



The Septembers of Shiraz: A Novel (P.S.)

By Dalia Sofer

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Soon to be a major motion picture starring Adrien Brody and Salma Hayek

In the aftermath of the Iranian revolution, rare-gem dealer Isaac Amin is arrested, wrongly accused of being a spy. Terrified by his disappearance, his family must reconcile a new world of cruelty and chaos with the collapse of everything they have known. As Isaac navigates the terrors of prison, and his wife feverishly searches for him, his children struggle with the realization that their family may soon be forced to embark on a journey of incalculable danger.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Sofer's family escaped from Iran in 1982 when she was 10, an experience that may explain the intense detail of this unnerving debut. On a September day in 1981, gem trader Isaac Amin is accosted by Revolutionary Guards at his Tehran office and imprisoned for no other crime than being Jewish in a country where Muslim fanaticism is growing daily. Being rich and having had slender ties to the Shah's regime magnify his peril. In anguish over what might be happening to his family, Isaac watches the brutal mutilation and executions of prisoners around him. His wife, Farnaz, struggles to keep from slipping into despair, while his young daughter, Shirin, steals files from the home of a playmate whose father is in charge of the prison that holds her father. Far away in Brooklyn, Isaac's nonreligious son, Parviz, struggles without his family's money and falls for the pious daughter of his Hasidic landlord. Nicely layered, the story shimmers with past secrets and hidden motivations. The dialogue, while stiff, allows the various characters to come through. Sofer's dramatization of just-post-revolutionary Iran captures its small tensions and larger brutalities, which play vividly upon a family that cannot, even if it wishes to, conform. (*Aug.*)

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From [Bookmarks Magazine](#)

Dalia Sofer, who was forced to flee postrevolutionary Iran at the age of ten after her own father was unjustly imprisoned, captures her family's experiences in this moving, semiautobiographical tale. Citing Sofer's evocative prose, sensitive characterizations, and suspenseful plot, reviewers called Sofer's debut novel persuasive and memorable. Though she ruminates on themes of faith, love, and the heavy toll of political and religious oppression, Sofer's honesty and balanced outlook prevent the story from lapsing into sensational melodrama or lurid allegory. Her descriptions of torture, though vivid, are not gratuitously violent. A few small complaints included some contrived dialogue and Parviz's annoying self-pity, but critics agreed that these do not detract from an otherwise "powerful, timely book" (*Rocky Mountain News*).

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From [Booklist](#)

Sofer's enlightening debut opens with the 1981 arrest of Isaac Amin, a Jewish businessman in Iran accused of being a Zionist spy. His arrest was not unexpected. Isaac has seen neighbors and family members disappear and knows the remnants of the shah's entourage—businessmen and communist rebels alike—are seen as enemies by the Revolutionary Guards. Sofer illuminates the horrific details of Isaac's months in prison and deftly captures how that experience affects the rest of his family—his wife and daughter Shirin at home and son Parviz in New York, where he has quickly fallen from son of a wealthy man to starving shop boy. In the midst of their depressing circumstances, the author nestles small jewels of hope, like the delivery of leftovers by the wife of Parviz's landlord, or the repaired shoes, picked up weeks late by Shirin, waiting patiently for Isaac's feet to fill them once again. Sofer herself emigrated from postrevolutionary Iran to New York, and her debut resonates with the empathy derived from that journey. Donovan, Deborah

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Roy Brown:

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