InsideOut

Where is my cookie?

I moved into a new residence and, as part of the routine procedures, had to register my new address with the local municipality. I prepared all the necessary documents and paperwork, and it did not take long before I was issued with a certificate of residence—a document required for official matters that concern me.

A few days later, I met my neighbour, who told me she had just completed the same process. She added, almost casually, that upon registration she had been offered a welcome cookie by the officer in charge. Jokingly, I told her that I hadn't received any cookie when I registered. She laughed and kindly offered to share hers with me.



Nafha Maani

Tales

Of course, the point was never really about the cookie. It was about the feeling of being welcomed.

Questions immediately began racing through my mind. Was it because I am from a different background? Because I am not yet fluent in Luxembourgish—despite attending classes and trying my best? When I paused to reflect, my thoughts drifted further. That cookie, as a simple symbol of welcome, carried me back many years, to a time when I had to give up my Iranian passport for reasons that were valid then. We had no choice.

Before that, the Iranian passport was once a prestigious document. Simply presenting it at many European border controls would allow you entry. But circumstances change, often beyond our control. The same journey that turns someone into a refugee can later become an opportunity to obtain one of the strongest passports in the world. And still, the question lingers: Where is my home? Where is my welcome cookie? Why must one feel out of place until they prove themselves fit to suit the environment they have been placed in?

Like many others, I follow the news and witness the atrocities unfolding across our world. There is hardly a place untouched by crisis. Tyrants ruthlessly destroy lives, money speaks louder than justice, and weapons are prioritised over medicine. We are left wondering whether the viruses attacking us are man-made or the wrath of nature pushed beyond its limits.

How many more parents must mourn the loss of their children? How many children must be orphaned and suffer under the consequences of tyranny? Who truly understands the divine wisdom behind all this? Are children paying for the sins of their fathers, as we are often told? Where is the way out—and when will it come?

Despite everything, my answer remains hopeful. I have done my soul-searching and believe that although the near future looks grim and uncertain, the sun of hope will shine again. It will embrace us, revive us with its warmth, and give us life once more. There will come a time when humanity speaks a common language of understanding, when thrones and presidential offices stand vacant because no one is willing to shoulder such immense responsibility without integrity and decency. That day may feel distant, but it will come.

As for my cookie, when I later returned to the municipality on another matter, I finally asked why I hadn't been given one. The lady smiled and explained that they had simply run out of cookies that day. Now we have them, she said—handing me one at last.

So, did I misjudge the whole situation? I guess I will never know.

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