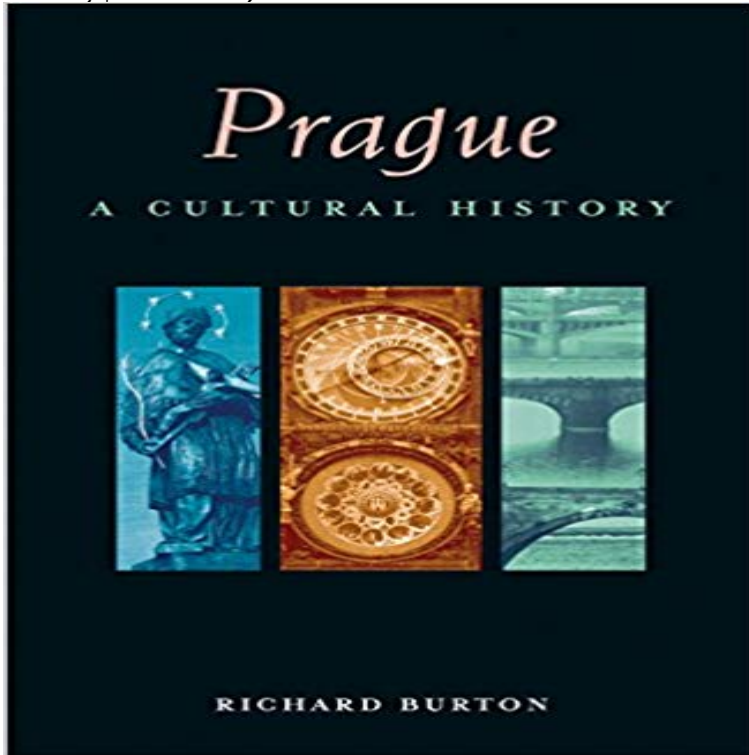


Prague: A Cultural History (Interlink Cultural Histories) (Cities of the Imagination)



Located at the very center of Europe, Prague has been on the frontline of international political, intellectual, religious, and cultural conflicts for more than six centuries. Invaded and occupied by the Habsburgs, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Nazis, and then Communist Russia, the city's identity is shaped by a long experience of foreign domination and a strong sense of martyrdom. A treasure house of Gothic, baroque, and modernist architecture, Prague is also a city of icons and symbols: statues, saints and signs reveal a turbulent history of religious and cultural conflict. As Kafka's nightmare city and home of the Good Soldier Švejk, the Czech capital also produced two of the twentieth century's emblematic writers. Richard Burton explores this metropolis of theatrical allusion, in which politics and drama have always been intertwined. His interpretation of the city's cultural past and present encompasses opera and rock music, puppetry and cinema, surrealism and socialist realism. Looking at Prague's world-famous landmarks and lesser-known sites, his reading of the city through its writing and iconography is both perceptive and challenging.*

THE CITY OF ARTISTS AND WRITERS: The Castle and Kafka, Hašek and Kundera; music from Smetana to the Plastic People of the Universe; modernism and cubism; political theater and the playwright-president Vaclav Havel.*

THE CITY OF TYRANNY AND RESISTANCE: Jan Hus and anti-Catholic revolt; subjugation and the rise of Czech nationalism; Germans, Czechs and Jews; Prague Spring 1968, Charter 77 and the Velvet Revolution of November 1989.*

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