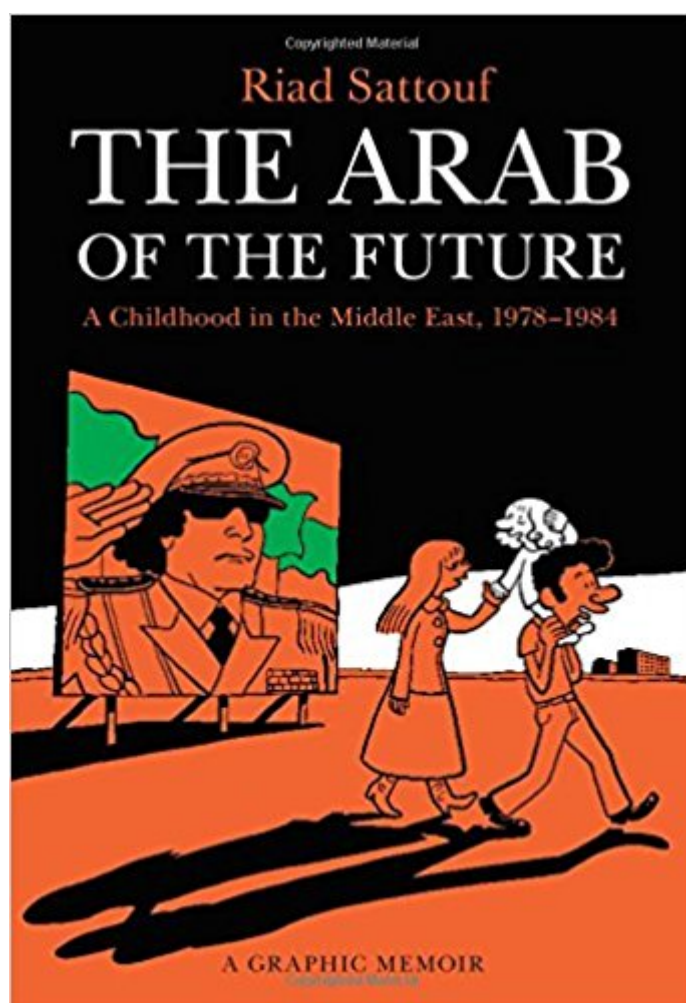


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# The Arab Of The Future: A Childhood In The Middle East, 1978-1984: A Graphic Memoir



## Synopsis

The Arab of the Future, the #1 French best-seller, tells the unforgettable story of Riad Sattouf's childhood, spent in the shadows of 3 dictators—Muammar Gaddafi, Hafez al-Assad, and his father. In striking, virtuoso graphic style that captures both the immediacy of childhood and the fervor of political idealism, Riad Sattouf recounts his nomadic childhood growing up in rural France, Gaddafi's Libya, and Assad's Syria—but always under the roof of his father, a Syrian Pan-Arabist who drags his family along in his pursuit of grandiose dreams for the Arab nation. Riad, delicate and wide-eyed, follows in the trail of his mismatched parents; his mother, a bookish French student, is as modest as his father is flamboyant. Venturing first to the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab State and then joining the family tribe in Homs, Syria, they hold fast to the vision of the paradise that always lies just around the corner. And hold they do, though food is scarce, children kill dogs for sport, and with locks banned, the Sattoufs come home one day to discover another family occupying their apartment. The ultimate outsider, Riad, with his flowing blond hair, is called the ultimate insult—Jewish. And in no time at all, his father has come up with yet another grand plan, moving from building a new people to building his own great palace. Brimming with life and dark humor, The Arab of the Future reveals the truth and texture of one eccentric family in an absurd Middle East, and also introduces a master cartoonist in a work destined to stand alongside Maus and Persepolis.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Winner of the L.A. Times Book Prize" One of the most prominent cartoonists in the world right now." *Smithsonian* "Exquisitely illustrated, and filled with experiences of misfortune bordering on the farcical, Mr. Sattouf's book is a disquieting yet essential read." *Carmela Ciuraru, The New York Times* "The Arab of the Future has become that rare thing in France's polarized intellectual climate: an object of consensual rapture, hailed as a masterpiece in the leading journals of both the left and the right. . . . it has, in effect, made Sattouf the Arab of the present in France." *Adam Shatz, The New Yorker* "As the very young Riad Sattouf navigates life in Libya, France, and Syria, he gets a serious education in the mysterious vectors of power that shape not just the political world, but the intimate sphere of his own family. With charming yet powerful drawings and vivid sensory details, Sattouf delivers a child's-eye view of the baffling adult world in all its complexity, corruption, and delusion. This is a beautiful, funny, and important graphic memoir." *Alison Bechdel, author of Fun Home* "The hundred-and-fifty-odd pages of Riad Sattouf's internationally bestselling graphic memoir . . . move with an irrepressible comic velocity. The book is told Candide-style . . . an indictment of the adult world and its insidious methods of diminishment we all have either faced or been fortunate enough to escape." *The New Republic* "Engaging and lovely to look at . . . Sattouf has an eye for grimly funny details . . . and milks the disjunction between how he experienced his political environment at the time and how he understands it now for all it's worth." *Douglas Wolk, Los Angeles Times* "Sattouf's work is laced with astute observations of human beings. His memoirs often dwell on their failings: hypocrisy, cowardice, bullying. Yet there's humour too – mainly because his humans are so helplessly absurd." *The Guardian* "The Arab of the Future is already being compared to biographical classics like *Maus* and *Persepolis*, and the modern relevance of the countries in which it is set is sure to make this a widely talked about book this year." *Mentalfloss.com* "The Arab of the Future maintains a balance of comedy and commentary and is carried by excellent drawings. Riad Sattouf's work takes its place alongside other classic animated retrospective memoirs from the region, *Persepolis* . . . and *Waltz with Bashir*." *The New York Journal of Books* "Seriously funny and penetratingly honest, Riad Sattouf tells the epic story of his eccentric and troubled family. Written with tenderness, grace, and piercing clarity, *The Arab of the Future* is one of those books that transcend their form to become a literary masterpiece." *Michel Hazanavicius, director of The Artist* "The Arab of the

Future is a beautifully cartooned story that is both modern and timeless. The protagonist is one of the most endearing in comics. An important book, not just as art but as a window into another culture.

