



A Door Between Us

Ehsaneh Sadr

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Politics, family frictions, and divided loyalties collide in Ehsaneh Sadr's engrossing novel, which is set during the aftermath of Iran's controversial 2009 presidential election and subsequent "Green Wave" protests.

The families of a young bride, Sarah, and her groom, Ali, are at odds: Ali's more liberal clan objects to the election results, arguing that they were rigged in the conservative Muslim hardliners' favor, while Sarah's more traditional relatives are ardent supporters of those in power. When riots erupt on their wedding night, Sarah offers safety to a young protester on impulse. Her act results in Ali getting arrested by the authorities, and the incident fractures both families.

As the effects of Ali's arrest ripple outward, the narrative expands its focus to include Ali's sister, Azar, a progressive divorce lawyer, and Sarah's cousin, Sadegh, a militiaman who's loyal to the incumbent government. While Azar comes under intense scrutiny when she obtains documents that indict high-ranking officers of torturing and killing prisoners, Sadegh's faith in the rightness of his family and the powers that be is shaken with the sudden appearance of his real mother, who has a surprising connection with the protester whom Sarah attempted to help.

This tangled web of coincidences is addressed via compelling storytelling that mixes gentle domestic humor with harrowing political intrigue. Life in Iran, where traditions and hidden secrets threaten to hamper justice at every turn, comes through. A monumental question hovers: How can one be an agent for change when repressive forces are forever in the way?

The novel moves toward a bittersweet conclusion in which there are no easy answers, though there is the potential for change and hope. Intense, emotional, and rich, *A Door Between Us* is a stirring novel about the importance of conscientiousness and truth.

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