

RANDOM HOUSE  BOOKS



Tale of the Unknown Island

José Saramago

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About the Book

“A man went to knock at the king’s door and said, Give me a boat. The king’s house had many other doors, but this was the door for favours (favours being offered to the king, you understand), whenever he heard someone knocking on the door for petitions, he would pretend not to hear...” Why the petitioner required a boat, where he was bound for, and who volunteered to crew for him and what cargo it was found to be carrying the reader will discover as this short narrative unfolds. And at the end it will be clear that what might appear to be a children’s fable is in fact a wry, witty philosophical tale that would not have displeased Voltaire or Swift.

About the Author

JOSÉ SARAMAGO was born in Portugal in 1922 and became a full-time writer in 1979. His oeuvre embraces plays, poetry, short stories, non-fiction and over a dozen novels, which have been translated into forty languages and have established him as one of Portugal's most influential writers. In 1998 he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. José Saramago died on 18 June 2010.

MARGARET JULL COSTA translated Saramago's novel *All the Names*. She is also translator of works by Javier Marías (including *A Heart so White* which won the Dublin International Impac Award), Carmen Martín Gaité, Bernardo Atxaga, Arturo Pérez-Reverte and J. Cardoso Pires. Her translation of Fernando Pessoa's *The Book of Disquiet* made her joint-winner of the Portuguese translation prize.