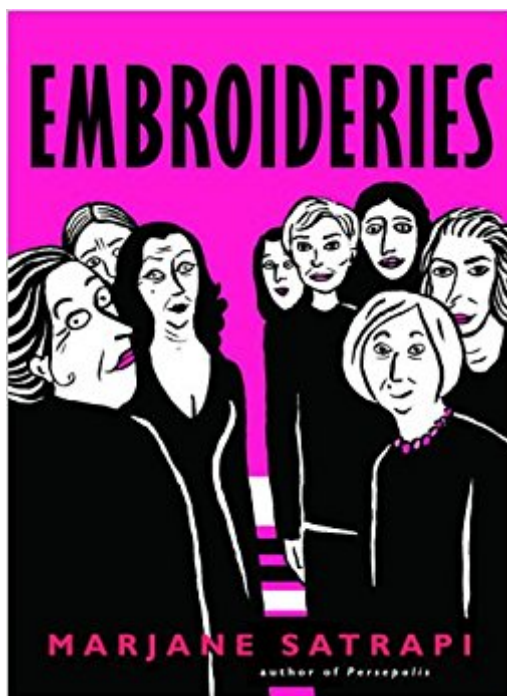


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# Embroideries (Pantheon Graphic Novels)



## Synopsis

From the best-selling author of *Persepolis* comes this gloriously entertaining and enlightening look into the sex lives of Iranian women. Embroideries gathers together Marjane's tough-talking grandmother, stoic mother, glamorous and eccentric aunt and their friends and neighbors for an afternoon of tea drinking and talking. Naturally, the subject turns to love, sex and the vagaries of men. As the afternoon progresses, these vibrant women share their secrets, their regrets and their often outrageous stories about, among other things, how to fake one's virginity, how to escape an arranged marriage, how to enjoy the miracles of plastic surgery and how to delight in being a mistress. By turns revealing and hilarious, these are stories about the lengths to which some women will go to find a man, keep a man or, most important, keep up appearances. Full of surprises, this introduction to the private lives of some fascinating women, whose life stories and lovers will strike us as at once deeply familiar and profoundly different from our own, is sure to bring smiles of recognition to the faces of women everywhere and to teach us all a thing or two.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This slight follow-up to Satrapi's acclaimed *Persepolis* books explores the lives of Iranian women young and old. The book begins with Satrapi arriving for afternoon tea at her grandmother's house. There, her mother, aunt and their group of friends tell stories about their lives as women, and, more

specifically, the men they've lived with and through. One woman tells a story about advising a friend on how to fake her virginity, a scheme that goes comically wrong. Another tells of escaping her life as a teenage bride of an army general. Satrapi's mother tells an anecdote of the author as a child; still others spin yarns of their sometimes glamorous, sometimes difficult, lives in Iran. The tales themselves are entertaining, though the folksiness and common themes of regret and elation feel familiar. Satrapi's artwork does nothing to elevate her source material; her straightforward b&w drawings simply illustrate the stories, rather than elucidating or adding meaning to them. Characters are hard to distinguish from each other, and Satrapi's depictions of gestures and expressions are severely limited, hampering any attempt at emotional resonance. This work, while charming at times, feels like an afterthought compared to Satrapi's more distinguished work on *Persepolis* and its sequel. (Apr.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

Satrapi follows her acclaimed youth memoirs *Persepolis* (2003) and *Persepolis 2* [BKL Ag 04] with some tales her grandmother, mother, aunts, and their bosom friends told her about sex and men--stories that are frank, funny, occasionally sad, and utterly credible. Thrice-married Grandma recalls the friend who took counsel on how to convince her husband she was still a virgin--with hilarious, wince-inducing results. Another woman confides that, despite her children (all daughters), "I've never seen or touched anything"--male, that is. Arranged marriages, a potion to bind a lover, cosmetic surgery, "embroidery"--by which is meant another means of "restoring" virginity--and more are revealed, assessed, and resolved, all within the context of a women-only tea-bibbing circle in which young Marji is cook (not brewer, she explains), decanter, and enthralled listener. In line with the book's aura of abandoned constraints, Satrapi dispenses with panel frames; she also elides most background detail; and those choices make the book less graphic-novelish than cartoonish a la, say, Jules Feiffer. The sparkling verbal content, however, triumphs. Ray OlsonCopyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

I'd already read Marjane Satrapi's books *Persepolis 1* & *Persepolis 2*, which I really enjoyed reading a lot.. So I wanted to read another one of her books. I decided to read *Embroideries* by Marjane Satrapi as it sounded really appealing to me as a graphic novel. It did not disappoint. I loved the writing and artwork contained within this graphic novel.

