

English II
Summer Skills and Reading Assignment
Academic Year 2010-2011

Texts: *Sister of My Heart*
The Prisoner of Tehran

by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni
by Marina Nemat

Directions: Summer Reading

- ❖ First and most important, do have a fabulous summer.
- ❖ To make it even more wonderful, we've chosen two amazing books for you to enjoy. *Sister of My Heart* is a novel set in both India and the United States. *The Prisoner of Tehran* is nonfiction, the real life experience of Marina Nemat amidst the political turmoil in Iran in the 1980's. You may purchase your copies from either Borders or Barnes and Noble. Do call the particular store ahead to make sure that branch of the franchise has the book in stock. You can also find this book via amazon.com.
- ❖ Work assigned is due on the day of your first English class for 2010-2011 - no exceptions! Please do not wait until the last moment to begin. Pace yourself.
- ❖ Please read this entire assignment sheet and any accompanying background notes before you begin working with the texts.
- ❖ For those of you who prefer audio, *Sister of My Heart* is not available in that format, but it is very easy to read aloud with a friend. *The Prisoner of Tehran* should be downloadable from iTunes onto your iPod.
- ❖ You will be tested on these novels and assigned essays and projects during the first few weeks of school. Do expect testing in some form to be immediate.
- ❖ Once you have seen your projects, your work will be kept in our English files and will not be returned to you. Therefore, be sure to save your work. You may well be asked to send your work to turnitin.com **Only your original work will be accepted**. There are no SparkNotes, e-notes, or videos for either work. Material used from other sources or work completed by another student and copied will be appropriately penalized. **In case of plagiarism, no credit will be given.**
- ❖ All written work is to be typed and cut/pasted onto 5x 8 index cards/lined on one side, so you will need to purchase those. Make sure you are indenting paragraphs and writing in complete sentences. Please check your spelling. For any quotations used, indicate page numbers in parentheses.

- ❖ Each set of cards will be left hole-punched and bound together with ribbon, straw ties, string, or binder rings when you hand them in at your first class. You will be handing in two different sets so **each set has its own typed cover card with your name in large bold type in the middle of that card.**
- ❖ We have included separate background material for The Prisoner of Tehran; do read this prior to reading the novel.

Note: *During your sophomore year, you will study the literature of cultures around the world. Your summer reading begins that pursuit. Do expect to be challenged by belief systems, customs and traditions very different from your own. That's a wonderful experience and will certainly broaden your worldview.*

The Prisoner of Tehran by Marina Nemat

Nemat tells of her harrowing experience as a young Iranian girl at the start of the Islamic revolution. (see background notes). In January 1982, the 16-year-old student activist was arrested, jailed in Tehran's infamous Evin prison, tortured and sentenced to death. Ali, one of her interrogators, intervened moments before her execution, having used family connections with Ayatollah Khomeini himself to reduce her sentence to life in prison. But, that sentence reduction would come with a tremendous price. Nemat's engaging memoir is rich with complex characters—loved ones lost on both sides of this political/religious conflict. You will meet Ali's warm and loving Islamic family who embrace Nemat with affection and acceptance; you will meet her own Christian family who struggle to survive in this magnificent country torn by strife. Nemat offers an arresting, heartbreaking story of forgiveness, hope and enduring love—a voice for the untold scores silenced by Iran's revolution. (May)

Reminder: Do read and digest the background material prior to reading this work of nonfiction!!! It is attached as the last page of this packet!

Note: Just follow Marina's compelling story. Do not worry if you do not understand the purposes of the different political groups or religious factions; just focus on Marina's personal conflict as she finds her own identity. Until 1935, Iran was known as Persia; you will see both names used in Marina's story.

Directions: Using thirteen 5x8 color-coded index cards, you will complete the following:

Card #1: Cover Card:

Please type or neatly print your full name. Under that please put the title of the book and the full name of the author in the center of this card. Do decorate this card with colors of the Iranian flag as well as small visuals/symbols/stickers of the cultural elements in this work. These could range from a Persian rug, a traditional wedding table, a Persian garden, Middle Eastern foods, or one of the many magnificent mosques or palaces.

Card #2: Geography: (Color-code this card green)

Download or hand-draw a colorful map of Iran. Circle or highlight the cities of Tehran, Quom, Zahedan, Tabris, and Shiraz. Also circle or highlight the Elborz (variously spelled Alborz) Mountains, the Caspian Sea., the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea. Clearly identify all border countries: Afghanistan, Armenia, Turkey, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, and Pakistan.

