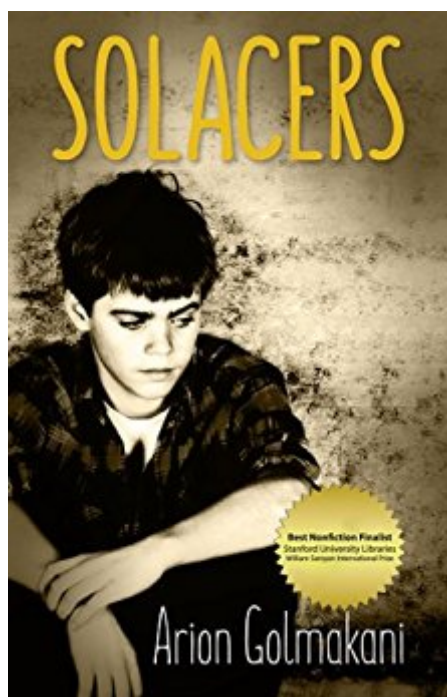


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Solacers: An Iranian Oliver Twist Story- A Memoir



Synopsis

*** Best Nonfiction Finalist, Stanford University Libraries, William Saroyan International Prize ****"He was neither an orphan, nor a street kid but life dealt him such a hand that now, those who hear the story of his childhood in Iran, consider him an Oliver Twist in the streets of Mashhad. His childhood could be summarized in two words: Hungry and Forlorn." • BBC Solacers tells the touching story of a 5-year old child's search for family life and safety following the divorce of his parents in Iran during the 1960s. The first child of a heartless father and a discarded mother is left to fend for himself on the streets of Mashhad, seeking food and shelter wherever he can. His lonely early years are an unbelievable tale of cruelty and betrayal on the part of nearly everyone who might be expected to help, save for one aunt who does her best to keep him from starving. But living a harsh and solitary existence has one advantage for this little boy: other than forcing him to be self-reliant, no one attempts to indoctrinate him on rural Iranian society's archaic cultural values and religious beliefs. And so he never accepts his wretched state as fate, choosing instead to dream big dreams about getting an education, having his own family, and starting a new life – possibly in the faraway land called America. He makes a plan and by the age of 17 he boards a plane to the land of possibilities, where his dreams eventually also take flight. "If you devoured – The Glass Castle, – vividly remember – Angela's Ashes, – and were fascinated by – Destined to Witness, – if you loved the colorful descriptions, the oriental storytelling and the ornate language of Khaled Hosseini's – The Kite Runner, – you will definitely get your money's worth reading – Beraubte Wut-- the German edition of Solacers, – by the American author Arion Golmakani."

– Joke Brocker, Westfälische Nachrichten – Congratulation on such a first class book. One of the most important attributes of this book is its ability to motivate readers to try harder, and guide them to find a better life for themselves. – Dr. Ehsan Yarshater, Colombia University – I finished the last pages of your book today. It has consumed me since I picked it up last week, and I have often had to tear myself away from the urge to keep reading, when necessary tasks awaited my attention. It was not only the events of your story (which were remarkable), but the literary qualities of your retelling: the detail you provided of all five (even six) senses, the foreshadowing, and the emotional depth combined to make this a riveting read. I felt deeply involved with the story, and had to suppress strong emotional responses. I confess, when I read the publisher's blurb about your book online, my expectations were low. I feared it would be another "escape from Iran" narrative, in which Muslims (or people "from there") featured as the enemies of reason and civilization. There are so many such Orientalist tales in circulation, and they feed into a politics of fear which I find very dangerous. How wonderful to be surprised by a story that captured the people you encountered in

all their humanity: the compassionate, the cold, the helpless, and the brutal. These were not one-sided depictions, and your effort to understand even your worst abusers (like your father) increased the power of the account. We all have the potential for both the best and worst acts. I was also delighted by the way you captured the differences of ethnic background, religious orientation, and regional variation in Iran. It will be a book I recommend to others.

— Eva Sajoo- Research Associate, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, Canada

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Customer Reviews

After reading *Solacers*, the reader will come away with the realization and validation for the justification in believing in a better tomorrow; this appears to be a recurring theme throughout the memoir. From the very opening pages, I found myself captivated by the ensuing narrative of Golmakani's extremely hard and difficult existence in the back villages of Iran. Every page afforded me the opportunity to witness the author's trials and tribulations--from the opening page to the last. So enmeshed do we become in this memoir that it becomes difficult to not feel the personal pains that the author descriptively lays out before us. We also find ourselves cheering for him during those fleeting periods in his life when things appear to be going his way (as with his new-found relationship with Molouk, a ten year old light years ahead of her physical age--and later Sarah who

befriended him on the river's edge). Throughout all the hardships he endures while growing up, he never once gave up on the notion that his tomorrows would justify the many sacrifices encountered along the way. We soon learn that it was those never-ending thoughts of tomorrow, coupled with a number of helping hands along the way that enabled him to realize his youthful dreams. Even with those helping hands, however, it was his inner desire for a better life that catapulted him in his survival against great odds. Solacers effortlessly records his youthful struggles to find a better life for himself and, above all, to be loved, unconditionally. Golmakani convincingly demonstrates throughout the memoir that in spite of external forces forever attempting to beat us back, there is a light at the end of the tunnel for those that maintain a sense of faith and hope.

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