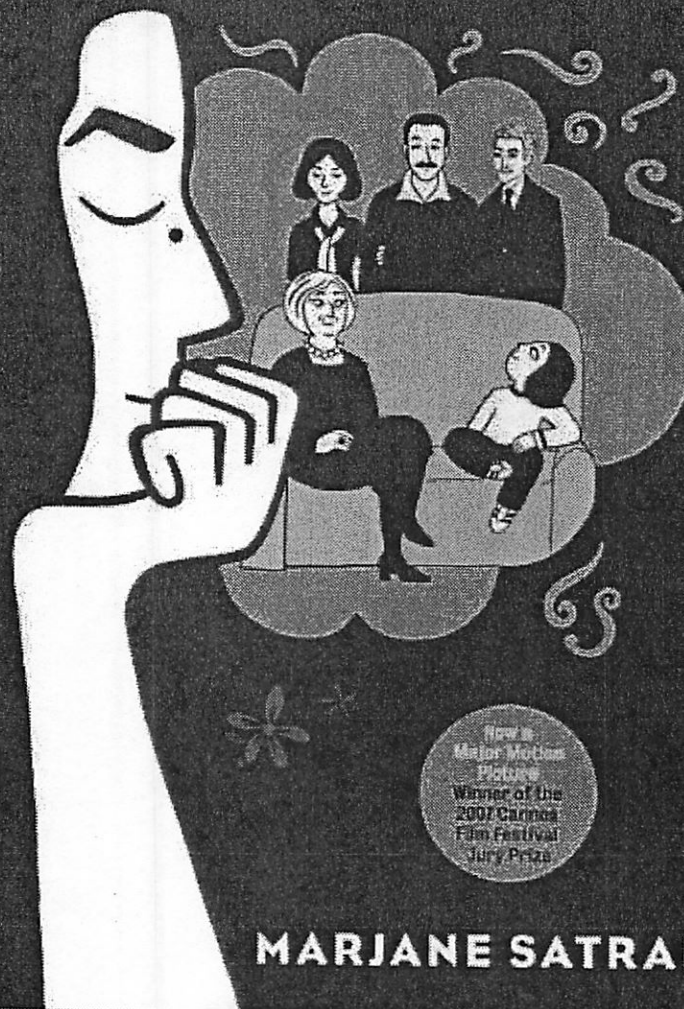


THE COMPLETE
PERSEPOLIS



Study Guide

Marjane Satrapi

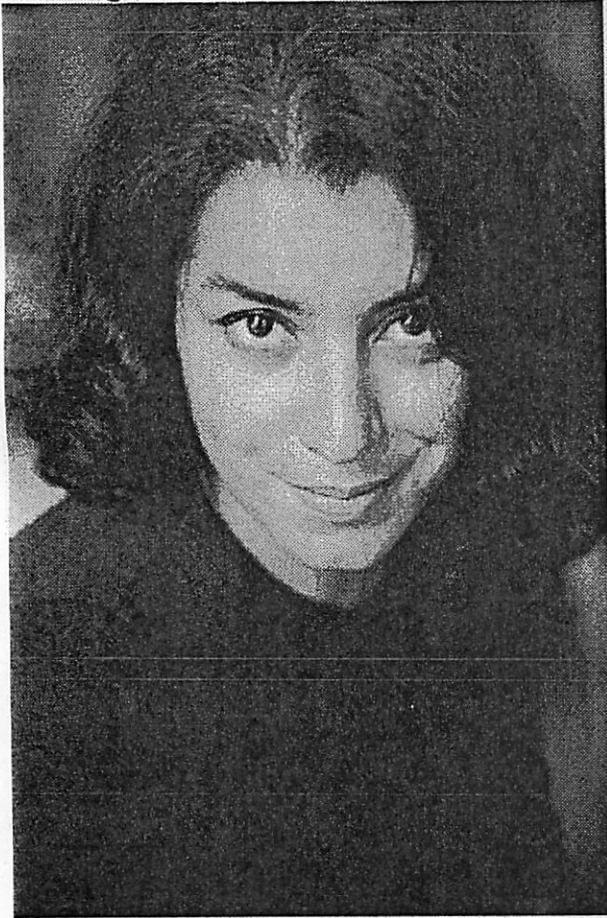


Photo: © Maria Ortis

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

MARJANE SATRAPI was born in Rasht, Iran. She now lives in Paris, where she is a regular contributor to magazines and newspapers throughout the world, including *The New Yorker* and *The New York Times*. She is the author of *Persepolis*, *Persepolis 2*, *Embroideries*, *Chicken with Plums*, and several children's books. She cowrote and codirected the animated feature film version of *Persepolis*, which was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Animated Feature. Her most recent film was *The Voices* with Ryan Reynolds (2014).

