

# Sunday

Cyrus Shams sits at an outdoor café named Daylight in Brooklyn, bracing against the cold as he waits for his friend Zee Novak. His mind is preoccupied with thoughts from a conversation with Orkideh, a mysterious figure who had referenced a plane crash related to his mother—something he never mentioned to her. He exchanges texts with his sponsor, Gabe, who confirms Cyrus is still sober. Reflecting on grief, Cyrus grapples with his unresolved emotions regarding his mother's death, noting that although he feels a connection to his father, his mother's absence remains abstract.

Cyrus then scrolls through the news, encountering an article featuring "President Invective," a name he and Zee use dismissively for the president, symbolizing their disdain for his leadership style. This prompts Cyrus to consider how Western leaders aspire to infallibility, contrasting them with historical figures who showed vulnerability, such as Jesus and Muhammad. Cyrus expresses frustration over the lack of emotionally grounded leadership in the modern world, yearning for a leader who acknowledges the complexity of human experience.

While waiting, Cyrus reflects on his family, recalling his mother's voracious curiosity and his father's reticence about knowledge. He admires his mother's habit of seeking answers, which instilled in him a comfort with uncertainty. This contemplation leads him to observe societal pain—people's belief that happiness is their natural state, believing external forces cause their discontent.

Zee finally arrives, dressed casually as he shows off records he's collected. Their conversation turns serious as Cyrus recounts his earlier talk with Orkideh, particularly her unexpected mention of the flight associated with his mother's death. Zee questions whether Orkideh might know Cyrus's father from Iran, but Cyrus thinks it's unlikely. They discuss Orkideh's artistic career, with Cyrus searching her name online. He finds scant information but discovers a powerful image from one of her works depicting a battlefield with a rider resembling his uncle Arash, who once fought in the Iran-Iraq War. This revelation strikes Cyrus deeply, intertwining his family's history with Orkideh's art, amplifying his emotional turmoil .