



UPPER SCHOOL 2010 COMMON READ

The Complete Persepolis



TomeTopia, Bancroft's student-led Summer Reading Committee, decided to venture into the world of the graphic novel with this year's choice, *The Complete Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi. In this "memoir-in-comic-strips" Satrapi recounts her experiences growing up in revolutionary Iran. Luc Sante, writing in *The New York Times* book review, claims, "Satrapi's story is compelling and extremely complex...the graphic form, with its cinematic motion and its style as personal as handwriting, endows it with a combination of dynamism and intimacy uniquely suited to a narrative at once intensely subjective and world-historical." (Aug. 2004)

ASSIGNMENT- DUE THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

Choose one.

1-Iran's recent past serves as not only the backdrop but also the foundation for the novel: it's not just set in a certain place and time, it's *about* that place and time. The uprising in Iran last summer provides another example of how its society wrestles with questions of democracy, oppression, freedom, and cultural identity. After reading *The Complete Persepolis*, search for some contemporary responses to the 2009 election protests, such as the web comic *Zahra's Paradise*, and then compare them to the novel by analyzing specific scenes from each that try to capture the essence of a turbulent era in visuals and in narrative. One page, double-spaced response.

2-The very nature of a graphic novel transforms the experience of reading *The Complete Persepolis*. After reading the memoir, choose a scene that struck you as a fundamentally transformative way to tell a story, and then respond by looking at your own life and/or your own world. Follow Satrapi's storytelling technique and create your own graphic novel or web comic chapter based on either a current event that has local, national or global importance or a personal theme such as culture, gender, childhood, and/or family.

3-Compare and contrast the movie and the book. After reading *The Complete Persepolis* and then watching the movie version, discuss your personal impressions of the way each medium tells a story. What is the impact of reading the panels versus how it feels to watch them animated on a screen? Choose at least three specific scenes for support as you analyze the two different media's treatment of the narrative and the images. One page, double-spaced response.