Essential Questions and Enduring Understandings for *The Complete Persepolis*

Enduring Understandings

- Individuals are a product of their society, but not necessarily unified with it.
- We develop our beliefs from a wide range of influences.
- Children repeat what they are told; adults use critical thinking to draw their own conclusions.

Pay attention to the following key questions as you begin reading, and keep them in mind as you work through the book:

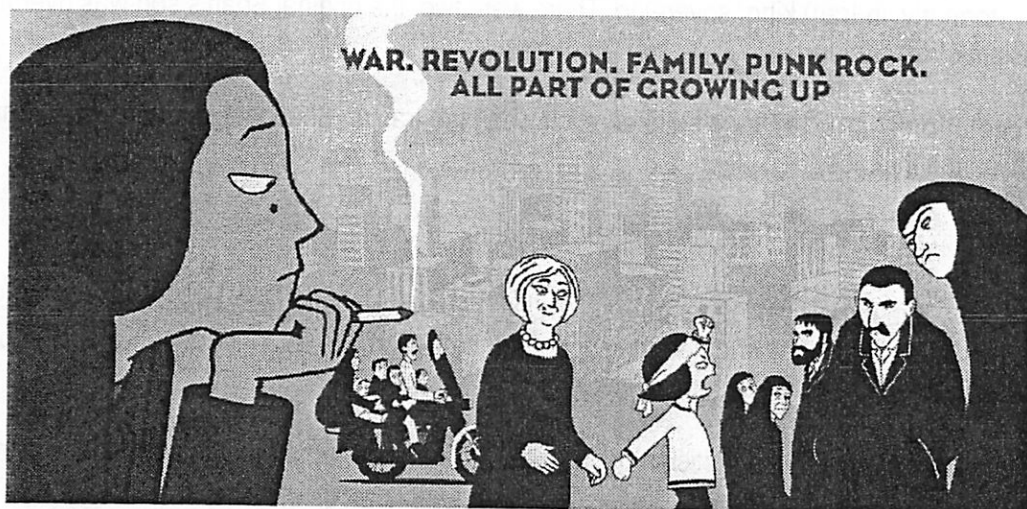
Essential Questions

- ❖ How do we form our beliefs in life? Are they set in stone, or constantly changing?
- ❖ What does it take to go from being a child to an adult?
- ❖ How does a person survive in and make sense of a conflicted world? In what ways must you change, and in what ways can you stay the same?

These questions can be applied directly to the book:

- How does Marjane form her beliefs as she grows up?
- When does Marjane go from being a child, to a teenager, to an adult? Why?
- How do Iranians survive the repressive regime in Iran? How does Marjane survive when is sent to live in Austria?

Many of the reader response questions relate to these essential questions.



FIRST DAY HOMEWORK: Characters, Events, and Allusions in the Text

Directions: In order to fully understand the events and references in *Persepolis*, you need to know about these important people, places, and ideas. You will research to find valid information about each of the terms listed below (1-5). For each, write down just a few sentences and the name of your source. Also, read through the rest of the terms so that you are prepared for reading. **You will show me this homework; I will not be collecting it.**

1. Persepolis –

2. capitalism –

3. socialism (or Marxism) –

4. dialectical materialism –

5. totalitarianism –

the Shah - (formerly, in Iran) king; sovereign. There were two, the original Shah's son was overthrown in the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Islamic Revolution – Iran, 1979 – a state of revolt when the Iranian Shah was overthrown and an Islamic theocracy was put in place.

Zarathustra - 6th century b.c., Persian religious teacher.

Fidel Castro - A Cuban political leader of the twentieth century. He led the revolution that in 1959 overthrew the dictator of Cuba, who had the support of the United States. Castro then presided over his country's transformation into a communist state.

