

Lebanon Is Burning and Other Dispatches

Yazan Al-Saadi

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Journalist Yazan Al-Saadi's comics collaboration *Lebanon Is Burning and Other Dispatches* delivers moment-in-time reports from the Middle East.

Beginning with the Lebanese uprisings in October of 2019, the book unfolds events day by day, even hour by hour. Its prose and art capture the uncertainty and suspense of the focal situations. Historical details are included, illuminating the short-term and long-term causes and effects of political discontent.

There are variations in storytelling style between the entries, which explore the histories and current problems of countries including Bahrain, Sudan, and Yemen. The Israel-Palestine conflict is also addressed through the lens of the "Great March of Return," in which Palestinians attempted to return home, only to be met with force. Elsewhere, a two-page entry criticizes humanitarian organizations for their emphasis on short-term "successes" to drive donations and recruitment, instead of focusing on real structural improvements.

Each chapter stands alone. The book is kept fresh and invigorating by its changing roster of artists, styles, and prose. The latter is detailed and visceral, making use of firsthand observations and experiences and leaving room for thoughtful questions about the causes and possible solutions to the difficulties that plague the Middle East. References to Chinese philosophy, Galileo Galilei, Jonathan Swift, and Maya Angelou broaden the book's scope.

An eye-opening tour of troubled events in the Middle East and Northern Africa, *Lebanon Is Burning and Other Dispatches* is an exciting, informative collection of graphic journalism.

PETER DABBENE (November / December 2024)

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