

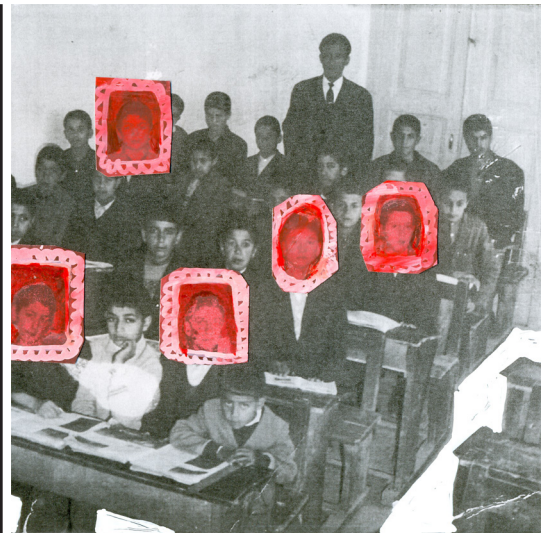
# Classmates:

## A Novel

Written by **Hossein Mortezaeian Abkenar**

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There were forty or fifty of us in a big classroom. After we finished school we drifted apart. Javad dropped out during the very last year. Reza Karimi went to the front and was martyred. When they brought back his body, there was a ceremony at school. Afterwards, many went to the mosque for his memorial service. Ramin started up a company after he finished his military service. He was in the so-called service business. Rasouli became a pilot. His plane crashed in the war. He was taken captive. For fourteen years he was a POW. He was released not long ago, I think. Hamed died of cancer. Houshang Razavi still works in his dad's shop. He sells socks. He must have gotten quite fat. Kourosh went to Germany. His uncle, who lived in Germany, sent him an invitation letter and Kourosh left after borrowing a ton to come up with some money; now he's studying dentistry and washing the dishes at a restaurant. Hossein Moghbeli froze up as he was fleeing over the Turkish border. Amir was executed. He was always looking for trouble. No one knows about Davoud. Ahmad Reza went in for business. He is in Dubai now. I once ran into him in the street. He was in a nice car. Had glasses, too. Farzad Mohammadi got admitted to med school. He studied so much he had to start wearing glasses. He must be doing night shifts now. Ghasemi has a boutique. He goes to Turkey two or three times a year to bring back goods. All he does is womanize. Mahmoud killed himself. He was a poet. Once the guys made fun of him when he was reading his poem. By midnight he simply left. In the cold and snow. Once he had also gotten into a brawl with Yaser. Kazemipour is in jail, for drugs. The principal once found a cigarette in his pocket at school; all hell broke loose. Naser went on to become a mullah. In those days he had no more than a few hairs on his chin. He practiced calligraphy. Now he is the head of the Ministry of Education and Training, District 11. Abdollah married his cousin. Their kid came out a retard. Looks just like Abdollah. Reza Teymouri was paralyzed in an accident. Became paraplegic. He has been in a wheelchair ever since. Sadegh Karbalai killed his wife because he was suspicious of her. He has been waiting on a verdict for some years now. The term is *honor killing*. He may be exonerated. They showed Sohrab on TV the other day. I think he has made something of himself. Rasoul and his folks still live in the same house. He's gone completely bald now. Once I saw him in pajamas in front of his house. He was spraying the alley with a hose. Mojtaba is still single. The girl he was in love with went off to Paris with another guy. Since his mom died, Shahsavari is depressed. Alcoholic too, I guess. Hassan Ghoncheh drowned at sea a couple of years ago. He was always dunking the guys in the pool. Adel and



Art (detail) by Negar Orang

his family had an accident on their way to Chalous. His wife, child and mother-in-law all died. His only injury was a broken head. Nima Masoudi became a mystic. He must have waist-long hair now. He had a good voice. And he would only sing Rumi. No one ever knew what Yaser was up to. He must be in intelligence. Ehsan moved to Isfahan and is now working in a factory. When Asghar divorced his wife, she filed for dowry. The poor guy is still in prison because he didn't have the two hundred gold coins. Teymour is a father to five daughters. He is working two jobs and also drives a taxi at night. Ata became a university professor. Then he got sacked. Now he is working at a taxi company. Ruzbeh works in an amusement park. Some of the guys have seen him a few times. He has ignored them. Hamid Ghaffarmanesh buys and sells dollars at Istanbul Crossroads. Someone on a bike snatched his bag once. Nouri is doing life. For armed robbery of a jeweler's shop on Sattarkhan St. This, in addition to the thirty burglaries he confessed. It all even made the papers. When Meshkat's brother was martyred, he went to the university on the Quota of Martyrs' Families. He himself had served at the front for a couple of months, too. Now he is a filmmaker. Bahram became a doctor. He always loved the uniform. Kamran Andalibi went to the university and studied electronics. Now he installs satellite dishes in people's houses. Saeed was a member of one of those opposition groups. He hadn't been seen around for several years, and then he was killed in an operation aiming to penetrate through the western border. Ali Sharareh, they cut his head off in Kurdistan and put it on his chest. I think he had been in the army. Naser Mousapour was executed for a political crime. They found a pile of flyers in his house, together with a gun. Obviously someone had turned him in. Sattar has become a TV actor. Wherever he goes people recognize his face. Morteza inherited a fortune. Had a stroke last year. . . . The rest I don't remember. . . . Me? I am one of these people I talked about. **P**



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**Hossein Mortezaeian Abkenar** (born 1966, Tehran) is an Iranian writer. He earned his BA in Dramatic Arts from the University of Tehran and now teaches creative writing at the Iran Arts University.

Abkenar has published two collections of short stories as well as a novel. He is the winner of several well-known Iranian literary prizes including the Golshiri Award. He won the Mehregan Adab Award for his novel *Scorpion on the Steps of the Rails of Andimeshk*.

Abkenar's work as a screenwriter includes the award-winning film *No One Knows About Persian Cats*. He has also published research work on Persian literature. (Updated Jan. 2011)

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