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# Exit Wounds



## Synopsis

Set in modern-day Tel Aviv, a young man, Koby Franco, receives an urgent phone call from a female soldier. Learning that his estranged father may have been a victim of a suicide bombing in Hadera, Koby reluctantly joins the soldier in searching for clues. His death would certainly explain his empty apartment and disconnected phone line. As Koby tries to unravel the mystery of his father's death, he finds himself piecing together not only the last few months of his father's life but his entire identity. With thin, precise lines and luscious watercolors, Rutu Modan creates a portrait of modern Israel, a place where sudden death mingles with the slow dissolution of family ties. *Exit Wounds* is the North American graphic-novel debut from one of Israel's best-known cartoonists. Modan has received several awards in Israel and abroad, including the Best Illustrated Children's Book Award from the Israel Museum in Jerusalem four times and Young Artist of the Year by the Israel Ministry of Culture. She is a chosen artist of the Israel Cultural Excellence Foundation.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Critics from *Time* to *Entertainment Weekly* to the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* have lauded Rutu Modan's *Exit Wounds* as one of the best (if not THE best) graphic novels of 2007, and had I read it a few weeks earlier, it would surely have ended up on my list of best comics of the year as well. As it is, I can only add my voice to the chorus of those who sing the praises of this book. Set in present-day Israel, the book's central character is Koby, a young man who lives with his aunt and uncle while trying to scrape by on the meager wages he earns as a cab driver. One day his life takes a strange turn when he meets Numi, a girl who has been dating Koby's estranged father

Gabriel. Gabriel has recently disappeared, and Numi believes he might have been a victim of a recent bombing in a bus station. Her request for Koby's help in identifying the body turns into a quest of sorts, as the two work to piece together the clues of what happened to Gabriel. That description might lead you to believe Modan emphasizes mystery and intrigue, when that couldn't be further from the truth. In reality, *Exit Wounds* is less about finding out what happened to Gabriel than it is a character piece about two complete strangers linked by their relationships to the same man. From their first meeting, Koby and Numi are at odds, clashing over their different ideas of how to handle the situation, and this conflict between them is a direct result of how they connected, or failed to connect, with Gabriel himself. Comics such as Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis* or the works of Joe Sacco have been designed to give readers an insight into another culture, and from that summary you might be fooled into thinking that this book's purpose is similarly informative.

I'm growing more accustomed to reading the graphic novel format. Enjoying this genre tremendously. Instead of imagining characters and geography in my head, I'm seeing this all pop out in front of me. To one who is familiar with the Tel Aviv landscape this book will seem starkly familiar. I can attest to this, having lived in one of the more downtrodden communities in and around this metropolis experiencing growing pains. Author Rutu Modan shows the grittiness of this post modern metropolis, the ridiculousness of the Israeli suburban lifestyle and the beauty of the Mediterranean Sea. Tones of browns, yellows, and gray evoke the grittiness of Israeli society. Against this backdrop are surprising reds and pinks. Best to call this a coming of age book but at another more defined and sometimes banal level. Koby is one of those men/boys who aren't sure of his life. His employment as a taxi cab driver. It fits his wandering and wondering persona. He's living with his overbearing yet well meaning Aunt and Uncle, his mother's passed away, his pre occupied sister lives in the States and his father is MIA. He is uncertain, hesitant, questioning. Enter Numi, a rather mysterious young woman (of note, she wears a red jacket, drives in a red car...) , seeking Koby's assistance surreptitiously at first, drawing him in. We discover that Numi's had an intimate relationship with Koby's estranged father Gabriel, and believes him to be a victim of a suicide bomber. We learn through Koby and Numi's eyes that Gabriel is a man who loves, but who leaves all that he loves. Modan isn't telling Gabriel's story, she's showing instead the repercussions and reverberations of the hurt and loss that Gabriel has brought on. Yes, this book is a love story as well.

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