

# TEACHERS' GUIDE

## I. Chapter Guide

### Introduction:

#### *Vocabulary:*

1. Nomad
2. Tincture

#### *Reading:*

1. According to the introduction, what were the conditions that forced the nomadic tribes to settle?

#### *Thought:*

1. Although advancement in technology brings many useful and positive changes, sometimes there are negative side effects as a result of these changes. What are some of the negative side effects of the advancements mentioned in the introduction? Would it have been possible to avoid these side effects? If so, how?

### Chapter One:

#### *Vocabulary:*

1. Corral

#### *Reading:*

1. Who does Anahita's father suggest she might marry?
2. What excuse does Anita give her father for not getting married?
3. What does Anahita say the khan's good quality is?

#### *Thought:*

1. Discuss Anahita's relationship with her father in Chapter One.

## Chapter Two:

### *Vocabulary:*

1. Conceal
2. Ponder
3. Migration
4. Descend
5. Vague
6. Apprentice
7. Sarcasm
8. Preside
9. Minaret
10. Chivalrous
11. Weft
12. Consolation

### *Reading:*

1. Who did Anahita and Shirin spy on when they were younger?
2. What secret does Anahita learn about the khan that makes the idea of marriage seem even scarier?
3. What analogy does the author use to describe the state of Anahita and Shirin's relationship and how it can be fixed?
4. What advice does the mullah give Anahita regarding marriage?

### *Thought:*

1. In both the beginning and end of the chapter, Anahita reflects upon her cousin Shirin's life as a married woman. Why do you think she keeps thinking about her cousin this way?
2. After Anahita remarks to her mother that women would make fine Kadkhudas (tribal leaders), her mother tells her that it sounds as if she is saying that she believes women could live without men. But is that really what Anahita is saying? Explain.
3. Anahita solves her father's riddle, which is that life is like a garden, that both never stay the same, which she realizes just after telling her mother

that she doesn't want her life to change. What is the reader to take away from this?

### Chapter Three:

#### *Vocabulary:*

1. Prattle
2. Bolster
3. Repercussion

#### *Reading:*

1. What two qualities does Anahita insist the man she will marry must possess?
2. According to Anahita's mother, how would the tribe's people react if Anahita were allowed to go forth with her wedding riddle contest?
3. What previous idea did Anahita have that caused an uproar among her community? What were the repercussions?

#### *Thought:*

1. What did Anahita learn about the bathhouse incident?
2. Anahita compares herself to the great Sufi poet Rabi'a', saying that they are both women wishing to express themselves feely to anyone, even Allah. Do you agree with this comparison? Explain your answer.

### Chapter Four:

#### *Vocabulary:*

1. Prominently
2. Sentimental
3. Encompass
4. Provincial
5. Tenement
6. Venture

#### *Reading:*

1. Why did Reza's family joke that he received "gifts of blood" from some Celtic ancestor?
2. What did Reza name is cockatiel?
3. How old is Reza?

*Thought:*

1. From the "lesson" Reza gives his students, do you feel he is a good teacher? Why or why not? What do his students learn from their outing?
2. What kind of man is Reza?

### Chapter Five:

*Vocabulary:*

1. Dysentery
2. Scimitar
3. Billow
4. Bleats
5. Bullock
6. Progeny
7. Bureaucracy

*Reading:*

1. What do Arash and his cousin find in between two boulders?
2. What agreement does Arash and his tribesmen reach regarding how to deal with the Russian soldiers approaching?

*Thought:*

1. From his leadership of the tribesmen, his discussion with his grandfather and the author's exposition about him, what have you learned about Arash?
2. What do Arash and Anahita have in common?

## Chapter Six:

### *Vocabulary:*

1. Whittle

### *Reading:*

1. What are the reasons Dariyoush's parents won't allow him to court Anahita?
2. What shape does Dariyoush carve out of wood for Anahita?

### *Thought:*

1. As he sits with Anahita, Dariyoush wishes he could enjoy spending this time with her. Why can't he?

## Chapter Seven:

### *Vocabulary:*

1. Pannier
2. Bristle
3. Assess
4. Kindling

### *Reading:*

1. How did Anahita respond after Shirin questioned whether choosing a husband would be a wonderful opportunity?
2. What tribe's person does Anahita compare Dariyoush to?

