

Describing the lighter side of iran in persepolis by marjane satrapi

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Persepolis is the Greek name (from perses polis for ' Persian City') for the ancient city of Parsa, located seventy miles northeast of Shiraz in present-day Iran. Persepolis is a graphic novel about a childhood of Marjane Satarapi. The story of Marjane's childhood is based on the Islamic Revolution that took place in 1979 in Iran. The author purpose of this book is to show that Iran is not a country of terrorists. And to remove the negative thinking about Iran from Western countries mind. In Persepolis, the author demonstrates her childhood through graphic novel; that how hard it is for a country to change its way of living and obey the law forcing individuals that force them to do so. There were many changes to people life that had a great impact on the military, women and educational institutes. Women were forced to wear veils beside of their unwillingness. Girls and boy's schools were separated. Marjane explains how difficult it was for her to change her way of living, abandoning the things and hobbies she liked and getting into troubles for expressing herself with the hobbies she followed. It was not just Satarapi but the whole society had to face the changes and were forced to like the way that was imposed on them by the law bodies on them.

Marjane Satarapi is the novel's main character. She wants to be a Prophet when she grows up, so that she can help people. Her teachers and classmates make fun of her. But her parents doesn't make fun of her and ask her whether in real she wants to be a Prophet. She is having conservations with God. She says, " I wanted to be justice, love and the wrath of God all in one". (1. 45 Persepolis). Marjane shares a very strong bond with her family. Her mother actively take parts in protest Islamic Revolution. Her photo was published in local as well as in International newspapers. She was scared

after seeing her picture in the newspaper because she was not supposed to protest revolution. She cut off her hair and dye them to look different.

Marjane's dad is a photographer, capturing political protest. He is always in a dangerous kind of situations. Marjane's thought her father is not a hero, just because he never went to jail because of protest. She realizes later that "

Her father loved his country as much as she did, he just has a different way of showing it." Marjane's grandma is an influential figure in her life. She tells Marjane about her ancestors. Her grandmother tells Marjane to keep her dignity and be true to herself. When Marjane was leaving for Vienna, she was very much upset for leaving her grandmother. Marjane's grandfather was a

prince and his kingdom was taken over by Reza Shah, after that her grandfather became the prime minister of Iran. Later, he was arrested for

conspiring as communist and was put into cells full of water. Anoosh is

Marjane's uncle. He was imprisoned by the Shah for his communist view.

After revolution, he was released. He went to Russia and married a Russian

girl. But his marriage was not a happy one. Later Anoosh is executed by Islamic Regime for a false charge of being a Russian spy. Marjane fathers tell

her that her uncle is on a trip. She assumes being on a trip means, he is dead. But later she found, he was in prison. He wanted to see Marjane's

before he dies. She visited him in prison because she was ' Star of his life".

(9. 55 Persepolis). Siamalic and Mohsen were heroes of the revolution.

Mohsen was a friend of Marjane's family. They both had been captured by

Shah and her forces but were released after revolution. They both were first to be released from prison after revolution whom Marjane's meet. Siamalic

sister was killed by Islamic Regime but he escapes Iran; by disguising himself

in a flock of sheep and crossed the border. Whereas Mohsen was murdered by drowning in a bathtub by Islamic Regime and presented his death to be a suicide. Mehri was a nanny of Marjane's and was a maid of her family. She lives with them since she was eight. She was more than a maid to Marjane. She considered Marjane as her sister. She falls in love with her neighbor. But was rejected by the guy, as she was from low class. Mali was friend of Marjane's mother. She comes to stay with them because her city was being bombarded by Iraqi's. She was so wealthy but lost everything in bombarding. Tahir is Marjane's uncle; who got heart attack and wanted to see his son, who is abroad before he dies. But his passport was refused by Hospital director and he dies without meeting his son. These all people had a deep influence on Marjane's character. Without them she would have not be the author of this book and the person she is today.

