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Bonilla y Asociados
desde 1950



Título: Kafka: The Decisive Years

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Precio: \$400.00

Editorial:

Año:

Tema:

Edición: 1ª

Sinopsis

ISBN: 9780691147413

"[M]onumental. . . [A] superb English-language translation by Shelly Frisch . . . now reprinted in a handsome paperback by Princeton. . . In this first volume, Stach sifts through that rubble with huge amounts of energy and discretion (and Frisch follows him without a misstep; it feels like exactly the book I read ten years ago in its original language). . . His letters and journals are marshaled with sometimes breathtaking ingenuity, and the sheer scope of the work allows Stach to be expansive when painting his backgrounds. . . Always in these recountings, Stach is searching for his elusive subject, trying--as all previous biographers have tried, though none so well--to hear Kafka's strange, singular voice in the noise. . . Kafka: The Decisive Years was greeted with a loud chorus of praise when it first appeared in English, and the passage of almost a decade has cast no doubt on that verdict. Princeton has re-issued this classic so that it can stand next to the following volume, Kafka: The Years of Insight, newly published in hardcover. No one interested in Kafka (or, by almost inevitable extension, 20th century literature) should miss either."--Steve Donoghue, Open Letters Monthly