



Title: **Cappuccino**

Author: Fatima Sharafeddine

Target age group: 13+ / young adult

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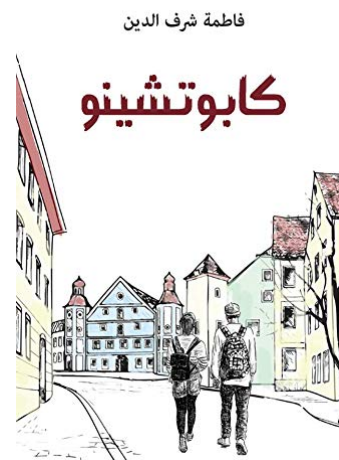
Pages: 207

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Literature for best book in the YA category

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About the book

The second YA novel by celebrated Lebanese author Fatima Sharafeddine, **Cappuccino** won the 2017 Etisalat Award for Arabic Children's Literature for best book in the YA category and, according to researcher Susanne Abou Ghaida, is a favorite of Lebanese teen readers, who see themselves in the book. Like Fatima's middle-grade novel *Ghady & Rawan* (published in English translation), the novel is co-narrated — by the characters Anas and Lina — and their lives unfold, chapter by chapter, in their voices. At the center is a story of domestic abuse, resistance, friendship, and hope that will resonate with young readers around the world.

Sample translation

Translated from Arabic by Marcia Lynx Qualey and Sawad Hussain

Chapter 1

Lina

His breaths are deep and steady, in time with the beat of the studio's soft music. Like always, I sit to his left and a little behind him, peeking through the slits of my eyelids, which are open just wide enough to see him. His eyes are closed, his back as straight as a bamboo rod, and his long hair curled in ringlets that fall over his forehead and shoulders. Instead of focusing on my breaths, like I should be, I'm watching him as his cologne wafts over to me with every breeze that drifts in through the open window, and I think about a way to talk to him after today's class. But as soon as we're done, he hurriedly rolls up his mat and puts it in the closet. Then he slings his bag onto his back and leaves without turning to say goodbye to anyone. I don't think he's noticed me even once since I joined the class. Maybe if I hurry, I could catch him... I'd have to think of something to say.



As these thoughts swirl around in my head, I quickly get my stuff together. That's when I spot a notebook sitting where his bag had been. It's the perfect chance to talk to him. I take the notebook and rush down the stairs. But he's already crossed the road and is about to step into a shared taxi. "Hey, wait!" I shout at him, waving the notebook as I cross the street.

"This fell out of your bag back in the studio. And careful, your zipper's still open."

He grabs the notebook out of my hand without looking me in the eye. I tell him who I am, saying I'm in the yoga class with him.

"I'm An... Anas," he mutters.

The driver leans on his horn to hurry things up. "Kid. You going or not? I've got work."

Anas says a hasty 'bye' before he gets into the car, and it drives off.

I don't even know why I'm so interested. He's not good-looking in your typical way, but he is attractive, with delicate features. And for some reason he seems mysterious—and a little bit sad.

Chapter 2

Anas

Two things make my heart race as I take my diary back from the girl. First, inside this notebook is private stuff about me that nobody else knows, so I'm really lucky she gave it back as soon as she found it. I would've been so worried if I'd gotten home and couldn't find it in my backpack, and it would've been a hot mess if anyone had opened it. The second reason is I can't believe she came up and started talking to me! Because ever since she started yoga, I'm the one who's been trying to dream up ways of talking to her.

"I'm Lina al-Masri," she says, right in the middle of my train of thought. I'm such an idiot that I don't introduce myself. Then I mumble and blurt out my name. The driver's rushing me, and I quickly shake her hand, even though mine's sweaty with excitement and confusion. It's only after I get in the shared taxi that I realize I haven't thanked her. I'm furious at myself, and I promise I'll apologize next time I see her.

The driver is looking at me. "Al-Mazraa' Road, please." The car leaves, trailing a cloud of black smoke, and its nasty smell fills my lungs. In the car, I catch myself smiling now and again, and I wipe it off, replacing it with an expression that echoes the seriousness of the driver. I notice he's staring hard at me in the mirror every few minutes, and that he's surprised by my smiling face.

I arrive, pay the fare, thank him. Then I head toward our building. I say hello to Abu Asi, the vegetable seller, who's busy carrying crates inside so he can shut the store, and to the doorman Mo'taz, who's sitting on his wooden chair, playing with his phone, like he does every evening after he's finished doing errands for the tenants.

The elevator's up on the top floor, and I'm not about to stand here and wait for it. I take the stairs two at a time in my excitement. I'm rushing to get inside to my computer to tell Ahmed and Emad about the girl. Ahmed is the son of my mom's best friend Dalia, and Emad's my cousin, the son of my Uncle Saleh. We've been best friends since we were little, and we're always in touch, especially the last few years, since we got our own phones and can send each other texts with news,



jokes, and photos, and can set times and places to meet. Friends and family call us “The Three Musketeers.” We’ve been together at the German school since elementary, even though we were enrolled for different reasons. In my family, my dad wants me to learn German. He worked in Berlin for a while, and we have German citizenship. He met my mom when she came to visit her friend Yasmine, who was living in Berlin. Yasmine’s husband had invited my dad to lunch to talk about closing the car company they’d opened a few years before.

My dad was really taken with by my mom that day, and she understood he was going back to Lebanon soon to set up a company and work in Beirut. Less than two months later, she got a call while she was at her parents’ house in the Rawsha neighborhood, and the rest is history.

I get to our apartment door and freeze. I can hear what’s going on in there, even before I open the door. My heart squeezes. My guts twist. A bitter, metallic taste rises to my tongue. I take a deep breath, put my key in the lock, and shove open the door.

More about Cappuccino

- [Fatima Sharafeddine’s YA Novel ‘Cappuccino,’ a Story of Surviving Domestic Violence](#)
- [Fatima Sharafeddine on ‘Throwing Aside Self-censorship’ When Writing YA Novel ‘Cappuccino’](#)