Some of the themes that are discussed in Persepolis are compelling teenage boys to join army, fear, freedom, come of age, gender discrimination. Women faced many changes during revolution. They were forced to wear veil on their heads. They were mentally not ready to wear veils but they had to do so as of the law which forced them to do so. Satarapi explains in his novel, " We didn't like to wear the veil, especially since we didn't understand why we had to" (3 Persepolis, Marjane Satarapi). With the start of the veils, women lost their freedom and rights. They were disrespected by men if seen without veil. They thought they were exposing themselves which was against the law. Teen age period is the same everywhere in the world. Marjane also starts to explore herself as well as her surrounding, following new trends in

music and fashion. She was obsessed with punk music as well as trying different outfits like denim jackets and jeans etc. After revolution, she was not allowed to wear jeans jackets in public, as it was not allowed to follow western culture. She was once stopped by two guardian women and warned not to wear western clothes but before she was taken to headquarters, she managed to run away. She for the first time tried cigarette. When Marji has her first cigarette, she considers it a sign of growing up. She coughs and coughs and says, “ with this first cigarette, I kissed childhood goodbye. Now I was a grown-up” (15. 46, Persepolis, Marjane Satarapi). But in my opinion Marjane doesn't need to smoke in order to feel like an adult, she is seeing death and destruction around her, which automatically makes her grown up. War was the main theme of Persepolis. Marjane's live in Tehran, which was being attacked by Iraq and was a subject of bombing throughout her life. Many of her family members were prisoned too. Marjane's demonstrates that war is nothing less than hell itself. Whether you are living in a country, open to war. You are living a miserable life whether you are harmed or not but mentally you are tortured day by day. The politics of Iran after revolution was not just to restrict freedom but to kill everyone, who oppose the regime. They either prisoned the protestor or killed them. Restriction/no freedom was one of the main reason of Islamic Revolution. No one had right of speech, right to follow his/her religion, right to wear. Protestor were executed if they opposed the laws. Women were forced to cover themselves from head to toe. If a person protest, he was shoted on the spot or executed by the law force. Morality is also seen in Persepolis as the main theme. Beside of natural death, people were killed and tortured by the police. There were many

death, day by day. It was on news all the time. All the sheets are named by Martyrs. Marjane mention that being in Iran was like living in the Graveyard. Gender discrimination can also be seen in Persepolis. Students were separated in school based on their gender. Boys and girl's classrooms were separated and were not allowed to talk to each other. They were not allowed to wear jewelry and had to beat their chests twice a day in honor of the martyrs. Freedom of religion is very important for any country or person. In Iran everyone was forced to follow Islam. Marjane was a devoted to religion but she never like the ideas of forcing someone to follow something with his/her will. They had to follow all Islamic customs and laws or face the water filled cells. Drugs and alcohol were forbidden in Islam. Marjane's family used to drink. One day army stopped them and ask them to check there home. Marjane's grandmother make an excuse of diabetes illness that she wants to take medicine and gets into home by the army and flush out all the alcohol and drugs in the toilet. Marjane's maid fall in love with her neighbor. Marjane used to write love letter for her as she was not able to read and write. When Marjane's father came to know, he went to his neighbor's house and told them Mehri is her maid not her daughter. Therefore, it is not right to love someone lower than your cast. Mehri was therefore rejected by the neighbors as she was not of their class. Young boys of fourteen years of age were recruited to join army. They were told if they die fighting. They will get a Golden key to heaven, where they will have plenty of food, women, houses made of gold and diamonds. Their life style changed, they started to join army in age of discovering themselves. Migration from Iran can also be seen at end of the novel. Many boys and girls were sent to countries, to have a

peaceful life. Many of her friends moved to US. Parents sent their children to other countries with a big heart. Marjane was also sent to France. Satarapi states, " What I had feared was true. Maybe the parents visit her but they would never live together again." (152. Persepolis, Marjane Satarapi). She said good bye to her grandmother and saw her mother fainted at her departure to France. They were upset at her departure but it was for her better future.

Graphic novels have emerged as important part of modern literature used by libertarians and educators. I think graphic novels helps to understand the novels much easier. Graphic novels motivate student to read. They can be of any genre. They usually include texts, pictures, words balloon and sound effects. Persepolis is illustrated in a unique way of graphic designs. Scenes were presented by different pictures and dialogues were shown in words balloons. The images were not too loud as the novel was based on. No graphic violations were shown, as bombing, blood, alcohol usage etc.

There are many aspects that changed the lives of many which had a lot of bad influence on their lives. Young boys were recruited into army. Right to speech, follow religion and live life per one's choice was taken away. Women lost their rights and freedom. Education become strict and boys and girls were separated. Many changes were unfair to all individuals. One should stay strong and strive for the best with a positive mind. Persepolis is a same case of staying strong and stand up for one's right and beliefs.