Cards #3-#5: Identification of People in Marina's Life: (Color-code these cards pink)

Choose three of the people listed below. In a well-expanded full paragraph with at least three supports, indicate **how** this person becomes a source of comfort and/or courage for Marina or both. **Or** did your chosen person surround her with a horrifying combination of terror and tenderness? Make sure your information is very specific; **cite the chapters and page numbers or your details. Type this paragraph in single space and paste to your index cards. Do remember to indent.**

Andre	Albert the bookseller	Arash	Grandmother Xena Mooratova
Mr.Mooshavi	Mrs. Mooshavi	Akram	Friend and cellmate – Sarah
Aram			

Card # 6 : Iranian Culture (Color- code this card orange)

Scour the internet and research one element of the fascinating Iranian/Persian culture. There are many which focus on the wedding traditions such as are noted in the book: the detailed set-up of the wedding table, the mirror of fate, the tray of seven herbs and spices, etc. Or you could research Persian rugs, Persian gardens, the ancient city of Persepolis, or the magnificent mosques or palaces which are highlights of Iranian architecture. It would also be fascinating to research the Imperial Collection of Jewels belonging to the former Shah.

On the front of your card (unlined), download visuals of your chosen topic with a title indicating the focus of research. On the back of your card (in single space, paragraph format), type the information which explains the visuals; the information must be **in your own words**. Be sure to cite your sources.

Card #7, 8, and 9: Significant Objects - Color-code these cards blue.

Choose three important objects throughout the book and explain the significance of each object. Each object should be on a separate index card.

- Front of the card (unlined): Draw a colorful visual of your object
- Back of the card (lined): Explain the following in sentence format
 - What is the object
 - To whom is it important
 - What is the object's function in this work?

Cards #10 - 13: Vocabulary: (Color-code these cards yellow)

Choose four words that are new to you. On the front of these vocabulary cards, print or type the word you have chosen (one per card).

Your chosen word is not one indicative of Iranian culture but rather a new word from the English language!! Ex “incomprehensible” versus “mojahedin”

- Create a visualization on the front that would help you remember that word.
- On the back, please type the original sentence with page number, the definition, and the part of speech of your chosen word.

Sister of My Heart by Chitra Divakaruni

Directions: Using thirteen 5x8 index cards, you will complete the following:

Card #1: Cover Card

Please type or neatly print your full name. Under that please put the title of the book and the full name of the author in the center of this card. Do decorate this card with colors of the flag of India as well as small visuals/symbols/stickers of the cultural elements in the novel. Again, these could range from traditional Indian clothing, food, Hindu gods and stories, or specific places/objects in the novel such as the cinema, sweetmeats, and the mangoes.

Note: Those of you who are Indian in heritage must focus on visuals/symbols researched from Indian mythology or folklore. Children’s stories told and retold to generations of children in India would also be very acceptable here.

Card #2: Geography (Color-code this card green)

Download or hand-draw a colorful map of India, circling the cities which are important in the story of Anju and Sudha. Keep track of these as you read.

Cards #3and 4: Themes (Color-code these cards pink)

Choose two dominant themes in the novel. State your theme in one sentence at the top of your index card. In one well-expanded paragraph, trace the presence of that theme presenting at least three examples from the novel as supports. Remember, a theme is not just a one word abstract noun like "love". You need to state what the author is saying about "love" in order to have a theme. For example, a definite theme in Sister of My Heart is as follows: "Every heart, even the hardest, has a fragile spot. If you hit it there, it shatters." **Type this paragraph in single space and paste to your index cards. Do remember to indent. (Two paragraphs/two themes)**

Card #5: Character Chart for Sudha (Color-code this card orange)

Create a two-columned chart for Sudha. In the first column, list four key personality traits of this character. In the second column parallel to the listing of that trait, present four

situations in which that trait is clearly seen. This information may be bulleted and not written in sentences. Do decorate this card with colors and symbols you associate with Sudha. **These situations must be drawn from throughout the entire novel not just the first five or six chapters and must be presented in detail!!**

Card #6: Character Chart for Anju (Color-code this chart in orange also)

Create a two-columned chart for Anju. In the first column, list four key personality traits of this character. In the second column parallel to the listing of that trait, present four situations in which that trait is clearly seen. This information may be bulleted and not written in sentences. Do decorate this card with colors and symbols you associate with Anju. **These situations must be drawn from throughout the entire novel not just the first five or six chapters and must be presented in detail!!**

***Note:** If you have difficulty putting your information in a chart, feel free to type the character trait in bold, space down and indent, and proceed to type a paragraph that then presents the four situations in which that trait is seen.*

Card #7: Hindu Wedding Customs (Color-code these cards blue)

Research traditional Hindu weddings and present a collage of your research (traditional wedding outfits, importance of color and jewelry, parts of the ceremony, specific ritual objects used, etc.) Do provide an explanation for **three** of any of the elements of a Hindu wedding.

Cards #8-13: Vocabulary: (Color-code these cards yellow)

Choose six words that are new to you. On the front of these vocabulary cards, print or type the word you have chosen (one per card).

Your chosen word is not one indicative of the culture of India but rather a new word from the English language.

- Create a visualization on the front that would help you remember that word.
- On the back, please type the original sentence, the definition, and the part of speech of your chosen word.

