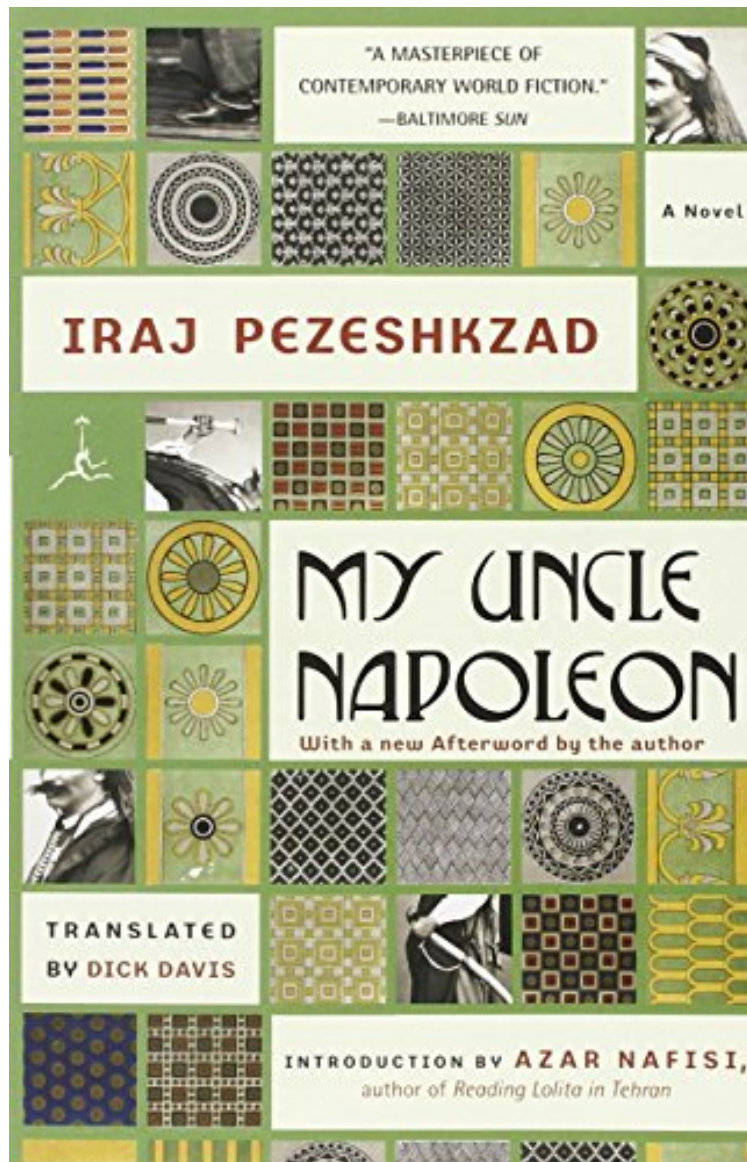


(Library ebook) My Uncle Napoleon: A Novel (Modern Library Paperbacks)

## My Uncle Napoleon: A Novel (Modern Library Paperbacks)

*Iraj Pezeshkzad*

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#338843 in Books Pizishkzad, Iraj/ Davis, Dick/ Nafisi, Azar (INT) 2006-04-11 2006-04-11Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 7.99 x 1.12 x 5.12l, .81 #File Name: 0812974433528 pages | File size: 53.Mb

**Iraj Pezeshkzad : My Uncle Napoleon: A Novel (Modern Library Paperbacks)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised My Uncle Napoleon: A Novel (Modern Library Paperbacks):

8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. But what if the murder victim refuses to come along?By Geoff PuterbaughWhat a wonderful book this is! Funny and heart-warming, indeed. On page one a 13-year-old boy falls in

