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Labyrinths (New Directions Paperbook)



Synopsis

The classic by Latin America's finest writer of the twentieth centuryâ•a true literary sensationâ•with an introduction by cyber-author William Gibson. The groundbreaking trans-genre work of Argentinian writer Jorge Luis Borges (1899-1986) has been insinuating itself into the structure, stance, and very breath of world literature for well over half a century. Multi-layered, self-referential, elusive, and allusive writing is now frequently labeled Borgesian. Umberto Eco's international bestseller, *The Name of the Rose*, is, on one level, an elaborate improvisation on Borges' fiction "The Library," which American readers first encountered in the original 1962 New Directions publication of *Labyrinths*. This new edition of *Labyrinths*, the classic representative selection of Borges' writing edited by Donald A. Yates and James E. Irby (in translations by themselves and others), includes the text of the original edition (as augmented in 1964) as well as Irby's biographical and critical essay, a poignant tribute by Andr   Maurois, and a chronology of the author's life. Borges enthusiast William Gibson has contributed a new introduction bringing Borges' influence and importance into the twenty-first century.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I have difficulty imagining a world without the literature of Borges. It would be incomplete. His works - so unique, so eclectic, so intellectually stimulating, and so enjoyable - seem so essential. Jorge Luis Borges is one of the great writers of the twentieth century. His literary works include short

stories, essays, and poetry, but not novels. He was never awarded the Nobel Literature Prize, a rather remarkable failure by the Nobel Committee. Borges will be read and respected long after many Nobel Prize winners of the last century have been forgotten. "Labyrinths" is an exceptional collection, great as an introduction to Borges, but equally suitable for the reader already familiar with his works. It consists of 23 of his best known stories, ten literary essays, eight short parables, an elegy to Borges from Borges himself, and a very useful bibliography. The detailed bibliography helps make Borges' works more accessible. In the last fifty years Borges' works in English have been published as a confusing mix of overlapping collections, largely due to complications regarding publishing rights. Translations also differ. The first sentence in The Form of the Sword (from Ficciones) - "His face was crossed with a rancorous scar: a nearly perfect ashen arc which sank into his temple on one side and his cheek on the other" - is recognizable, but transformed in The Shape of the Sword (from Labyrinths) - "A spiteful scar crossed his face: an ash-colored and nearly perfect arc creased his temple at one tip and his cheek at the other." While both translations are good, I suspect that the effort to master Spanish would be paid in full by the joy of reading Borges in his native language.

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