



★ **The End of the Arab of the Future: A Youth in the Middle East Volume 1**

Riad Sattouf

Sam Taylor, Translator

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Riad Sattouf's exceptional graphic memoir *The End of the Arab of the Future* is about when his brother went missing.

In 1992, Sattouf was fourteen years old. His father kidnapped his younger brother, Fadi, and took him to Syria. Sattouf's mother sought help, but legal aid was delayed by her divorce proceedings.

In the interim, Sattouf, whose interests included H. P. Lovecraft and comic books, developed romantic feelings for a girl and started down a path in art. His mother consulted a medium for news of Fadi. Later, Sattouf's grandmother spotted his father in a store in France, leading to a climactic confrontation over Fadi's custody.

The illustrations are whimsical, even in covering difficult scenes, as of Sattouf's mother's heartbreak. Contrasts between "good" and "bad" thoughts are marked by color changes from blue to red; when Sattouf muses about serious topics like religion, an image of himself as a horned Satan keeps the panel entertaining.

In this way, laugh-out-loud moments, as with arrows pointing to Sattouf's "Weird haircut to conceal egg-shaped head," are well juxtaposed to the drama inherent in the story. Even the lettering contributes to the fun: Sattouf tries "not to sound effeminate," and the all-capitalized text in his word balloon takes on a sudden, hilarious increase in size and weight.

The End of the Arab of the Future is a masterful graphic memoir about growing up in the space between two cultures.

PETER DABBENE (May / June 2026)

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