Che Guevara - Theoretician and tactician of guerrilla warfare and prominent figure in Fidel Castro's revolution in Cuba (1956–59).

Trotsky, Leon, 1879-1940, Russian Communist revolutionary, one of the principal leaders in the establishment of the USSR

Hossein Fatemi, PhD - was a famous politician of Iran, born in 1919 in Nain and was executed on 10 November 1954. He proposed the thesis of nationalization of Iranian oil and gas assets to Premiere Mossadegh.

Other Terms Used in the Text, (that can help with analysis)

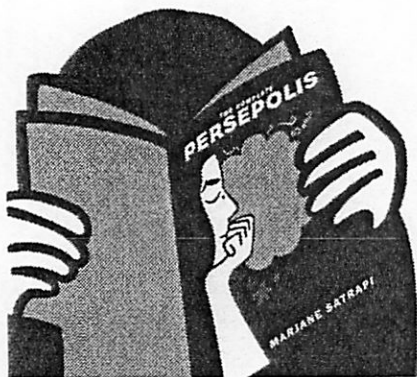
historical context - reflects the time in which something takes place or was created and how that influences how you interpret it.

secular - of or pertaining to worldly things or to things that are not regarded as religious, spiritual, or sacred

theocracy - a form of government in which God or a deity is recognized as the supreme civil ruler, the God's or deity's laws being interpreted by the ecclesiastical authorities

The West – Countries in the western hemisphere including the United States and Western Europe

Map of Iran and Region



Graphic Novel/Comics Terms and Concepts

Layout

Panel: A distinct segment of the comic, containing a combination of image and text in endless variety. Panels offer a different experience than simply reading text:

- The spatial arrangement allows an immediate juxtaposition of the present and the past.
- Unlike other visual media, transitions are instantaneous and direct but the exact timing of the reader's experience is determined by focus and reading speed.

Frame: The lines and borders that contain the panels.

Gutter: The space between framed panels.

Bleed: An image that extends to and/or beyond the edge of the page.

Foreground: The panel closest to the viewer.

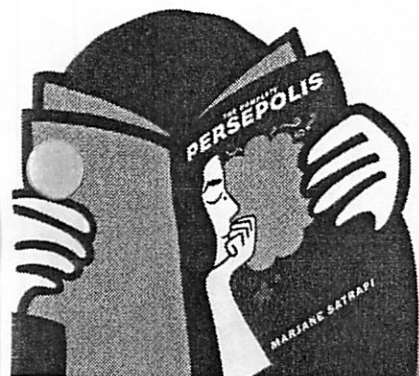
Midground: Allows centering of image by using natural resting place for vision. The artist deliberately decides to place the image where a viewer would be most likely to look first. Placing an image off-center or near the top or bottom can be used to create visual tension but using the midground permits the artist to create a more readily accepted image.

Background: Provides additional, subtextual information for the reader.

Graphic weight: A term that describes the way some images draw the eye more than others, creating a definite focus using color and shading in various ways including:

- The use of light and dark shades; dark-toned images or high-contrast images draw the eye more than light or low-contrast images do
- A pattern or repeated series of marks
- Colors that are more brilliant or deeper than others on the page

Continued



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Figures

Faces: Faces can be portrayed in different ways. Some depict an actual person, like a portrait; others are iconic, which means they are representative of an idea or a group of people. Other points to observe about faces include:

- They can be dramatic when placed against a detailed backdrop; a bright white face stands out
- They can be drawn without much expression or detail; this is called an “open blank” and it invites the audience to imagine what the character is feeling without telling them.

Hands/Feet: The positioning of hands and feet can be used to express what is happening in the story. For example, hands that are raised with palms out suggest surprise. The wringing of hands suggests obsequiousness or discomfort. Hands over the mouth depict fear, shame, or shyness. Turned in feet may denote embarrassment, while feet with motion strokes can create the sense of panic, urgency, or speed.

