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LENS 5

Critical: *Persepolis*

Marjane Satrapi’s graphic novel *Persepolis* is an excellent insight into Iranian history through the persepctive of a young girl. The 1970s and 1980s in Iran were difficult and through the eyes of Marjane, a reader can see the struggles that the entire population went through (and still goes through today). Religion and politics heavily affect daily life and violent war was a constant threat and a very real danger.

I found the burning of the movie theater a frightening image of the violence of Iran during Marjane’s childhood. That movie theater was locked from the outside and set on fire by government soldiers, killing everyone inside. I think that was a scary representation of the mindset of their government: keep citizens in line at all costs. They were making an example of the people in the theater for everyone to see and be intimidated by.

It was interesting when Marjane made the comment “you find extremists in every religion.” When you think about it, this is defintiely true. It’s a good reminder that Islam isn’t the only religion that can be dangerous when taken to extremes. In the modern world, especially America, it’s easy to write off Islam as the “terrorist religion” that breeds people hell-bent on killing all non-Muslims.

It is impossible to read *Persepolis* as an American and not renew appreciation for your way of life. Our freedoms are incredibly precious and we often take them for granted. I cannot imagine being in Marjane’s place, leaving my parents for another country just for the opportunity to be physically safe and effectively educated. If I grew up like Marjane did, with the constraints placed on her family, I don’t think I would be able to rebel the way she did on a constant basis.