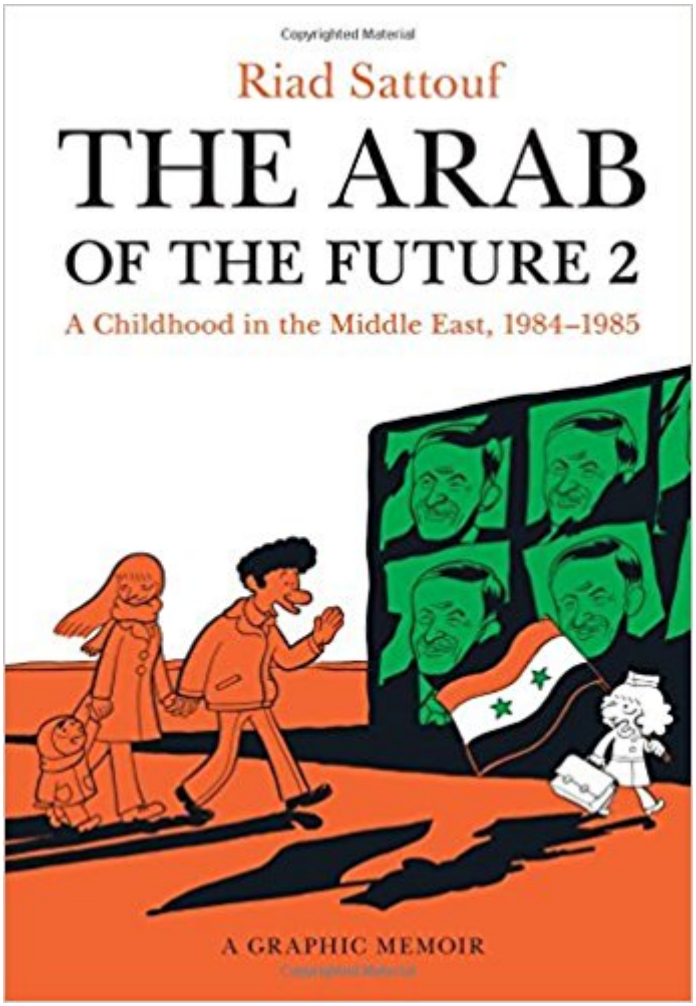
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The Arab Of The Future 2: A Childhood In The Middle East, 1984-1985: A Graphic Memoir



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Synopsis

The highly anticipated continuation of Riad SattoufÃ¢â ¬â„¢s internationally acclaimed, #1 French bestseller, which was hailed by The New York Times as Ã¢â ¬Å“a disquieting yet essential readÃ¢â ¬Â•In The Arab of the Future: Volume 1, cartoonist Riad Sattouf tells of the first years of his childhood as his family shuttles back and forth between France and the Middle East. In Libya and Syria, young Riad is exposed to the dismal reality of a life where food is scarce, children kill dogs for sport, and his cousins, virulently anti-Semitic and convinced he is Jewish because of his blond hair, lurk around every corner waiting to beat him up. In Volume 2, Riad, now settled in his fatherÃ¢â ¬â„¢s hometown of Homs, gets to go to school, where he dedicates himself to becoming a true Syrian in the country of the dictator Hafez Al-Assad. Told simply yet with devastating effect, RiadÃ¢â ¬â„¢s story takes in the sweep of politics, religion, and poverty, but is steered by acutely observed small moments: the daily sadism of his schoolteacher, the lure of the black market, with its menu of shame and subsistence, and the obsequiousness of his father in the company of those close to the regime. As his family strains to fit in, one chilling, barbaric act drives the Sattoufs to make the most dramatic of changes. Darkly funny and piercingly direct, The Arab of the Future, Volume 2 once again reveals the inner workings of a tormented country and a tormented family, delivered through Riad SattoufÃ¢â ¬â„¢s dazzlingly original talent.

