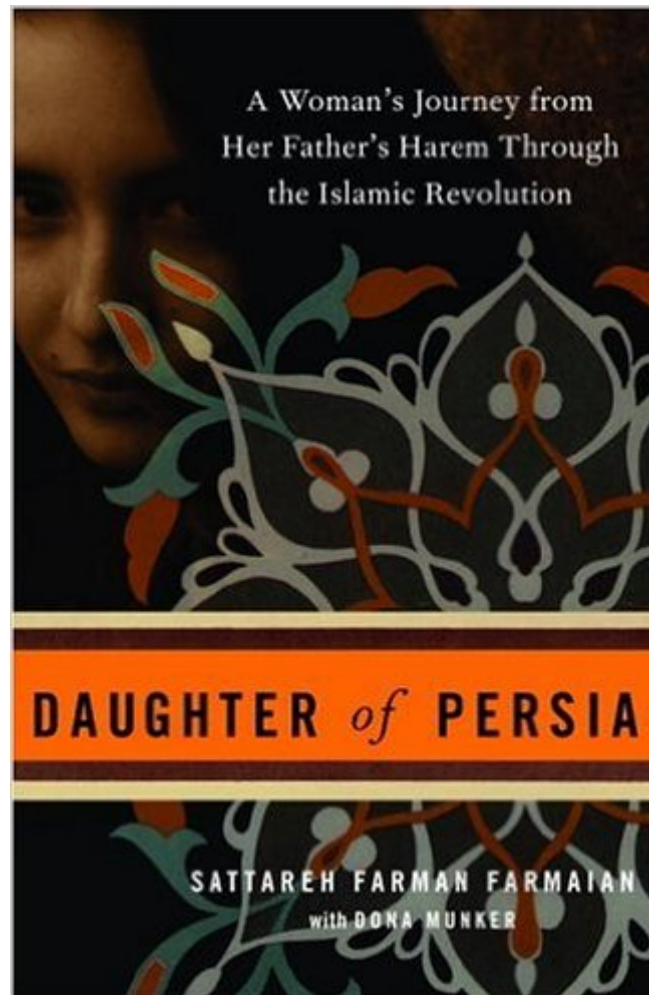


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# Daughter Of Persia: A Woman's Journey From Her Father's Harem Through The Islamic Revolution



## Synopsis

"A riveting memoir about an inspiring Iranian woman and her country's road to revolution." "A lesson about the value of personal freedom and what happens to a nation when its people are denied the right to direct their own destiny. This is a book Americans should read." --Washington Post

The fifteenth of thirty-six children, Sattareh Farman Farmaian was born in Iran in 1921 to a wealthy and powerful shazdeh, or prince, and spent a happy childhood in her father's Tehran harem. Inspired and empowered by his ardent belief in education, she defied tradition by traveling alone at the age of twenty-three to the United States to study at the University of Southern California. Ten years later, she returned to Tehran and founded the first school of social work in Iran. Intertwined with Sattareh's personal story is her unique perspective on the Iranian political and social upheaval that have rocked Iran throughout the twentieth century, from the 1953 American-backed coup that toppled democratic premier Mossadegh to the brutal regime of the Shah and Ayatollah Khomeini's fanatic and anti-Western Islamic Republic. In 1979, after two decades of tirelessly serving Iran's neediest, Sattareh was arrested as a counterrevolutionary and branded an imperialist by Ayatollah Khomeini's radical students. *Daughter of Persia* is the remarkable story of a woman and a nation in the grip of profound change.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I am an American daughter of an Iranian man who grew up in Tehran the same time as the author, and I was THRILLED to find this book. It provided me with many insights and a sizeable history lesson about Iran and its culture. Ms. Farman-Farmaian writes clearly and factually, yet includes her

own analysis of the amazing history and perpetual transitions that have characterized this ancient country. She provides an excellent introduction, pertinent background, and an exposure to some of the Farsi language, which gives the rest of the book depth and feeling and makes it easy to follow. Contrary to the Western connotation of a "Harem," Farman-Farmaian enlightens us with the powerful network of love and support, which deeply connected the women and siblings in her family. It is a moving account of a life of courage and dedication by a woman who dared to think beyond her cultural boundaries. I highly recommend it!