### *Thought:*

1. Anahita thinks to herself that her grandmother follows “her own spiritual clock.” Do you think Anahita does as well, or is she just stubborn?
2. Do you think Anahita wants Dariyoush to ask for her hand in marriage? Why or why not?

### Chapter Eight:

#### *Vocabulary:*

1. Cumbersome
2. Defiant
3. Dervish
4. Ardent
5. Filigreed

#### *Reading:*

1. In response to her mother’s question, what does Anahita say she was born for?
2. According to Anahita, what do colors made from synthetic dyes lack?
3. What does Anahita lose outside the mosque?

#### *Thought:*

1. What quality about Anahita is Arash most attracted to? Explain.

### Chapter Nine:

#### *Vocabulary:*

1. Somber
2. Escarpment
3. Reprimand

#### *Reading:*

1. What does Dariyoush say he needs Anahita’s help with at the caves?

2. What joke does Dariyoush play on Anahita at the cave?

*Thought:*

1. Were you surprised that the mullah consented to Anahita's wedding riddle idea? Why or why not?

Chapter Ten:

*Vocabulary:*

1. Dilapidated
2. Abacus
3. Destitute
4. Portents
5. Meticulously
6. Conscripted
7. Protocol
8. Decrees
9. Obscured
10. Emissaries

*Reading:*

1. What personal desire for himself is revealed about Arash in the beginning of the chapter?
2. Who does Pirouz, the young boy Arash meets upon entering Marv, say once stayed in Marv?

*Thought:*

1. Do you think Arash will make a good governor of Marv? Why or why not?
2. Discuss the concerns Arash seems to have regarding his father's leadership.

Chapter Eleven:

*Vocabulary:*

1. Obsidian
2. Alluring

*Reading:*

1. What does the khan carry on his arm?
2. What does the khan suggest his servant buy for Anahita as a gift?

*Thought:*

1. Chapter eleven is told from the khan's point of view. How is he different than what we've heard of him in earlier chapters?

Chapter Twelve:

*Vocabulary:*

1. Indiscretion
2. Elaborate
3. Sentiments
4. Ornery
5. Divert

*Reading:*

1. Why doesn't Anahita's father want to hear her riddle?
2. What advice does Shirin give Anahita?
3. How did Anahita's father chase away the snow leopard?

*Thought:*

1. Do you think Anahita is justified in tackling Shirin or did she overreact?
2. Anahita's father explains his reasons for being angry with Anahita regarding her telling the mullah about the wedding riddle contest idea. Do you think he has the right to be angry? Should it influence his decision regarding the contest?

Chapter Thirteen:*Vocabulary:*

1. Deliberation
2. Impious
3. Discretion

*Reading:*

1. While thinking about Shirin as a grown-up, married woman, what does Anahita feel?
2. What message does the khan's messenger have for Anahita's father?
3. What does Anahita do with the silk given to her by the khan?

*Thought:*

1. Do you think Anahita is too hard on the khan, that maybe she should give him a chance? Why or why not?
2. Were you surprised by the grandmother's support of the contest? Why or why not?

Chapter Fourteen:*Vocabulary:*

1. Ultimatum
2. Dissipate
3. Blustery
4. Exasperate

*Reading:*

1. What is said to be Anahita's biggest wish in life?
2. What occurred that might prevent later stopping at Mashhad on the way back to Hasanabad?

*Thought:*

1. Anahita believes that the man who solves her riddle will be her kindred spirit. Do you agree or do you think these are just naive thoughts? Explain your answer.

### Chapter Fifteen:

*Vocabulary:*

1. Irreconcilable
2. Fervent
3. Trajectory
4. Receptivity
5. Atrocious

*Reading:*

1. After learning of the wedding riddle contest, what does the khan threaten to do?
2. What does Anahita say that hurts Dariyoush's feelings?
3. What book does one of the dervishes give Arash?