Text

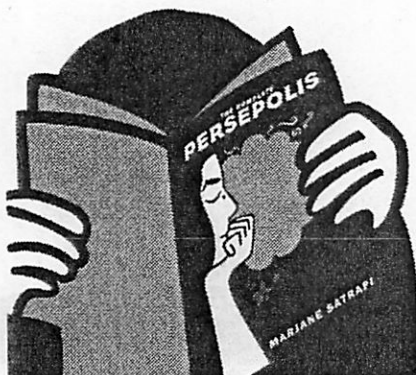
Captions: These are boxes containing a variety of text elements, including scene-setting, description, etc.

Speech balloons: These enclose dialogue and come from a specific speaker’s mouth; they vary in size, shape, and layout and can alternate to depict a conversation. Types of speech balloons include those holding:

- External dialogue, which is speech between characters
- Internal dialogue, which is a thought enclosed by a balloon that has a series of dots or bubbles going up to it

Special-effects lettering: This is a method of drawing attention to text; it often highlights onomatopoeia and reinforces the impact of words such as *bang* or *wow*.

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Reader Response Questions – Book One

1 - The Veil

Why must Marjane start wearing the veil? How do she and her classmates react?

Describe Marjane's relationship with her parents and grandmother. How do they influence her and her relationship with the changing Iranian society?

Why does Marjane want to be "the last prophet?" What would be the purpose of being "justice, love, and the wrath of God all in one?"

2 - The Bicycle

On page 10, young Marjane proclaims that "the revolution is like a bicycle. When the wheels don't turn, it falls." What does her drawing in the next frame suggest about this idea? How have her opinions of the Iranian revolution changed from when she was a child?

Why do you think God stops visiting Marjane at the end of the chapter?

3 - The Water Cell

What's the difference between what Marjane learns in school about the Shah's power and what her father tells her?

Why was Marjane's grandfather imprisoned? What effect did this have on his family?

4 - Persepolis

What is so funny about the "martyr" scene outside the hospital? Why doesn't Marjane get it?

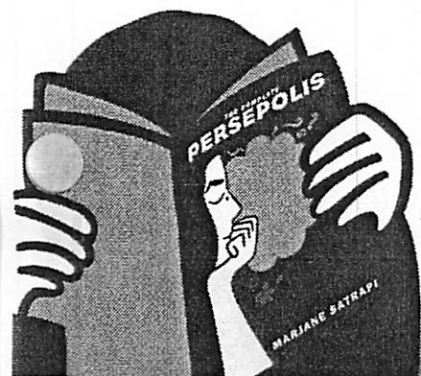
5 - The Letter

Why does Mehri's admiring neighbor reject her? Do you think Marjane's father did the right thing by ending the crush?

6 - The Party

How does people's behavior change in this chapter after the Shah steps down?

Why does Marjane's mother stop her from terrorizing Ramin? Do you think she succeeds in getting her message across to Marjane?



7- The Heroes

Why were the men who come to Marjane's house imprisoned and tortured?

What effect do their stories have on Marjane?

8 - Moscow

Why does Marjane idolize her uncle Anoosh so much? Do you think she is right to do so?

9 - The Sheep

In this chapter, a family escapes Iran hidden among a flock of sheep -- but what does it mean when we say people act like a herd of sheep? When do the people in this chapter do that?

Why does Anoosh request to see Marjane when he's in prison? How does Marjane react when she gets the news of his death?

10 - The Trip

What changes do the new fundamentalist government make in Iran? How does Marjane's family react?

How does Marjane react to the announcement that Iraq has invaded Iran? How is she dressed in the last frame of the chapter (79)?

11 - The F-14s

Why do you think Marjane thinks her father is unpatriotic for saying he won't fight in the war (81)? Do you think she is right?

In the last frame of the chapter, Pardisse says she wishes her father "were alive and in jail rather than dead and a hero." Do you think you would feel the same way in her place?

12 - The Jewels

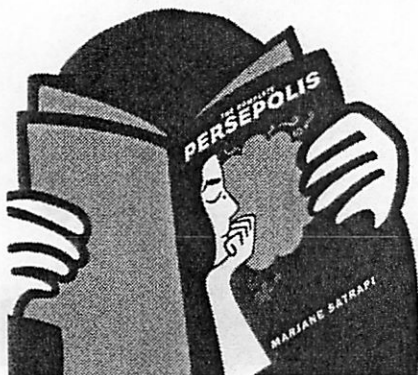
What effect does the war have on daily life in Tehran? How do people, including Marjane's parents, act differently?

