Persepolis by Marjane Satrapi

Please fill out these discussion prompts as you read along. Each section is broken up into 3 parts, and each part has several questions. Choose 1 question (3 total per section) to focus on.

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| **SECTION I –** p.3-46 |
| **A common theme of the book is “revolution.”**   * The book starts with one that happened in 1980. Which group gained control? What were some of the changes that happened? * Chapter 2 (p10) discusses many revolutionaries; Marx, Fidel, Descartes, etc. Why does the book reference these other people even though they’re not Iranian? What impact did they have on a young Marjane? * How did the parents feel about the revolution; did they support or protest it? What dangers did they face? |
| Choose ONE of the questions above and answer it below, citing quotes and pages from the text. |

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| **It’s important in the book to understand history.**   * Iran has had a long and difficult history; they have been oppressed many times. Who are some of the groups who oppressed them (p11). Which countries are depicted with “modern imperialism” and in what ways have they contributed to the oppression? * Marjane says the king (or shah) was “chosen by god.” (p19) but how (and who) really chose the new king/shah? * What were the king’s (shah) promises (p27) and his “ridiculous celebrations” (p28)? What was the reality of how he treated his citizens? |
| Choose ONE of the questions above and answer it below, citing quotes and pages from the text. |

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| **A common theme of the book is “freedom.”**   * Her parents were protesters, which was illegal. What did her father do that was “strictly forbidden” (p29)? What would he photograph? Why would it be illegal to simply take pictures? * Who is Mehri (p35) and what is her job? The parents protest and believe in freedom yet say she must “stay within her own social class.” Why does this make Marjane so upset? * After the shah left people’s attitudes change: How did the neighbor’s attitude change (p44)? How did Marjane’s attitude change towards their classmate Ramin? How do these attitudes undermine their newly gained freedom? |
| Choose ONE of the questions above and answer it below, citing quotes and pages from the text. |

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| **SECTION II –** p.47 - 93 |
| “**Heroes**”   * Who are the “Heroes” Marji is talking about on p47? How could people in jail be considered heroes? What did they do that made them heroes? * Who is Uncle Anoosh and why does Marji consider him a hero? Does Marji truly understand sacrifice or is she proud for a more selfish reason? Explain. * Marji has many heroes (p12) How do her old heroes relate to her new ones? What is the same and why are they different? |
| Choose ONE of the questions above and answer it below, citing quotes and pages from the text. |

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| “**99.99**” voted for the Islamic Republic   * Even though the people just won a revolution many began to leave. Why do you think people were leaving the country? Why do you think Marji’s family chose to stay? * What happened to the former “heroes” like Moshen & Siamak? If they were revolutionary heroes, **why** would someone do this, and equally important **who** would want to do it? * The newspaper claims Anoosh was a Russian spy (p70). Do you believe this to be true? Why would the newspaper and the Islamic Republic make this claim if it was untrue? |
| Choose ONE of the questions above and answer it below, citing quotes and pages from the text. |

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| “**Fundamentalism**”   * What is the different between a “fundamentalist” and a “modern” person (p75)? Can a fundamentalist also be modern? Why or why not? * “If anyone ever asks you say you pray” (p75) Why would Marji’s mom ask her to lie about this? And why specifically praying? * “My father loved his country as much as I did” (p84). Loving your country (or nation) is called “nationalism.” How is nationalism different from fundamentalism? Is Marji’s dad a Nationalist, Fundamentalist, explain. |
| Choose ONE of the questions above and answer it below, citing quotes and pages from the text. |

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| **SECTION III –** p.94 - 153 |
| * What is the definition of a martyr? (use a dictionary!) The newspaper lists fallen soldiers are martyrs. Do you agree or disagree with this? Why? And why would newspaper list them as such regardless? * What does it seem the focus of school is now that the country is at war? How the parents react (p98) to the new focus of the school system? Do you agree with the parents or the teacher? Why? * Marji and her friends don’t take what the school says seriously but some students do. What is the significance of the key? What happened to many of the school boys who took that key?(p102) Is it right for a school to encourage its student to enlist if a country is at war? |
| Choose ONE of the questions above and answer it below, citing quotes and pages from the text. |

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| * The people of Iran made many sacrifices for the war and for the new regime. What were some of the sacrifices the family made and some they did not make? Do you agree with their choices? * “In spite of everything, kids were trying to look hip, even under risk of arrest.” (p. 112) How did they do this? In way ways is Marji just a normal kid? What do you think you would have done had you been a teenager in this environment? * What sacrifices did Marji’s parents make for her to have a “normal” childhood? What inspires her mom & dad to do these things? What inspires Marji to break the rules? Who is braver and why? |
| Choose ONE of the questions above and answer it below, citing quotes and pages from the text. |

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| * Iran was ruled by a shah and had a successful revolution, only to fall under new oppressive rulers. When thinking of this, what do you think the phrase “When a big wave comes, lower your head and let is pass.” (p94) mean? Did Marji’s family follow their own advice? * Marji says “I will always be true to myself” (p151) do you think she will be? Give examples of people through out the text that weren’t true to themselves (neighbors, people at school, friends, etc) How did these people make Maji’s family feel, how do people like that make you feel? * The people of Iran may be religious but they only want freedom from oppressive rulers. How was religion used against the country’s own citizens? Do you think it’s right for a country to be religious and follow religious laws? Is our country religious> |
| Choose ONE of the questions above and answer it below, citing quotes and pages from the text. |