

The Complete Persepolis Reading Guide

Introduction. Do NOT skip this.

- Persia –
- Reza Shah –
- Mohammad Reza Pahlavi (“Shah”) –
- 1951 –
- 1979 –

List of Important Terms. *These may help you as you read.*

- Islamic Revolution – the overthrowing of the Shah of Iran and his replacement with a fundamentalist regime, which occurred in 1979
- Imperialism – refers to the oppressive rule by an outside or foreign nation
- Dialectic Materialism – a philosophy based on the views of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels
- Black Friday – refers to a violent end to a protest in Tehran in 1978, in which protestors were shot and killed by government forces
- Savak – secret police of the Shah’s regime
- Abadan – town in the south of Iraq where an oil refinery is located that is bombed by the Iraqis
- The Guardians of the Revolution – enforced codes of conduct and morality during the fundamentalist regime including making sure that women were properly attired and cracking down on illegal parties
- The Committee – a ruling council that meted out punishments for those found to be in violation of laws and codes of conduct
- Tyrol – a state in Austria, where Marjane’s roommate is from, and which Marjane visits while in Austria
- Bakunin – a Russian writer and anarchist and a founder of collective anarchism

Character List. Pay attention to and be able to identify these characters.

- Marjane (Marji) –
- Ebi –
- Taji –
- Ali Ashraf Darvishian –
- Mehri –
- Jimmy Carter –
- Anwar Al-Sadat –
- Ramin –
- Siamak Jari –
- Mohsen Shakiba –
- Uncle Anoosh –
- Mali –
- Uncle Taher –

- The Baba-Levys –
- Lucia –
- Julie –
- Armelle –
- Enrique –
- Ingrid –
- Markus –
- Frau Doctor Heller –
- Kia –
- Reza –

Summary and Structure. Persepolis was originally published in two parts. Take the time to write a quick note/summary for each of the chapters.

1. *The Story of a Childhood*

- “The Veil” -
- “The Bicycle” -
- “The Water Cell” -
- “Persepolis” -
- “The Letter” -
- “The Party” -
- “The Heroes” -
- “Moscow” -
- “The Sheep” -
- “The Trip” -
- “The F-14’s” -
- “The Jewels” -
- “The Key” -
- “The Wine” -
- “The Cigarette” -
- “The Passport” -
- “Kim Wilde” -
- “The Shabbat” -
- “The Dowry” -

2. *The Story of a Return*

- “The Soup” -
- “Tyrol” -
- “Pasta” -
- “The Pill” -
- “The Vegetable” -
- “The Horse” -
- “Hide and Seek” -
- “The Croissant” -
- “The Veil” -

“The Return” -
“The Joke” -
“Skiing” -
“The Exam” -
“The Makeup” -
“The Convocation” -
“The Socks” -
“The Wedding” -
“The Satellite” -
“The End” -

Questions.

1. Examine the genre.
 - Why do you think the author chose to tell her story in the form of a graphic memoir?
 - How do the illustrations complement the text of the book?
 - How do the images capture ideas and emotions that go beyond the text?
 - How or in what ways does Satrapi employ symbolism and motifs through her illustrations?
 - How or in what ways does the graphic novel format affect the way that Satrapi characterizes the figures in the text?
2. A *bildungsroman* is a coming of age story, or a story about growing up.
 - Describe how Satrapi’s political views change throughout her life. Who influences her different views?
 - What are the key moments or turning points in Marjane’s journey from childhood to maturity?
 - What is Marjane’s chief obstacle to growing up and moving from immaturity to a developed sense of herself and her life’s meaning?
 - In what way is Marjane’s particular story, struggles, and journey connected/similar to the universal experience of growing up to which most teens can relate?
 - In what way is Marjane’s particular story, struggles, and journey dissimilar to the universal experience of growing up, making it difficult for most teens to relate?
3. Explain the book’s title.
4. Notice what you notice.
 - Pay attention to recurring symbols, themes, phrases, diction, or imagery.

- Notice your own reaction to the text. What aspects of it surprise you, make you feel uncomfortable, angry, sad, or frustrated? Consider whether this was Satrapi's intent.
5. What questions are you left with regarding the Islamic Revolution, the modern history of Iran, or other aspects of the novel. Keep a list.