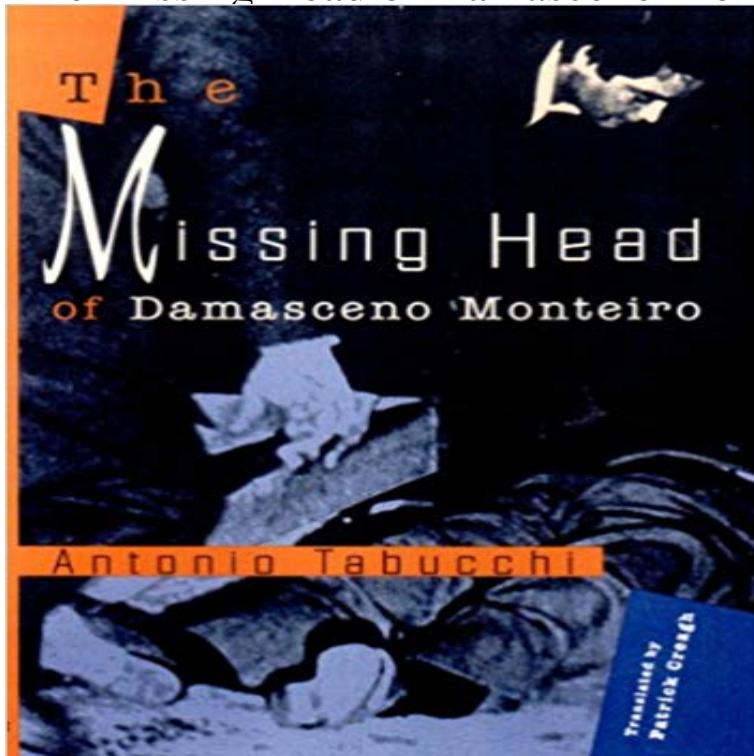


The Missing Head of Damasceno Monteiro



Antonio Tabucchi's new novel *The Missing Head of Damasceno Monteiro* continues the experiment so successfully begun with his *Pereira Declares* (New Directions, 1994) -- a European best-seller and winner of the prestigious Aristeion European Literature Prize in 1997. Tabucchi has now written a thriller, but one with a subtle intellectual depth not usual in that genre. *The Missing Head of Damasceno Monteiro* intriguingly reflects on current social issues: crime, police corruption, yellow journalism, and the courts -- both of the law and of public opinion. Tabucchi hooks the reader on page one of this book and the story advances with electric and unflagging suspense. A gypsy discovers a headless body; Firmino, a young journalist who writes for a scandal-sheet, takes up the case; the headless corpse turns out to be that of one Damasceno Monteiro, an employee at an import-export company who, having stumbled upon a heroin smuggling ring at his work, had stolen a drug shipment; and, the police are suppressing evidence -- all the stuff of familiar daily news, here made riveting in the hands of a rare and brilliant writer.

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