Book Information

Series: The Arab of the Future (Book 2)

Paperback: 160 pages

Publisher: Metropolitan Books; First Edition edition (September 20, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1627793518

ISBN-13: 978-1627793513

Product Dimensions: 6.4 x 0.7 x 9.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 14.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars 22 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #194,343 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #134 inÃ Â Books > Comics & Graphic Novels > Graphic Novels > Educational & Nonfiction #171 inÃ Â Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Historical > Middle East #226 inÃ Â Books > Comics & Graphic Novels > Biographies & History Graphic Novels

Customer Reviews

Ã¢â ¬Å“SattoufÃ¢â ¬â„¢s story and storytelling [are] irresistible. . . . Living betwixt and between cultures may be SattoufÃ¢â ¬â„¢s destiny. It was hard on him as a child, and it may remain so in adulthood. But it makes for exceptionally good art.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â ¢The New York TimesÃ¢â ¬Å“A deft and devastating graphic memoir . . . both sensitive and biting . . . Along the way, we get a fine-grained, first-person account of the brutality of Syria under Hafez al-Assad and Libya under Muammar Qaddafi.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â ¢New York Review of BooksÃ¢â ¬Å“Sattouf is a master of visual storytelling, capable of compressing a great deal of human emotion and contradictions within a few panels. He creates a searing depiction of growing up poor in a country ruled by corruption and religious zealotry.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â ¢Publishers WeeklyÃ¢â ¬Å“Nothing escapes SattoufÃ¢â ¬â„¢s curious and vigilant eyes. . . . Using the magic of his visual storytelling, Sattouf becomes a darkly humorous, poignant, and vivid guide into the mind of Syrians.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â ¢Christian Science MonitorÃ¢â ¬Å“Darkly ironic . . . SattoufÃ¢â ¬â„¢s father is the same immature, posturing figure familiar from volume 1Ã¢â ¬â ¢the family can only trail along in the mercurial patriarchÃ¢â ¬â„¢s wake. Under SattoufÃ¢â ¬â„¢s pen, this state of affairs becomes an ingeniously apt microcosm of the larger world he grew up in.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â ¢NPRÃ¢â ¬Å“A darker book than its predecessor, though itÃ¢â ¬â„¢s still drily funny, Sattouf never failing to make the most of the aching gap between his fatherÃ¢â ¬â„¢s fantasies and reality.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â ¢The Guardian (Graphic Novel of the Month)Ã¢â ¬Å“The scope of SattoufÃ¢â ¬â„¢s comic is remarkable, taking in the complicated landscape of politics and religion, but it is in the small, human moments that he shines as an artist. . . . The Arab of the Future is essential read that deserves such a phenomenal sequel.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â ¢Largehearted BoyÃ¢â ¬Å“This work will undoubtedly win more accolades as the author continues the proposed five-volume series. Readers familiar with Marjane SatrapiÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Persepolis will be well rewarded when they pick up this similarly engrossing book.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â ¢Library Journal

Riad Sattouf is a best-selling cartoonist and filmmaker who grew up in Syria and Libya and now lives in Paris. The author of several comics series in France and a former contributor to the satirical publication Charlie Hebdo, Sattouf is now a weekly columnist for lÃ¢â ¬â„¢Obs. He also directed the films The French Kissers and Jacky in the WomenÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Kingdom.

A continuation of Riad Sattouf's graphic memoir of childhood. In this installment, which covers Riad at ages 6 - 7, the Sattouf family--Riad, his parents, and his baby brother--are living in a small Syrian village near Homs, where his grandmother lives as well as a number of other relatives (it almost

