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This is more than a literary critique — it is a work of perception, of analysis that reveals a portrait of Kundera the novelist as one of the greatest demystifiers of our time. This significant work deals with all of Milan Kundera's novels up to his most recent work, Slowness, which marks the beginning of a new phase of his writing. It is the first work that studies Kundera as a novelist, rather than a philosopher or intellectual guide, and the only one that diverges from the beaten path in examining and in reflecting on the composition and style of these novels, to discern the underlying humanity and originality of the work as a whole and to finally establish the connections and correlation within and between the novels — connections that

conventional criticism can never reveal. "Slender but weighty. . . . What is moving about this novel is its embrace of what has always driven Kundera, the delicate state of living between being and nothingness."— Boston Globe From the internationally acclaimed, bestselling author of *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, an entertaining and enchanting novel—"a fitting capstone on an extraordinary career." (Slate) Casting light on the most serious of problems and at the same time saying not one serious sentence; being fascinated by the reality of the contemporary world and at the same time completely avoiding realism—that's *The Festival of Insignificance*. Readers who know Milan Kundera's earlier books know that the wish to incorporate an element of the "unserious" in a novel is not at all unexpected of him. In *Immortality*, Goethe and Hemingway stroll through several chapters together talking and laughing. And in *Slowness*, Vera, the author's wife, says to her husband: "you've often told me you meant to write a book one day that would have not a single serious word in it...I warn you: watch out. Your enemies are lying in wait." Kundera is finally and fully realizing his old aesthetic dream in this novel that we could easily view as a summation of his whole work. A strange sort of summation. Strange sort of epilogue. Strange sort of laughter, inspired by our time, which is comical because it has lost all sense of humor. What more can we say? Nothing. Just read. In their virtuoso displays of literary talent, Nabokov and Kundera showcase the strategies that allow their protagonists to succeed as emigres: a creative fusing of past and present through the prism of the imagination." . The author initially intended to call this novel *The Lyrical Age*. The lyrical age, according to Kundera, is youth, and this novel, above all, is an epic of adolescence; an ironic epic that tenderly erodes sacrosanct values: childhood, motherhood, revolution, and even poetry. Jaromil is in fact a poet. His mother made him a poet and accompanies him (figuratively) to his love bed and (literally) to his deathbed. A ridiculous and touching character, horrifying and totally innocent ("innocence with its bloody smile!"), Jaromil is at the same time a true poet. He's no creep, he's Rimbaud. Rimbaud entrapped by the communist revolution, entrapped in a somber farce. "An elegant, personalized integration of anecdote, analysis, scholarship, memory and speculation. . . . Not since Henry James, perhaps, has a fiction writer examined the process of writing with such insight, authority and range of reference and allusion." —Russell Banks, *New York Times Book Review* "A magic curtain, woven of legends, hung before the world. Cervantes sent Don Quixote journeying and tore through the curtain. The world opened before the knight-errant in all the comical nakedness of its prose." In this thought-provoking, endlessly enlightening, and entertaining essay on the art of the novel, renowned author Milan Kundera suggests that "the curtain" represents a ready-made perception of the world that each of us has—a pre-interpreted world. The job of the novelist, he argues, is to rip through the curtain and reveal what it hides. Here an incomparable literary artist cleverly sketches out his personal view of the history and value of the novel in Western civilization. In doing so, he celebrates a prose form that possesses the unique ability to transcend national and language boundaries in order to reveal some previously unknown aspect of human existence. "An absolutely dazzling entertainment. . . . Arousing on every level—political, erotic, intellectual, and above all, humorous." —*Newsweek* "The Book of Laughter and Forgetting calls itself a novel, although it is part fairy tale, part literary criticism, part political tract, part musicology, and part autobiography. It can call itself