Have a safe and wonderful summer!

****See Attached Background Information for *The Prisoner of Tehran***

BACKGROUND ON IRAN (PERSIA) - the modern era

Early Years

In the 18th and 19th centuries Iran fell under the increasing pressure of European nations, particularly Russia and Great Britain. The discovery of oil in Iran the early 1900's intensified the rivalry of the two nations for power and influence over Iran. By the end of World War II Great Britain and Russia (then called the Soviet Union) occupied Iran. Although the U.S and British pressure eventually forced the Soviet Union to withdraw, Iran remained under strong British influence. Britain owned the majority of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company which controlled Iran's oil industry. Iranian nationalists resented British domination of their country. They believed that Iranian development could be achieved through democratic, constitutional means.

The Shah - Mohammad Reza Pahlavi

In the 1950's Iran's prime minister tried to free Iran from foreign influence and regain control of its oil industry. He nationalized (took over) the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company which outraged both British and Iranian conservatives. The British called it an illegal act and organized a worldwide boycott of Iranian oil. The U.S. was aware of the influence that the Soviet Union had on Iran. It feared that it might gain control of Iran. For this reason in 1953 the U.S. helped to overthrow the prime minister and establish a new leader, **Mohammad Reza Pahlavi**, who was supportive of the U.S. and Western culture. Known as the Shah because of his ties to the former Iranian monarchy, he worked to modernize Iran. He created a modern economy and extended basic rights to women. However many of his reforms, especially those involving women, upset conservative Muslims. He relied on the support of the U.S. and on his army and secret police known as the **Savak** which provided security for the Shah. It was often ruthless in its methods, even torturing and executing any opposition to the Shah.

Ayatollah Khomeini

In the 1960's and 1970's the Shah controlled Iran and ran it as a dictatorship. When the Shah introduced "The White Revolution" in 1963 which was a campaign of social and economic Westernization, it was met with intense opposition. During this time the U.S. counted on the Shah to guarantee the security of the region. To many observers Iran led by the Shah appeared to be strong and stable, but discontent was growing. In a series of reforms that alienated his people, the Shah replaced the Islamic calendar with an "imperial" calendar, beginning with the founding of the Persian Empire. Many of the Shah's critics saw this as an "anti-Islamic" action. By 1978 Iranians who were against the Shah resorted to rioting, mass demonstrations and strikes to protest his policies. One of the opponents, **Ayatollah Khomeini**, a conservative Islamic leader, was arrested by the Shah in one of his crackdowns on his rivals. The brutal actions of the secret police, Savak, increased opposition to the Shah.

Islamic Revolution

In addition many of those who opposed the Shah took a renewed interest in the Islamic religion. Led by Khomeini, they were against the Shah's modernization efforts and ties to Western culture. They wanted a society more like a **theocracy** where religion controls the governmental decisions. Unable to contain the opposition, the Shah left Iran in early 1979. Khomeini then stepped in to take power and established an Islamic Republic. Iranians elected a president in 1980, but Khomeini held the real power. When he gained power with his army of "spiritual enforcers" known as **Revolutionary Guards**, he only substituted one dictatorship for another. His rule did not bring more freedom for anyone. Women lost the rights they had and were forced to wear head coverings and full body cloaks. Opponents to Khomeini were imprisoned and tortured as severely as during the rule of the Shah. Meanwhile the Shah fled to the U.S. where he was protected by the American government which angered the Iranians. In November of 1979 Iranian radicals took over the U.S. Embassy in Tehran and seized more than 60 Americans who were working there. The Americans were held hostage while the radicals demanded that the Shah be returned to Iran to stand trial. The Shah left the U.S. and died in Egypt in 1980, but the Iranians continued to hold the American hostages for 444 days and did not release them until January, 1981.

Glossary of Terms for Prisoner of Tehran

1. **Russian Christian** - Eastern Orthodox (Orthodox Catholic Church) religion under leadership of the patriarch of Russia
2. **Theocracy** – form of government ruled by religious authority
3. **Shia Sect** – branch of Islam; these followers believe Ali (cousin of Muhammad) and his descendants are the true successors of Muhammad.
4. **Revolutionary Guards** – a branch of the Iranian Military formed after the 1979 Revolution, specifically to advance revolutionary goals. They have also played an active role in training other terrorist groups in the Middle East like Hezbollah.
5. **Mojahedin** – Muslims who proclaim themselves warriors for the Islamic faith; literally one who struggles, justice-fighter, one who fights for freedom.
6. **Namaz** – refers to five daily prayers that Muslims offer to Allah. As a Pillar of Islam it is compulsory for every Muslim.
7. **Jihad** – an individual's personal struggle for spiritual perfection; today it is also an Arabic word for holy war.
8. **Hijab/Hejab** - a headscarf worn by Muslim women which conceals the hair and neck, may also have face veil.
9. **Chador** – a loose, usually black robe worn by Muslim women that covers the body.

