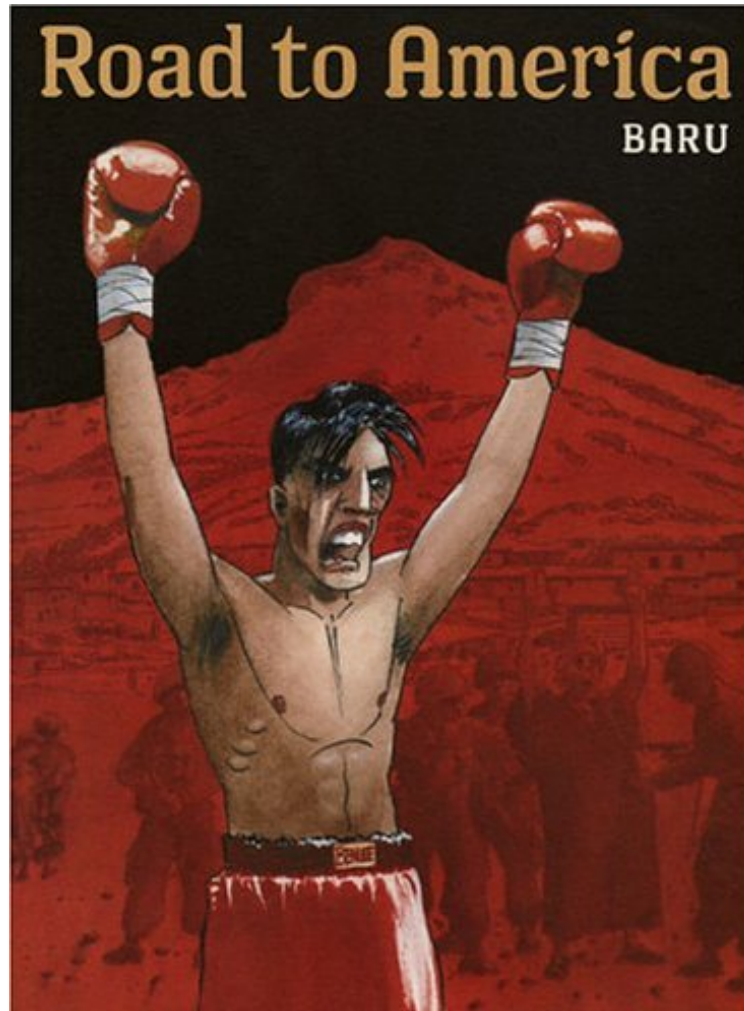


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## Road to America

Baru

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#3101191 in Books Drawn and Quarterly 2002-06-01 2002-03-01Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 .45 x .1 x 8.451, #File Name: 189659752180 pages | File size: 34.Mb

**Baru : Road to America** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Road to America:

2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Astonishing art and graphic novelBy Federico NeiraI loved this graphic novel. The story is great! The artwork is absolutely beautiful. The water-colors (Gouache?) and the movement of the figures are incredible. Five stars for this beautiful book.6 of 8 people found the following review helpful. I Really Wanted To Like This More...By A. RossBoy, I really wanted to like to like this book. It's from one the best publishers out there (Drawn Quarterly) and is about Algeria's struggle for liberation (I lived in Algeria for five years). Unfortunately, the beautiful coloring and wonderful paper and production can't quite rescue a story in which characters are barely developed and the action transitions much too abruptly.The story begins in 1955, the early days of the Algerian revolution against French colonial rule, where the reader meets young boxer Said. Promoters spot his raw