*Thought:*

1. Anahita seems to be becoming fonder of both Dariyoush and Arash at the same time. Which do you think is more compatible with her?

### Chapter Sixteen:

*Vocabulary:*

1. Predicament
2. Gregarious
3. Manipulate
4. Depose

*Reading:*

1. What lie does the carpet merchant tell Arash?
2. What does Dariyoush buy for himself at the bazaar?

*Thought:*

1. While talking with the carpet merchant, Arash says that he “doesn’t like games when his concerns are at stake.” With this in mind, how do you think he will react to the idea of a wedding riddle contest?
2. Both Anahita and her father come to realizations in this chapter. Do you think they will hold fast to these thoughts or eventually let them go? Discuss.

Chapter Seventeen:*Vocabulary:*

1. Camaraderie
2. Perilous
3. Perseverance
4. Perplexed

*Reading:*

1. In the beginning of the chapter, what does Anahita’s father say he will have to think over?
2. What form of liquid does the dyemaster use with indigo to make the color so vibrant?

*Thought:*

1. Both Anahita and the dyemaster seem to think it's unnatural to use synthetic dyes. Do you think they are stuck in their ways or do you think their reasons to stick with natural dyes are significant?

### Chapter Eighteen:

#### *Vocabulary:*

1. Squelch

#### *Reading:*

1. Where does the fire occur?
2. What is sunk at the bottom of the pool of the bathhouse that Anahita retrieves?

#### *Thought:*

1. Do you think Anahita's father wants Dariyoush to win the contest? Why or why not?

### Chapter Nineteen:

#### *Vocabulary:*

1. Skirmish
2. Formidable
3. Garrison
4. Allegiance
5. Console

#### *Reading:*

1. While at the horserace he is obligated to attend, Arash realizes why he was asked by the shah to go. What is his realization?
2. In his description of Anahita, what does Arash say that makes his men laugh?

#### *Thought:*

1. If Arash's men find Anahita soon and Arash goes to Hasanabad to ask for her hand in marriage, do you think Anahita would be willing to give up the contest? What do you think would happen?

### Chapter Twenty:

#### *Vocabulary:*

1. Carcass
2. Attuned
3. Antic
4. Articulate

#### *Reading:*

1. What does Anahita tell Reza she inherited from her mother?
2. What subject does Anahita ask Reza if there are books about?

#### *Thought:*

1. At the end of the chapter, Reza contemplates trying to persuade Anahita's father to let her become one of his students. If he succeeds and becomes Anahita's teacher – knowing how strong the desire is in Anahita to learn – do you think she might fall in love with Reza?

### Chapter Twenty-One:

#### *Vocabulary:*

1. Retinue
2. Incense
3. Chattel
4. Enshroud
5. Oblivion
6. Audacity

#### *Reading:*

1. When the khan learns that he missed the grand opening of the school, what is his response?
2. With what does the khan use to try and bribe Anahita's parents into giving him her hand?
3. What gift does the khan leave for Anahita that makes her sick to her stomach?

*Thought:*

1. Do you think there is anything the khan can do to make Anahita change her mind about him?

### Chapter Twenty-Two:

*Vocabulary:*

1. Tautness
2. Countenance
3. Cadence
4. Insurmountable

*Reading:*

1. Who helps Anahita weave her wedding qali?
2. What secret does Anahita reveal that she has been hiding from her family?

*Thought:*

1. At the end of the chapter, Maman Bozorg suggests to Anahita that since she can't be absolutely certain of the outcome of her choices, then it doesn't make a difference which path she chooses. Think about this with regard to Anahita, as well as some of the choices you've had to make in your life. Do you agree with this philosophy? Why or why not?

### Chapter Twenty-Three:

*Vocabulary:*

1. Oasis

*Reading:*

1. According to Reza, what would make Hasanabad paradise?
2. Why is Anahita angry with Dariyoush?
3. Why does Anahita's mother prefer Dariyoush to Reza as a husband for Anahita?

*Thought:*

1. While talking with her mom, Anahita says that she hopes their tribes' nomadic ways will carry on. For a girl who seems too impatient for the normally slow pace of societal progress, does it seem odd that she would resist this change?