13 - The Key

What is the purpose of a "nuptial chamber," and why are there so many of them in Tehran?

In this chapter, adults seek to influence the younger population of Iran in different ways. How do Marjane and her schoolmates defy their teachers? And what is the significance of the "golden" key given to boys?

On the last page of the chapter (102), There are only two frames. Compare and contrast their images and their messages. (They look similar but show opposite experiences--what does this say about life and war?)



14 - The Wine

Marjane's family enjoys having parties and drinking--what precautions do they take, and why do they continue despite the danger of being found out? Why do people seek to keep their regular routines even in dangerous times?

15 - The Cigarette

What understanding does Marjane come to about the war? Why could it have been avoided?

In the last frame, she announces that "with this first cigarette, I kissed childhood goodbye." Do you believe her? What does it take to go from being a child to an adult?

16 - The Passport

Why is the Iranian government so strict about letting people out of the country, even if they are gravely ill like uncle Taher?

Why is it ironic that his passport finally arrives on the day of his funeral?

17 - Kim Wilde

Why does American pop culture have such an influence on Marjane and kids her age? Why are she and her family willing to take such risks to have tapes, posters, and jean jackets?

18 - The Shabbat

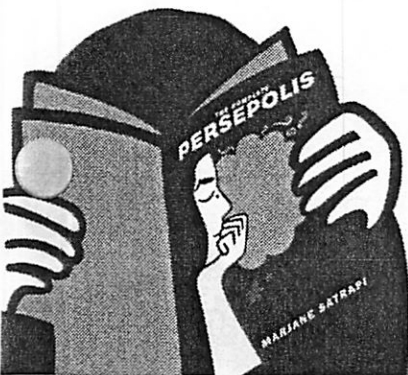
Why does Marjane's family decide to stay in Tehran, despite the constant threat of bombing?

How does the bombing on her street affect Marjane? Have you ever come home to a major crisis or disaster like she did? How did it change you?

19 - The Dowry

Marjane is outspoken at all times--how does this hurt her, and what decision does it lead her parents to make?

What advice does Marjane's grandmother give her the night before she leaves? How do you think Marjane might use this advice once she is in Austria?



Reader Response Questions – Book Two

1 - The Soup

Who makes Marjane feel at home in Austria? How do they do it?

What does a person need to feel at home in a foreign place?

Tyrol

Why do you think Marjane ends up with her group of "outsider" friends? What are your impressions of them?

Compare and contrast Marjane's friends at school with Lucia and her family in Tyrol. In what ways do they make Marjane feel better about her new life?

Pasta

What is Anarchism, and why do you think Marjane's friends are so interested in it?

How does Marjane respond to Momo's suggestion that she "cultivate" herself?

Why does Marjane get kicked out of the dormitory? Do you think she was justified in defending her background, or was she just being rude?

The Pill

Julie introduces Marjane to many new ideas about sex and being a woman in the western world. Which ideas does Marjane accept, and which make her feel uncomfortable?

The Vegetable

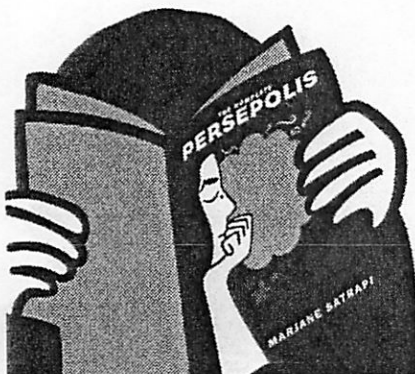
Marjane goes through many physical changes in this chapter—both voluntary and involuntary. How do they think they affect her? How have your physical changes affected you over your lifetime?

Marjane says that her life in Austria felt like "playing a game by somebody else's rules." What does she mean by this? Does she have to play by "somebody else's rules" to survive in her new home, or not?

The Horse

Marjane's mom lies to her about her missing gold pendant. What do you think really happened to the jewelry?

How do you think Marjane and her mother's relationship have changed since Marjane left Iran? Do you think they are closer or more distant now that they live in different countries?