talent and he is propelled to France to become a championship contender. Meanwhile, back home, his brother has joined the revolutionary underground. As Said rises through the ranks, he struggles to stay apolitical, refusing to pay a "tax" to support the revolution and somewhat less successfully refusing to be a poster boy for French rule in Algeria. Indeed, his naive attempt to remain neutral is rather unconvincing as there is no explanation for its grounding, and thus is one of the story's weak points. Said's tale spans six years and takes only 45 pages, which leads to a certain feeling of truncation. Scenes jump into each other rather awkwardly, and the pacing feels very forced. What's also odd is that despite the title, the hero only spends a page and a half in America, and that trip has almost no plot purpose. Another problem is that a number of characters tend to look the same in Baru's representations. Interestingly, although he has gone for lovely traditional European detail for all his buildings, cars, backgrounds, etc. (like Vittorio Giardino), he retains a stylized cartoonish formation for his people, which can be confusing. Ultimately, while the art and production are quite beautiful, Baru has tried to force too much into too small a space. Algeria's struggle to free herself from France was a vastly complicated affair, with several factions on both sides operating both in Algeria and France. It's an integral part of modern French history, but I suspect that most American readers won't have enough of a historical context to sort out what's going on with DeGaulle, the OAS, and whatnot. Finally, the conclusion is rather weak in that it has events overtake Said rather than force him to confront his conscience and make a choice as to whose side he's on. It's still worth a look, and the climactic depiction of the riot by Paris police against peaceful protest marchers (which really happened) is quite vivid and horrific. One final note is that the introductory text has two typos in it. One refers to Algeria's liberation struggle as a civil war, which is rather like calling the American revolution the American civil war. The other is with regard to the number of Algerians killed, which is listed as 150,000. Depending on whose numbers you look at, the real number is from three to ten times that amount (the French government finally admitted to a figure of 350,000 while the Algerian government placed it at 1.5 million).<sup>2</sup> of 4 people found the following review helpful. Great Atmosphere But Not Much Of a Story By Marco Antonio Abarca The setting is Algeria and France during the political upheavals of the late 1950's. A young Algerian begins boxing and rises through the ranks to become the French National Champion. He is caught in a political tug of war between the French authorities and Algerian revolutionaries. This is a great idea for a story but the Bande Desinee format is not best medium for telling it. Baru's artwork is beautiful and rich in the atmosphere of the time. Unfortunately, the text is more of an outline of a good story than it is a real story.

The acclaimed series from Drawn Quarterly is finally a graphic novel. An alumnus of Art Spiegelman's RAW and one of France's most exciting talents, Baru has created with twitchy, nervous lines and washes of pale color the tense, sun bleached atmosphere of colonial Algeria in the 1950s. Together two Arab brothers wander the narrow streets of the capital. Tearing the family apart with their loyalties and ambitions, one brother goes underground and joins the fight for his country's freedom from French rule. The other brother takes to the boxing ring and makes a career of fighting with his fists that will make him a European sensation. A graphic novel with cinematic sweep and richly expressive art, the story explodes with the force of a punching fist or a car bomb.

From Publishers Weekly Set mainly in late 1950s Algeria and France during Algeria's war of independence, this work tells of young, working-class Algerian Said Boudiaf, whose first offer to box professionally comes as car bombs explode in the street nearby. His brother joins the resistance against the French, while Said leaves for France to fight professionally. When Said arrives in the Paris train station, a gendarme hits him and calls him a "dirty Arab" before the apologetic French Minister of Sports greets him. Fighting his way to the championship, Said avoids taking sides in the conflict, convinced sport is beyond politics. The French government and the Algerian resistance use Said as a propaganda tool, but Said only wants to box. Agents of the Algerian National Liberation Army trail him, threatening his life, and when Said wins the French Boxing Championship, the crowd erupts in rioting, French against Algerian. Said makes it to America and qualifies to fight for the world title, but when he returns to Paris during the intervening months before his title fight, he's caught up in the turmoil of October 17, 1961, the day thousands marched in Paris's streets to protest curfews against Algerians and faced violent repression by police. This intriguing book brings a sad, tumultuous slice of history to life with vivid artistry. Printed in Italy on a near card-stock paper, it is artfully drawn, with Baru's fluid line and masterful panel work, and Daniel Ledran's subtle, rich color. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist This graphic novel about ambition, freedom, and prejudice is set in the context of Algeria's war for independence from France in the 1950s. French fight promoters take boxer Said Boudiaf from his Algerian hometown because they see in him a potential European champ. While his brother joins the revolutionary forces, Boudiaf fights his own war for independence. Trying to focus on his boxing career, he finds it difficult to remain neutral when everyone around him has chosen sides. Boxing takes a backseat to Boudiaf's personal struggle, which comes to a head during the 1961 police massacre of Algerian demonstrators in Paris. This first English translation of one of French artist Baru's books must be one of the most attractively produced graphic novels ever, with its subtle, muted colors on heavy paper greatly enhancing Baru's fluid, expressive drawings. The story, however, with its abrupt transitions and confusingly introduced characters, seems rushed. That may limit the book's appeal to serious

fans of the medium. Gordon Flagg Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved While its setting becomes nostalgic, its sense of danger does not. Filled with paranoia, prejudice and terrorism, the time and place have a particular resonance now. Time.com Drop dead beautiful. Publishers Weekly This is an exemplary graphic novel, informative and gripping, and Baru's muted colors and mournful caricatures are a welcome break from the American style. Nick Hornby, The New York Times Book