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The Library At Night



Synopsis

Inspired by the process of creating a library for his fifteenth-century home near the Loire, in France, Alberto Manguel, the acclaimed writer on books and reading, has taken up the subject of libraries. "Libraries," he says, "have always seemed to me pleasantly mad places, and for as long as I can remember I've been seduced by their labyrinthine logic." In this personal, deliberately unsystematic, and wide-ranging book, he offers a captivating meditation on the meaning of libraries. Manguel, a guide of irrepressible enthusiasm, conducts a unique library tour that extends from his childhood bookshelves to the "complete" libraries of the Internet, from Ancient Egypt and Greece to the Arab world, from China and Rome to Google. He ponders the doomed library of Alexandria as well as the personal libraries of Charles Dickens, Jorge Luis Borges, and others. He recounts stories of people who have struggled against tyranny to preserve freedom of thought: the Polish librarian who smuggled books to safety as the Nazis began their destruction of Jewish libraries; the Afghani bookseller who kept his store open through decades of unrest. Oral "memory libraries" kept alive by prisoners, libraries of banned books, the imaginary library of Count Dracula, the library of books never written—Manguel illuminates the mysteries of libraries as no other writer could. With scores of wonderful images throughout, *The Library at Night* is a fascinating voyage through Manguel's mind, memory, and vast knowledge of books and civilizations.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In this wonderful tome, Alberto Manguel has given anyone who loves books a fascinating look at books, libraries and the captivating world of books in general. Books have been a major part of the author's life, and he shares it with us on both a personal and worldwide basis. Generally speaking, anyone who loves books, can never resist the desire to have their own library. In this 373 page book, he touches on just about every aspect of a library, both those which are personal and those which are public or private. The reader will constantly think of their own library as he discusses all these things. How and why the books are acquired, how are they arranged, how are they catalogued, how long are they kept, how hard were they to acquire, what will become of them, what about lending them, which are your favorites and why, where are they housed; you name it, he talks about it. I have a place in my library where I keep "Books About Books". I love to read about books and this one will be at home with them. This book is beautifully written with a copious amount of amazing photographs. Because the author covers so much in the book, it never gets laboured and there is something new and interesting on every page. Some of the things are simple, such as the price-stickers, which he so aptly calls "these evil white scabs". They annoy me as well, and I have found a product called "Goo Gone" a great help in getting rid of them. This reminds me of those "evil doer of deeds" in some bookstores who price-clip the dust jackets because in their little minds they don't think the customers can handle the published price versus what they are asking. I am always interested in the published price of older books and their actions are nothing short of vandalism in what they do.

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