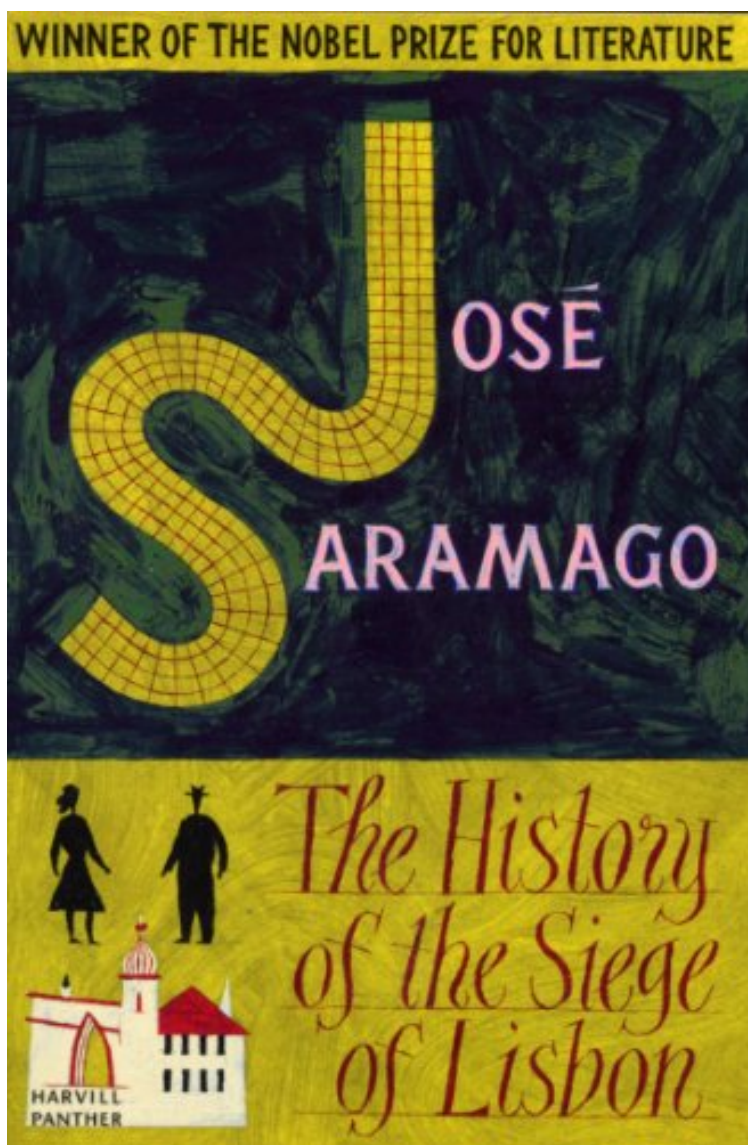


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History Of The Siege Of Lisbon



Par Jos Saramago
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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurWhat happens when the facts of history are replaced by the mysteries of love?When Raimundo Silva, a lowly proof-reader for a Lisbon publishing house, inserts a negative into a sentence of a historical text, he alters the whole course of the 1147 Siege of Lisbon. Fearing censure he is met instead with admiration: Dr Maria Sara, his voluptuous new editor, encourages him to pen his own alternative history. As his retelling draws on all his imaginative powers, Silva finds - to his nervous delight - that if the facts of the past can be rewritten as a romance then so can the details of his own dusty bachelor present..com"If proofreaders were given their freedom and did not have their hands and feet tied by a mass of prohibitions more binding than the penal code, they would soon transform the face of the world, establish the kingdom of universal happiness, giving drink to the thirsty, food to the famished, peace to those who live in turmoil, joy

to the sorrowful ... for they would be able to do all these things simply by changing the words ..." The power of the word is evident in Portuguese author Jos Saramago's novel, *The History of the Siege of Lisbon*. His protagonist, a proofreader named Raimundo Silva, adds a key word to a history of Portugal and thus rewrites not only the past, but also his own life. Brilliantly translated from the Portuguese by Giovanni Pontiero, *The History of the Siege of Lisbon* is a meditation on the differences between historiography, historical fiction, and "stories inserted into history." The novel is really two stories in one: the reimagined history of the 1147 siege of Lisbon that Raimundo feels compelled to write and the story of Raimundo's life, including his unexpected love affair with the editor, Maria Sara. In Saramago's masterful hands, the strands of this complex tale weave together to create a satisfying whole. From *Library Journal* Portuguese novelist Saramago (*The Stone Raft*, LJ 2/15/95) is fascinated by how history, often constructed from the slightest shreds, fails to acknowledge the reality of unavailable evidence. When proofreader Raimundo Silva dares to falsify a statement in a history text?namely, that Galician warriors conquered Lisbon from the Moors in 1147 without the help of returning Crusaders?instead of losing his job, he gains the respect of his supervisor and begins an affair with her. She encourages him to recast the event as a novel. Soon he is rooting for a Moor over the Archbishop of Braga and suspecting that there is more Moorish than Aryan Christian blood in the modern Portuguese nation. With its paragraph-long sentences and page-long paragraphs, this panoramic tale of daring and timidity challenges readers to consider the sprawling no man's land where fiction and history merge.?Jack Shreve, Allegany Community Coll., Cumberland, Md. Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc.