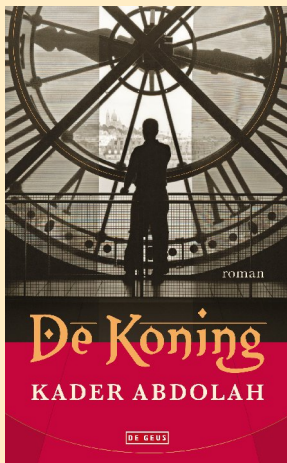




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# Kader Abdolah

## *The King*

Original title: *De koning*

NOVEL

**Masterly novel by the international bestselling author**

**Work sold to more than 25 countries**

**Author of the Book Week Gift 2011, with the central theme 'written portraits' (the life story)**

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## About the author

Kader Abdolah's (Iran, 1954) first collection of stories appeared in 1993 under the title *THE EAGLES*, and was followed in 1995 by *THE GIRLS AND THE PARTISANS*. His first novel, *THE JOURNEY OF THE EMPTY BOTTLES*, appeared in 1997, and was followed by *MY FATHER'S NOTEBOOK* (also known as *Cuneiform*) (2000), *PORTRAITS AND AN OLD DREAM* (2003) and *THE HOUSE OF THE MOSQUE* (2005). His dual publication *THE MESSENGER / THE KORAN* appeared in 2008 and was nominated for the NS Prize (awarded by the general public). Abdolah has already published three collections of his columns in *de Volkskrant*, namely *MIRZA*, *A GARDEN IN THE SEA* and *CARAVAN*.

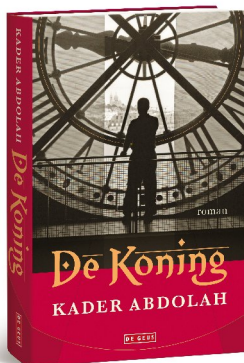
Abdolah's new novel, named *THE KING*, will be published in February 2011. Moreover, he is the author of the 2011 Book Gift, which will have a print run of 1 million copies.

Kader Abdolah, *De koning*

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Hardcover, 416 pages

Publication March 2011



## About the book

Abdolah is best-known for his international bestseller *THE HOUSE OF THE MOSQUE*, in which he explored the way in which the people of Iran coped with the changes of the second half of the 20th century. In his new historical novel, *THE KING*, he explores how Persia opened its doors to the West.

*THE KING* begins in 1848, when Nasser al-Din Shah ascended to the Persian throne, and runs until 1896 when he was murdered.

Nasser al-Din Shah (1831-1896) was a born diplomat. In the mid-19th century, it was he who opened up Persia to outside influences. During his reign he promoted technological and educational innovations, such as a postal system, banks, railways and newspapers. He admired the European arts and made it possible for many Persian students to study abroad. Nasser al-Din Shah not only opened Persia's doors to Europe, he was also the very first shah to travel through Europe. Through his story this novel brings to life the interaction between Europe and Persia over a century ago. There are also references to present-day relations.

## Bibliography

*De adelaars* (THE EAGLES) (1993, stories)  
*De meisjes en de partizanen* (THE GIRLS AND THE PARTISANS) (1995, stories)  
*De reis van de lege flessen* (THE JOURNEY OF THE EMPTY BOTTLES) (1997, novel)  
*Mirza* (MIRZA) (1998, columns)  
*Spijkerschrift* (MY FATHER'S NOTEBOOK) (2000, novel)  
*Een tuin in de zee* (A GARDEN IN THE SEA) (2001, columns)  
*Portretten en een oude droom* (PORTRAITS AND AN OLD DREAM) (2003, novel)  
*Karavaan* (CARAVAN) (2003, columns)  
*Het huis van de moskee* (THE HOUSE OF THE MOSQUE) (2005, novel)  
*De koe* (THE COW – KÉLILÉ EN DEMNÉ) (2007, stories)  
*De boodschapper* (THE MESSENGER) and *De Koran* (THE KORAN) (2008, a story and a translation)  
*Dit mooie land* (THIS BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY) (2009, columns)

## Prizes and awards

1993 – Gouden Ezelsoor Award for THE EAGLES  
 1995 – Charlotte Köhler Stipend for THE GIRLS AND THE PARTISANS  
 1997 – ASN-ADO Media Prize for MIRZA, his column in *de Volkskrant*  
 1998 – Mundial Award  
 2000 – Dutch royal decoration  
 2001 – E. du Perron Prize for his complete works  
 2004 – French Cultural Knighthood  
 2006 – THE HOUSE OF THE MOSQUE, nominated for the NS Prize 2006 (runner-up)  
 2007 – THE HOUSE OF THE MOSQUE, nominated for the All-time Favourite Dutch Book of Fiction (runner-up)  
 2008 – French decoration Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres  
 2008 – THE MESSENGER / THE KORAN, nominated for the NS Prize 2008  
 2009 – Il Premio Grinzane Cavour 2009 for THE HOUSE OF THE MOSQUE

## Rights

Rights for Kader Abdolah's novels have been sold to more than 25 countries.  
 Sales lists are available for each title.

