

Bandar Abbas, Iran

In the chapter "Bandar Abbas, Iran," the narrative begins on Sunday, July 3, 1988, with a woman embarking on her first airplane journey. Although financial constraints were not the reason for her previous lack of flying experience, she reflects on the hardships around her, particularly in Tehran, where many families struggle to make ends meet, selling off their belongings just to survive. She recounts how desperate men and boys wait in long lines to purchase baby chicks and how women resort to risky behaviors in an unstable socio-political landscape, illustrating the dire circumstances that pervade everyday life.

On her first flight to Bandar Abbas, the woman feels a mix of anxiety and relief as she settles into a half-empty plane and observes the mundane rituals of air travel. Despite the comforts offered during the flight, her thoughts are clouded, marked by memories of fear and violence prevalent in her homeland. After a second flight transfer to Dubai, she encounters a bustling scene in her new surroundings, contrasted against her reflections of the political unrest back in Iran.

As the flight progresses, the woman's internal dialogue speaks to her desire to escape from the horrors she has witnessed. A sense of calm washes over her as the plane takes off, disconnecting her momentarily from the terror and sorrow populating her memories. The quietude of the air brings a brief respite from the horrific reality on the ground, where mothers are informed of their sons' martyrdom and fear looms large.

Despite the weight of guilt that accompanies her departure, she urges herself to embrace possibilities for the future—a feeling she has not experienced in a long time. Gazing at the horizon filled with shades of blue and distant islands, the woman clings to a fragile sense of hope, reflecting on the nature of optimism in a world where her family and friends remain entrenched in despair. This chapter encapsulates her turbulent emotional landscape as she seeks liberation from her past while recognizing the burdens she carries with her.