

The Body Snatcher

Patrícia Melo

Clifford E. Landers, Translator

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Gritty and raw, Patrícia Melo's *The Body Snatcher* pushes the limits of acceptable behavior as one man's impulsive action leads to a chain of events that quickly spirals out of control. When a small private plane falls out of the sky, the only witness relieves the dying pilot of some valuables, including a cache of cocaine. What follows is his desperate attempt to redeem himself from the disgust and attraction of the constantly evolving and ever more desperate endgame.

Translated by Clifford E. Landers from the original Portuguese, the language and tone retain an exotic and edgy appeal, from the banks of the Paraguay River to the seedy underbelly of Corumbá. Corrupt cops, drug traffickers, and an array of colorful locals reveal the passion and violence that coexist in the small towns of Brazil, allowing the conscience, or "internal radio," to warp even the purest of intentions.

Themes of death and closure, domestic abuse, and self-destructive behavior abound, along with the age-old question of what it means to be a good person, a definition that flows and changes as the action unfolds and the antihero wrestles with his own demons. The unnamed narrator's internal dialogue and justifications, together with his scandalous behavior, make this sordid tale a page-turner not to be missed.

PALLAS GATES MCCORQUODALE (Winter 2016)

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