



# Aya

*Marguerite Abouet*

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## Aya Marguerite Abouet

"That's what I wanted to show in Aya: an Africa without the . . . war and famine, an Africa that endures despite everything because, as we say back home, life goes on." --Marguerite Abouet

Ivory Coast, 1978. Family and friends gather at Aya's house every evening to watch the country's first television ad campaign promoting the fortifying effects of Solibra, "the strong man's beer." It's a golden time, and the nation, too--an oasis of affluence and stability in West Africa--seems fueled by something wondrous.

Who's to know that the Ivorian miracle is nearing its end? In the sun-warmed streets of working-class Yopougon, aka Yop City, holidays are around the corner, the open-air bars and discos are starting to fill up, and trouble of a different kind is about to raise eyebrows. At night, an empty table in the market square under the stars is all the privacy young lovers can hope for, and what happens there is soon everybody's business.

*Aya* tells the story of its nineteen-year-old heroine, the studious and clear-sighted Aya, her easygoing friends Adjoua and Bintou, and their meddling relatives and neighbors. It's a breezy and wryly funny account of the desire for joy and freedom, and of the simple pleasures and private troubles of everyday life in Yop City. An unpretentious and gently humorous story of an Africa we rarely see--spirited, hopeful, and resilient--*Aya* won the 2006 award for Best First Album at the Angoulême International Comics Festival. Clément Oubrerie's warm colors and energetic, playful lines connect expressively with Marguerite Abouet's vibrant writing.

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