Chapter Twenty-Four:*Vocabulary:*

1. Treacherous
2. Sanction
3. Grievance

*Reading:*

1. What does Arash's men bring back for him from Hasanabad?
2. Why is Arash happy to hear of the wedding riddle contest?

*Thought:*

1. Anahita tells the dyemaster the advice she received from her grandmother, "Those who, like moths, seek the flame and not the wick will only get burned." How might this apply to the khan?

Chapter Twenty-Five:

*Vocabulary:*

1. Cistern
2. Rectify
3. Deplete
4. Faction
5. Prudent

*Reading:*

1. In the meeting, who is the first tribesperson to suggest that the wedding contest be canceled in order to bring peace with the khan and secure the tribes' water rights?
2. How does the meeting end?

*Thought:*

1. Considering Reza is her teacher and her father's teacher, do you think Reza should've shared his feelings with Anahita?

Chapter Twenty-Six:*Vocabulary:*

1. Ostracism
2. Appease
3. Estrangement
4. Dejected
5. Demeanor
6. Berate
7. Detriment

*Reading:*

1. What does Anahita's father say troubles him about Anahita?
2. What did Anahita write in the notebook Reza gave her?

*Thought:*

1. Reread Anahita's dream. What do you think it means? Do you agree with Maman Bozorg's interpretation or do you have your own ideas?

### Chapter Twenty-Seven:

*Vocabulary:*

1. Throng
2. Tentatively
3. Sporadic
4. Hectare

*Reading:*

1. Which person does Anahita tell Arash that she wishes she had the strength of?
2. What does Arash tell Anahita he will talk to her father about?

*Thought:*

1. When Anahita tends to Dariyoush, she thinks how holding him feels so natural and right. Then, moments later, her feelings move to Arash. At this point in the story, who do you hope wins the contest? Why?

### Chapter twenty-Eight:

*Reading:*

1. Who are the appointed judges of the wedding riddle contest?
2. What are the two possessions Dariyoush says are all he can offer Anahita?

*Thought:*

1. Dariyoush isn't as clever or educated as Reza, Arash or even the khan, yet he has known Anahita longer and better than any of the other men. Do you think he has a good chance in winning the contest? Explain your answer.

Chapter Twenty-Nine:*Vocabulary:*

1. Incredulous
2. Intermediary

*Reading:*

1. While waiting out the sandstorm, what important conclusion does Arash come to about his life?

*Thought:*

1. Is it fair of Arash to hide his royalty from Anahita, or should he trust her enough to see beyond it, especially if he truly believes she his *yar*?

Chapter Thirty:*Vocabulary:*

1. Mirage
2. Ewer
3. Chastise

*Reading:*

1. What nice thing does Maman Bozorg have prepared for Anahita on the day of the wedding riddle contest?
2. What answer does the first contestant give?

*Thought:*

1. Seeing how nervous Anahita is on the day of the contest, knowing that anybody – young or old, rich or poor, handsome or ugly, nice or mean – could enter the contest, would you rather consent to an arranged marriage in which your parents choose your spouse, or would you take your chances in a contest in which you create the rules, but in which anyone could enter? Explain your answer.

Chapter Thirty-One:*Vocabulary:*

1. Motif
2. Imperial

*Reading:*

1. What does Arash's messenger bring with him?
2. What is said that princes are known for that causes Anahita's mother to worry?

*Thought:*

1. Maman Bozorg says that every time Anahita and Arash meet there is a sandstorm. Discuss this idea as a metaphor.

Chapter Thirty-Two:*Vocabulary:*

1. Euphoria
2. Penchant

*Reading:*

1. Which contestant does Arash feel threatened by?
2. Which contestant seems the most nervous?
3. What answer does the khan give?

*Thought:*

1. If Dariyoush wins, Anahita would stay in Hasanabad, close to her family; if Reza wins, she would eventually go back with him to Mashhad, a city she likes; and if Arash wins, she would move far away from her family, but would have the benefits of being married to a prince. Thinking about

it this way, does it change which contestant you want to win? Explain your answer.

