



Essential Dialogues of Plato (Barnes & Noble Classics)

Plato

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Plato is one of those world-famed individuals, his philosophy one of those world-renowned creations, whose influence, as regards the culture and development of the mind, has from its commencement down to the present time been all-important.

— **G. W. F. Hegel**

Western philosophy starts with Socrates and his student **Plato**. By way of the dialectic that evolved between master and student, Plato invented the philosophical method of inquiry and analysis, and became the first to use a logical framework to ask—and try to answer—the eternal questions about ethics, politics, art, and life that still haunt humanity: What is virtue? What is justice? What is the ideal form of government? What is the individual's relationship to the state? Do artists have a responsibility to society, or only to their own creative impulse? Plato explores these issues through a series of dialogues, records of supposed conversations between Socrates and other Greek aristocrats. Although Socrates is nominally the main speaker in all of them, only the earlier dialogues document his thoughts, while the latter ones present Plato's own ideas.

What is often ignored in commentaries on Plato's work is its unique literary form. The dialogues are neither dramas, nor stories, yet they are skillfully fashioned by means of characters, narrative events, dramatic moments, and perhaps most surprising, a great deal of humor. Along with such exemplars of Plato's thought as *Symposium*, *Apology*, and *Phaedrus*, this volume includes the first three books of Plato's *Laws*.

Pedro De Blas holds degrees in Law and Classics. He has worked as counsel for several international organizations, including the United Nations and the World Bank, and he is currently a Ph.D. candidate in Classics at Columbia University. He has taught classical languages and literature at Columbia, the CUNY Latin and Greek Institute, and New York University's Gallatin School.

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