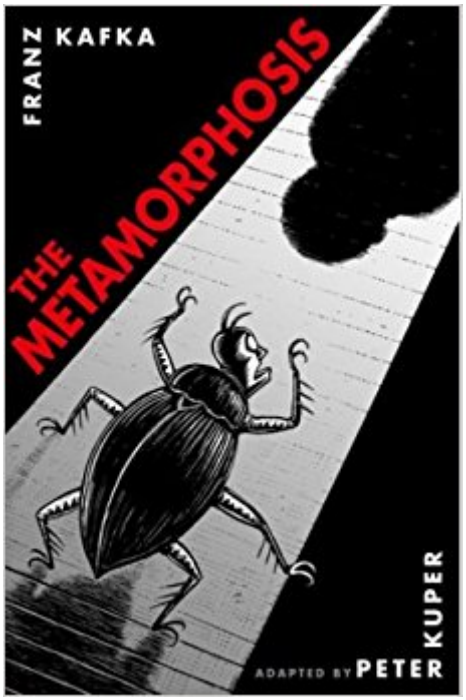
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The Metamorphosis



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Synopsis

Acclaimed graphic artist Peter Kuper presents a brilliant, darkly comic reimagining of KafkaÃ¢â ¬â„¢s classic tale of family, alienation, and a giant bug. KuperÃ¢â ¬â„¢s electric drawingsÃ¢â ¬â •which merge American cartooning with German expressionismÃ¢â ¬â •bring KafkaÃ¢â ¬â„¢s prose to vivid life, reviving the original storyÃ¢â ¬â„¢s humor and poignancy in a way that will surprise and delight readers of Kafka and graphic novels alike. Ã¢â ¬Å“A brilliant illustrated adaptation of Franz KafkaÃ¢â ¬â„¢s famous story. ItÃ¢â ¬â„¢s a real pleasure to read and one in which everyone will recognize the existential drama and uncanny wit of the original text."Ã¢â ¬â •Susan Bernstein, associate professor of comparative literature and German studies, Brown University

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Customer Reviews

Kuper has adapted short works by Kafka into comics before, but here he tackles the most famous one of all: the jet-black comedy that ensues after the luckless Gregor Samsa turns into a gigantic bug. The story loses a bit in translation (and the typeset text looks awkward in the context of Kuper's distinctly handmade drawings). A lot of the humor in the original comes from the way Kafka plays the story's absurdities absolutely deadpan, and the visuals oversell the joke, especially since Kuper draws all the human characters as broad caricatures. Even so, he works up a suitably creepy frisson, mostly thanks to his drawing style. Executed on scratchboard, it's a jittery, woodcut-inspired mass of sharp angles that owes a debt to both Frans Masereel (a Belgian woodcut artist who worked around Kafka's time) and MAD magazine's Will Elder. The knotty walls and floors of the

Samsas' house look like they're about to dissolve into dust. In the book's best moments, Kuper lets his unerring design sense and command of visual shorthand carry the story. The jagged forms on the huge insect's belly are mirrored by folds in business clothes; thinking about the debt his parents owe his employer, Gregor imagines his insectoid body turning into money slipping through an hourglass. Every thing and person in this Metamorphosis seems silhouetted and carved, an effect that meshes neatly with Kafka's sense of nightmarish unreality. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

