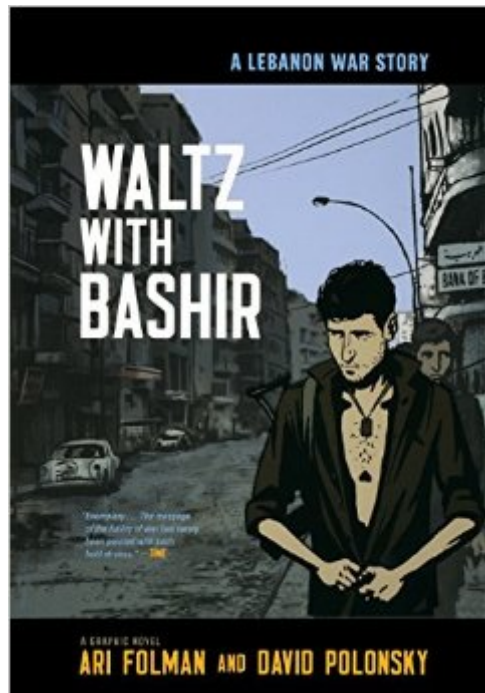


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Waltz With Bashir: A Lebanon War Story



Synopsis

"Special, strange, and peculiarly potent... Extraordinary." —Variety One night in Beirut in September 1982, while Israeli soldiers secured the area, Christian militia members entered the refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila and began to massacre hundreds, if not thousands, of Palestinians. Ari Folman was one of those Israeli soldiers, but for more than twenty years he remembered nothing of that night or of the weeks leading up to it. Then came a friend's disturbing dream, and with it Folman's need to excavate the truth of the war in Lebanon and answer the crucial question: what was he doing during the hours of slaughter? Challenging the collective amnesia of friends and fellow soldiers, Folman painfully, candidly pieces together the war and his place in it. Gradually, the blankness of his mind is filled in by scenes of combat and patrol, misery and carnage, as well as dreams and hallucinations. Soldiers are haunted by inexplicable nightmares and flashbacks—snapping, growling dogs with teeth bared and eyes glowing orange; a recurring image of three young men rising naked out of the sea to drift into the Beirut battlefield. Tanks crush cars and buildings with lethal indifference; snipers pick off men on donkeys, men in cars, men drinking coffee; a soldier waltzes through a storm of bullets; rock songs fill the air, and then yellow flares. The recollections accumulate until Ari Folman arrives at Sabra and Shatila and his investigation reaches its terrible end. The result is a gripping reconstruction, a probing inquiry into the unreliable quality of memory, and, above all, a powerful denunciation of the senselessness of all wars. Profoundly original in form and approach, *Waltz with Bashir* will take its place as one of the great works of wartime testimony.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Reading *Waltz With Bashir* has been an interesting experience. Initially I was under the impression that it was a graphic novel based on a live-action movie, but as I came to learn more of the graphic novel's history I realized that this is a direct film-to-book translation of an animated piece. Each panel is captured from the film and given English dialogue. Despite my general dislike for book adaptations of movies, *Waltz With Bashir* actually works, because as a graphic novel it is as visually stimulating as a film might be and had an immense impact on me as a reader. *Waltz With Bashir* follows a man named Folman, one of the authors, actually, who has begun having strange and terrible dreams related to his involvement in the 1982 Lebanon War. But he can't remember anything from the war beyond vague details and sets out to unravel the pieces to finally achieve some semblance of peace in his sleep. In doing so, however, he begins to discover things about himself and the war that he would much rather forget. *Waltz With Bashir* is clearly an emotional piece, and it successfully strikes home the feeling of regret and terror that comes with war, and especially with particularly bloody ones. While the story never fully completes itself--Folman never recalls his past in its entirety--*Waltz With Bashir* does give us a detailed glimpse into the world of a modern day soldier in the Middle East. Particularly touching, for me, were the last few pages of the book, which showed real pictures from the events described by Folman in his memories. These are, to say the least, disturbing precisely because they are real images, not doctored or staged photos--at least, I assume they're not staged. The vast majority of us in the U.S.

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