Hide and Seek

There is an actual hide and seek game in this chapter, but what other meanings might this title have for Marjane? What is she seeking and/or hiding from?

Marjane proclaims Markus "the first great love of [my] life" (65) but their relationship has its own challenges and troubles. Do you think Markus is a good boyfriend to Marjane? What happens in the chapter that supports your opinion?

How do some Austrians make Marjane feel like an outsider? Why do you think they act this way towards her?

The Croissant

Some of Marjane's friends are very concerned about the new conservative, "Nazi-like" politicians in Austria. Why doesn't Marjane seem to share their anger?

What are some of the ways Marjane and Markus grow apart during this chapter?

The Veil

Why does Marjane end up on the streets? Do you think it's a situation she could have avoided?

Why does Marjane request that her parents never ask about the three months she went missing? Do you think this was the right thing to do?

Look at the last frame in the chapter. What do you think Marjane's attitude is about going back to Iran? Make a prediction about how life will go for her after she returns.

The Return

How have Marjane's parents changed since she left Iran? What is their attitude towards the Iran-Iraq war, and why?

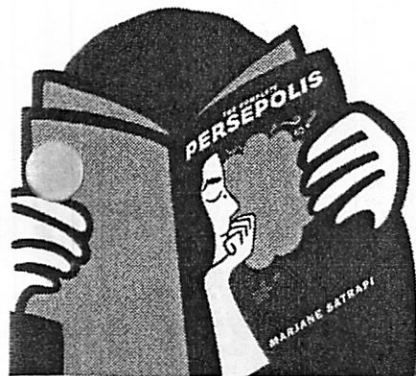
Marjane's father complains that the West supplied both sides of the war with weapons and supplies. Why do you think that they did this?

At the end of the chapter, Marjane decides never to tell her parents about her "misadventures" in Europe. Do you think she made the right choice? What about the fact that she eventually wrote this book?

The Joke

What do you think of Kia's condition? Does he seem "almost dead" or not?

What is the lesson that Marjane learns from visiting Kia? Do you agree with her analysis of the situation? Can you imagine living like Kia does?



Skiing

What are Marjane's motivations for attempting to commit suicide?

How serious do you think Marjane was about trying to kill herself?

Do you think her attempted suicide was necessary for her to take control of her life, or could she have achieved it another way?

The Exam

Why are Marjane and Reza so interested in each other when they first meet? Do you think these interests will lead to a successful relationship?

What do you think of the "ideological exam" that Marjane has to take? If you were in her place, would you have done the same thing?

The Makeup

What does Marjane do to avoid being picked up by the police? How do Reza and her Grandmother react to this? Why do you think they have opposite reactions?

The Convocation

What are some of the ways Marjane and her female friends show off their individuality, despite their restrictive clothing?

The Socks

In this chapter, Marjane states that "fear has always been the driving force behind all dictators' repression." In what ways are young people in Iran repressed, and how do they rebel against this repression?

The Wedding

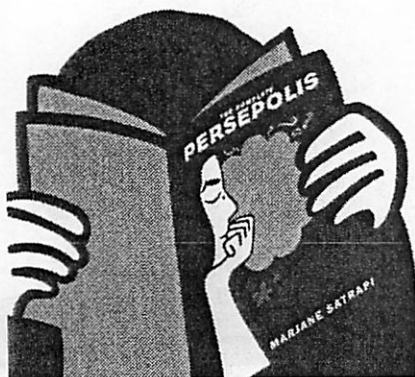
At the end of the dinner with Marjane's father, Marjane tells us that she and Reza end up getting divorced. Why do you think she chose to tell us this fact before the wedding even takes place?

Why does the marriage break down as soon as Marjane and Reza move in together?

The Satellite

What are the different ways that Marjane and her family get news and information? What sources do they trust, and what are they critical of?

Why do Marjane and her father fight? What conclusion does Marjane come to afterwards?



The End

How does Marjane's family react to her eventual separation and divorce from Reza? What does this show about their politics and character?

Why does Marjane finally decide to leave Iran? Do you think she will follow her mothers instructions and never return?

