



## Ben Barka Lane

*Mahmoud Saeed , Kay Heikkinen (Translation)*

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**Ben Barka Lane** Mahmoud Saeed , Kay Heikkinen (Translation)

FIRST ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF AWARD-WINNING NOVEL BANNED IN IRAQ. In Ben Barka Lane we see the Morocco of the late 1960s through the eyes of a young political exile from Iraqits beauty and misery, its unforgettable people. In this contemporary classic, Mahmoud Saeed offers us a unique portrait of a time and place, and a tale of the passion, politics, vengeance, and betrayal that take place there. "A landmark of the modern Arab novel," in the words of one critic, Ben Barka Lane is now, at last, in English translation, as compelling today as when first published.

## Ben Barka Lane Details

Date : Published May 1st 2013 by Interlink Books (first published January 1st 1997)

ISBN : 9781566569262

Author : Mahmoud Saeed , Kay Heikkinen (Translation)

Format : Paperback 276 pages

Genre : Historical, Historical Fiction, Fiction

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# From Reader Review Ben Barka Lane for online ebook

## World Literature Today says

"[*Ben Barka Lane*] is a young man's book, full of the joy of life, the allurements and satisfactions of the physical world, women's bodies, grilled lamb and alcoholic exaltation, even the delight of walking down a street in the evening 'by way of the casino lined by tall palms, by huge trees and by fragrant blossoms... in and of itself an incomparable pleasure.' It depicts loneliness, too, and the agonies and jealousies of unrequited love." - M. D. Allen, University of Wisconsin-Fox Valley

This book was reviewed in the January 2014 issue of *World Literature Today*. Read the full review by visiting our website: <http://bit.ly/1e8BMvd>

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## Kiessa says

Around the World in 52 Books: Iraq

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## Allen says

did not read a novel more powerful than it exposed the policy of morocco through unique love story

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## Karen says

I won this book from the author on LibraryThing...and it was a signed copy too! This book is about an Iraqi on vacation in Morocco and all the people he meets and places he goes and the woman he falls in love with. Overall I enjoyed the book. It held my interest, was a fast-paced story and really picked up at the end with some added intrigue. Some of the reading was difficult to decipher due to the fact that this book was translated into English.

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## J Michael says

A touching & mystical ramble through a young man's encounter with the mystery that is love.

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## Sam Reaves says

Mahmoud Saeed is a leading Iraqi novelist, widely published in Arabic but with only a few titles available in English. Translation costs are a major barrier for writers like Saeed, who are important voices but don't sell books in the numbers that attract western publishers' attention. This novel, first published in 1970, was

banned in Iraq for many years, due not to its relative sexual frankness, but to its critical approach to Moroccan political and social issues. (Authoritarian regimes stick together.) With some autobiographical elements (Saeed fled Iraq after multiple stretches as a political prisoner), the book takes place in 1960's Morocco, where a young Iraqi political exile teaches school and yearns for love and a life unconstricted by fear of the state. As his summer vacation begins he is drawn into Moroccan political intrigues through his friendship with a dissident in internal exile; he is bewitched by a beautiful young woman of mysterious background, unclear motives and exhilaratingly unfettered manners; a killing will bring the turbulent summer to a close. The possibilities of love and personal fulfillment in a repressed society in rapid transition are illuminated. An interesting slice of life for anyone interested in Arab society; the translation is serviceable if not luminous.

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### **Tim says**

In many ways this reads as a protest novel, yet all protests at base might simply be a search for authenticity and the rejection of anything that doesn't truly give life or meaning. The protagonist Sharqi, also the narrator, lives his life mostly counter to the mainstream political and religious climate of his time. His way of thinking, which has forced him to leave his home country of Iraq, has also found him out of place in Morocco, where he finds himself in a time of historic political change at the end of the 1960s. This situation forces him to confront his own political consciousness, when it seems that life would rather have him focus on more basic human interests surrounding love and sex. Yet as life itself is messy, these competing interests become enmeshed throughout the book, and end up influencing one another in a way that is very relatable, particularly as it surrounds his infatuation for Ruqayya.

Despite the author Saeed's obvious discontent with the outward restrictions of his society, there is a tension that comes through in his recognition of traditional wisdom that can be seen in Habib's sober living and ultimately Sharqi's abrupt decision which finishes the novel. It's a book that gives a taste of the political climate of its time, but also likely reflects the cultural struggle that many in this part of the world might find themselves in today.

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### **Don O'goodreader says**

Foreign translations often present a view of an alien culture, but published-in-1970-Iraq (and banned) Ben Barka Lane by Mahmoud Saeed is more a mirror on the human condition than a vision of a particular time or place.

Certainly Si l-Sharqi is a Iraqi expatriate living in Morocco, the women wear jalaba and veils outside, couscous is a favorite food, and tea is flavored with mint. But after that protagonist Sharqi is a young teacher on summer vacation. His relationship with men is about drinking and gambling, and with women -- sex and Casablanca night life.

I imagine this was banned in Iraq more for reasons of sex than politics. Not the book I was expecting.

For more see ... <http://1book42day.blogspot.com/2013/0...>

I won a copy of this book in a Goodreads First Read giveaway on June 11, 2013. I received my copy on June 21, 2013.

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### Jasim Kasim says

The best Arab or foreign novel depicting Morocco in the sixties at all, I never read the best of them ever

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### Krista says

Maybe it was the cultural difference but I couldn't even make myself finish this after 50 pages. I normally make myself finish books even when I'm not enjoying them but I couldn't do it. It's too hard to relate to and they names make it very difficult to follow.

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### Midge Bork says

I registered a book at BookCrossing.com!  
<http://www.BookCrossing.com/journal/12202603>

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### Arnīs says

?sti nav saprotami iemesli k?d?? š? gr?mata sav? laik? bija nok?uvusi aizliegto gr?matu sarakst?.

Par beig?m vrb v?l var?tu ielikt 4 zvaigznes.

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