One of the best and most illuminating biographies I have read. It's sad, insightful, but funny (for example, when Miss Farmaian arrives in Los Angeles after a long journey and asks to see the Statue of Liberty). She explains why figures like Khomeini were so popular, though she is clearly unbiased since she was almost prosecuted for being a spy. She discusses the good and bad about the shah and provides tremendous insight into Moslem society. Why aren't there more books as good as this.

I loved reading Daughter of Persia. It is a thrilling journey through Farman Farmaian's remarkable life, and it is a fascinating ride through the modern history of Iran; from before the overthrow of the Shah to Iran today. Farman Farmaian's descriptive, yet fast-paced writing style makes this book a treasure to read. Read Daughter of Persia if you are interested in reading about the life of the extraordinary woman who founded social work in Iran, and read this if you are interested in Iranian culture and history.

I've just bought this book for the fourth time. The story is so fascinating and the author is so personable that I have had to lend it out and then that person lends it out and somehow it never gets back to me. This autobiography tells a very personal story of a person raised in three very different worlds: as a daughter of the fourth wife of a very wealthy man in Tehran, as a student and then social worker living under the Shah, and then her life under the Ayatollah. Her story provides a glimpse into the history of Iran and an appreciation of a culture most of us know little of. Iranians all know the family of this author and those I have lent the book to like it. Americans love it. Everyone, without exception, I've talked to about this book has wanted to write the author and thank her for telling her story.

Sattareh Farman Farmanian gives a spellbinding account of her life from birth until 1979, when she

flees an Iran caught in the throes of the Islamic revolution. Her tale works not only as a memoir, but also as an anecdotal history of modern Iran up to and including the Islamic revolution which toppled the Pahlavi dynasty. As a descendant of the former Qajar dynasty, and daughter of a prominent Persian government official, she is blessed and cursed to see important events in her country's history unfold before her eyes. Indeed, I was intrigued by her kinship to the late Iranian Prime Minister Dr. Mohammed Mossadegh. Most moving is how she emerges as a strong, willful young woman, who successfully pleads with her father that she deserves a college education, along with her brothers. And you see the same strong determination in her efforts to elevate social work as a respected profession in Iran, and her management of the college she founds in Tehran, Iran's capital, for social work education. Anyone who wishes to understand at least some contemporary Iranian history should read this excellent tome.

This was a very satisfying read. Sattareh is an inspiring person who cares deeply about her native country and worked very hard to improve the condition of the people in Iran. Ultimately it was a losing battle but she did not give up on her country until forced to do so. It was interesting to read her mixed feelings about Americans and she realized it is hard for people to truly understand how another country lives without experiencing it for themselves. There is a scene where she is on an American vessel and is dumbfounded by the amount of food that she sees wasted. As a general rule, Americans truly do not understand what it is like to go hungry. It again made me feel grateful to live in such a blessed and abundant country. Also I realized that democracy works (of course not perfectly) in America because it is founded on Christian principles. Other countries that try democracy but without such moral principles as a base, tend to fail again and again because self interest ends up ruling the day.

This is a great book for a long train or plane journey, as once you start reading, you want to continue to find out what happens to this interesting woman - Persian woman. I found the first one-third of the book the most interesting as this part told the story of a little girl growing up in a Persian family, in Iran, with 12 step mothers. The historical aspect of the book is very informative but also not chonical or boring. Obviously Sattareh Farman Farmaian has gone a lot in her life, things that most Americans or Europeans will never go through, and perhaps never fully understand. This book is particularly interesting because it introduces Americans to an unknown world and continuously amazes the reader with S. Farman's reactions, emotions and thoughts. She never falls in love and she does not seek to fall in love. Although she moves to the United States,

and adopts well to the professional life, she never abandons her cultural roots and beliefs. Despite what goes on in Iran, and how they treat her, she loves her country until the end. Read it and enjoy it for yourself!

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