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INTRODUCTION BY AZAR NAFISI, AUTHOR OF READING LOLITA IN TEHRAN,
AND A NEW AFTERWORD BY THE AUTHOR, IRAJ PEZESHKZAD

“Let us imagine we are in the process of creating a much needed mandatory reading list for
experts and analysts on Iran. I would put My Uncle Napoleon in a cherished place very near the
top. One seemingly irreverent reason for this choice is that it is a great read. More pragmatically,
I believe this novel provides its readers—in a delightful and deliciously politically incorrect
manner—with many important insights into Iran, its culture and traditions, its present conflicts
and past history, as well as its paradoxical relation to the West.”

--Azar Nafisi, excerpt from the Introduction of My Uncle Napoleon

MY UNCLE NAPOLEON

A Novel

Iraj Pezeshkzad

In April 2006, Modern Library will publish MY UNCLE NAPOLEON (Modern Library
Paperbacks; On-Sale Date: April 11, 2006), by Iraj Pezeshkzad, a timeless and universal satire of
first love and family intrigue with a new Afterword by the author and an Introduction by Azar
adapted into a hugely successful television series, MY UNCLE NAPOLEON is widely
regarded as the most important (and beloved) work of Iranian fiction of the last century.

Set in an extended Tehran household in the 1940s, MY UNCLE NAPOLEON is the comic
story of a family dominated by a paranoid patriarch whom the children have nicknamed
Napoleon. The novel opens with the narrator realizing he's fallen in love with his beautiful
cousin, Napoleon's daughter. The narrator's exuberantly naive pursuit of Layli, and the uncle's
doddering attempts to stop love, form the heart of the narrative. Pezeshkzad's send-up of a large
extended household is both unique to Iranian culture and universal to anyone with a sprawling
family with nosey aunts, lazy brothers, scheming sisters, out-of-touch parents, and loads of
rivalrous love. Like Reading Lolita in Tehran and Persepolis it is an unexpected portrait of daily
life in Iran and an important addition to our understanding of Persian culture and society.

~more~

"My Uncle Napoleon is a surprising novel, a raunchy, irreverent, hilarious farce wrapped around a core of quiet sorrow. Iranian novelist Iraj Pezeshkzad embroils us in the zany antics of an upper-class Iranian family."
—The Washington Post

"A giddily uproarious mixture of farce and slapstick.... The novel is funny in an uninhibited, larger than-life style seldom practiced today."
—The Atlantic Monthly

"Readers will gain a more balanced impression of Iran from this novel, which looks at life from the kind of humorous perspective few Westerners may associate with the current regime in that country."
—Christian Science Monitor

"A howlingly funny -- not to mention tender, salacious and magical -- Iranian import."
—Cleveland Plain Dealer

About the Author:
Iraj Pezeshkzad was born in Tehran in 1928 and educated in Iran and France where he received his degree in law. He served as a judge in the Iranian Judiciary for five years prior to joining the Iranian Foreign Service. He began writing in the early 1950s by translating the works of Voltaire and Moliere into Persian and by writing short stories for magazines. He currently works as a journalist in Paris.


Translator Dick Davis was born in Portsmouth, England, and earned degrees at King's College, Cambridge and at the University of Manchester. He has taught at the universities of Tehran, Durham, Newcastle, and California (Santa Barbara) and is currently professor of Persian at Ohio State University. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature.

MY UNCLE NAPOLEON: A Novel
Iraj Pezeshkzad
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