Literary Log Prompts

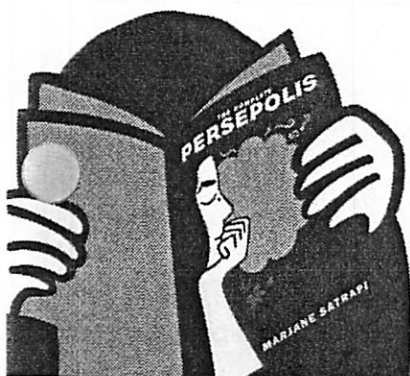
Students can use one or more of these prompts as a way to keep a log their reading. This can be used as preparation for class, or as a way for students to keep track of their independent reading. Logs could be anything from a few notes to a few paragraphs. Worksheets for these logs are provided in the packet.

Marjane's Beliefs

For each reading assignment, log any new "big idea" she encounters, including where/who it comes from, and what affect it has on her.

Character Log

For each reading assignment log one (or more) of the new characters that is introduced to the story. Describe them briefly. What does Marjane learn from her interaction with them?



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Vocabulary – Book One

1. obligatory (3)

"Then came 1980: The year it became **obligatory** to wear the veil at school."

2. decadence (4)

"All bilingual schools must be closed down. They are symbols of capitalism. Of **decadence**."

3. avant-garde (6)

"Deep down I was very religious, but as a family we were very modern and **avant-garde**."

4. fanatics (15)

"The Shah said that a group of religious **fanatics** perpetrated the massacre."

5. degenerate (18)

"My parents demonstrated every day. Things started to **degenerate**. The army shot at them."

6. frivolities (28)

"All of the country's money went into ridiculous celebrations of the 2500 years of dynasty and other **frivolities**... all of this to impress heads of state, the population couldn't have cared less."

7. cadaver (31)

"People came out carrying the body of a young man... then there was another **cadaver**, an old man carried out on a stretcher."

8. sentiment (43)

"Politics and **sentiment** don't mix."

9. subversive (47)

"Crime: wrote **subversive** articles in the Keyhan."

10. cyanide (51)

"He always had **cyanide** on him in case he was arrested, but he was taken by surprise and unfortunately he never had a chance to use it..."

11. dialectic (53)

"Now that the revolution was finally over once and for all, I abandoned the **dialectic** materialism of my comic strips."

12. shunned (58)

"You know what it is like to be an unmarried mother in this country. You will be **shunned**."

13. proletariat (62)

"The **proletariat** shall rule! It's inevitable!"

14. imperialists (73)

"Better to have no students at all than to educate future **imperialists**."

15. regime (75)

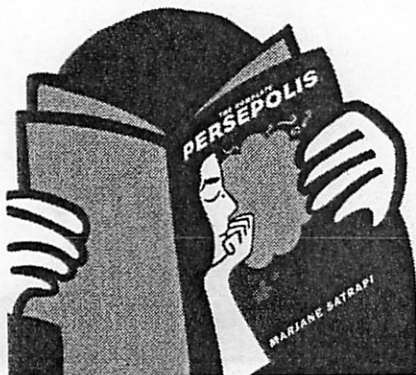
"You showed your opposition to the **regime** by letting a few strands of hair show."

16. console (86)

"At recess, I tried to **console** her..."

17. nuptial (94)

"According to Shiite tradition, when an unmarried man dies, a **nuptial** chamber is built for him."



18. carnage (101)

"It's nuts! They hypnotize them and just toss them into battle. Absolute **carnage**."

19. vintner (106)

"My uncle was the **vintner**. He had a genuine wine-making lab in his basement."

20. belligerent (115)

"The walls were suddenly covered with **belligerent** slogans."

21. systematically (117)

"Those who opposed the regime were **systematically** arrested... and executed together."

22. veritable (122)

"The Germans sell chemical weapons to Iran and Iraq. The wounded are then sent to Germany to be treated. **Veritable** guinea pigs."

23. asylum (123)

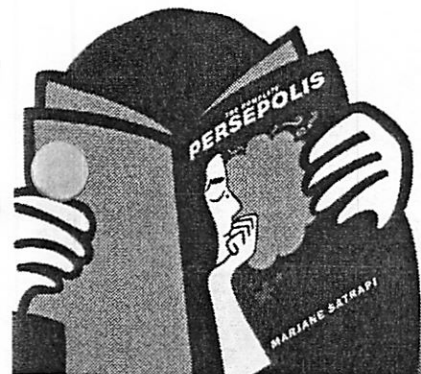
"I made him a fake passport and he sought political **asylum** in Sweden."