Adult/High School-Gregor Samsa wakes up and discovers he has been changed into a giant cockroach. Thus begins "The Metamorphosis," and Kuper translates this story masterfully with his scratchboard illustrations. The text is more spare, but the visuals are so strongly rendered that little of the original is changed or omitted. Though the story remains set in Kafka's time, Kuper has added some present-day touches, such as fast-food restaurants, that do not detract from the tale. He has used the medium creatively, employing unusual perspectives and panel shapes, and text that even crawls on the walls and ceilings, as Gregor does. The roach has an insect body but human facial expressions. Once he is pelted with the apple, readers can watch his rapid decline, as his body becomes more wizened and his face more gaunt. This is a faithful rendition rather than an illustrated abridgment.Jamie Watson, Enoch Pratt Free Library, BaltimoreCopyright Ã Â© Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“MetamorphosisÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• by Franz Kafka is a creative look at how man deals with difficult situationsThis book contains no explanation of how or why the metamorphosis occurs, but it seems clear that the transition is not the fault of Gregor Samsa. At this start of the story, the reader wonders if this is a story advocating tolerance and understanding of those who are different or handicapped. But, quite the contrary, the plot develops that the Samsa family is cursed in its efforts to accommodate an important member of the family who is suffering. And when these feeble efforts are no longer required, the family is rewarded even though it seems that more compassion could have and should have been shown.So the bottom line is that the theme of this story is one to which we can all relate. We all encounter adversity that we cannot understand and we all receive less sympathy than we think we should receive. Herr Kafka does not offer a solution, only a vivid and depressing description of the situation.

As I got into the book, I could read fewer and fewer pages without stopping to wonder "what was just said." Although the characters spoke in ostensibly reasonable and earnest terms, what they said was doubletalk but absolutely engrossing doubletalk. As the extraordinary descriptions of the "legal system" that had ensnared and would ultimately murder Josef, an innocent bank clerk, became more nonsensical they became simultaneously more irresistible. To me, the book is about process, diabolical process, prophetically imagined by Kafka and alarmingly pertinent today. There is no reason to say anything more about the narrative than "read it."

I’m not especially interested in guesswork at what the castle represents. Instead, it is the dreamy, endless, circular prose that captivated my imagination from the first few paragraphs. One has the sense of K. being trapped in purgatory as he attempts again and again to reach the castle or at least make sense of the confounding village and navigate its bureaucracies. Bureaucracy, incidentally, is far too easy and uninteresting an answer for what this tale illustrates.I encountered Kafka via Murakami, and it is especially the brain-bound city/afterlife in "Hardboiled Wonderland..." that points to Kafka’s surreal prose and the sense of separation and distraction throughout. In a way, "The Castle" reminds me of trying to focus on reading text in an actual dream: the harder your sleeping self focuses, the more senseless and abstract the words become.

Favorite line in the book is: "It is often safer to be in chains than to be free."The book is slow paced and is long. It is not an easy read, but the fascinating thing is how relevant it is to today. How many stories have we read in the last few years regarding civil/asset forfeiture. The police seizing money and or property for no reason. Not too far of a stretch from the theme in this book.

I am as fascinated by Kafka’s life as I am by his work, perhaps because the sad melancholy of the former so closely mirrors that which is uniquely and brilliantly portrayed in the latter. There are many gems in this collection. ’In the Penal Colony’, with its dry, detailed description of the intricate workings of a torture/execution machine, is so perfectly economical but devastating in its tone and power. But my favourite has to be ’The Metamorphosis’, the archetypal story of alienation, timeless in its imagery, pioneering in its meaningful absurdity, and once again so entirely self-contained in the enormity of its shortness... I’m finding it hard to put into words how profound I think it is. Recently I read a book in which Gregor’s room is brought to life - literally, by being constructed inside a modern London house - as a means of escaping a lack of authentic identity. ’Bowl of Fruit (1907)’, with its miserably "gifted" protagonist, was a very different book to ’The Metamorphosis’, but it was

one more example of how this masterpiece continues, and will always continue, to inspire modern writers in new and imaginative ways.

Franz Kafka is a timeless writer whose works deserve the canonization it has received and more. The Metamorphosis is the story of a man who wakes to find himself overnight turned into a large cockroach. It then delves into the effects of this metamorphosis in a way that is illuminating to a host of societal and interpersonal problems whose absurdity require such an absurd premise to bring to light. While the protagonist is not likable, you will in the end, find yourself sympathizing with his plight as it is emblematic to the plight of many of us that goes unspoken.This book- and Kafka's whole catalog- are highly recommended.

Something crazy happens and the family has to deal with it. It is hard to deal with and when it looks hopeless the problem goes away.The ending seemed a bit abrupt. It was too quick for my tastes.The glimpses of chatacters were nice, but I think I would have liked a little more depth.It was an interesting and short little story.

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