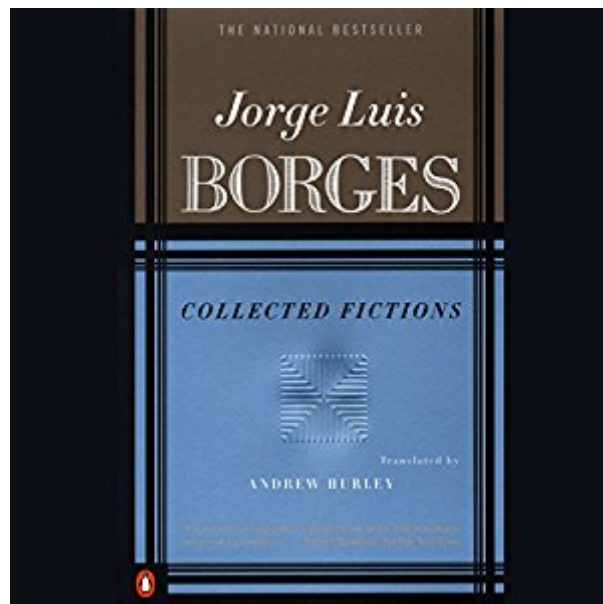


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Collected Fictions



Synopsis

Jorge Luis Borges has been called the greatest Spanish-language writer of our century. A selection of Borges' dazzling fictions are gathered in this audiobook, brilliantly translated by Andrew Hurley. These enigmatic, elaborate, imaginative inventions display Borges' talent for turning fiction on its head by playing with form and genre and toying with language. Together these incomparable works comprise the perfect compendium for all those who have long loved Borges, and a superb introduction to the master's work for those who have yet to discover this singular genius. Selections include: "Borges and I", "The Garden of Forking Paths", "Man on Pink Corner", "The Library of Babel", "Death and the Compass", "The Lottery in Babylon", "The Maker", "The Zahir", "The Encounter", "The Circular Ruins", "Shakespeare's Memory", "August 25, 1983", "The Immortal", "Parable of Cervantes and the Quixote", "The Story from Rosendo Juarez", "The Aleph", and "Dreamtigers". Please note: This audio edition includes selections from the paperback edition. The stories included are unabridged.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I have always been hesitant to read fiction originally written in any language except English. I'm fickle enough as it is without needing another person's biases and tendencies interfering with my own... and so it was with great trepidation that I bought Hurley's collection. The stories in summation: marvelous. Hurley's work? I'll never be able to read these Borges stories again without Hurley's translation heavily influencing, and that is an endorsement. I suspect that for most people their first experience of Borges will always be their most memorable, and their preferred. I don't think there

are many "On first reading Chapman's Homer" instances: that initial shock of strange and monstrous (perhaps my favorite Borgesian adjective) is evident through any kind of translation so long as it is basically competent. Whatever arguments others may have with Hurley's, they can at least admit that his is that. But I feel there's more: a playful lilt to the language, one that isn't overly scholarly or mechanical. Hurley's introduction briefly talks about the particular style Borges would become famous for: a laconic, matter-of-fact myth disguised as mere sentences, with the employment of words normally alien to each other. Hurley serves this style well, and his presentation of the most memorable lines of each story were the ones that stayed with me even after readings of several different versions. I'm not exaggerating when I say that I sat down with four different versions of "The Library of Babel" and compared them sentence by sentence. I was living in a bookstore at the time, stuck on an island in the middle of the Aegean and co-habiting with an Englishman who held Irby's version as the superior.

Some earlier reviewers complained about the quality of the translation of this collection of stories by Andrew Hurley, especially when compared to the collaboration between Jorge Luis Borges, (JLB, as he liked to sign), and Norman Thomas di Giovanni in preparing *Labyrinths*. (I suggest you read all reviews in the order they were written.) As one reasonably familiar with JLB's oeuvre, (a word JLB disliked), I state unequivocally that paying six dollars more for four times the number of stories in *Labyrinths* is a great bargain. Beyond nickels and dimes, it is precisely because the works of JLB were erstwhile translated into English in bits and pieces that his recognition as a gifted writer took so long in coming. (Jean-Pierre Berne's two-volume French translation, *Oeuvres completes*, is highly recommended.) American-born writer, editor, translator and collaborator, di Giovanni, was JLB's personal assistant in Buenos Aires from 1968 to 1972. I shall now illustrate specifically how his style of translation differed from that of Hurley with the story "The Gospel According to Saint Mark." In characterizing the Gutre family when they first met Espinosa, di Giovanni wrote "They were barely articulate," (in English, that is), while Hurley scribed "They rarely spoke." While the former sentence explains why "the Gutres, who knew so much about things in the country, did not know how to explain them," (page 398 in this book), the latter indicated an aloofness if not suspicion of Espinosa from their first meeting which addresses the irony of the ending. In depicting their eagerness to have St.

The critical applause the marketing department of this book's publisher dreamed up is one recent example of how money corrupts art. Penguin, often a reliable imprint, needs to be told that THERE

IS NO EXCUSE FOR PUBLISHING INFERIOR MATERIAL. This was the first Borges I read, and I loved it, until I encountered alternative translations in an anthology called 'Borges: A Reader'. I noticed that the most elegant and intense translations were by someone called Norman Thomas di Giovanni. I asked a number of my Spanish-speaking friends to compare the stories to the originals, and they unanimously agreed that the di Giovannis were more accurate as well. Later I heard that di Giovanni published a number of Borges' works in several books that are now out of print. I wondered why a superior translation would be superseded by a new, clunky one, and why this new clunky one would be hailed as the "definitive English version". I found out that it's because di Giovanni made his translations in collaboration with Borges himself, that they spent years getting it right, and that Borges wept with joy over the translations which he deemed in some cases better than the original. So they agreed to split the profits 50/50, an unprecedented thing for translator to make that percentage. When Borges died his Estate decided they'd make more cash if they got a new translation... and they hold the copyrights. Thus the true definitive versions are condemned to dust. The best that can be said about Hurley's translation is that they're "capable" (see Harold Bloom's obviously paid-for quote on the back); well, you'd have to REALLY screw up to make Borges not amazing.

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