

BEYOND REVOLUTION

Written by

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EXT. TEHRAN SKYLINE - NOVEMBER 4, 1979 - SUNRISE

The sunrise gives the city a deep red glow. Smog rises above the snow-capped Alborz Mountains.

Thousands of armed PROTESTERS line Queen Elizabeth Boulevard, SHOUTING at each other, CHANTING, waving signs in Farsi.

PROTESTERS

Allahu Akbar!

EXT. QUEEN ELIZABETH BOULEVARD - DAY

BUSINESSPEOPLE and STUDENTS rush down the vast tree-lined boulevard towards skyscrapers, weaving between passing cars.

ROXANA YAGHMAEI, 19, Persian, petite, in a blouse, scarf, long coat, miniskirt, and Mary Janes, strides through traffic, checking her watch.

REZA YAGHMAEI, 50s, distinguished, in a three-piece suit and fedora, walks with her.

ROXANA

Okay, I know organic chemistry is supposed to be hard, but did they have to take us all to the gallows with that midterm?

REZA

Did sleeping with Gray's Anatomy under your pillow help?

Off Roxana's look -

REZA (CONT'D)

You've been studying every day for months. I'm sure you did fine.

ROXANA

I hope so, for my future patients' sakes.

REZA

Is Shirin still taking her test?

ROXANA

Yeah, she's such a perfectionist. Makes for a good engineer, though.

A black muscle car tails Roxana.

Reza eyes the car, takes Roxana's hand.

Roxana glances at her watch.

ROXANA (CONT'D)

Shoot! I'm gonna be late. Follow me. I know a short cut.

She leads him into a crowded side street.

REZA

Roxana, you're not going through the protests.

ROXANA

You're with me. I'll be fine.

An armed MOJAHEDIN WOMAN, 35, in a black chador, wipes the makeup off a SCREAMING WOMAN, 25. Throws a spare chador at her. Other mojahedin women repeat the scene. They march with bearded MUSLIM MEN in black, who carry pro-Khomeini signs.

They YELL at armed CHERIK MEN AND WOMEN, 20s, in army green uniforms, black berets, and red hammer-and-sickle armbands. They carry anti-Khomeini signs and YELL back.

ROXANA (CONT'D)

Agha joon -

REZA

Don't look at them.

ROXANA

I want to help that woman.

He holds her close until the protesters pass by.

REZA

You should stay home today.

Roxana takes off her scarf, puts it on her hair.

ROXANA

There. Problem solved.

REZA

Roxana -

ROXANA

I'm not afraid of the mojahedin, dad. They're afraid of me.

She checks her watch.

ROXANA (CONT'D)

We're so late.

REZA
You'll make it on time.

ROXANA
But David always goes in early and
now I can't walk in with him -

He gives her a stern look.

ROXANA (CONT'D)
I mean, I value my education.

EXT. IRAN-AMERICA SOCIETY - CONTINUOUS

About 20 protesters from all sides stand outside the school,
YELLING at each other, waving pro- and anti-Khomeini signs.

DAVID ANDREWS, 29, tall, long brown hair, medium complexion,
wearing a necklace tucked under his shirt, strides with
AMERICAN TEACHERS, late 20s. Jokes around with colleagues,
JOHN HARRIS, 25, blonde, and MARY WILLIAMS, 25, red-headed.

Roxana and Reza walk around the protests. She waves to David.

ROXANA
Hey, David!

David waves back.

JOHN
Look, it's your groupie.

DAVID
Shut up, John. She's my best
student. And she's very sweet.

MARY
Yeah, sweet on you.

DAVID
Come on, Mary. I'm too old for her.

MARY
So? College girls love older guys.

DAVID
Catch you later.

JOHN
Where are you going?

DAVID
Away from this conversation.

David catches up with Roxana and Reza.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Reza! It's great to see you.

He shakes hands with Reza, smiles at Roxana.

REZA
You too, David. Be careful today.
Roxana, I'll pick you up later.

DAVID
I could walk her, if that's easier
for you, sir. Plus, some of us are
going to see the new Rocky movie
after class, and it would be great
if Roxana could come along.
(to Roxana)
I know the first one's your
favorite movie.

