



Nietzsche

A Self-Portrait
from His Letters
edited by
Peter Fuss and
Henry Shapiro

Nietzsche: A Self-Portrait from His Letters

for Hannah,
fondly and with
deep appreciation Peter

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Nietzsche *A Self-Portrait from His Letters*

*Edited and translated by
Peter Fuss and Henry Shapiro*

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Contents

The Letters 1

A Chronological Sketch 147

Nietzsche's Major Works 155

The Correspondents 159

Bibliography 185

Index 191

With respect to the practical side of life I beg of you, my tried and true friend, to go on helping me maintain just one thing: the greatest possible independence and freedom from personal concerns. I think you know what Zarathustra's urging "Become hard!" means for me in particular. My tendency to do justice to everyone, and to treat with the greatest gentleness precisely what is most hostile to me, is developed to excess. This invites one danger after another, not only for me but for my task. Here indeed I need hardening and, for disciplinary reasons, an occasional bit of cruelty.

Forgive me! It doesn't always sound good when one speaks of oneself; it doesn't always smell good either.

98 TO MALWIDA VON MEYSENBUG

Venice, May 1884

. . . It has now become extremely difficult to give me help; more and more, I consider it unlikely that I'll meet anyone who can. Almost every time I've entertained such hopes, it's turned out that *I* was the one who had to pitch in. But I have no time for that now. My task is enormous, my determination no less so. What I want, my son Zarathustra won't tell you. But he'll challenge you to figure it out, and perhaps you can. This much is certain: I wish to force mankind to decisions which will determine its entire future—and it may yet happen that one day whole millennia will make their most solemn vows in my name. . . .

99 TO PETER GAST

Sils-Maria, 2 September 1884

. . . Here, without a stove, chilled to the marrow, my hands blue, I'll hardly be able to stand it much longer. . . .

I've managed to get the major task I set myself this summer more or less done. The next six years will go toward