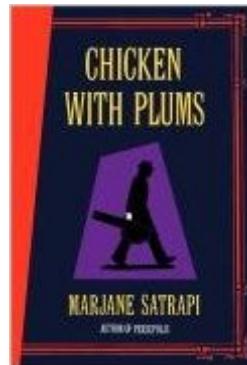


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# Chicken With Plums



## Synopsis

In her acclaimed *Persepolis* books and in *Embroideries*, Marjane Satrapi rendered the events of her life and times in a uniquely captivating and powerful voice and vision. Now she turns that same keen eye and ear to the heartrending story of her great-uncle, a celebrated Iranian musician who gave up his life for music and love. We are in Tehran in 1958, and Nasser Ali Khan, one of Iran's most revered tar players, discovers that his beloved instrument is irreparably damaged. Though he tries, he cannot find one to replace it, one whose sound speaks to him with the same power and passion with which his music speaks to others. In despair, he takes to his bed, renouncing the world and all its pleasures, closing the door on the demands and love of his wife and his four children. Over the course of the week that follows, his family and close friends attempt to change his mind, but Nasser Ali slips further and further into his own reveries: flashbacks and flash-forwards (with unexpected appearances by the likes of the Angel of Death and Sophia Loren) from his own childhood through his children's futures. And as the pieces of his story slowly fall into place, we begin to understand the profundity of his decision to give up life. Marjane Satrapi brings what has become her signature humor, insight, and generosity to this emotional tale of life and death, and the courage and passion both require of us. The poignant story of one man, it is also a story of stunning universality "and an altogether luminous work.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Drawn in bold black and white, Marjane Satrapi's graphic novel illustrates the moving and disturbing life and last days of her uncle, Nasser Ali Kahn. He was a famous Iranian musician, loved for his

virtuosity, and the sensitivity with which he played his beloved tar. It's a tale of how a man's happiness was gradually eroded by his culture, loss, suppressed feelings, and unrealizable expectations. The story starts with an older man in black walking down a city street. He encounters a slender woman with her grandchild. He hesitates. Asks if her name is Irane. She doesn't recognize him. Wonders how he knows her name. He, Nasser, apologizes and walks on to a friend's business where he hopes to buy a replacement for his recently broken tar. We later learn that the broken tar had special meaning for Nasser. When he was a young man, the parents of the woman he'd fallen in love with forbade her to marry him because he was only a musician. Losing her plunged him into deep depression. He had difficulty playing. Nasser's tar master tried to console him by telling him, "To the common man, whether you're a musician or a clown, it's one and the same. The love you feel for this woman will translate into your music. She will be in every note you play." He then gave Nasser his own tar and instructed him to go on playing. From then on, Nasser's joy was his music. His playing thrilled his audiences. Since childhood he'd been unable to meet the conventional expectations of others. His mother's, his brother's, his teachers', the parents of the woman he loved, his wife, his children. His mother urged him to marry a woman he didn't love so that he would forget his loss. Although the woman he married did love him, she resented his music.

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