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Y.A. Lit

LENS 5

Reader-as-Writer

In Marjane Satrapi’s graphic novel *Persepolis*, she chronicles her life as an Iranian girl growing up in a world of political turmoil. What I found most interesting was not the story itself, but how Satrapi chose to present it to her readers. While she could have written a more traditional novel, she chose to write graphic novel which adds so much to her story, especially when she describes living in Iran.

By providing drawings of her everyday life in Iran, I was able to learn things about the country that I did not know. For example, I often forget that Iran has big cities too. Satrapi grew up in Tehran, one of the big cities. Instead of spending time describing the city in detail, she just drew it in the background of her own story. At one point, readers are shown a time when Satrapi and her friends went into a nicer part of the city to hang out. In the pictures you can see multiple cars and businesses (112). At another point, get to view how Iranian teenagers would try to blend their forced traditions with the modern world. We can literally see Satrapi wearing a veil, denim jacket, and sneakers (131). This is a great way for an author to make sure that his/her readers are actually getting the right picture in their minds and makes it more relatable.

What also makes this story relatable is that it is told from the perspective of a young child growing up into a woman. I like this because readers get to grow and learn with Marjane as she grows up. In the beginning, Marjane is often as confused about what is going on as I am. An example of this would be that little history lessons that her family gives her teach me as much as they teach her. Early in the book, Satrapi’s father sits her down to tell her, and consequently the readers, about how the Iranian Emperor was overthrown yeas ago (19). Without this information, the political atmosphere of the story would not make as much sense to me.

Overall, I think Satrapi made a very wise decision to present her story as a graphic novel that follows her life from childhood to adulthood. It makes the story more understandable and readers can better picture what actually happened. They also get to grow with Satrapi as she learns more and more about what is occurring in her country. It makes a stronger connection between the author and the reader, therefore her idea will be better accepted.