

Crimes of August: A Novel (Paperback)



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Reviews

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(Shayne O'Conner)

CRIMES OF AUGUST: A NOVEL (PAPERBACK)



University of Massachusetts Press, United States, 2014. Paperback. Condition: New. Language: English . Brand New Book. Rubem Fonseca's Crimes of August offers the first serious literary treatment of the cataclysmic events of August 1954, arguably the most turbulent month in Brazilian history. A rich novel, both culturally and historically, Crimes of August tells two stories simultaneously. The first is private, involving the well-delineated character of Alberto Mattos, a police officer. The other is public, focusing on events that begin with the attempted assassination of Carlos Lacerda, a demagogic journalist and political enemy of President Getulio Vargas, and culminate in Vargas's suicide on August 24, 1954. Throughout this suspenseful novel, deceptively couched as a thriller, Fonseca interweaves fact and fiction in a complex, provocative plot. At the same time, he re-creates the atmosphere of the 1950s, when Rio de Janeiro was Brazil's capital and the nexus of political intrigue and corruption. Mattos is assigned to solve the brutal murder of a wealthy entrepreneur in the aftermath of what appears to be a homosexual liaison. An educated and introspective man, and one of the few in his precinct not on the take from the bankers of the illegal lottery, Mattos suffers from alienation and a bleeding ulcer. His investigation puts him on a dangerous collision course with the conspiracy to depose Vargas, the novel's other narrative thread. The two overlap at several points, coming to their tragic end with the aged politician's suicide and Mattos's downfall.



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