*Embroideries* is categorized as a memoir, though it's more like a book of short stories, told by

different female characters living in Iran, done in Marjane's usual graphic novel style. Marjane and her family and a few friends are sitting down to tea to gossip after lunch while the men nap. These women relate stories about past or present relationship issues and I think that most female readers will find that they've done something similar with their own family or friends. I can't really describe the plot because each little tale has its own - but they range from cheating husbands, old lovers, sexual experiences, marriage and more. This is definitely not a book intended for children. I found myself laughing out loud several times, especially when the women are discussing the male anatomy. As the blurb on the book says, these stories "will strike us as at once deeply familiar and profoundly different from our own" and I'm inclined to agree. I enjoyed this little book very much and would recommend it to most - as long as you have a sense of humor and don't mind people discussing sex and the naked body.

Bottom line: Not great literature, not brilliant comic book art. If you have ever wanted to be a fly on the wall when women let loose, this is it. I had not read *Persopolis* I or II nor have I been to the new movie *Chicken with Plums*. I was looking to get a taste of Iranian born Parisian Marjane Satrapi. Embroideries, in hard back \$6.78, \$1 less than paperback was an easy decision. It is a fast read, maybe an hour, longer if you take the time to enjoy the artwork. I liked it. One could be harsh and describe this as another "women complain about men" chick flick book. There are a growing number of books about the "secret" lives of women in Iran. This is not another anything. This book, short and simple is a good read. If we need to be technical, this is a slice of life. There is no introduction and no long back story on individuals. Almost the first thing we know is that Grandma is an opium addict. We like her this way. If something so bald and forthright does not snap you to attention, not much can. The scene is a group of women, most related; taking a tea break after serving a lunch, then cleaning up and while the men folk sleep it off- The women talk, gossip and tell secrets. Almost all are about sex and while men are usually bad, the women are also silly, overly romantic and as often victims of their own weaknesses. What elevates this book is the natural flow of the dialogue and the sense that we are fully included into this family. We are Marjane Satrapi, letting her elders and betters expose their sad stories, their funny stories, and their most personal truths. Nothing is edited. Nothing is withheld. We are among friends and trusted to keep secrets. For example 'Embroideries' are not exactly what you thought they were. I wanted an easy introduction to Ms. Satrapi and her graphic novels. This one did what I needed and more.

I ordered this book for a friend's birthday as she is a huge fan of Marjane Satrapi. When the book

arrived I think I read it at least 3 times before gifting it to her! If you are a fan of Persepolis then you are already familiar with Satrapi's writing/drawing style. This book is a little lighter of a read since it does not deal as much with war and politics. This is a great gift to give to your best girl friend and then swap your own stories inspired by the ones of Marjane and her various friends and family members. It is an amazing book, as expected.

I picked up this book after reading Persepolis, which I felt examined a lot of issues in a surprisingly deep way. I expected this book to have some unexpected insights into Iranian women and their thoughts on sexuality, marriage, and men. So I was disappointed by this comparatively shallow book. It read like an Iranian Cosmo - lots of light, fun tidbits but no truly compelling stories or insights that stood out, or that I can even remember the day after finishing it. The stories weren't connected in any way that gave them depth, and individually they had the feel of overhearing some gossip on the bus about someone you don't know - mildly interesting but nothing to think about after it is over. It is a great way to entertain yourself on a rainy afternoon, and the author's illustrations are quirky and expressive as usual, but don't expect to want to press this book on your friends and relatives after reading it, the way I think many of us did with Persepolis.

I really enjoy Marjane's work. This is a very interesting piece.

"Embroideries" immediately pulls you right in to what feels like an intimate girl's night conversation. What's more interesting is that the characters are many of the same Iranian women that you have the privilege of meeting in the book "Persepolis." I felt as if I really was there with old friends and family, because Marjane has such a skill for developing her characters; so, I felt pretty connected to them from reading "Persepolis" right before reading this book. The stories are so entertaining and enlightening - it's so nice to see this side of Iranian culture and to see women who weren't afraid to go against the status quo and be so honest. The only negative thing about this book is that I literally finished it in about 30 minutes - it's very short. The way she develops a culture and its characters within such a short book is very impressive, but I was sad that it was over.

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