She gazes at him, twirling her Farrah Fawcett hair.

ROXANA
You remembered that? Oh, agha joon,
can I please go?

REZA
(stern)
You want to take my daughter on a -

DAVID
- Educational field trip.

REZA
If that's all, why didn't you ask
me?

Roxana GROANS. Reza pats David on the shoulder. Hugs Roxana.

REZA (CONT'D)
See you tonight, dear. Be safe.

Reza walks away.

Roxana and David climb the steps to the entrance.

DAVID
I don't know why you deny it. You
totally get it from him.

ROXANA
What?

DAVID

The sass.

She LAUGHS. Follows him inside.

INT. IRAN-AMERICA SOCIETY - CLASSROOM - DAY

Roxana sits front and center, doodling in her notebook.

She glances out the window. 50 protesters stand outside.

She looks around the classroom. It's decorated with English grammar charts, maps of Iran and the U.S., and the flags of Iran and America, crossed above the blackboard.

Fifteen STUDENTS, 20s, wearing the raddest 70s fashion, pass notes and CHIT-CHAT. David writes on the blackboard.

DAVID

All right, guys. Pass your papers
to the front of the room.

Everyone passes their papers up. David collects them.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Anyone want to share your thesis
statements with the class?

Everyone avoids eye contact.

DAVID (CONT'D)

I'll call on you. Want to take that
chance?

Roxana raises her hand.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Very brave, Miss Yaghmaei.

ROXANA

Prepare to be amazed, Mr. Andrews.
My paper is about how, for the
first time in the history of Iran,
the youth are writing our future.

DAVID

How so?

ROXANA

Look outside. This is a revolution
by young people, and for young
people.

(MORE)

ROXANA (CONT'D)

The ruling class is holding onto their old ways, but the factions who oppose them are run by kids fresh out of college. Things are changing around here. And fast.

DAVID

I like your take on current events.

ROXANA

So, does this mean I get out of the midterm?

DAVID

Nice try. Now quit doodling and take notes.

David turns back to the blackboard.

Roxana breaks into a smile, just as a crumpled piece of paper HITS her in the face. She looks to her right, at -

SHIRIN ASLAN, 19, Persian-Turkish, in a conservative version of Roxana's outfit. Stifles GIGGLES, pretends to take notes.

Roxana smooths out the paper, reads the handwritten Farsi.

SUBTITLE: "Teacher's pet!"

Both girls LAUGH, shove each other.

The door flies open. ALI YAGHMAEI, 23, large and muscular, in a Cherik uniform, runs in, PANTING. STUDENTS and TEACHERS run down the hall behind him. He sees Roxana.

ROXANA

Ali? What are you doing here? Dad said you were out protesting.

ALI

I had to warn the teachers when I heard -

DAVID

Heard what? What's going on?

ALI

You have to get out. It's the Revolutionary Guard. They took the American Embassy. And they're coming. Everybody, let's go! Now!

Ali runs out.

DAVID
 (shell-shocked)
 Oh my God.

The students gather their belongings and rush out. Shirin follows. Roxana waits by the door.

SHIRIN
 Roxana, let's go.

ROXANA
 We have to help him, Shirin. You heard what Ali said.

SHIRIN
 (whisper)
 That's why we can't go with him.
 It's suicide.

ROXANA
 David, are you coming?

David stares at the crossed flags above the blackboard.

DAVID
 Yeah. Let's go, girls.

Roxana leads them out.

EXT. IRAN-AMERICA SOCIETY - DAY

A HEZBOLLAH PROTESTER, 20s, bearded, in all black, wearing a black armband with white script, BURNS an American flag.

Heavily-armed, college-aged protesters BURN President Carter and the Shah in effigy.

Roxana, Shirin, and David exit the building, into the chaos.

DAVID
 What a violent fucking dystopia.

SHIRIN
 I never thought it would get this bad.

ROXANA
 It was a long time coming. We didn't want to believe it.

The Hezbollah protester waves the burning flag at the trio.