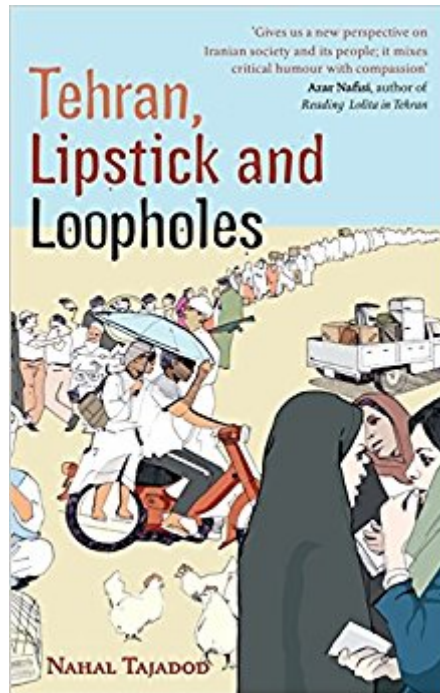




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# Tehran, Lipstick And Loopholes



## Synopsis

A wry and humorous account of Nahal Tajadod's quest to get her Iranian passport renewed. She embarks on a bizarre and circuitous journey, meeting a colourful cast of characters along the way: two photographers who specialise in Islamic portraits, a forensic surgeon who trades in human organs and a grandmother who offers a live chicken to an implacable official. TEHRAN, LIPSTICK AND LOOPHOLES is a fascinating look at the constraints and contradictions of contemporary life in Tehran from the author's unique standpoint of being both a native of Iran and a foreigner.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

It seemed like such a simple thing. The author, an Iranian living in Paris, had returned to Tehran for a holiday. Now she's ready to go home; she just needs to renew her Iranian passport, a process that is usually fairly routine. Told over the space of slightly more than a week, the story recounts Tajadod's rather mind-bogglingly circuitous odyssey to get the paperwork done. Tajadod structures the book like a novel, introducing us to a number of peculiar and interesting characters (who are, we must assume, more or less as they actually are), telling us the story of a hapless traveler simply trying to get home. Adroitly translated from the original French, the book offers readers a detailed and fascinating look at daily life in Tehran—a place that, despite our Western sense of its radical difference, seems quite familiar in many ways. It's not really a travel memoir; more of an I-want-to-travel memoir. --David Pitt

Gives us a new perspective on the Iranian society and its people, it mixes critical humour with

compassion' Azar Nafisi, author of Reading Lolita in Tehran • 'A Picaresque journey through modern-day Iran' Tajadod's exasperated yet non-condemnatory tone is most refreshing • 'Tajadod has a good eye for the absurdities of Iranian daily life' an abundance of colourful detail brings every encounter alive

It's an affectionate and exasperated portrayal of life in Iran, concentrating mainly on the hoops an Iranian citizen needs to jump through to get anything done out of the notoriously corrupt bureaucracy. It's witty, it is cultured - Nahal Tajadod is well acquainted with the artists and filmmakers and litterateurs of Iran - and the way networking works in the Middle-East, it's no wonder that she uses all their contacts to forward her agenda. Why does this diminish the work? It's the same in many parts of Europe as well - Italy, anyone? There's no way of telling which contacts will come up trumps, especially when relationships between the public and the bureaucracy are so fluid and fraught. Combined with the famed Iranian politesse, it's difficult to withdraw from networking dead-ends without causing immense offence, and much of the memoir describes the tricks Tajadod has to come up with to assuage hurt feelings or persuade new contacts to help out. Through it all, she bemoans the faults of fundamentalism and the rigidity of the old guard. This is not a serious work by any means on the state of modern Iran, but it is perceptive enough, and written from the perspective of an upper-class woman. Surely all viewpoints are valuable?

A great author and I would definitely read other books by her. However, I did not feel this book was very eventful. Interesting? Yes. Informative? Yes. But after 4 years in Dubai, I find many of the problems and events very common to the Middle East. Still a good book.

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