whatever it wants to, because the whole is genius." —*New York Times* Rich in its stories, characters, and imaginative range, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* is the novel that brought Milan Kundera his first big international success in the late 1970s. Like all his work, it is valuable for far more than its historical implications. In seven wonderfully integrated parts, different aspects of human existence are magnified and reduced, reordered and emphasized, newly examined, analyzed, and experienced. El doctor Havel, la enfermera Alzbeta, Eduard, Alice, Kiara y una falsa autoestopista son algunos de los inolvidables personajes que se entregan a los múltiples y contradictorios juegos propiciados por la amistad, el amor y el sexo. En un entorno inquisitivo y sofocante, ellos protagonizan siete aventuras, siete encuentros y desencuentros con los que Kundera, con la brillantez que lo caracteriza, incita a una risa traviesa, a un humor sabio, refinado y gozoso. "A thoughtful, intricate, ambivalent novel with the reach of greatness in it." —John Updike "It is impossible to do justice here to the subtleties, comedy, and wisdom of this very beautiful novel. Milan Kundera is an artist, clearly one of the best to be found anywhere, who says that the good (and evil) that issues from men's souls matters much more than the deeds of a State. And he says it with passion, with good humor, and with love." —Salman Rushdie All too often, this brilliant novel of thwarted love and revenge miscarried has been read for its political implications. Now, more than a quarter century after *The Joke* was first published and several years after the collapse of the Soviet-imposed Czechoslovak regime, it becomes easier to put such implications into perspective in favor of valuing the book (and all Milan Kundera's work) as what it truly is: great, stirring literature that sheds new light on the eternal themes of human existence. This edition provides English-language readers an important further means toward reevaluation of *The Joke*. For reasons he describes in his Author's Note, Milan Kundera devoted much time to creating a completely revised translation that reflects his original as closely as any translation possibly can: reflects it in its fidelity not only to the words and syntax but also to the characteristic dictions and tonalities of the novel's narrators. The result is nothing less than the restoration of a classic. Published simultaneously with *Identity*, his new novel, here is a masterful new translation of Milan Kundera's most brilliantly plotted and sheerly entertaining novel -- a dark farce of sex, murder, and motherhood. Set in an Old-Fashioned Central European Spa Town, *Farewell Waltz* follows the lives of eight characters: a pretty nurse and her repairman boyfriend; an oddball gynecologist; a rich American who is at once a saint and a Don Juan; a popular trumpeter and his beautiful obsessively jealous wife; a disillusioned former political prisoner about to leave his country and his young female ward. Perhaps the most accessible of Milan Kundera's novels, *Farewell Waltz* poses the most serious questions with a blasphemous lightness that makes us see that the modern world has deprived us even of the right to tragedy. Translated from the French text prepared by the author himself a quarter century after the novel was originally written, *Farewell Waltz* sparkles anew with wit, humor, and irony. A valuable addition to HarperFlamingo's impressive Kundera backlist, it offers readers a chance to discover, or rediscover, one of the very best works of a legendary writer. "It is

hard to imagine anything more chilling and profound than Kundera's apparent lightheartedness". -- Elizabeth Pochoda  
"Kundera ... remains faithful to this subtle, wily, devious talent for a fiction of 'erotic possibilities'. -- New York Times Book Review "A defense of fiction and a lesson in the art of reading." —New York Times Book Review "Testaments Betrayed is to be savored paragraph by paragraph. . . . It must be purchased, read, pondered, and argued within the margins. And frequently reread." — Washington Post A brilliant and thought-provoking essay from one of the twentieth century's masters of fiction, *Testaments Betrayed* is written like a novel: the same characters appear and reappear throughout the nine parts of the book, as do the principal themes that preoccupy the author. Kundera is a passionate defender of the moral rights of the artist and the respect due a work of art and its creator's wishes. The betrayal of both—often by their most passionate proponents—is one of the key ideas that informs this strikingly original and elegant book. New York