PERSEPOLIS: A STUDY GUIDE

I. THE VEIL

1. The author indicates two motives for writing Persepolis. What are they?

_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

2. Based upon the images presented in the story, what does the veil symbolize?

_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

3. Describe the symbolism and conflict represented in the picture on the top left of page 6.

_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________


4. Based upon the visual representations of God presented in The Veil, how does Marjane view Him?

_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

II. THE BICYCLE

5. How does Marji’s relationship with God begin to change in “The Bicycle”? Visually, how are these changes represented?

_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

III. THE WATER CELL

6. What was Marji’s grandfather’s job under Reza? How did his beliefs change, and how did his life change?

_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

2
7. 20. Why does God return to the protagonist after a long absence?

IV. PERSEPOLIS
8. Compare and contrast the new Shah’s rule with that of his father.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The New Shah</th>
<th>His Father</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9. Describe the symbolism of the image at the top of page 28.

_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

10. What did Marji’s father do every day that makes her mother so nervous? Why is this activity strictly forbidden? How is the impactfulness of his activity demonstrated by the author visually?

_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

V. THE LETTER

11. Summarize the events of this chapter.

_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

12. Social class is an important thematic topic in this chapter. What thematic statement does this chapter make? Support your response with evidence from the text.

_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

VI. THE PARTY

13. According to Marji’s dad, why will the Middle East never have peace? Based upon social and political events in the area since the period portrayed in the graphic novel, do you believe his rationale remains sound?

_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

14. What is the significance of this chapter’s title? Visually, which page or frame best supports the mood the title portrays?

_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
VII. THE HEROES & VIII. MOSCOW

15. Who are Siamak and Mohsen? What is the significance of their return to the characters in the story, both historically and personally?

_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

16. Who led the training in torture practices for the prison guards? Did this surprise you? How do you believe events like these will influence the attitudes of Iranians toward the nations complicit in the events described?

_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

17. Who is Anoosh? Why is he so important to the protagonist? How is his status depicted visually when his character is introduced on page 54 of the text?

_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
18. What gift does Anoosh give to Marji? What might it symbolize?

IX. THE SHEEP

19. What is the literal and figurative significance of the title? How does it help to characterize the people of Iran? How is this characterization depicted visually by the author, in this and previous chapters?

20. What was the reported outcome of the elections? How does Marji’s father explain these results and he and his wife’s decision to remain in Iran despite them?
21. What happens to Anoosh? How does this impact the protagonist spiritually and emotionally? How is the significance of that impact depicted visually in this chapter?

X. THE TRIP

22. How does it come to be that all women in Iran have to wear the veil? How does the author/artist portray continued resistance to this transition?
23. What happened while the family was abroad? How are the events foreshadowed even before they learn the news, officially?

_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

XI. THE F-14s

24. How does Marji’s immediate response to the war reflect typical wartime thinking among members of a nation-state? How does her father’s immediate reaction differ from her own? What do you infer to be the reason for these different strands of thought?

_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

25. What are Pardisse’s final words to the protagonist in this chapter? How might this change Marji’s perceptions of heroism?

_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

9
XII. THE JEWELS

26. Is the final frame of p. 89 a literal or symbolic representation of events? What is being portrayed?

27. List 2 - 3 effects of Iraq’s bombing of Iran and describe the social implications of these effects.
XIII. THE KEY

28. Why is the protagonist’s generation so rebellious? How is that rebellion portrayed?
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

29. What is the significance of this chapter’s title? Does the recruitment method alluded to in the title remind you of a current sociopolitical problem related to the radicalization of youth in the West and abroad?
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

XIV. THE WINE

30. What forbidden items did the government find at the house of Timoosh’s dad? What was his punishment? When have you seen similar occurrences in our country’s history?
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
31. How does the author use humor to portray the hecticness of the double lives being lived by the characters?

32. Summarize the traffic stop and the events that followed it.
XV. THE CIGARETTE

33. According to the author, what did the survival of the regime depend upon? How do these motives explain the wartime events discussed in this and previous chapters?

_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

34. What is the literal and symbolic significance of the title of this chapter?

_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

XVI. THE PASSPORT

35. What wartime event became an even bigger controversy among the citizens of Iran than the war against Iraq? How does this controversy manifest?

_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
36. Review p. 120. What request is being made here of the Iranian people? Describe the literal and figurative significance of this request.

_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

37. What is Taher's only wish? What prevents him from realizing his dream? What happens just three weeks later? This is an example of which type of irony?

_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

14
38. How does Marji’s mother get her souvenirs into the country? How was Iran’s food shortage resolved? What was appealing about Gandhi Avenue? How are all of these things related, and what do they say about the state of Iran?

_____________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

39. What was the purpose of the Guardians of the Revolution? What happens when they encounter Marji? How does Marji respond, and how is this response portrayed visually?

_____________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

40. What did the sirens signify? What did Marji realize for the first time? What grander statement does this delayed reaction make about people?
41. How does Marji's mother attempt to protect her daughter? How does Marji discover the truth? Why is the final frame of p. 142 so impactful?

XIX. THE DOWRY

42. What is the significance of the title of this chapter? Describe the fate of Niloufar in relation to this significance.
43. Earlier in the graphic novel, the protagonist’s perception of heroism shifts. How can you infer it changed again (after what happened to Niloufar)?

_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

44. How is Marji comforted when her parents inform her that she will be attending a boarding school? Which frame first indicates that she understands that they are not being entirely honest about their plans for the family?

_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

45. Why does Marji’s grandmother decide not to accompany Marji to the airport? How are you able to infer that her decision was likely wise?

_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

17
POST-READING QUESTIONS

1. Thinking of the book as a coming-of-age story, with a focus on connections to readers’ own lives, how would you describe the child Marji to whom we’re introduced at the beginning of Persepolis? To what extent is she like children anywhere? To what extent is she different from the child that you were or the children that you grew up with?
POST-READING QUESTIONS

2. Thinking of the book as a graphic text, with a focus on word and image as devices for storytelling, why do you think Satrapi chose to tell her story in words and images? What does the combination make possible that words or images alone would not? What particular incidents in the story do you think are conveyed more effectively in pictures than they could have been in words alone?

_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________