

THE METAMORPHOSIS

BY FRANZ KAFKA



Programme

INTRODUCTION

The Metamorphosis is such a brilliant story, and is one of those tales which most people have heard of, but don't know all that much about except for the bit about the guy who turns into an insect.

In fact, it is a study of how Franz Kafka's world seemed to him in 1915: confusing, bureaucratic, completely impossible to navigate, and leaving an ordinary, unassuming and unimportant person unable to find any meaningful relationships or a sense of belonging. The story is full of messages about how we treat each other, how our society treats us, and how this treatment makes us feel.

100 years after Franz Kafka died, we wanted to look at how the world was when he was writing about it compared to how it is now. It's really not that different, and if Kafka could see our society, with AI, the computer systems we deal with on a daily basis and the way we treat each other online, he would probably find it both hilarious and horrifying.

This adaptation of The Metamorphosis tells the story of Gregor, but in a place and time which is not Prague in 1915 – it is here, and now, with the things which make our world more Kafkaesque than it was when Kafka was alive.

Gregor is made to feel so alienated and worthless that he actually turns into a creature which represents how he sees himself. And those around him also undergo their own transformations, emerging better equipped to deal with life by learning from their shared experience.

This isn't just a story about a guy who turns into an insect: it's about how we feel when somebody puts us down, or gaslights us, or when we try to navigate a system like buying car insurance or going to the doctor or scrolling through the internet. At every step, we are dealing with other people who are also just trying to find their way through the same confusing systems and trying to look as though they know what they are doing, just like us.

Kafka's story is surreal and bizarre, and is full of black humour, shocking moments and important messages for us as all we try to navigate our increasingly Kafkaesque world. This is why, 100 years later, we think it is vital that we look at it again in a new way, and take the opportunity to learn about how we can look after ourselves and those around us.

THE METAMORPHOSIS

published in October 1915 in a German magazine called Die Weissen Blätter.

A lot of Franz Kafka's stories were not published during his lifetime, but The Metamorphosis was one of the longest books which he considered to be completed.



In the original German, the nature of Gregor's metamorphosis is never explained. We normally think of his new form as some sort of insect, but Kafka only describes it as 'ungeheueres ungeziefer,' or 'monstrous vermin.'

Gregor Samsa is a travelling salesman, and one morning he wakes up to find that he has changed into a giant insect.

Initially he wants to get up and carry on as normal: the main thing for Gregor is that he needs to go to work, as his family rely on him for money.

Of course, this doesn't work and he finds himself locked in his bedroom, unable to communicate with his family or to go about his life.

The reason for Gregor's metamorphosis is never explained, but through his recollections we are told about some of the parts of his life which have made him feel as though he doesn't fit in or understand the way the world works.

Gregor gradually becomes more accustomed to his new body, and as he does, he begins to think less of work, money, and the usual human things he spends his time worrying about, essentially allowing his mind to become less human.

His family try to be helpful at first, everybody hoping that this situation might be temporary, but as time goes on they become less accepting of Gregor, and are forced to go through a number of changes themselves in order to survive.

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Act 1:

Scene 1: Gregor wakes from uneasy dreams

Scene 2: A travelling salesman

Scene 3: Home again

Scene 4: On the train

Scene 5: The doctor's office

Scene 6: A wilted flower of joy

Scene 7: A review meeting

Scene 8: Gregor tries to sleep

Act 2:

Scene 1: Gregor wakes from uneasy dreams

Scene 2: Father and Grete discuss the situation

Scene 3: Grete tries to help

Scene 4: The Cleaner arrives

Scene 5: The Lodger

Scene 6: Gregor's room

Scene 7: A day out

Characters:

Gregor Samsa - Kim Gjersoe

Grete Samsa - Emily Huxter

Mr Samsa - Andrew Carn

The Customer - Emily Huxter

The Girl on the Train - Emily Huxter

The Doctor - Andrew Carn

Mrs Manager - Emily Huxter

Mr Francis - Andrew Carn

The Cleaner - Emily Huxter

The Lodger - Andrew Carn

Helpline Staff - Andrew Carn & Emily Huxter

CREDITS

Starring

KIM GJERSOE as Gregor Samsa

EMILY HUXTER as Grete and other roles

ANDREW CARN as Mr Samsa and other roles

Technical Manager KENT DAVIES

Music and sound KENT DAVIES

Visual design SIMON SPEARING

Lighting design KENT DAVIES

Set TIM BONNY

Production assistant REUBEN SPEARING

Production assistant PENELOPE SPEARING

Photography MATT HONEY

Marketing SAM SHEPHERD

Social Media SQUEEB CREATIVE

Adapted and directed by SIMON SPEARING

Produced by MILD PERIL THEATRE

And none of this would be possible without
amazing support and advice from

IAN TROW

BEX WILLIS

ANITA WHITE

CHRIS D'ARCY

SARAH BROWN

SAMANTHA SPEARING

ARRIET AND NOEL AT THE NUTSHELL, WINCHESTER

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Kim Gjersoe



Kim comes from an academic background, having taken an MA in Philosophy and English from Roskilde University in Denmark, working first as an English teacher. He always courted the theatrical arts, having attended a drama school before his academic years, but it was not until he moved to the UK that he started working in earnest as an actor. Here he started working in voice-over during the pandemic, learning how to produce audiobooks and audio dramas, while also honing his skills on the international scene. Since then he has worked in the commercial sector (for Muller and Swytch among others), theatre and film in the UK. He has also dipped his toe into tour guiding, giving regular tours around London and enjoys writing gritty epic Fantasy fiction in his spare time.

