

# The metamorphosis

## frank kafta



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

The MetamorphosisThe writer of a popular short story titled The Metamorphosis was written by Franz Kafka in 1912. Kafka was born into a Jewish middle-class German speaking family on July 3, 1883 in Prague, Bohemia now known as Czech Republic. Kafka wrote many pieces but was best known for The Metamorphosis, and his creation of literary terms like Kafkaesque, which was inspired by his bizarre impersonal short stories.

Kafka's father Hermann Kafka was a successful merchant who ran a shop on the main level and they lived on the top level. Hermann had a bad temper and had high expectations for his three sons to continue running the family business. When Kafka's two brothers died the natural strain of being the only boy began. Not approving of his son's decision to become a writer, Kafka faced many conflicts with his father. Knowing that his father didn't approve of his work Kafka still continued to follow his passion of writing.

In 1919 Kafka wrote Letter to Father, which he never sent. A person feels more at peace with their internal anger when they write down their thoughts on paper, and that's what I felt Kafka did when he wrote the letter to his father. Even though he never sent the letter, nor had intentions to send it, there is always the possibility of his father to find the letter. Many people repress their feelings because they don't want to face the truth, or hurt anyone else; it seemed that Kafka was empowered by his escape through literature. Like William Gibson who story Burning Chrome we read in class, Kafka was also a fiction writer ahead of his time. Work by Kafka often was addressing subjects three decades in advance.

Due to isolation from the German community Kafka often wrote about the ghetto before there was urban build-up. Due to his families'™ extreme religious practice Kafka eventually declared himself a socialist atheist. Max Brod became Kafka's™ translator in 1902, with all the time that the two spent together they eventually became intimate friends. In 1906 Kafka received his doctorate degree from the German University in German literature and law.

The work of Kafka often consisted of black humor with mixes of meditations, poetic fragments, and sketches which makes it hard to categorize his work. Most of Kafka's™ work falls into the genre of existentialism and modernism. Most of 1911 Kafka spend his time in spas for ill health. The following year Kafka met and became engaged to Felice Bauer who was from Berlin. In his diary there were many considerations of killing himself. '?? I would stand at the window for long periods, and was frequently tempted to amaze the toll collector on the bridge below by my plunge.??' (Kafka's™ quote from his diary written in 1912). All of Kafka's™ work had a twist along with hidden meaning that not many understand, or chose study the words true meanings.

Before the Law is a very short story that Kafka wrote in 1914, which has many different interpretations the story. Followed by a short series he wrote in 1916 Kafka wrote The Judgment that sets focus on his struggle with his father. Shortly after writing The Judgment, Kafka broke off his second engagement from Felice in 1917. This can be related to his reflections of his struggles with his father, and wanting to disconnect with any parts of his life that reminded him of his struggles. After two years of suffering from poor

health Kafka was diagnosed with tuberculosis, which enabled him to escape his family and move to Berlin where he was able to strictly focus on writing. Even though Kafka was a gifted writer he had low confidence in his work.

Kafka requested all of his unpublished work to be destroyed by his best friend Max Brod. Following Kafka's death in 1924 Brod didn't publish any of Kafka's work, but he also didn't destroy it. Although they were friends Brod went against Kafka's wishes and published his work such as *The Trial* in 1925, followed by *The Castle* in 1926, and *Amerika* in 1927. A few days after Kafka's death, Milena Jesenska his assumed lover and also a Czech journalist wrote, "He wrote the most significant works of modern German literature, which reflect the irony and prophetic vision of a man condemned to see the world with such blinding clarity that he found it unbearable and went to his death." One of Franz Kafka quotes that I found moving was "Theoretically there is a perfect possibility of happiness; believing in the indestructible element in oneself and not striving towards it." To understand or appreciate the story *The Metamorphosis* the reader needs to interpret the entire story, and avoid looking at it as a whole.

If I was to summarize the story to a person they would just understand that a man went to sleep and woke up to find himself transformed into some sort of beetle. After reading the story and understanding more of Kafka's work and background I am able to appreciate this piece, and the fact that there is more meaning to it than readers give it credit for. *The Metamorphosis* is constructed as a fantasy, when Gregor discovered that he has transformed he thought, "What has happened to me he thought. It was no dream." Although this piece is fiction we are to analyze the meaning of the literature,

and in my opinion it was a dream. Most people have experienced dreams that have felt so real that when we awake we are confused, and even have a rush of adrenaline. Since dreams can be surreal at times, how does a reader know that this wasn't a dream if Gregor's throughout the entire story. The story expresses how the family depended on Gregor for financial stability, but once he transformed into a beetle they lost a sense of respect for him. Gregor's sister Gretta was the only family member who attempts to take care of Gregor.

Gretta even tries to find him food that he would like to eat, since he no longer had the appetite for foods he used to love. The fact that the family trapped Gregor in his own room because of his appearance is beyond words. It made me think what I would do if this happened to a family member of mine, I would allow them to roam the house and be their own person in their own home. Not treat them like they are an unwanted pet. In the end of the story it explains how Gregor was going to sleep, and it seemed like he was upset more than the other nights. Gregor died that night in his sleep, some may be sad to read that but it's the best thing that can happen in his position.

He is released from the stress and agony that he was living in, and now has the opportunity to be free in his afterlife. Most of Kafka's writings tend to be depressing but The Metamorphosis sets a different tone at the end of the story. Some readers may find the end of this piece sad because of Gregor's death; an optimistic person will see the happiness enclosed. The story has a happy ending when the family is motivated to move on by hoping to find Gretta a husband. Even though Kafka's writing was known for not so

happy endings, the meaning ??? The Metamorphosis??? had different intention. The story consisted of sadness and helplessness for Gregor, in which he died at the end of the piece, but death isn't always the end.

When the family lost Gregor they managed to grieve in a unusual way by focusing on Gretta. The goal was to help Gretta find a husband, which gives the story hope, and leaves the reader wondering what would happen. This can be the reason why ??? The Metamorphosis??? ended up as one of Kafka's most popular short stories. In order to understand Kafka's work, the reader needs to be unbiased and put all judgment aside.

The beauty of Kafka's writing is that he wrote exactly what he was feeling, and anything that came to his mind he was brave enough to compose it on paper. The world would be full of creative writers if people would avoid worrying about what others would think of them or their writing.

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