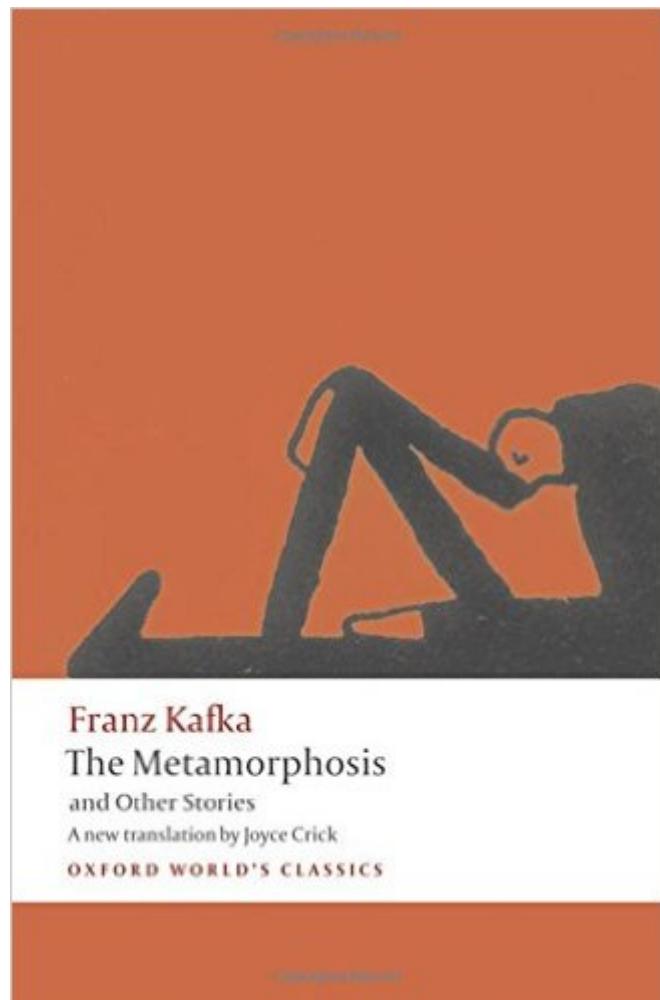


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# The Metamorphosis And Other Stories (Oxford World's Classics)



## Synopsis

It is one of the most memorable first lines in all of literature: "When Gregor Samsa woke one morning from uneasy dreams, he found himself transformed into some kind of monstrous vermin." So begins Kafka's famous short story, *The Metamorphosis*. Kafka considered publishing it with two of the stories included here in a volume to be called *Punishments*. *The Judgment* explores an enigmatic power struggle between a father and son, while *In the Penal Colony* examines questions of power, justice, punishment, and the meaning of pain in a colonial setting. These three stories are flanked by two very different works. *Meditation*, the first book Kafka published, consists of light, whimsical, often poignant mood-pictures, while the autobiographical *Letter to his Father* analyzes his difficult relationship with his father in devastating detail. This new translation by Joyce Crick pays particular attention to the nuances of Kafka's style, and the Introduction and notes by Ritchie Robertson provide guidance to this most enigmatic and rewarding of writers. There is also a Biographical Preface, an up-to-date bibliography, and a chronology of Kafka's life.

**About the Series:** For over 100 years Oxford World's Classics has made available the broadest spectrum of literature from around the globe. Each affordable volume reflects Oxford's commitment to scholarship, providing the most accurate text plus a wealth of other valuable features, including expert introductions by leading authorities, voluminous notes to clarify the text, up-to-date bibliographies for further study, and much more.

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## Customer Reviews

Franz Kafka's novella *The Metamorphosis* exists in the same terrifyingly absurd sort of world as so many of his other stories. His characters are often oppressed by isolation and a sense of futility, and as such the horror they experience is part and parcel with the very act of living. In his novel *The Trial*, for instance, Josef K. is arrested and prosecuted for a crime unknown not only to the reader but to himself. Many of Kafka's stories exist on the borders of madness and despair, something most Horror writers can only dream of accomplishing in their own work. *The Metamorphosis* is a strangely-layered work pulling out of many literary traditions, but still seemingly unique. The title, for instance, is a reference to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, an ancient Roman work that retells Greek myths to make the philosophical point that all things are in a state of flux and transformation. The mutation of traveling salesman Gregor Samsa into a giant insect is reminiscent of werewolf stories... well, except for the insect part. The suddenness and unexplained nature of the mutation is a feature of absurdist and postmodern art, which has it that the world (contra Aristotle) is intrinsically irrational and chaotic. The unkindness of Gregor's family as they fail to adjust to his curse is evocative even of the crueler sort of European fairy tales. But despite all this, there is nothing that can quite prepare the reader for a story which describes the protagonist's plight in this way: "His numerous legs, which were pitifully thin compared to the rest of his bulk, waved helplessly before his eyes." It manages to be both disgusting and terrifying at the same time, something the Splatterpunk subgenre rarely achieves.

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