## The press on THE MESSENGER / THE KORAN:

'With his narration and translation, he has produced a magnum opus. A masterpiece that (...) is nothing less than an enrichment of Dutch literature.' – *de Volkskrant*

‘The result is surprising. In a time when we are bombarded with a fierce Koran that calls for the murder of believers and the beating of women, Abdolah’s translation shows that you should not read the Koran as a statute book, but as poetry.’ – *Wereldomroep*

‘This is how the Koran should be read. Abdolah’s ambitions are not so much social, political or religious as purely literary in nature. His translation expresses a kind of relationship with Islam that you find with, for example, Jan Wolkers or Maarten ’t Hart towards Protestant Christianity.’ – *NRC Handelsblad*

‘These books show how Abdolah used his earlier works mainly to sharpen his pen and to perfect his style. Everything he did bore the stamp of mastery. A writer with a big plan – wonderful to experience. And you don’t often get the chance to buy a first edition of the Koran.’ – *De Twentsche Courant Tubantia*

‘With THE MESSENGER, Kader Abdolah has written a biographical novel about Mohammed, while producing a new translation and thorough edit of the Koran. Top that!’ – *Het Parool*

‘With his new title, THE MESSENGER and THE KORAN, Kader Abdolah, writer of THE HOUSE OF THE MOSQUE, has put the Holy Book in a readable, Dutch polder-model, form, with Mohammed as a human being.’ – *De Pers*

‘A fine project.’ – *nrc.next*

### **The Dutch press about THE HOUSE OF THE MOSQUE:**

‘The expressive power of his lyrical style and the combination of a now idyllic, now fairy tale, now horrifying atmosphere, makes THE HOUSE OF THE MOSQUE no less than Abdolah’s masterpiece.’ – *Trouw*

‘His new book, written in Abdolah’s familiar, beautifully subtle, almost primitive style, is an ode to the permanence and magic of the written word, with its power to influence fate.’ – *Brabants Dagblad*

‘He manages, with beautiful images, to articulate the incomprehensible.’ – *de Volkskrant*

‘Abdolah succeeds in revealing the Iranian tragedy with delicacy, now culminating in the penetrating family epic of THE HOUSE OF THE MOSQUE.’ – *NRC Handelsblad*

‘Extreme beauty and harsh inhumanity, freedom and repression, joy and fury, go hand in hand.’ – *Telegraaf*

‘It is a melancholic picture that Abdolah sketches of a loving, sociable existence in the pre-radicalised Iran. He does this in the clear, effervescent language that we expect from him. (...) This gives us, particularly at the start of the novel, a number of beautiful, magical scenes with

roots in the culture that produced the Thousand-and-One Nights. Abdolah is at his best when showing people living in harmony, contentment and stolen passion.’ – *Leeuwarder Courant*

‘Abdolah knows the laws of fiction all too well – both those of Dutch and of Persian literature.’ – *De Standaard*

‘Abdolah’s book, part autobiographical, is an important appeal to a shared humanity.’ – *Zin*

‘THE HOUSE OF THE MOSQUE is Kader Abdolah’s magnum opus.’ – *De Tijd*

‘THE HOUSE OF THE MOSQUE is his magnum opus (...) in which Abdolah first paints in poetry and poignant images the old Persia, before describing the decline of the culture and the terror of the Iranian revolution.’ – *Artsenkrant*

‘The Netherlands should congratulate itself on having such a talent within its borders.’ – *Metro*

‘THE HOUSE OF THE MOSQUE outlines in an equally expressive and penetrating manner the story of his native land starting at the end of the sixties.’ – *PZC*

### **International press about THE HOUSE OF THE MOSQUE:**

‘With seamlessly interwoven quotations from Persian and Dutch literature, deft storytelling and affectionate humour, he offers the reader buoyancy as well as weight My Father’s Notebook is a gift to English readers.’ – *Independent*

‘Kader Abdolah’s fable-like story of a family caught in the turmoil of the Iranian revolution is beguiling and utterly original. It is that rare thing: a deeply political novel that informs, thrills, and moves in equal measure.’ – Tahmima Anam, author of *A Golden Age*

‘Entre reportage journalistique et enquête ethnographique, *La maison de la mosquée* est le réquisitoire le plus implacable qu’on puisse lire sur la descente aux enfers d’un Iran aveuglé par le fanatisme.’ – *Lire*

‘Les différents protagonistes de ce récit captivant sont tous décrits avec une grande finesse. (...) Abdolah réussit là un texte très émouvant, d’abord nostalgique et tendre, plein d’humour, et peu à peu tragique, qui peut être lu autant pour ses qualités littéraires que pour son aspect documentaire, puisqu’il nous permet de vivre, de l’intérieur, la prise de pouvoir par les ayatollahs. (...) Avec cette ambitieuse fresque historique, il confirme son talent. Il montre aussi, de fait, l’importance que prennent ces écrivains venus d’ailleurs dans la littérature européenne, et leur rôle essentiel pour notre ouverture au monde et notre compréhension d’autres cultures.’ – *Hebdo*

‘Abdolah gibt sich indes ganz der Kunst hin, den Leser mitzunehmen in die Fremde, die Seine Heimat ist; er macht uns, wenngleich mit einer angenehmen Prise Humor, auf sanft-poetische

Weise vertraut mit Traditionen und Gebräuche, mit gesellschaftlichen Regeln und Strukturen und natürlich dem Islam, mit der Faszination einer ganzen Kultur.' – *LiteraturNachrichten*

'Liest sich wie ein modernes Märchen aus Tausendundeine Nacht.' – *Berliner Zeitung*

**Excerpt: not available yet**

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Translated by Stephen Smith  
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