Times Bestseller "Inspired. . . . Kundera's most brilliantly imagined novel. . . . A book that entrances, beguiles and charms us from first page to last." — Cleveland Plain Dealer Milan Kundera's sixth novel springs from a casual gesture of a woman to her swimming instructor, a gesture that creates a character in the mind of a writer named Kundera. Like Flaubert's *Emma* or Tolstoy's *Anna*, Kundera's *Agnès* becomes an object of fascination, of indefinable longing. From that character springs a novel, a gesture of the imagination that both embodies and articulates Milan Kundera's supreme mastery of the novel and its purpose: to explore thoroughly the great themes of existence. En *El libro de la risa y el olvido*, la primera obra del gran escritor checo escrita fuera de su país, Kundera muestra una historia de exilio que contiene dos verdades: la experiencia trágica de Praga y la vida en el mundo occidental. Las siete partes de la obra, a las que el autor llama "novela con variaciones," se suceden como las etapas de un viaje: idénticos problemas y situaciones progresan en crescendo hasta unirse en una sola imagen. Tamina, a quien el exilio obliga a trabajar como camarera, lucha desesperadamente contra el olvido que empieza ya a difuminar el recuerdo de su marido, muerto y a todas luces irremplazable. El texto es excepcionalmente vivo en contrastes: a una situación política suceden escenas de un erotismo ambiguo y fragil que en cualquier momento puede transformarse en risible pantomima; el relato onírico alterna con una enorme farsa de poetas ebrios que intercambian frases tan incongruentes como insultantes; el humor aparece tenido de profunda tristeza y el vertigo de la Historia es una carrera amenazante. Desde una esceptica perspectiva, Milan Kundera persigue en sus obras un mismo proyecto estético: la unión de los imposibles -lo más serio y lo más frívolo, lo más real y lo más lúdico-. En este libro esa meta se alcanza plenamente. Una desenfadada visión del mundo que recoge la esencia de toda la narrativa de Kundera. Proyectar una luz sobre los problemas más serios y a la vez no pronunciar una sola frase seria, estar fascinado por la realidad del mundo contemporáneo y a la vez evitar todo realismo, así es *La fiesta de la insignificancia*. Quien conozca los libros anteriores de Kundera sabe que no son en absoluto inesperadas en él las ganas de incorporar en una novela algo «no serio». En *La inmortalidad*, Goethe y Hemingway pasean juntos durante muchos capítulos, charlan y se lo pasan bien. Y en *La lentitud*, Vera, la esposa del autor, dice a su marido: «Tú me has dicho muchas veces que un día escribirías una novela en la que no habría ninguna palabra seria... Te lo advierto: ve con cuidado: tus enemigos acechan». Pero, en lugar de ir con cuidado, Kundera realiza por fin plenamente en esta novela su viejo sueño estético, que así puede verse como un sorprendente resumen de toda su obra. Menudo resumen. Menudo epílogo. Menuda risa inspirada en nuestra época, que es cómica porque ha perdido todo su sentido del humor. ¿Qué puede aún decirse? Nada. ¡Lean! "Kundera, master of the twosome, finds erotic and existential threads everywhere in daily behavior. Like his previous books, *Identity* is a cluster of jeweled observations. . . . But *Identity* has a special charm: suspense. . . . [It] gets us turning the pages in excitement and alarm, and Kundera's wit keeps us turning them to the very end." — San Francisco Chronicle In a narrative as intense as it is brief, a moment of confusion sets in motion a complex chain of events which forces the reader to cross and recross the divide between fantasy and reality. Sometimes—perhaps only for an instant—we fail to recognize a companion; for a moment their identity ceases to exist, and thus we come to doubt our own. The effect is at its most acute in a couple, where our existence is given meaning by our perception of a lover, and theirs of us. With his astonishing skill at building on and out from the significant moment, Milan Kundera has placed such a situation and the resulting wave of panic at the core of this novel. Hailed as a "a fervent and compelling romance, a moving fable about the anxieties of love and separateness" (*Baltimore Sun*), it is not to be missed. Milan Kundera se sirve a la vez de una novela francesa del siglo XVIII y de una excursión que a él y a su mujer se les antoja hacer a un castillo de Francia convertido en hotel, para ir dando vida a una serie de personajes del pasado y del presente que terminan coincidiendo en un congreso de entomólogos que se celebra en sus salones. Personajes e historias de ayer y de hoy van entrelazándose de tal manera que a nadie sorprendera, por