**MLA HEADING  
YOUR NAME: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

***Persepolis* Cheat Sheet and Study Guide**

**Introduction**

1. What stereotypical image does Satrapi want to dispel?

2. What are the author’s two **motives** for writing Persepolis?

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**Section 1: The Veil** *– The Symbol of Conformity*

Marji is ten years old in 1980, the year after the Islamic Revolution, when girls were obliged to wear the veil and **segregated** by gender.

1. How was education affected by the new regime?
2. What did the veil symbolize?
3. How do women respond to the veil?
4. Why was a picture of Marjane's mother published in the newspaper?
5. Does Marji *actually* want to be a prophet?

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**Section 2: The Bicycle** *– “A revolution is like a bicycle…”*

Marji observes **oppression** and learns about **revolutions** and **socialism—** which is why she refers to: [Leon Trotsky](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leon_Trotsky), [Fidel Castro](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fidel_Castro), [Che Guevara](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Che_Guevara), The Vietnam war, Socialist **revolutionaries** of Iran (Frezaï, Fatemi and Ashraf), and **philosophers**[Descartes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Descartes) and [Marx](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marx). Books inspire her **anti-authoritarian** attitude and behavior.

1. Who are Che Guevara, Fidel, and Trotsky?
2. Why does Marjane allude to revolutionaries and philosophers?
3. How does Marji’s relationship with God begin to change?
4. What happens at the Rex Cinema? What is the significance of this event?



**Section 3: The Water Cell** *– Iran’s political history*

Marji repeats **propaganda** she learns at school: that God chose the king. Marji’s parents tell her the truth: the current king, Reza Shah, used to be a low-ranking, **illiterate**, young officer. The British helped overthrow the (then) ruler so that the they could take control of Iran's oil. This is called a **coup d’état**.

The ruler that Reza Shah **deposed** was Marji's grandfather, a prince. Her grandpa briefly served as prime minister, but since he outwardly **opposed** the new regime and became a **communist**, he was sent to prison and tortured.

1. How did the king come to power?
2. How do Marji’s parents feel about the current government?
3. How did her grandfather’s beliefs change over time? Why?



**Section 4: Persepolis** *– Corrupt Government*

  
When her grandmother visits, Marji learns more about the hardship her family endured. She also learns that while Reza Shah was brutal, his son Mohammed Reza was ten times *worse.* The family begins to fear that family members will be captured, killed, or tortured. Marji realizes how little she understands **vows** to read everything she can.

1. How did the new Shah's rule compare to his father's?
2. Why does the author **allude** to Cyrus the Great? Why does she **depict** the men standing on his grave? Explain the look on Cyrus’ face.
3. What dangerous **endeavor** becomes a habit for Marji’s father?



**Section 5: The Letter** *– The Class Divide*  
Marji reads about the class divide and realizes it’s not just part of society, it even exists within her home. She thinks about Mehri, who became her family’s maid when she was just 8 years old. She remembers when Mehri fell in love with the neighbor boy, who lost interest in her when he realized her social class. Marji’s father explained, “their love was impossible”.

Marji sees this as another reason for the revolution, so she convinces Mehri to attend anti-Shah demonstrations with her on “Black Friday”, a day when many demonstrators were shot and killed by the Shah’s armed forces.

1. Why does Marji feel ashamed of her family?
2. Describe Marji’s relationship with Mehri.
3. *Aside from her social class*, what else makes Mehri socially weak?
4. What is the significance of Black Friday?

**Section 6: The Party***– in celebration of the end of the monarchy*  
The massacre of Black Friday was only the beginning of a long period of violence, which led to the decline and exile of the Shah in Egypt. His departure prompted the biggest celebration in the history of Iran. Marji becomes more aware of politics and the fickleness of human nature as she observes former supporters of the Shah now touting pro-revolution propaganda and support. Marji incites action against her classmates who were children of the Shah’s secret service (Savak) who unapologetically killed and tortured a million communists. Marji’s mother suggests more tolerance and forgiveness towards such people, and Marji tries hard to do so.

**Section 7: The Heroes** *– the release of the Shah’s political prisoners*  
3000 political prisoners were released (March, 1979), and Marji’s family knew two of them who were imprisoned for communist revolutionary acts. When they came to visit, their family is shocked by their tales of enduring horrific torture by Iranians who had “received special training from the CIA” and the deaths of many of their comrades. Marji experiences shame that her father is not a ‘hero’ of the revolution and is confused by her mother who is now saying that “Bad people are dangerous but forgiving them is too. Don’t worry there is justice on earth”. Marji has no idea what justice is. Now that the revolution is complete, she abandons her Dialectical Materialism comics and seeks solace in her faith.

**Section 8: Moscow** *– the return of a Russian-educated family hero*  
Marji is over-joyed by the visit of one of her father’s five brothers, her uncle Anoosh, who was imprisoned for nine years as a communist revolutionary and hero of the revolution. He tells her how her grandfather was loyal to the Shah, but his uncle Fereydoon was devoted to ideals of justice and democracy so he had gone along with a group of his friends and attempted to bring about independence from the Shah in the province of Azerbaijan. Anoosh joined him, much to the dismay of her grandfather, and together they plotted the freedom and independence of all provinces in Iran. Fereydoon was arrested and executed, but his girlfriend escaped to Switzerland with their son. Anoosh was able to escape to the USSR where he became a Marxist–Leninist scholar and married a Russian woman and had two girls. Anoosh tells Marji that Russians aren’t like Iranians, they don’t have hearts, so they were divorced and in his attempt to return to Iran to see his family, he was discovered and imprisoned. He encourages Marji to remember his story, even if she has difficulty understanding it, because it is their “family memory” and it must not be lost, then gives her a swan he made in prison.

**Section 9: The Sheep** *– naïve idealism*  
In discussion with Marji’s father, her uncle Anoosh points out that since half of Iran’s population is illiterate, the people cannot be united around Marxist ideals, so only nationalism or a religious ethic would work. Eventually he thought the working classes would rule, and in a way he was correct. The exit of the Shah and the abolition of the monarchy paved the way for Ayatollah Khomeini and the Islamic Republic in 1979. Marji’s world is altered forever by the creation of the republic, as many friends and family leave Iran for the United States and Europe. Her uncle Anoosh encourages everyone by telling them that it is just a period of transition and that everything will work out. However they soon discover that their communist-revolutionary friends who had just been released from prison are either dead or fled (one of them is found drowned in his bathtub; the other had to cross the border with his wife and daughter hidden among a flock of sheep) and Anoosh is arrested and executed as a Russian spy. This leaves Marji in tears; with another swan he made for her she rejects her faith, lost and without bearing in the universe unable to think of anything worse – then bombs fell on Iran.

**Section 10: The Trip** *– escape from turmoil*  
Fundamentalist students were reported in the news as taking over the US embassy – eliminating any future hope for Marji’s family getting a visa to join friends and family there. The universities were also announced as closed, pending reform (2 years) to prevent any more imperialist indoctrination, dashing Marji’s hope of a science degree. Marji’s mother, who correctly predicts that women will be forced to wear a veil, is accosted by fundamentalists for not wearing a veil. Marji’s family observe their neighbours once again changing their behaviour to suit the new regime as if they had always adhered to fundamentalist ways. Marji is encouraged to produce similar fabrications to safeguard her family and at the same time her family demonstrates for women’s rights, although this is brought to an abrupt end when demonstrators are violently attacked (1980). Marji’s family goes on an abrupt vacation for three weeks to Spain and Italy, only to return home to the announcement of war with Iraq – the second Arab invasion in 1400 years, and Marji felt ready to fight.