

# PERWANAS ABEND

## Parwanas' Evening

**Bachtyar Ali**

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Unionsverlag



**Author:** Bachtyar Ali

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*Iraqi Kurdistan in the 1980s: Two sisters, Parwana and Khandan, full of life and desire for freedom, face two different destinies in a city isolated by war. An insightful journey through the soul of Middle Eastern society, its divisions and fatal fallings out; an interpretation of the fanatical and strictly religious side set against the desire to live without restrictions from religious and social forces.*

In a complex social and political setting, where religion wields great influence, Parwana's only dream is to leave the country. When she runs away with her lover Feridoun to a remote mountain area called Ashqstan, Khandan is sent with other girls who have sinful relatives to a special religious school. In a skilful blend of fantasy and reality, the author deftly portrays both the world of the runaway lovers and the confines of a strict religious school. Parwana and Feridoun join a group of runaway lovers, all of them trying to escape from their oppressive families. But they seem to be unable to build a happy community: they have brought too much of the outside world with them. Finally, the religious extremists find and attack Ashqstan. Parwana is killed and Khandan forced to watch, in a night later known as Parwana's Evening.

For four more years Khandan lives in a strict Islamic school, where she has to learn how to subdue her soul and her body to avoid her sister's sins and destiny. After the first Gulf War, she leaves the school and sees the changes in the world after a destructive war. Her only wish is to find out and tell her sister's lost story, the story of the courage of somebody who followed her hopes without fearing death. Her journey draws Khandan into a search for a God who does not oppose love, a God who has been missing from her life for so long.

**Bachtyar Ali** was born in Sulaymaniyah in Iraqi Kurdistan in 1966. He has established himself as an influential novelist since the mid-1990s. His books have become instant bestsellers in both Iraq and Iran. In 2009 Ali received the first HARDI Literature Prize, awarded by the largest cultural festival in the Kurdish part of Iraq. 2014 he was awarded the newly-founded Sherko Bekas Literature Prize and 2017 the prestigious Nelly-Sachs-Prize. Today, Ali is one of the most famous contemporary Kurdish writers. He has been living in Cologne since 1998.