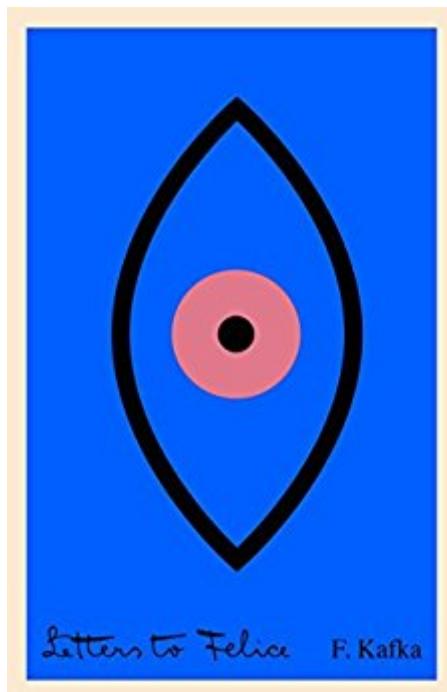


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Letters To Felice (The Schocken Kafka Library)



Synopsis

Franz Kafka first met Felice Bauer in August 1912, at the home of his friend Max Brod. The twenty-five-year-old career woman from Berlin "energetic, down-to-earth, life-affirming" awakened in him a desire to marry. Kafka wrote to Felice almost daily, sometimes even twice a day. Because he was living in Prague and she in Berlin, their letters became their sole source of knowledge of each other. But soon after their engagement in 1914, Kafka began having doubts about the relationship, fearing that marriage would imperil his dedication to writing and interfere with his need for solitude. Through their break-up, a second engagement in 1917, and their final parting later that year, when Kafka began falling ill with the tuberculosis that would eventually claim his life, their correspondence continued. The more than five hundred letters that Kafka wrote to Felice over the course of those five years were acquired by Schocken from her in 1955. They reveal the full measure of Kafka's inner turmoil as he tried, in vain, to balance his need for stability with the demands of his craft. "These letters are indispensable for anyone seeking a more intimate knowledge of Kafka and his fragmented world." —Library Journal

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The talent and importance of Franz Kafka is beyond dispute (who could ever forget the insect Gregor Samsa?). This book published in 1967 is based on his letters to Felice Bauer, the love of his life, and letters to her friend Grete Bloch. It was not translated until the early 70's and added important insights to what is known of this literary genius of the 19th century. The book begins with "An Introductory Essay" concerning Kafka's wishes for publication, "Editors' Note" about the controversy, "Letters to Felice," "Notes," an essay by Kafka, "Chronology from 1912-1917," as well as additional information about translations of other Kafka novels and stories from the Schocken Kafka Library. The letters mostly describe to Felice (twice his fiancée) his "dread of the union even with the most beloved woman" because he held the conviction that he was literature itself, obeying a command from heaven.

This book is pure proof Franz Kafka was a stalker. It's endlessly entertaining with letter after letter assuring Felice there is nothing untoward for a 30-year old to be writing an 18-year old, but he really needs to know what she's wearing and everyone she meets and exact records of what they said to her. He wants every tiny detail of her life so he suggests keeping a notebook with her to be precise in the details when she writes him. Franz wrote up to 4 letters a day for many years, so it's a very dense book. I would have liked to read her letters too, but you get a real sense of them from his letters. I like the kindle version so I can just dip in without having to carry around a 600-page book.

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