Emily Huxter



Emily is an actor and musical director who trained on the Actor Musician BA at the Guildford School of Acting. She also trained in dance and musical theatre at Emil Dale Academy and Kingsclere Performing Arts. Since leaving GSA she has performed in the West End concert production of *The Witches of Eastwick* (Sondheim Theatre), played piano for *Ed: The Sketch Show Musical* (Canal Cafe Theatre), and Musical Directed *Spring Awakening* at Cambridge University (ADC Theatre). At the Edinburgh Fringe 2023 she performed the leading role in award winning musical *On Your Bike* (Best Musical 2021 at the Edinburgh Fringe), alongside its critically acclaimed sister show *Jingle Street*. She reprised her role in the Warsaw run of *On Your Bike*. She then performed a solo children's show at Audley End Miniature Railway's Christmas event, and has musical directed *Les Miserables* with Sawston Youth Drama.

Emily is excited to branch out of the musical theatre world and take on a challenging dramatic role.

Andrew Carn



Andrew has recently been seen on the London Stage as The Duke in *The Revengers Tragedy*, and as Peter Quince in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

So it is with great excitement he takes on multiple roles in *The Metamorphosis*, as it almost reflects his own changing characters throughout the performance.

He has toured UK & Internationally, including as Berger in *Hair*, Pontius Pilate in *Jesus Christ Superstar* & Riff Raff in the *Rocky Horror Picture Show*.

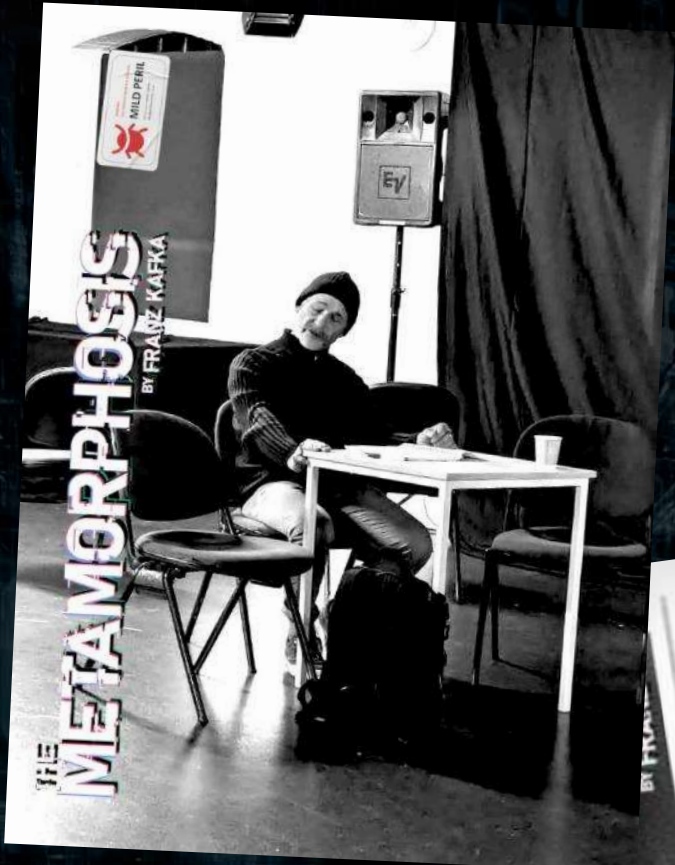
He has written for and performed theatre, radio, TV and film. He is currently artistic director of *The Dirt-Bike Apostles*, a troupe of guerrilla actors.

Director: Simon Spearing

Simon has worked in the theatre for over thirty years, starting out as a technician, tour manager and production manager, touring the UK and internationally with bands, musicals, opera, ballet and theatre before deciding to grow up a bit and stop spending so much time in the backs of lorries. Then he started running venues, but quickly found the rehearsal room to be the best part, and began producing a range of shows from pantomimes to very, very serious dramas.

Simon started Mild Peril Theatre to try to help to retain something we are in danger of losing right now: live theatre. Times are tough for the arts, and if we don't go out and experience the amazing skills offered by the actors and artists we are blessed to have within our reach, we stand to lose so much which makes our lives better.