### Chapter Thirty-Three:

#### *Vocabulary:*

1. Boisterous

#### *Reading:*

1. What does Arash use to help explain his answer?
2. Why doesn't Arash look at Anahita when discussing his answer?
3. Why doesn't the khan know Arash is a prince?
4. At the end of the chapter, what realization does Anahita come to regarding Dariyoush?

#### *Thought:*

1. Explain the title of the chapter, *A Twist of Fate*.

### Chapter Thirty-Four:

#### *Vocabulary:*

1. Vestige

#### *Reading:*

1. What does Anahita finally decide regarding her feelings for Dariyoush?
2. What is the answer to Arash's riddle?

#### *Thought:*

1. Do you feel that Anahita has matured enough for marriage and for creating a family of her own in a new place? Explain your answer.

## II. Research Projects

1. Conduct a research project that explores both ancient and modern weaving and dyeing practices.
2. Conduct a research project that explores the history of the Qajar Dynasty, of which the character of Arash was a prince.
3. Conduct a research project that explores Sufi poetry, focusing on Rumi and Rabi'a.
4. The author is donating proceeds of this book to the development of enterprises aiding women and children who have been victims of the earthquakes in Iran. Conduct a research project that explores the recent earthquakes in Iran, including the one in Bam in December, 2003, which killed over 40,000 people, injured 20,000 and left 60,000 homeless.
5. Conduct a research project that explores the development of educational systems, both in the U.S. and in Iran, including the inclusion of women.
6. Conduct a research project that explores feminism and womens' rights, both in the U.S. and in Iran.
7. Conduct a research project that explores the Persian traditions that are mentioned in this book, such as Nooruz.
8. Conduct a research project that explores the nomadic tribes of contemporary Persia, including the Ashfar and Yomut tribes.
9. Conduct a research project that explores the history and tradition of riddles and how they are used in various cultures.
10. Conduct a research project that explores Persian tribal rugs and how they are made, using pictures to help illustrate the process. Include examples of symbolic meaning, stories and myth, as well as practical uses and the symbolism of certain colors.

## III. Creative Writing Assignments

1. Write and alternate ending to the story.
2. Pretend you are either Arash, Reza, Dariyoush or the khan. Compose a diary entry written the day after Anahita's wedding.
3. Choosing either Pirouz (the young street boy who befriends Arash) or Shirin, write a day-in-the-life story from their point of view.
4. Write a short paragraph each about what you think might happen to Reza, Dariyoush and the khan after the story ends.
5. Write a day-in-the-life story from Anahita's point of view after she marries Arash.

#### IV. Essay Questions

1. How has *Anahita's Woven Riddle* changed your perspective on Iranian culture?
2. What aspects of the Muslim religion or world view, as portrayed in the book, relate to your own religion or world view?
3. Read the poem "A Great Wagon" (included in chapter twenty). Do you think Rumi wrote the poem to a woman or to God (Allah)? Discuss your answer using examples from the text.
4. In the last stanza of "A Great Wagon" (included in chapter twenty), Rumi says, 'Some of us walking alongside/are lame!' Discuss his meaning within the context of the poem.
5. In fiction, the protagonist (main character) undertakes some sort of change by the end of the story. Discuss the ways Anahita has changed and grown.
6. Discuss the feminist element of the book and Anahita as a feminist icon.
7. When looking at a woven tapestry or rug, you often have to look closely to realize the complexity of the work, which looks simplified standing further away. Thinking about some of the characters in this way, how are their complexities revealed more fully upon closer inspection?

8. Thinking about what you've learned about ancient Persian culture from this book, discuss the differences and similarities with your own culture.
9. Discuss the idea of arranged marriage and what the advantages and disadvantages are.
10. Good writers know that it is important to make their characters complex and three-dimensional, especially the protagonist, who should have some weaknesses, and the antagonist, who should have some strengths. Using examples from the book, discuss Anahita (the protagonist) and the khan (the antagonist) as complex characters that possess both strengths and weaknesses.
11. Discuss how the author's use of multiple points of view in this book enhance the story, imagining how it might be different if it were told only from Anahita's point of view.