQ. THE WOUNDED ARE THEN SENT TO GERMANY TO BE TREATED. VERITABLE HUMAN GUINEA PIGS.
WHY ARE YOU TELLING ME THIS?! I COULDN'T CARE LESS. I WANT MY HUSBAND TO GET WELL!
CALM DOWN
CALM DOWN, DEAR. EVERYTHING WILL BE ALL RIGHT. DON'T WORRY.
WE'LL BE RIGHT BACK!

WE WENT TO SEE AN ACQUAINTANCE OF MY FATHER'S, KHOSRO. HIS BROTHER AND MY UNCLE ANOOSH WERE IN PRISON TOGETHER DURING THE REIGN OF THE SHAH.
EBI, THE BROTHER OF ANOOSH? 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 SAW IT WITH HIS OWN EYES. 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 NILOUFAR. 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.
SO?
I SAW KHOSRO. HE CAN MAKE A PASSPORT FOR TAHER BY WEDNESDAY.
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...