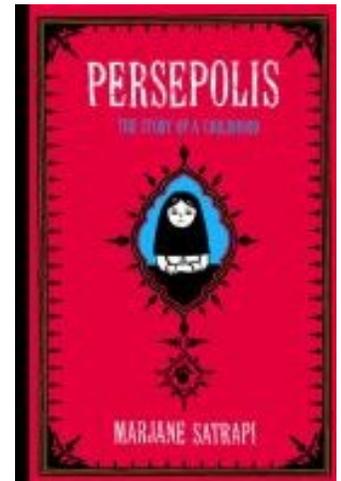




Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood Marjane Satrapi

Discussion Questions

1. The *New York Times* hails *Persepolis* as “the latest and one of the most delectable examples of a booming postmodern genre: autobiography by comic book.” Why do you think this genre is so popular? Why did Satrapi chose this format in which to tell her story? What does the visual aspect add that a conventional memoir lacks? Have you read other graphic memoirs, such as *Maus* by Art Spiegelman or Joe Sacco’s *Palestine*? How is *Persepolis* different and/or similar to those? How does *Persepolis* compare to other comic books? Would you call this a comic book, or does it transcend this and other categories? Where would you place this book in a bookstore? With memoirs, comic books, current events?
2. Written as a memoir, is *Persepolis* more powerful than if Satrapi had fictionalized the story? Why or why not? Compare this book to other memoirs you have read. What are the benefits and drawbacks of memoirs?
3. How is *Persepolis* organized and structured? What has Satrapi chosen to emphasize in her childhood? How is the passage of time presented? Describe Satrapi’s drawings. How do the drawings add to the narrative of the story?
4. Describe the writer’s voice. Is it appealing? Which aspects of Marji’s character do you identify with or like the most, the least? Did your reaction to the little girl affect your reading experience?
5. How did the revolution exert power and influence over so many people, including many educated and middle class people like Satrapi’s parents? Why did so many people leave after the revolution? Why do you think Marji’s parents send her off to Austria while they stay in Tehran? Why don’t they leave/escape as well?
6. In what ways is *Persepolis* both telling a story and commenting on the importance of stories in our lives? What does the book suggest about how stories shape and give meaning to our experience? Discuss some of the stories in *Persepolis*—Uncle Anoosh’s story, her grandfather’s story, Niloufar’s story.
7. What is Satrapi suggesting about the relationship between past and present, and between national and personal history? What role does her family history, and the stories of her relatives, play in shaping Marji?





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About the Author

Satrapi grew up in Tehran in a family which was involved with the communist and socialist movements in Iran, prior to the Iranian Revolution. She attended the Lycée Français there and witnessed, as a child, the growing suppression of civil liberties and the everyday-life consequences of Iranian politics, including the fall of the Shah, the early regime of Ruhollah Khomeini, and the first years of the Iran-Iraq war.

Satrapi is a great-granddaughter of Nasser al-Din Shah, Shah of Persia from 1848 until 1896. However, Satrapi points out that "the kings of the Qajar Turkish dynasty...had hundreds of wives. They made thousands of kids. If you multiply these kids by generation you have, I don't know, ten to fifteen thousand princes and princesses. There's nothing extremely special about that."

In 1983, at the age of 14, Satrapi was sent to Vienna, Austria, by her parents in order to flee the Iranian regime. According to her autobiographical graphic novel, *Persepolis*, she lived there during her high school years, returning to Iran for college. At college, she met a man named Reza, whom she married at age 21 and divorced roughly three years later.

She then studied Visual Communication, eventually obtaining a Master's Degree in Visual Communication from the School of Fine Arts in Tehran Islamic Azad University. Satrapi then moved to Strasbourg, France. She currently lives in Paris, where she works as an illustrator and an author of children's books.