love with the beautiful black eyes of his cousin, and he tells the rest of the story. The characters are not "realistic." Heaven forbid! They are loving and comic exaggerations of real Persians, who could never be mistaken for (say) Japanese or Americans. For one obvious thing, there is the huge importance of the Very Extended Family, a simple fact of Persian life. In fact, some thinker once commented that Persians are still living a "tribal" life behind the walls of their homes. Is that true? Well, when I was in Iran, I had a best friend who, over a period of two years, introduced me to about 200 members of his family, and to precisely one unrelated friend! If I had to try to reciprocate as an American, I'd be stuck after the first four or five members of my immediate family... The stuff about "England being responsible for everything" really hits home, and is probably the reason the book became a runaway hit in Persia itself. I hope everyone noticed that during the recent anti-government riots in Persia, the crazed mullahs immediately arrested eight staff at the British Embassy! The loony but lovable old character, "Uncle Napoleon" goes so far as to believe that all of his failures in life happened because of a British Plot. And one reason he is the universe's biggest fan of Napoleon Bonaparte is (guess why!)... because Napoleon was a great enemy of England! England! Perfidious Albion! That sceptred isle of mad plotters, that counterfeit jewel set in a sea of treachery.... Well, you get the idea. For me, the most important extra-literary point of this book is that it shows us The Real Iran, a very human place where people fall in love, get married, write poems, and fall into insane rivalries. Neither the Iran of the Shah, nor the Iran of Khomeini: it has existed for thousands of years, and right now (perhaps) waits to be reborn. By the way, the title for this review, "But what if the murder victim refuses to come along?" points out the Monty Python in this book. A man runs away --- vanishes --- and some family member decides to accuse another family member of killing him. The police are called, and the numskull detective (following his "international method of surprise attack") immediately refers to the missing man as "the murder victim." He does it so insistently that others pick up his habit --- and then the missing man turns up alive. They call the detective, who instructs them to show up the next morning with "the murder victim." They answer, "But what if the murder victim refuses to come along?" Said totally dead-pan, of course! :-)) I would read this book along with Taheri's "The Persian Night" to try to get a grasp on the immensity of the tragedy. That is, try to imagine ANY of the characters in "My Uncle Napoleon" falling for the crazy party line of the mullahs in any real way. You can imagine them PRETENDING to do so, if it will help them steal a march on a family rival, but REALLY? As they used to sing on the mountain, "Man zan-e mullah ne misham! Chera ne mishid?" ("I will never consent to be the wife of a mullah," sings the soloist. "Why not?" sings the raucous chorus. The rest can be supplied for you by a Persian friend.... :-)) By the way, I believe the complete Persian TV series has shown up on YouTube. No subtitles that I've seen yet, alas. Search for "Daie Jan Napelon." 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A truly entertaining story. By O.A. A story which entices you in and you can't help reading through to the conclusion. Some real unexpected surprises. It's as if you are viewing real events through a window in the privacy of your own home. I can imagine there are families like this in Iranian. It has romance, comedy, and arguments in a pot boiler of a story. The narrator, a 13-year-old boy falls in love with his first cousin. Unfortunately, there are many obstacles in his path, especially his father's prickly relationship with his wife's brother, Uncle Napoleon. Uncle suffers from his own importance and imagines himself like Napoleon. It's the funniest story I've read in a long time. 35 of 36 people found the following review helpful. A World-Class Comic Masterpiece! By David Americans have become so accustomed to seeing televised images of dour Ayatollahs and grim-faced Iranian demonstrators shouting "Death to the Great Satan" that we have forgotten that Iran is also the land of Omar Khayyam. Pezeshkzad and his characters have more in common with the 12th century poet than the religious revolutionaries who overthrew the Shah would like, and the readers will give thanks with laughter. Early in World War II, the unnamed 15-year-old narrator becomes infatuated with his first cousin Layli, the daughter of the narrator's uncle, derisively nicknamed Napoleon for constantly voicing admiration for the French general. At a family gathering, the narrator's father vents annoyance with Uncle Napoleon's unending inflation of his military record (Uncle Napoleon's four-man gendarmerie squad over the years had been transformed into dozens of army battalions thwarting the plans of British imperialism). For his father's offense, the narrator is banned from seeing his beloved Layli, who Uncle Napoleon betrothes to the narrator's horse-faced cousin Puri. The narrator turns to his cousin Asadollah, a bon vivant and womanizer extraordinaire, for advice in stopping the wedding and winning Layli. The action builds to a climax when the British occupy Tehran. The results . . . well, I won't give it away. But if you like laugh-out-loud farce mixed with sharp-eyed satire, you owe it to yourself to read this book. It belongs on a very short list of comic masterpieces of world literature

The most beloved Iranian novel of the twentieth century "God forbid, I've fallen in love with Layli!" So begins the farce of our narrator's life, one spent in a large extended Iranian family lorded over by the blustering, paranoid patriarch, Dear Uncle Napoleon. When Uncle Napoleon's least-favorite nephew falls for his daughter, Layli, family fortunes are reversed, feuds fired up and resolved, and assignations attempted and thwarted. First published in Iran in the 1970s and adapted into a hugely successful television series, this beloved novel is now "Suggested Reading" in Azar Nafisi's Reading Lolita in Tehran. My Uncle Napoleon is a timeless and universal satire of first love and family intrigue.

From Publishers Weekly The obsessions of Dear Uncle Napoleon, as Pezeshkzad's eponymous Iranian patriarch is nicknamed, furnish this epic, episodic farce with a multitude of mock heroic elements: the "centuries old" honor of his petty aristocratic family; the propriety of his distant relatives; the care of his prize sweetbrier; his mythologized exploits in a Cossack regiment; his hero-worship of Bonaparte; and, above all, his paranoia about English international intrigue on his doorstep. Dear Uncle's extended family's antics don't so much distract him as exacerbate his eccentricities with each new misunderstanding, private feud, clandestine affair and arranged marriage. Told from the naive perspective of Dear Uncle's least-favorite nephew (who is chastely, adolescently in love with his daughter), Pezeshkzad's tale, first published in Iran in the early 1970s, seems innocently obsolete after the Iranian Revolution, like Wodehouse after the Blitz, with its comedy relying heavily on conventions?verbal tics, frenetic dialogue, farcical action and acrobatic reversals of fortune. Pezeshkzad supplies an instantly recognizable, universal cast: the foolish family retainer (the Sancho Panza to Dear Uncle's Quixote), the worldly and womanizing uncle, the disgruntled brother-in-law, the officious local police officer, the brawny butcher with an attractive younger wife. While such characters made the novel a huge bestseller and a national touchstone for comic types in Iran, they don't make the best international travelers, and stateside readers may have trouble discerning, or caring about, how they satirize specific elements of Iranian society. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From Scientific American A giddily uproarious mixture of farce and slapstick.

From The New Yorker An uproarious and endearing Iranian novel ...one of the most entertaining books we're likely to see this year.