



1st May 1978



Cher Richard,

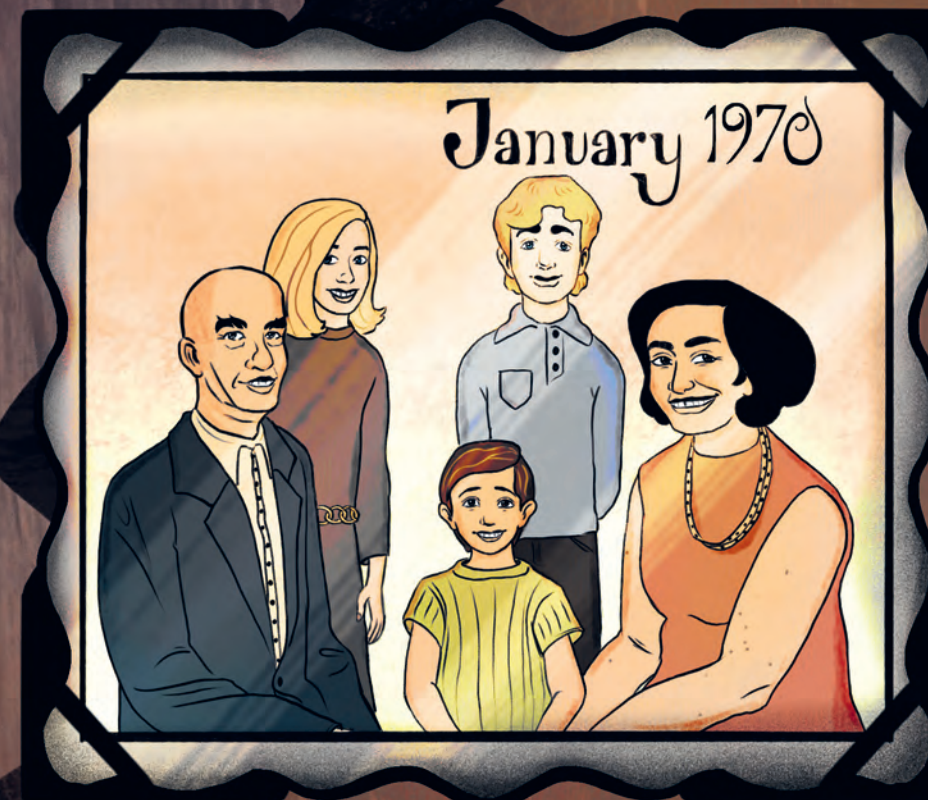
When one is plagued with worry, whom to tell if not one's own brother? What I wouldn't give to be in Montreal with you now, far removed from the calamity that is this Lebanon. You will have seen the Syrian tanks and cannon bomb our dear Beirut every day: I still remember last year when you believed that the two-year war was coming to an end. I, too, was an optimist back then. We'd fled the massacres and survived the raids by the Palestinians and Muslim leftists, and there was a moment in 1977 as the guns fell silent when we all thought peace was around the corner. How could we possibly know that all of that was nothing more than an appetizer, *un amuse gueule*?

This has become sickening...

...Everything has fallen apart.

Workwise, it is as though my clients never even existed. The political situation has turned against us and so - at 56 - I am a retiree who retires badly. Now more than ever, I only live for my family: Nirvah and ETC - our "etc.", that is, Elissa, Terence and Carl.

Tell me what you are doing with your time. It might inspire me. I listen to the BBC, read *Time* magazine and give French lessons to Carl - and that's it.





Dear Terence,

As you are probably aware, we have had a bit of trouble here with the Syrian troops. Our neighbourhood has been bombed and we are all at home waiting for things to come back to normal. Today the news is a bit better and there is a ceasefire. We expect everything to be all right in the next few days. At any rate, don't worry about us because we take all the necessary precautions.

This is my fourth letter. Have you received my third letter? In that letter I gave you my opinion concerning your idea of sharing a flat with three other guys and I said I was against it because you are bound to get deflected from your work schedule at Imperial College.

How come other students - your friend, Nick for example - can study alone without help from other students and my son can't do that? Must he have somebody to look over his shoulder all the time?

I think you should be alone in a room so that you can go on with the kind of studying you put in when you were in Beirut. But if you feel terribly lacking and you need continuous coaching, if you need Nick's help every day of next year, then go ahead and share a flat. But think in terms of your academic year and not of how lonesome you will be: with the kind of work you will have to put in, you won't feel loneliness.

Besides, you will still have your Sundays to relax.

Also, don't be too downhearted at being in London during the summer. After all, it isn't exactly Jeddah or some other unspeakable hole. You are in London to study in the first and only place. And it's still better than Beirut at home in this situation when we cannot, dare not go out.

I hope I have made myself clear, and all there remains for me to say is: good luck.

