

"THE WAY TO THE COFFEE SHOP Ehab shook Yehya's hand encouragingly, welcoming him into a relationship of friendship and solidarity, where he would be at Yehya's disposal. He told Yehya that he was ready to help him any way he could, with anything and at any time. Whether he was in the queue or at the newspaper headquarters, all Yehya had to do was call him. He gave him his phone number and left him with Nagy; he didn't want to waste time talking when he was sure he could find this Mrs. Alfat, wherever she was. If Yehya was ready to go public with his story, which was sure to spark an uproar, he would be by far the most important person Ehab had met in the queue; he and his bullet were pieces of solid evidence that hadn't yet been covered up. If Yehya was able to get his permit, it would set a significant precedent; the Gate had never issued anything like it before. But if he failed, he would pay with his life, and no bargaining or compromises would save him. Ehab meant it: he was ready to do anything to help Yehya stay strong "until the Gate opened." "I think we really screwed up. We got off to a late start; Yehya should've requested the X-ray sooner." "What about Yehya?" "Yehya heard it, too. We're looking for the head nurse."