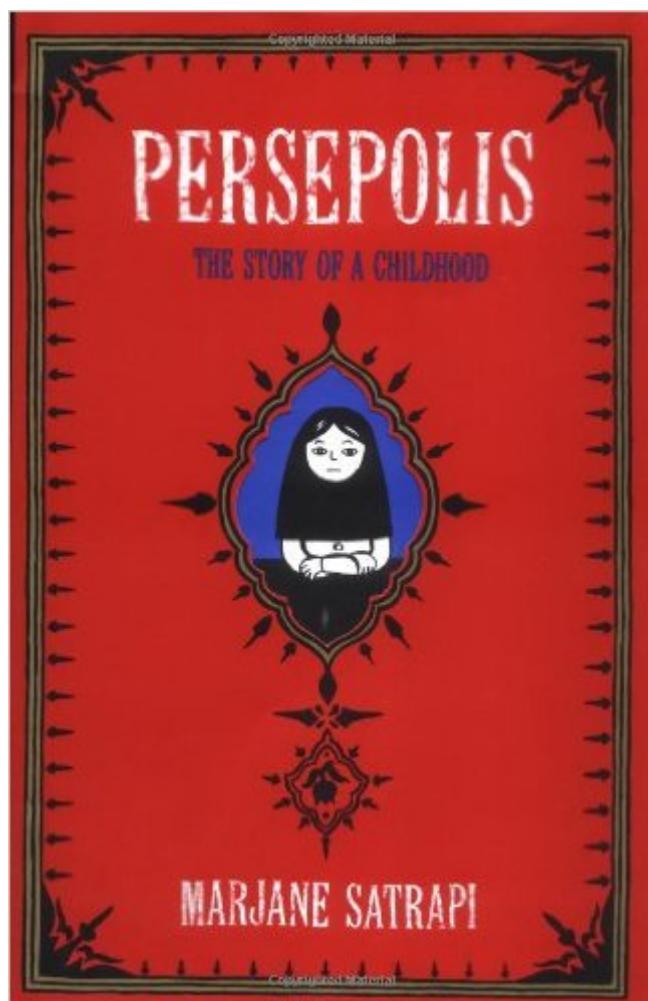


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Persepolis: The Story Of A Childhood



Synopsis

Originally published to wide critical acclaim in France, where it elicited comparisons to Art Spiegelman's *Maus*, *Persepolis* is Marjane Satrapi's wise, funny, and heartbreaking memoir of growing up in Iran during the Islamic Revolution. In powerful black-and-white comic strip images, Satrapi tells the story of her life in Tehran from ages six to fourteen, years that saw the overthrow of the Shah's regime, the triumph of the Islamic Revolution, and the devastating effects of war with Iraq. The intelligent and outspoken only child of committed Marxists and the great-granddaughter of one of Iran's last emperors, Marjane bears witness to a childhood uniquely entwined with the history of her country. *Persepolis* paints an unforgettable portrait of daily life in Iran: of the bewildering contradictions between home life and public life and of the enormous toll repressive regimes exact on the individual spirit. Marjaneâ™s child's-eye-view of dethroned emperors, state-sanctioned whippings, and heroes of the revolution allows us to learn as she does the history of this fascinating country and of her own extraordinary family. Intensely personal, profoundly political, and wholly original, *Persepolis* is at once a story of growing up and a stunning reminder of the human cost of war and political repression. It shows how we carry on, through laughter and tears, in the face of absurdity. And, finally, it introduces us to an irresistible little girl with whom we cannot help but fall in love.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I read *Persepolis* tonight. I mean the whole thing. I started it after dinner, and just finished it at the 153rd page. For those of you who've read, or should I say "experienced" this work, that won't come

as a surprise. For those of you who haven't, consider it a high-endorsement. I had other plans for my night.....I also had my doubts about this work. Despite the rave reviews, I've never even read a comic book. That, coupled with the fact that at first glance, it seemed very...well, childish? Oh the shame! Marjane Satrapi has created an apologetic convert out of me. Persepolis is the story of one girl's experience during the fall of the Shah of Iran, the ensuing Islamic Revolution (which included Stalin-like "purges"), and war with Iraq. Only it's not told in plain text, but rather is a picture in a comic book style. A history buff myself, I have an above-average awareness of the historical goings on of that period. However, told in this unorthodox style, with pictures, through the creative and emotional eyes of a child, the "facts" gained a vibrance and color for me like never before. The human side of history had so much more meaning, and seemed to imprint a deeper and easier understanding in my mind than most accounts. When I was thinking about what was so compelling about this book, I thought of Edward Tufte. He's a famous professor and scientist in the field of displaying information graphically. I went to a seminar by him once. He passionately explained the concept of neural bandwidth, and how most text and plain graphs don't take advantage of the massive processing power of our minds. The pictures in Persepolis, coupled with Marjane's rich historical account seemed to take advantage of that latent neural ability. For me, they compounded and achieved something of an emotional critical mass of understanding that few books have. So, like I said, I'm a convert. I just ordered her second work "The Story of a Return". Only this time, I'll have a nice bottle of wine, and no plans for the night. Enjoy, Christian Hunter Santa Barbara, California

PERSEPOLIS is a graphical autobiography of the author, who experienced the Iranian revolution and the Iran-Iraq war as a child in the 1970s and 1980s. It is told in the beautiful black and white graphical language of a comic strip where simple pictures communicate strong feelings, much better than words could. But PERSEPOLIS is also the story of a whole generation of young Iranians, who left their land in the quest of better conditions during the post-revolutionary era. I belong to this generation myself and I totally identified with the experiences Ms SATRAPI went through- her childhood in post revolutionary Iran, her description of Iranian society at the time, her exile in Austria- also in the volumes 2 & 3 (which already appeared in French). Though conceived as a comic book, the book has messages which are not childish in nature: the child, through the naivety of her views, points out to many of the contradictions of Iranian society that adults are unwilling to face. It is also one of the rare unbiased personal accounts of what happened in Iran at the time of the revolution and as such, is an interesting document on this period of Iranian history. (It certainly contains more information on Iran and its people than the junk broadcasted on most TV

channels). Some readers (including reviews posted here) criticize this book for not being a realistic description of Iran. Though I totally disagree with this criticism, the main point is that PERSEPOLIS is NOT a history book nor a sociological study. It is a story, the story of a childhood and the author has never claimed it to be otherwise. I definitely recommend this book, first to all Iranians who live abroad, especially those who did not grow up in Iran and did not experience the revolution, and then to all readers interested in getting a human, insider view of what Iranian society was like in the early 1980s.

At last this gem reaches us in America, after raking in awards all over Europe. Not only is it a very timely and revealing peek inside daily life in Iran, it's also a very personal, sometimes hilarious, sometimes heartbreaking slice of one remarkable girl's life. There really is nothing quite like it, it's true. I've given copies of it to all my friends, many of whom never read graphic novels or comic books, but they all agree: this is something special. It's not suitable for kids though, because of its depiction of torture and violence and other mature themes you might expect in a society under the yoke of fundamentalist Islamic rule. But for everyone else, I highly recommend PERSEPOLIS. This is an exceptional childhood memoir, that ranks with *Angela's Ashes* for its depth and authenticity. This one will be around forever.

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