

Initial reactions

- How did you feel
- What did you like
- What did you dislike
- What did you connect with
- What bothered you

How do you think Marji's childhood/life would have been different if she were born after the Islamic Revolution?

How does Marji's story change our understanding of women's lives in the Middle East, or of Muslim people or Iranians in general?

How do Marji, her friends, and her family challenge the Islamic regime, publicly and privately?

Imagery

- Why do you think Satrapi chose to write her memoir as a graphic novel?
 - "Image is an international language. The first writing of the human being was drawing, not writing. That appeared much before the alphabet. And when you draw a situation — someone is scared or angry or happy — it means the same thing in all cultures. You cannot draw someone crying, and in one culture they think that he is happy. He would have the same expression. There's something direct about the image.

Also, it is more accessible. People don't take it so seriously. And when you want to use a little bit of humor, it's much easier to use pictures."

- "So the use of the drawing for me is that first of all, I am a very lousy writer. I have tried actually, you know, at one time to write. If I had to write this short article or something, here I am good. But for a novel, just forget about it. I lose all my sense of humor, I lose completely all my decency, and I become completely lousy and pathetic. If I say to myself, 'Now you are a serious girl and now you are going to make some serious work,' there's nothing worse than wanting to make a serious work for me. So drawing gives to me the possibility of this sense of saying what I want to say."
- "When you are reading comics, between one frame to the other what is happening, you have to imagine it yourself. So you are active; you have to take part actually when you read the story. It is the only medium that uses the images in this way."
- Describe the illustrations. What do they add to the story?
 - Minimal, stark, charming, humorous, simple, expressive, graphic, cartoony, cute
 - *LJ*: "allows for easy identification with the characters and expertly reflects their varying emotions"
- Why are the illustrations in black and white?

Religion

- What role does religion play in the story?
- Describe Marji's relationship with God
 - Marji believes she is a prophet (p. 6)
 - God & Marx (p. 13)
 - The night he didn't come (p. 17)
 - "The only place I felt safe was in the arms of my friend" (p. 53)
 - She rejects him after Uncle Anoosh dies (p. 70)
- How did it change over time?
- Did you ever believe you were special or chosen as a child? Did you have a religious zeal like Marji's?

Coming of age

- What are the similarities and differences with other coming-of-age stories you've read?
- How does Marji rebel?
 - Punk rock (p. 102)
 - Cutting class (p. 111)
 - Smoking cigarette (p. 117)
 - Iron Maiden, Kim Wilde, Michael Jackson, Nikes (p. 131)
 - Hitting the principal (p. 143)
- Who or what is her teenage rebellion against?
- How does this compare to the ways American teens rebel?
 - Trying to look hip (p. 112)
- How does the age of Marji at the beginning of the book affect our feelings about/understanding of her?

History

- What role does Persian/Iranian history play in the characters' understanding of their lives and current events?
 - Tyranny and submission (p. 11)
 - British colonialism, rise of the shah (p. 21)
- What did you learn about Persian culture/Iran? Did it change your perception of the Iranian/Persian people?
 - "The only thing I hope is that people will read my book and see that this abstract thing, this Axis of Evil, is made up of individuals with lives and hopes."

Memoir

- Is this a graphic *novel*? Is it a work of fiction or nonfiction?
 - "As soon as you write your story, it is a story; this is not a documentary. Of course you have to make fiction, you have to cheat, you have to make some angle around there, because the story has to turn, so that is the reconstruction of what we do."

Humor

- The widow whose husband dies of cancer and she joins the demonstration (p. 32)
- Farts (p. 92)
- “Every situation has an opportunity for laughs”
 - Making fun of the martyrs (p. 97)

Class

- Isn't it hypocritical for Marji's Marxist/Communist family to have a maid?
 - Mehri p. 33

Marji's dark side

- The torture of Mohsen, Siamek, Uncle Anoosh
- Attack Ramin with brass knuckles (p. 45)
- What it felt like to be in a cell filled with water (p. 25)
- Torture games (p. 53)