

SAMPLE BOOK

The Orange Tree House

The Memoirs of Karim Ahmadi

A childhood in Shiraz, a father's bakery,
and the road that led to Vancouver

LIFE STORY BOOKS

METRO VANCOUVER

About this sample

This booklet is a sample. “Karim Ahmadi” is a fictional storyteller, and this chapter was created so that — before ordering anything — you can see exactly what your family will receive: a polished chapter in the storyteller's own voice, the family's photographs in place, and an audio edition that keeps the storyteller's real voice beside every chapter.

In a real book, the storyteller is your own parent. Each week, the family records short answers to one or two ready questions; the senior does nothing technical at all. Everything else — transcription, polishing, photo placement, design and hardcover printing — is done by us.

Consent and privacy, in writing from day one

- The storyteller owns their story; printing, deletion and access happen only with their written consent.
- Before any recording, a short agreement sets out who may access the audio and text, and which topics are off-limits.
- Raw recordings are never made public, and the book is printed only for the family — never for public sale.
- The storyteller may skip any question and stop at any time.

In this sample

- About this sample, and the privacy agreement
- Chapter One — The Orange Tree House
- The voice of this chapter: hear the storyteller
- Packages, and the next step

Sample weekly questions

- What did your childhood home smell like?
- When did you first feel grown up?
- What did your father teach you that you still live by?
- On the day you emigrated, what did you pack that you still keep?
- How would you like your grandchildren to remember you?

Chapter One — The Orange Tree House

My name is Karim Ahmadi. I was born in 1948 in Shiraz, in a house whose smell I can still find whenever I close my eyes: orange blossom, fresh bread, and the earth my mother watered every morning so the dust would settle.

Our house stood in one of the old lanes near the bazaar. It had a green wooden door whose paint slowly faded under the Shiraz sun. In the middle of the courtyard stood an orange tree — a tree my father said was the same age as my older brother. When spring came, the courtyard filled with white blossoms, and we children were not allowed to play near the pool, in case the blossoms fell too soon. My mother gathered them, dried them, and in winter brewed tea with them — tea that tasted of spring in the middle of the coldest month.

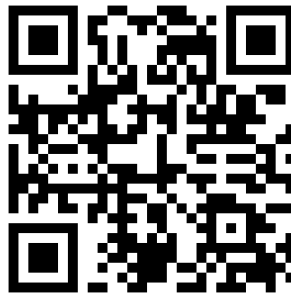
My father was a baker; he had a small sangak bakery near the crossroads. He left home at four in the morning, while it was still dark. The sound of his key in the lock was the first sound of my every day. Sometimes I would wake and follow him to the bakery, sit on the ledge beside the oven, and watch him spread the dough over the hot pebbles. His hands were large and always smelled of flour. Once, when I was seven, he let me take a loaf out of the oven myself for the first time. The bread came out half-burnt, but my father folded it, put it in the cloth, and said, "This is Karim's bread. Today, we eat Karim's bread for lunch." To this day I believe that half-burnt loaf was the most delicious bread of my life.

My mother — God rest her soul — was a woman who could spread a table from almost nothing and still feed everyone. The neighbours knew our door was never closed to anyone. On Fridays the courtyard filled up: uncles, aunts, children, a samovar bubbling from morning to evening, and laughter curling around the orange tree into the lane.

Nothing is left of that house now; it was torn down years ago and apartments were built in its place. But whenever I pass a garden in Vancouver and catch the scent of blossom, I am back in that courtyard, under that tree, hearing my father's key in the dark of morning. That is why I am telling these memories — so that my grandchildren know where they come from, and know that the orange tree was the root of us all.

Hear this chapter in the storyteller's voice

In a real book, a code is printed beside every chapter. Hold any phone camera up to it, and the storyteller's own voice begins to play — the very voice grandchildren will still hear years from now. The complete audio edition is also delivered privately to the family, and can be deleted whenever the family wishes.



Scan to open the sample page and hear the sample narration of this chapter.

In your book, every chapter plays the real voice of your own parent.

Packages

Essential — “My Life Story”: \$399 CAD for the first five families (regular \$549). A book of up to 120 pages, one hardcover copy, a private audio edition with a listening code in every chapter, and up to 12 family photos.

Premium — “Family Legacy”: \$899 CAD for the first five families (regular \$1,190). Two editions (English, plus the storyteller's own language), two hardcover copies, up to 30 photos, a family-tree page and life-path map, an edited audio edition, and a gift box.

Payment is split in two: half to start, and half only after you have seen and approved the complete book for print. Printing is paid from that amount.

The next step

A free 15-minute consultation with the adult child who is arranging the gift. You see the printed sample, ask your questions, and — only if it feels right — we begin, with the storyteller's written consent. There is no pressure to buy.

Life Story Books • Metro Vancouver, British Columbia

This sample was created with a fictional storyteller.