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Dictionary of the Khazars: A Lexicon Novel in 100,000 Words (Male Edition) (English and Serbo-Croatian Edition)

Milorad Pavic

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Milorad Pavic : Dictionary of the Khazars: A Lexicon Novel in 100,000 Words (Male Edition) (English and Serbo-Croatian Edition) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Dictionary of the Khazars: A Lexicon Novel in 100,000 Words (Male Edition) (English and Serbo-Croatian Edition):

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Weird as hell, and all the better for it. By Jacob Smith A non-linear book. Fictional mythologies, parables, cultures, and religions all create a fantastic fantasy world, all rooted in actual history. Difficult to get into, and not much in the way of characterization or traditional plotting, but you feel like some kind of scholar-stroke-detective cross-referencing and digging deeper into the book to find its mysteries. A hearty recommendation to the kinds of readers who enjoy unique and experimental narratives, like House of Leaves or mashup fiction in general. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. CURIOUS By Samus I climbed on board by reading his Landscape Painted with Tea. A novel way to write a novel, most unorthodox and curious. It all makes sense when viewed from the landscape of the fragmented, motley, multicultural patchwork quilt that was Yugoslavia. Well, as long as the reader doesn't expect expect the novel to conform or correspond to the historical reality of the Khazars... 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. A Trip to A Fascinating World By Vanesa You know how

most of the novels have to be read from the beginning to the end, in a specific and tedious order. Well, this book does not follow that rule. It is quite original in its idea to tell a story of a mysterious tribe of the Khazars which lived in Europe between seventh and ninth century. As it is a dictionary, numerous characters can be found within their own sections, in alphabetical order, and distributed along three different books. So, you can skip from one book to the other, following stories about your favourite character, or just read it in a "conventional" way. Pavic writes in a beautiful and rich style which is excellently translated to English. If you like fantasy novels, with a true ring to them, this would be a great novel for you.

A novel despite its title, this spans five or more centuries and is a mixture of history, fiction and fable. This edition is intended for male readers. There is an accompanying female edition.

From Publishers Weekly
Written in Serbo-Croatian, first published in Yugoslavia, already a bestseller in Germany and France, this whimsical "lexicon" can be read on many levels. Pavic, professor of Serbian literature at the University of Belgrade, cares passionately about literature and he teases us through the unusual format of this novel to explore the subject. Entries are alphabetically arranged and can be perused at random, read start to finish or back to front. The publisher is offering two different versions, designated "male" and "female," and differing by only 15 lines. The narrative purports to be the historical record of the Khazars, a fictional Indo-European tribe that vanished in the 10th century. According to legend, the Khazar ruler asked a rabbi, a monk and a dervish to interpret a portentous dream; the winner would gain the conversion of the Khazar people to Judaism, Christianity or Islam. The result of this contest was lost in time. Interest in the "Khazar Polemic" prompted the Serbian warlord Avram Brankovich to compile a dictionary on the Khazars with the help of his retinue in the 17th century. Codified by a monk, the dictionary subsequently was 99% destroyed; one copy was found and revised; now it has fallen into the hands of modern-day scholars. Pavic is a 20th century Scheherazade, spinning a series of interconnected folk tales, drawing on a vast source of literary references, eventually metamorphosing his narrative into a murder mystery. Readers who are intrigued by literary conundrums will enjoy entering this magical world with Pavic as their guide. 40,000 combined first printing. Copyright 1988 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal
Christina Pribicevic-Zoric. LC 88-45262. \$19.95. f Yugoslav writer Pavic assures us that the Khazars were a nomadic people who settled near the Black Sea in the 7th century A.D. "But their origins remain unknown and all traces of them have vanished." A thousand years later a Polish printer incorporated surviving knowledge of the Khazars into a dictionary almost all copies of which were burned by the Inquisition. Pavic's interlocking series of witty and fantastic tales purports to update that edition, but by now all "facts" about the forgotten nation are doubly conjectural. As if the truth weren't problematic enough already, Pavic has even produced his lexicon in "male" and "female" versions differing by only a few (highly significant!) words. This congeries will delight readers of Borges and Calvino, although libraries will need to buy both editions to satisfy them. Grove Koger, Boise P.L., Id. Copyright 1988 Reed Business Information, Inc. "All its delights...the structural novelty and the comic inventiveness of the imagery...[are] an ebullient and generous celebration of the reading experience." -- The New York Times Book "As with Borges or Garcia Marquez...[Pavic] knows how to support his textual legerdemain with superb portrait miniatures and entrancing anecdotes." -- Washington Post Book World
Translated from the Serbo-Croatian by Christina Pribicevic-Zoric