—Gene Luen Yang, author of *American Born Chinese*

“The Arab of the Future confirms Riad Sattouf’s place among the greatest cartoonists of his generation.

—Le Monde

“Engrossing . . . Sattouf writes in a fluid prose, beautifully translated by Sam Taylor.

—Laila Lalami, *The New York Times Book Review* (Editor’s Choice)

“In his comics, Sattouf deftly weaves the political background with the everyday. He tells a personal story but also observes the society and country around him, and his great sense of humor makes reading the book thoroughly enjoyable.

It’ll have you laughing to the point of tears.

—Haaretz

“Very funny and very sad . . . the social commentary here is more wistful and melancholy than sharp-edged . . . subtly written and deftly illustrated, with psychological incisiveness and humor.

—Kirkus Reviews (starred review)

“Sattouf’s account of his childhood is a deeply personal recollection of a peripatetic youth that can resonate with audiences across the world. It also paints an incisive picture of the Arab world in the late 1970s and early 1980s that sets the stage for the revolutionary changes that would grip and roil the region decades later.

—Foreign Policy

“Wide-eyed, yet perceptive, the book documents the wanderings of [Sattouf’s] mismatched parents—his bookish French mother and pan-Arabist father, Abdel-Razak Sattouf . . . often disquieting, but always honest.

—France 24

“Despite his father’s determination to integrate his son into Arab society, little Sattouf—with his long blond hair—never fully fits in, and this report reads like the curious pondering of an alien from another world. Caught between his parents, Sattouf makes the best of his situation by becoming a master observer and interpreter, his clean, cartoonish art making a social and personal document of wit and understanding.

—Publishers Weekly (starred review, Most Anticipated Books of Fall 2015)

Riad Sattouf is a best-selling cartoonist and filmmaker who grew up in Syria, Libya, and Algeria, and now lives in Paris. The author of four comics series in France and a weekly column in the satirical publication *Charlie Hebdo*, Sattouf also directed the films *The French Kissers* and *Jacky in the Women’s Kingdom*. *The Arab of the Future* is his first work to appear in English.

I read about this Graphic Memoir on a book blog and had previously only read one other graphic

memoir (Persepolis) and loved it, so I thought I'd try this one. My first reaction was that it was "strange" but graphic novels/memoirs are really a genre unto themselves and need a bit of getting used to. Eventually, I was processing the story as though it were written text because the author/artist is so adept at choosing just the right narration with a few words of dialogue and the perfect graphics to create understanding within the reader. There were moments of hilarity such as when the author, as a small boy, gets assistance from his grandmother in getting something out of his eye. In addition, the characterization of the parents and the extended family was done well and it is difficult not to leave the story without specific feelings for each. The story, in general, is a wonderful look at a child from mixed cultures trying to deal with the Arab world in the late 1970s, early 1980s. The book left me with the need to read its sequel and looking forward to it.

Entertaining, humorous and disturbing. The insights here are deeply real, very personal. You just want to know more -- how and why is this marriage holding together? When will it end and how? At times, this is a very painful account of a family in some very strange circumstances. It is also the amusing perspective of a tiny, quirky outsider who is forced to bridge different worlds. The insights into the Arabic mindset are electrifying and especially relevant. I will be looking for the next book. Superb.

The renderings were wonderful. I love the color schemes. People here really dislike the father figure and see him as a tyrant of sorts. While I didn't "like" him per se, I found him to be a sympathetic character. Imagine growing up in a rural, nearly medieval village and being the only person in your family to become literate, get an advanced education, learn new languages, and travel abroad? How does one reconcile their new knowledge with culture and family of origin? This is a man trying to straddle two very disparate cultures and make sense of it, decide what should be adopted and what should be thrown away. It wouldn't be an easy task for any one, and in our globalist world we know plenty of people are dealing with this very struggle on a daily basis. While there are dark elements in the story, I also felt sentimentality and nostalgia for the idealism expressed by the father and by Quadaffi's communitarian vision. This was the era when people believed that Marxism and Pan-Arabism would transform society and move it forward. The father embraces these ideals and believes a new society is possible. It all seems quaint now, in an era where much of the Muslim vanguard has discarded Marxist ideals and instead embraced the retrograde, Wahhabist vision of life organized around theocratic principles. This story may have been different if it took place in the modern era. It's a great book, hard to put down, and challenging to modern western sensibilities.

NOT A BOOK FOR KINDLE. COMIC BOOK STYLE CAN'T BE READ EASILY.

A wonderful and exciting way if you want to learn about Syrian culture, customs and world views. This Book helped me understanding strange and unfamiliar things in the Near East. Reading this book is a delight, I especially like the humor in it, the way people are pictured.

love it couldnt let go...and for those blaming our religion for the anti-jewish kids.. no you are wrong after the 1948 palestinian problem caused by incoming jews and zionists from germany there was a wide spread hate for jews for causing the what is known as the "Palestinian refugee "which was and is a big problem .....

Beautifully illustrated and colored cartoon with incredible insights into a rich culture that is deeply misunderstood and ignored by the West.

Excellent. I'm looking forward to volume two. The drawings are annoying at first, crude, but well balanced with the content. I soon grew to admire their succinct clarity and how well they complemented the storyline. Read this and share it.

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