

Lipstick Jihad: A Memoir of Growing up Iranian in America and American in Iran

By Azadeh Moaveni

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As far back as she can remember, Azadeh Moaveni has felt at odds with her tangled identity as an Iranian-American. In suburban America, Azadeh lived in two worlds. At home, she was the daughter of the Iranian exile community, serving tea, clinging to tradition, and dreaming of Tehran. Outside, she was a California girl who practiced yoga and listened to Madonna. For years, she ignored the tense standoff between her two cultures. But college magnified the clash between Iran and America, and after graduating, she moved to Iran as a journalist. This is the story of her search for identity, between two cultures cleaved apart by a violent history. It is also the story of Iran, a restive land lost in the twilight of its revolution.
Moaveni's homecoming falls in the heady days of the country's reform movement, when young people demonstrated in the streets and shouted for the Islamic regime to end. In these tumultuous times, she struggles to build a life in a dark country, wholly unlike the luminous, saffron and turquoise-tinted Iran of her imagination. As she leads us through the drug-soaked, underground parties of Tehran, into the hedonistic lives of young people desperate for change, Moaveni paints a rare portrait of Iran's rebellious next generation. The landscape of her Tehran — ski slopes, fashion shows, malls and cafes — is populated by a cast of young people whose exuberance and despair brings the modern reality of Iran to vivid life.

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Lipstick Jihad: A Memoir of Growing up Iranian in America and American in Iran By Azadeh Moaveni Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #699600 in Books
- Published on: 2006-03-28
- Released on: 2006-03-28
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.38" h x .75" w x 5.50" l, 1.00 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 272 pages

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly
Time reporter Moaveni, the American-born child of Iranian exiles, spent two years (2000–2001) working in Tehran. Although she reports on the overall tumult and repression felt by Iranians between the 1999 pro-democracy student demonstrations and the 2002 "Axis of Evil" declaration, the book's dominant story is more intimate. Moaveni was on a personal search "to figure out my relationship" to Iran. Neither her adolescent ethnic identity conundrums nor her idyllic memories of a childhood visit prepared her for the realities she confronted as she navigated Iran, learning its rules, restrictions and taboos—and how to evade and even exploit them like a local. Because she was a journalist, the shadowy, unnerving presence of an Iranian intelligence agent/interrogator hovered continually ("it would be useful if we saw your work before publication," he told her). Readers also get intimate glimpses of domestic life: Moaveni lived among family and depicts clandestine partying, women's gyms and the popularity of cosmetic surgery. Eventually, Moaveni became "more at home than [her mother] was" in Iran, and a visit to the U.S. showed how Moaveni, who now lives in Beirut, had grown unaccustomed to American life, "where my Iranian instincts served no purpose." *Lipstick Jihad* is a catchy title, but its flippancy does a disservice to Moaveni's nuanced narrative. *Agent, Diana Finch. (Mar.)*Forecast:*This work, as well as Afschineh Latifi's* Even After All This Time*, reviewed above, joins the recent explosion of memoirs by women about living in Iran, and could be displayed alongside Marjane Satrapi's* Persepolis*, Roya Hakakian's* Journey from the Land of No *and Azar Nafisi's* Reading Lolita in Tehran.
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From School Library Journal
Adult/High School–Moaveni went to Tehran to report for *Time*–to find out both the truth about Iran and, she hoped, her "authentic self." One of the strongest memoirs written about being trapped between two countries, the book begins with the author as a young Californian who told friends she was "Persian." Secretly enthralled by the country her parents left during the Islamic Revolution, she wanted to love Iran and determined to give it a chance. She quickly adapted to not smoking or smiling in public. She learned how dating boys and girls seen together on the street are subject to being beaten by the police. During her time in Iran, certain regulations relaxed: veils and *roopooshes* became available in an array of colors. Citizens pulled off the occasional wild party in the street. There were things she could not accept–as when a friend of hers was caught with a bottle of wine and fined 30 lashes. The author writes well about the aftermath of 9/11–feeling "suspect" in the U.S. and tensing under the weight of President Bush's naming Iran as part of an "Axis of Evil." She includes many stories about Iranians with varying situations and perspectives. Her book is an excellent introduction to the country's recent history and the Islamic Revolution. It makes fine reading both for those who will identify with the author and for those who are curious about how teens in very different countries negotiate their lives.–*Emily Lloyd, Stephen J. Betze Library, Georgetown, DE*
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From Booklist
After growing up in suburban California, where she never felt fully comfortable, Moaveni moved in 2000 to Iran, the land her parents had fled. Although she spent her childhood aching to live in Tehran, the place she discovers is nothing like she imagined--and, indeed, not what most of us imagine, either. She describes a sprawling city choked by smog and traffic; people "preoccupied by sex in the manner of dieters constantly thinking about food"; and, of course, the volunteer Morality Police, whose brazen cruelty has to be read about to be believed. Moaveni has captured Tehran's youth, the "student demonstrators" often in the news, in

both their worldliness and their ignorance. And although much of the writing tells more than it shows, Moaveni is riveting when she works her way into a scene--capturing, for instance, the horror of a girl who must not react when the Morality Police beat her boyfriend lest they find out she is breaking *shariah* by dating. Not quite *Persepolis* without the pictures, but good stuff all the same. *John Green*
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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Linda Pillar:

Have you spare time for a day? What do you do when you have considerably more or little spare time? Yes, you can choose the suitable activity to get spend your time. Any person spent their spare time to take a move, shopping, or went to the Mall. How about open or maybe read a book eligible Lipstick Jihad: A Memoir of Growing up Iranian in America and American in Iran? Maybe it is for being best activity for you. You recognize beside you can spend your time with the favorite's book, you can more intelligent than before. Do you agree with it is opinion or you have some other opinion?

Randy Johnson:

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