24. euphoria (138)

"We were in the midst of shopping **euphoria**, when suddenly..."

25. discreet (142)

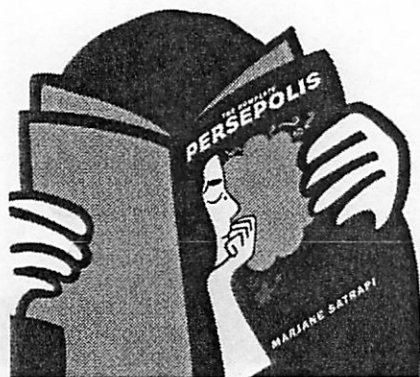
"When we walked past the Baba-Levy's house, which was completely destroyed, I could feel that she was **discreetly** pulling me away."



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Vocabulary – Book Two

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1. trivial (156)
"While people were dying in our country, she was talking to me about trivial things."</p> <p>2. habitual (157)
"I heard that in the course of one of their habitual quarrels."</p> <p>3. caricatures (165)
"Then I began to draw caricatures of the teachers."</p> <p>4. rudimentary (172)
"My German was rudimentary, theirs unusual."</p> <p>5. refectory (176)
"I went downstairs with my pot to watch TV in the refectory."</p> <p>6. volition (179)
"Explaining to them that, humiliated to have been caught red-handed stealing a fruit yogurt, I had decided to leave the boarding house of my own volition."</p> <p>7. insolent (180)
"And the sisters who found me insolent... they should have seen Julie."</p> <p>8. lackey (191)
"My relationship with the school's lackeys didn't please my friends much."</p> | <p>9. assimilate (193)
"The harder I tried to assimilate, the more I had the feeling that I was distancing myself from my culture, betraying my parents and my origins, that I was playing a game by somebody else's rules..."</p> <p>10. Baccalaureate (223)
"It was the end of my last year. I was going to take the French baccalaureate."</p> <p>11. Banal (241)
"..and it's a banal story of love that almost carried me away."</p> <p>12. Mediocre (244)
"The shame of having become a mediocre nihilist."</p> <p>13. Nihilist (244)
"The shame of having become a mediocre nihilist."</p> <p>14. Disillusioned (252)
"I would never have thought that I would one day hear my mother sound so disillusioned."</p> <p>15. Anecdote (257)
"Next to my father's distressing report, my Viennese misadventures seemed like little anecdotes of no importance."</p> <p>16. Tyrannical (289)
"Most families are traditionalists. They are as tyrannical as the state."</p> |
|---|---|



17. intransigence (294)

"I had forgotten her extreme **intransigence**."

18. perspicacity (295)

"Faced with the **perspicacity** of my girlfriends, I had no choice but to admit the truth."

19. discernment (295)

"Such **discernment!**"

20. Discreet (302)

"Our struggle was more **discreet**."

21. Semblance (304)

"To find a **semblance** of equilibrium, we partied almost every night..."

22. Propaganda (322)

"Since when have you trusted our media? Their objective consists of making anti-western **propaganda**."

23. Cynicism (322)

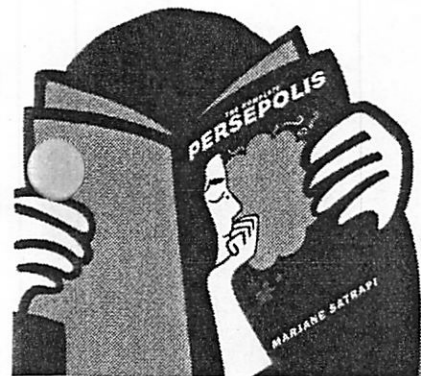
"I hate just as much the **cynicism** of the allies who call themselves "liberators" while they're there for oil."

24. Itinerant (332)

"The **itinerant** cigarette seller, even beggars in the street, all made it clear they'd like to sleep with her."

25. Insinuate (335)

"At that, they started to yell, saying that I was **insinuating** that bearded men were sissies."



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