ejemplo, que un hombre enfundado en un casco de motociclista, azorado e impaciente, se aleje en su moto a toda velocidad, mientras otro, con una peluca blanca, adormilado y ensimismado, se sube a una calesa que parece salida de una estampa del pasado : el primero desea sin duda dejar algo tras de sí a toda prisa ; el segundo, en cambio, parece disponerse a recordar, al paso lento del caballo, la noche que acaba de pasar con la intrigante y seductora Madame de T. *Agnès's Final Afternoon* imitates the protagonist of Milan Kundera's novel *Immortality* on the last afternoon of her life. Like all readers of fiction, *Agnès* steps out of the world of planned routes, responsibilities, and social self and gives herself up to the discovery of a new landscape, an experience that will transform her. François Ricard's essay enters into the writings of Milan Kundera in much the same way. The landscape he explores includes a chain of ten novels, composed between 1959 and 1999, and two books containing one of the most lucid reflections on the novel. Milan Kundera is a master of graceful illusion and illuminating surprise. In one of these stories a young man and his girlfriend pretend that she is a stranger he picked up on the road--only to become strangers to each other in reality as their game proceeds. In another a teacher fakes piety in order to seduce a devout girl, then jilts her and yearns for God. In yet another girls wait in bars, on beaches, and on station platforms for the same lover, a middle-aged Don Juan who has gone home to his wife. Games, fantasies, and schemes abound in all the stories while different characters react in varying ways to the sudden release of erotic impulses. Ésta es una historia de amor, o sea

de celos, de sexo, de traiciones y también de las debilidades y paradojas de la vida cotidiana de dos parejas cuyos destinos se entrelazan. Los celos de Teresa por Tomás, el terco amor de éste por ella, opuesto a su irrefrenable deseo de otras mujeres, el idealismo de Franz, amante de Sabina, y la necesidad de ésta, amante también de Tomás, de perseguir una libertad que tan sólo la conduce a la insoportable levedad del ser, se convierten de simple anécdota en reflexión sobre problemas que nos afectan a todos. "I can't imagine reading this book without being challenged and instructed, amused, amazed and aroused, and ultimately delighted." —John Simon, New York Times Book Review Milan Kundera's brilliant collection of essays is a passionate defense of art in an era that, he argues, no longer values art or beauty. With the same dazzling mix of emotion and ideas that characterizes his bestselling novels, the internationally acclaimed author revisits the artists whose works help us better understand what it means to be human. Elegant, startlingly original, and provocative, Encounter combines many of the author's signature themes with personal reflections and stories. Tal vez por haber sido escritas en el periodo (entre 1959 y 1968) más feliz de la vida de Milan Kundera, según sus propias palabras, las narraciones que componen el libro de los amores ridículos son las más alegres, las más seriamente desvergonzadas y las más reflexivamente divertidas de toda su obra. La farándula de personajes hedonistas que desfila ante los ojos del lector, todos ellos en busca de los juegos múltiples y contradictorios de la amistad, el amor y el sexo, y envueltos en un mundo lleno de severidad, hermetismo e inquisición, no puede sino incitar a la risa. Una risa auténtica, traviesa; un humor sabio, refinado y gozoso, al que nos tiene ya acostumbrados el autor de la insoportable levedad del ser. Al mismo tiempo que el libro de los amores ridículos, Tusquets Editores saca a la luz otras tres obras de Milan Kundera en la colección Esenciales: el ensayo *El telón* (Esenciales Kundera 1), la novela *La despedida* (Esenciales Kundera 2) y la obra de teatro *Jacques y su amo* (Esenciales Kundera 4). Se inicia así la reedición de todas las obras de Milan Kundera aparecidas en nuestro catálogo, ahora reunidas en la colección Esenciales. - UN ENCUENTRO nos da a conocer a un KUNDERA, en cierto modo, inédito. En efecto, aunque el autor reflexione, como confiesa al principio del libro, sobre sus «viejestemas existenciales y estéticos», lo cierto es que en este apasionado -y apasionante- «encuentro» con algunas obras maestras de la literatura, la música y la pintura, el escritor checo aborda cuestiones hasta ahora poco o nada transitadas en sus libros anteriores. Así, explora lo que la novela -y sólo la novela, esa «sonda existencial»- puede explicar sobre el ser humano, e indaga asimismo en las repercusiones, no siempre negativas, que el exilio tiene para el creador (con una emocionante comparación entre las dos Primaveras del 68, la de París y la de Praga). También desentraña el papel de la memoria ante las tragedias del siglo XX y habla de la lucha desesperada del verdadero artista por asumir lo mejor de la tradición de su arte (con una irónica pregunta sobre lo que la posteridad conserva finalmente de los autores). Por último, sostiene que sólo un análisis profundo de la composición formal de una obra revela las intenciones estéticas de su autor (y lo demuestra con un breve y fascinante ensayo dedicado a KAPUTT y a la que califica de genial «archinovela», *LA PIEL*, de Curzio Malaparte). A partir del gesto encantador de una mujer de cierta edad, el escritor crea el personaje de Agnes, alrededor de la cual aparecerán su hermana Laura, su marido Paul, y todo nuestro mundo contemporáneo en el que se rinde culto a la tecnología y la imagen. Pero ¿y si el hombre no fuera sino su imagen?, pregunta otro personaje, Rubens, quien comprueba finalmente que de la más excitante de sus amantes sólo le quedan dos o tres fotografías mentales. Esta novela transforma todos los aspectos del mundo moderno en cuestiones metafísicas. Su forma es polifónica: las aventuras de los personajes imaginarios se mezclan con la historia de dos candidatos a la inmortalidad, Goethe y Bettina von Armin; la reflexión sobre el nacimiento del homo senti-mentalis en la historia de Europa alterna con las peripecias parisienses del singular profesor Avenarius, para quien el mundo de hoy no sirve sino como objeto de juego. Kundera tiene el don de decir del modo más cristalino lo que a uno le resulta más difícil decirse, y en esta novela alcanza la cima de esta facultad. Ludvik Jahn, joven estudiante universitario y activo miembro del Partido Comunista checo, envía a una compañera de clase una postal en la que se burla del optimismo ideológico imperante. La broma no les hace la menor gracia a los dirigentes universitarios y, tras un juicio sumario, expulsan a Ludvik de la universidad y del Partido. Pero, paradójicamente, al caer en desgracia, se abre para Ludvik un mundo aún desconocido. Atrapado entre dos amores, el de Lucie, tierno y desesperado, y el de Helena, apasionado y cínico, Ludvik va, sin embargo, de tropiezo en tropiezo, transformando su vida en un cúmulo de situaciones a cual más grotesca y risible. De hecho, con el paso del tiempo, la vida de Ludvik se convertirá en una enorme broma pesada: ya no podrá culpar al destino, porque ya no puede sino culparse a sí mismo. Milan Kundera's lightest novel, a divertimento, an opera buffa, *Slowness* is also the first of this author's fictional works to have been written in French. Disconcerted and enchanted, the reader follows the narrator of *Slowness* through a midsummer's night in which two tales of seduction, separated by more than two hundred years, interweave and oscillate between the sublime and the comic. Underlying this libertine fantasy is a profound meditation on contemporary life: about the secret bond between slowness and memory, about the connection between our era's desire to forget and the way we have given ourselves over to the demon of speed. And about "dancers" possessed by the passion to be seen, for whom life is merely a perpetual show emptied of every intimacy and every joy. "After Farewell Waltz there cannot be any doubt. Kundera is a master of contemporary literature. This novel is both an example of virtuosity and a descent into the human soul." —L'Unite Set in an old-fashioned Central European spa town, *Farewell Waltz* poses the most serious questions with a blasphemous lightness that makes us see that the modern world has deprived us even of the right to tragedy. In this dark farce of a novel, eight characters are swept up in an accelerating dance: a pretty nurse and her repairman boyfriend; an oddball gynecologist; a rich American (at once saint and Don Juan); a popular trumpeter and his beautiful, obsessively jealous wife; and an disillusioned former political prisoner about to leave his country and his young woman ward. It is perhaps the most brilliantly plotted and sheerly entertaining of Milan Kundera's novels. Written in Bohemia in 1969-70, the book was first published (in 1976) in France under the title *La valse aux adieux* (*Farewell Waltz*), and later in thirty-four other countries. This beautiful translation, made from the French text prepared by the novelist himself, fully reflects

