

You are going to read an extract from ‘The Ungrateful Refugee: What immigrants never tell you,’ a book written by Dina Nayeri. She was once a refugee, and she tells her story and the stories of others who cannot be heard.

Extract from: The Ungrateful Refugee

May 22, 2019

Reza arrived just as sirens began screaming. We watched the surveillance cars from the kitchen window; they hesitated, then scattered. ‘Let’s go,’ said Reza. A lucky crack had opened in Maman’s house arrest; I held my favourite uncle’s hand for the last time and we ran through it.

We scrambled into the back of the car with our suitcases. The street was deserted, just a long sun-streaked hollow where I played with the neighbourhood children. Blurred by rain and tyres and shoeprints, our chalk hopscotch ladders still coloured the street from top to bottom. We weren’t going far on this leg of the journey. We would fly to Tehran, then drive to Karaj, where we could hide in the home of Maman’s elderly grandmother (Moti’s mother). She had pillows lining a wall beside a small television, a bed-ridden husband and cherry trees that would be blossoming now.

Earlier that morning, before he left for work, I had asked Baba, ‘When are you coming?’

‘Soon,’ he said. ‘I’ll come to Karaj.’

Uncle Reza drove us past Baba’s building; his office was on the third floor, his operating room facing the street.

‘Wave goodbye to your Baba,’ he said, his voice too quiet and low.

I squinted at the man in the window and waved. I knew the window, the big chair beyond, the desk with our photos scattered under glass. I couldn’t see his face. We were in a moving car and he was three storeys up.

In the front passenger seat, Maman stared at the streets with grieving eyes, taking in every shop sign and utility pole. Waving to Baba had unnerved me. Maman always told me the truth. She told me about her arrests, the death of church leaders. But now I understood that we were sealing a door even tighter than I liked, that I’d never again see this life from inside. I may never sit beside my cousins, glance for my name above Pooneh’s, or tuck in Maman Masi’s hair. Morvarid would die without me.

I made promises to myself. If we made it to the United States or England, I would work twenty times harder to avoid Khadijeh’s fate. I would learn English and become exceptional. In the West, the criminals wouldn’t be in charge. Teachers would be kind. Worthy rivals would abound.

Author: Dina Nayeri

MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTION

1) When the sirens started, ...

- Uncle Reza arrived.
- Uncle Reza had already arrived.
- Uncle Reza was arriving.
- Uncle Reza screamed.

2. Dina and her family...

- were not going on a very long journey yet.
- played with other children.
- had no suitcases to carry.
- would stay in Tehran.

3. While driving in Uncle Reza’s car, they passed by...

- Baba’s place of work.
- Baba’s home.

- Karaj.
- Maman's elderly grandmother's house.

4. After waving to Baba, Dina...

- knew that this part of her life was over.
- decided she would learn English.
- understood that Maman would tell her the truth.
- wished she could go inside his building.

5. What does 'scattered' mean in the sentence, 'We watched the surveillance cars from the kitchen window; they hesitated, then scattered'?

- Separated
- Dissolved
- Assembled
- Mixed

6. What does 'squinted' mean in the sentence, 'I squinted at the man in the window and waved'?

- looked
- smiled
- ignored
- spotted

7. What does 'unnerved' mean in the sentence, 'Waving to Baba had unnerved me'?

- upset
- encouraged
- relaxed
- strengthened