So, having spent too much time trying to be sensible and grown up, Simon has found a bunch of brilliant people who are far more talented than him to bring this classic story to the stage to help us understand where we come from, who we are, and where we might be going when things change around and inside us.



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 MILD PERIL



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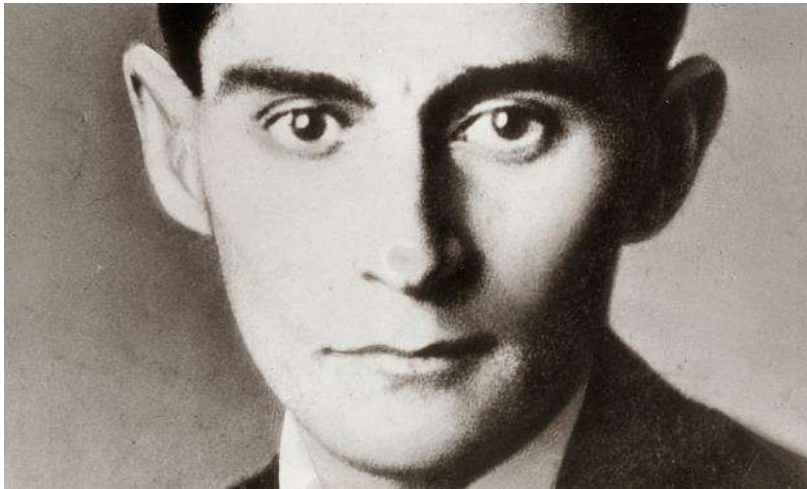


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 MILD PERIL

FRANZ KAFKA



Franz Kafka was born in Prague, which is now in the Czech Republic, on 3rd July 1883.

His family were relatively well off, and he trained as a lawyer before going to work for an insurance company.

He died in obscurity on 3rd June 1924 of tuberculosis, and at that time hardly any of his writing had been published. Kafka wrote in his spare time and wrote hundreds of letters to his family and friends, but most of his books and stories have never been seen. He was riddled with self-doubt, and burned most of what he wrote, believing that it was worthless.

After he died, he instructed his close friend, fellow writer Max Brod to destroy what was left of his writing. Brod ignored this and published the work, including *Amerika*, *The Trial*, and *The Castle*, which are now among Kafka's most famous novels. After World War II, these stories started to become well known, and in the 1960s, after they were translated from German, Kafka became famous worldwide.

Kafka suffered from ill health and struggled to form relationships for much of his life, and a lot of the main characters in his stories reflect this. He had a strained and very formal relationship with his father, and in his writing many of the authoritarian figures draw from this. He had close relationships with a number of girlfriends during his life, but he never married.

Kafka believed that people found him repulsive, both physically and mentally. However, many people who knew him and have written about him found him to be fascinating, handsome, intelligent and funny.

He feared abandonment and was highly dependant on those around him despite his struggles with anxiety and depression. It has been suggested that he may have had borderline personality disorder, causing him to struggle to form close relationships.

A lot of the things which Kafka struggled to understand about his life, and about himself, are shown in his writing. In *The Metamorphosis*, Gregor's inability to make personal connections with the people around him, and his transformation into a 'monstrous vermin' show this clearly. By understanding a little about Franz Kafka, we can better understand some of the things which Gregor goes through, and how he sees the other characters in the story.

TOUR DATES

Saturday 24 February & Sunday 25 February
The Nutshell, Winchester

Wednesday 28 February
Castle Theatre Studio, Wellingborough

Friday 1 March & Saturday 2 March
The Hat Factory, Luton

Wednesday 13 March
The Gatehouse Theatre, Stafford

Thursday 14 March
Pocklington Arts Centre, York

Friday 15 March
The Witham, Barnard Castle

Saturday 16 March
The Kirkgate Centre, Cockermouth

Friday 22 March
The Hazlitt, Maidstone

Wednesday 17 April
Chequer Mead Theatre, East Grinstead

Thursday 18 April
Camberley Theatre, Camberley

Friday 19 April
The Civic, Stourport

Wednesday 24 April
Princess Alexandra Auditorium, Yarm

Thursday 25 April
Cornerstone Arts, Didcot

Friday 26 April
The Albert Hall, Llandrindod Wells

Saturday 27 April
The Georgian Theatre Royal, Richmond

Friday 3 May
South Mill Arts, Bishop's Stortford

Wednesday 8 May
Beccles Public Hall & Theatre, Beccles

Thursday 9 May
Swindon Arts Centre, Swindon

Saturday 18 May
The Acorn, Penzance

Friday 24 May
The Old Electric, Blackpool

Wednesday 29 May
Watersmeet, Rickmansworth

Friday 7 June
The Swan Theatre, Worcester

Sunday 9 June
Brentwood Theatre, Brentwood

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We would love to hear from you!

Please visit us at
www.mildperiltheatre.co.uk

Please do get in touch to tell us
what you thought of the show.

You can fill in our contact form
to say hello, or email us at
info@mildperiltheatre.co.uk



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