Kundera's own tone and intentions, and offers an opportunity for both the discovery and the rediscovery of one of the very best of a great writer's works. "An intellectual heavyweight and a pure literary virtuoso, Milan Kundera takes some of Freud's most cherished complexes and irreverently whirls them about in acts of legerdemain that capture our darkest, deepest human passions. . . . The tales in *Laughable Loves* surprise and illuminate. . . . Kundera's world is complex, full of mockeries and paradoxes. Life is often brutal and humiliating; it is often blasphemous, funny, irritating." — Cleveland Plain Dealer

Milan Kundera is a master of graceful illusion and illuminating surprise. In one of these stories a young man and his girlfriend pretend that she is a stranger he picked up on the road—only to become strangers to each other in reality as their game proceeds. In another a teacher fakes piety in order to seduce a devout girl, then jilts her and yearns for God. In yet another girls wait in bars, on beaches, and on station platforms for the same lover, a middle-aged Don Juan who has gone home to his wife. Games, fantasies, and schemes abound in all the stories while different characters react in varying ways to the sudden release of erotic impulses. Una novela ya clásica en torno al olvido, el erotismo y el humor. Mientras Tamina, una joven viuda en el exilio, quiere recuperar sus diarios íntimos para reconstruir con ellos sus cada vez más vagos recuerdos de su vida matrimonial, Mirek, en Bohemia, trata, en cambio, de recobrar unas antiguas cartas de amor para borrar parte de su pasado. Como dice el propio autor, «es una novela sobre Tamina y, en el momento en el que Tamina desaparece de la escena, es una novela para Tamina. Ella es el personaje principal y el principal espectador y todas las demás historias son variaciones de su historia y se reúnen en su vida como en un espejo». One of a series of titles first published by Faber between 1930 and 1990, and in a style and format planned with a view to the appearance of the volumes on the bookshelf. In his story of irreconcilable loves and infidelities, Kundera addresses himself to the nature of 20th-century Being. En un balneario algo trasnochado convergen ocho personas cuyas circunstancias van entretejiéndose hasta formar, con la precisión de una telaraña, una trama en la que todos acaban viéndose atrapados: el músico célebre y la hermosa enfermera que quiere quedarse embarazada; la celosa esposa del músico y el joven mecánico enamorado de la enfermera; el ex convicto, víctima de las purgas de su país, que va a despedirse de la cerebral Olga; el ginecólogo, con sus fanfarrones proyectos demográficos, y el rico excéntrico, un santo en versión moderna. la despedida tiene la ligereza de un vals, la magia de «un sueño de una noche de verano». Pero, tras esta forma intencionadamente frívola, se oculta una pregunta más grave: ¿merece el hombre vivir en esta tierra?, ¿acaso no hay que «liberar el planeta de las garras del hombre»? En este sentido, cuesta imaginar algo más glacial y más profundo que la aparente levedad de Kundera. Simultáneamente a la despedida, Tusquets Editores saca a la luz tres obras más de este autor, iniciando así la publicación en la colección Esenciales de todas las obras de Milan Kundera que contiene nuestro catálogo: el ensayo *el telón* (Esenciales Kundera 1) —su título más reciente—, el volumen de narraciones *el libro de los amores ridículos* (Esenciales Kundera 3) y la obra de teatro *Jacques y su amo* (Esenciales Kundera 4). Una mujer y un hombre se encuentran por casualidad durante su viaje de regreso al país natal del que emigraron hace veinte años. ¿Podrán reemprender una extraña historia de amor, apenas iniciada entonces en su tierra? El caso es que, tras tan larga ausencia, «sus recuerdos no se parecen». Porque «nuestra memoria, la pobre, ¿qué puede hacer? Sólo es capaz de retener del pasado una miserable pequeña parcela sin que nadie sepa por qué precisamente ésta y no otra...». Vivimos sumidos en un inmenso olvido, y no queremos saberlo. Sólo aquellos que, como Ulises, vuelven después de veinte años a su Ítaca natal pueden ver de cerca, atónitos y deslumbrados, a la diosa de la ignorancia. "I will say no more about this lacerating book except to urge it upon all who care about literature in our difficult era." — Boston Globe "A sly and merciless lampoon of revolutionary romanticism. . . Kundera commits some of the funniest literary savaging since Evelyn Waugh polished off Dickens in *A Handful of Dust*." — Time Milan Kundera initially intended to call this novel *The Lyrical Age*. The lyrical age, according to him, is youth, and this novel, above all, is an epic of adolescence; an ironic epic that tenderly erodes sacrosanct values: childhood, motherhood, revolution, and even poetry. Jaromil is in fact a poet. His mother made him a poet and accompanies him (figuratively) to his love bed and (literally) to his deathbed. A