seems as if everyone nearby is a cousin, aunt, or uncle).Riad starts school, and many scenes are set there, where corporal punishment--delivered with something that looks like a truncheon, generally as a THWACK! across the hands--is arbitrary and commonplace, and much of the education seems to be pure indoctrination. For instance, as Riad recounts it, the very first lesson is learning the national anthem ("Defenders of the Homeland, peace be with you...The home of pan-Arabism, a sacred sanctuary...Our spirit is noble and our past glorious, and our martyrs' souls are our guardians...."), and before a presidential election, the class is told, "we must all say yes to our president Hafez Al-Assad [father of the current president, Bashar Al-Assad]...So you must tell your parents to vote yes, of course, because President Assad is the father of the Syrian nation." Riad afterwards reports, capturing his childhood innocence, "On February 10, 1985, Hafez Al-Assad was reelected with a 100-percent yes vote, a world record!" Assad, by the way, was the only candidate.There are other memories of these schooldays--some that seem quite ordinary and pleasant; others that will likely strike readers as much darker (e.g., playing at war against Israel, with cries of "Let's kill as many Jews as we can!...Yaay! All the Jews are dead!"). And there are many scenes set at home, where Riad's love and respect for his father are quite evident, but where he seems not to fully sense the magnitude of the tension between his French-born mother and his father, educated in France and with seemingly ambivalent feelings about traditional and modern values. The mother is generally in the background in this story, but when she emerges--for instance, immediately and forcefully condemning the honor killing of a unwed village woman who became pregnant, while Riad's father vacillates about reporting the crime--it seems apparent that conflicts are going to be a larger part of the story going forward.Another telling scene takes place late in the book when on a summer vacation in France to visit his grandparents, Riad visits the Euromarche, a superstore along the lines, I suppose, of a Target. He is overwhelmed by the selection toys, electronics, groceries, etc, and he concludes, "For me, it was the best place on earth." This is in contrast to the fact that when his father wants to purchase some luxuries for the home (to his mother, necessities, like a gas oven), he has to resort to the black market, where goods are smuggled in from Lebanon. During the same trip to get the oven, he also happily buys a VCR--a Betamax. Ulp.Book 3 in this series was published in France in Oct 2016 but will apparently not be available in the US until Aug 2018. I look forward to it!

This is an outstanding memoir. One must acknowledge that it takes place when the author is between 6 and 7. I will have to hunt down some interviews of the Mr. Sattouf, because most readers (including myself) find that his father and many aspects of Syrian government and life come across

as awful. Riad is half French and half Syrian. In volume one, his father (who is educated but incredibly sexist, racist and ethnocentric) hauls the family from France to Libya and then Syria so that he can secure a teaching position. This volume takes place entirely in Syria, save for a 2 week vacation to France that Riad takes with his mother and younger brother. Riad's father constantly puts the west down and says how Syria is very superior...but Riad continually contradicts his father (for example - when he visits a doctor, the doctor tells the son and father that he should have the operation in France rather than Syria....the father refuses to tell the mother this because it goes against his propaganda).Because this is volume 2, Riad is more at the center of action than an observer of his parents. He enters school and has to deal with terrible rule beatings from his teachers and statist propaganda about religion and politics (the bit on the Presidential election is terrific). Riad has a kind heart and a keen eye - he can see that many of his classmates are very poor and some have burn marks on their face and hands (from crawling around as a baby and knocking over super hot cups of tea). He walks around with other children, picks up crabs, plays at war, forms friendships, and is occasionally ostracized and left out. Despite being set in Syria, Riad shares many universal experiences of childhood.The first volume was nominated for an Eisner award. It would have won, but it ran into incredibly stiff competition (March 2 by John Lewis won, while "The Story of My Tits" is an incredible memoir about a family's multigenerational battle with breast cancer). March 3 came out a few weeks before this, and Mr. Satouf will be hard pressed to pick up the Eisner this year. But it seems like we will have several volumes of this comic, so he should get an Eisner at some point.It's a fine work. I imagine that some Arabs will find this offensive, and that some Trumpists will cite it as an excuse to ban all Muslims (but then again, that kind of individual would not read this). Both are wrong. Frankly, it's a great story from a man raised in two worlds.

I wanted to buy volume one when it came out but decided to wait until volume 2 was released - I live in Australia and it takes forever to have it sent over and costs a fortune. So, I received both volumes at the same time and whipped through them in a day. Now I realize that volumes 3, 4, and 5 are in the pipeline. I hate it; I'm not a patient guy.The story: gut retching. Painfully honest. Frankly, I'd fear for the author's safety. I pray that the title is ironic and the it does not depict the Arab of the future but Sattouf makes it quite clear that change in the Arab world just isn't in the cards.

A brilliant, moving and funny story of the author's vivid childhood memories when his insecure but caring father takes the family from France to his poor home village in Syria. Sattouf's drawings and

words bring to life his six year old feelings and fears, as well as his very specific memories of the streets, his school, and the children and adults he encounters in Syria and on vacation in France. A classic which I will re-read many times. Everyone should read it.

A tour de force look at life in the Arab world from the perspective of a little boy with a Syrian father and a French mother. Rings true!

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