ridiculous and touching character, horrifying and totally innocent ("innocence with its bloody smile!"), Jaromil is at the same time a true poet. He's no creep, he's Rimbaud. Rimbaud entrapped by the communist revolution, entrapped in a somber farce. Conciencia de la continuidad - Die Weltliteratur - Llegar al alma de las cosas - ¿Qué es un novelista? - La estética y la existencia - El telón rasgado - La novela, la memoria, el olvido. "We should welcome the context Kundera gives for the struggles between Russia and Europe, and the plight of those caught between them. His defense of small languages, small cultures, and small nations feels pressing." — Claire Messud, Harper's Magazine "Kundera focuses on the relationship of Europe's central 'small nations' like Czechoslovakia and Ukraine to Western culture and argues that their cultural identities were increasingly threatened." — New York Book Review A short collection of brilliant early essays that offers a fascinating context for Milan Kundera's subsequent career and holds a mirror to much recent European history. It is also remarkably prescient with regard to Russia's current aggression in Ukraine and its threat to the rest of Europe. Milan Kundera's early nonfiction work feels especially resonant in our own time. In these pieces, Kundera pleads the case of the "small nations" of Europe who, by culture, are Western with deep roots in Europe, despite Russia imposing its own Communist political regimes in Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Ukraine, and elsewhere. Kundera warns that the real tragedy here is not Russia but Europe, whose own identity and culture are directly challenged and threatened in a way that could lead to their destruction. He is sounding the alarm, which chimes loud and clear in our own twenty-first century. The 1983 essay translated by Edmund White ("The Tragedy of Central Europe"), and the 1967 lecture delivered to the Czech Writers' Union in the middle of the Prague Spring by the young Milan Kundera ("Literature and the Small Nations"), translated for the first time by Linda Asher, are both written in a voice that is at once personal, vehement, and anguished. Here, Kundera appears already as one of our great European writers and truly our contemporary. Each piece is prefaced by a short presentation by French historian Pierre Nora and Czech-born French political scientist Jacques Rupnik. "Incites us to reflect on fiction and philosophy, knowledge and

truth, and brilliantly illustrates the art of the essay.” — The New Republic "Every novelist's work contains an implicit vision of the history of the novel, an idea of what the novel is. I have tried to express the idea of the novel that is inherent in my own novels." — Milan Kundera Kundera brilliantly examines the evolution, construction, and essence of the novel as an art form through the lens of his own work and through the work of such important and diverse figures as Rabelais, Cervantes, Sterne, Diderot, Flaubert, Tolstoy, Musil, Kafka, and perhaps the least known of all the great novelists of our time, Hermann Broch. Kundera's discussion of his own work includes his views on the role of historical events in fiction, the meaning of action, and the creation of character in the post-psychological novel. A New York Times Notable Book Irena and Josef meet by chance while returning to their homeland, which they had abandoned twenty years earlier. Will they manage to pick up the thread of their strange love story, interrupted almost as soon as it began and then lost in the tides of history? The truth is that after such a long absence "their memories no longer match." "Far more than a conventional novel. It is a meditation on life, on the erotic, on the nature of men and women and love . . . full of telling details, truths large and small, to which just about every reader will respond." — People In The Unbearable Lightness of Being, Milan Kundera tells the story of two couples, a young woman in love with a man torn between his love for her and his incorrigible womanizing, and one of his mistresses and her humbly faithful lover. In a world in which lives are shaped by irrevocable choices and by fortuitous events, a world in which everything occurs but once, existence seems to lose its substance, its weight. Hence, we feel "the unbearable lightness of being" not only as the consequence of our pristine actions but also in the public sphere, and the two inevitably intertwine. This magnificent novel is a story of passion and politics, infidelity and ideas, and encompasses the extremes of comedy and tragedy, illuminating all aspects of human existence.

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