

“The Metamorphosis” - review

Gregor Samsa, an ordinary travelling salesman, wakes up one morning to find out that he had inexplicably been turned into a gigantic insect overnight. Despite the gravity of the situation, his first thoughts are related to how he is going to be late for work and get lectured by his boss. He tries to stand up but only manages to shake his skinny legs up in the air and dangle from side to side until he falls on the floor, hitting the ground with a deafening thud.

Kafka's best known literary work, “The Metamorphosis”, has a striking, bizarre and absurdly humorous opening, as Gregor's strange transformation is being depicted in a very blunt way. The author's approach of describing odd events in a relaxed manner reminds us of other writers that focused on magical realism, such as Mihail Bulgakov or Nikolai Gogol. Further, the reader can witness how Samsa becomes an object of disgrace to his family, a stranger in his own home, after years of financially supporting his mother, father and sister. He is being kept isolated in his room because of his new and repulsive condition, made to hide under the couch when his sister enters with food, cut off from his former life, alienated and neglected. His father, a tough man (just like Kafka's father) even tries to hurt him by tossing apples at him when his mother faints after seeing him in his new body.

‘The Metamorphosis’ is one of the most interesting 20th century existentialist work of fiction, a metaphor for sacrifice, a meditation on the human feelings of worthlessness, maladjustment and guilt. It presents the effects of the struggle of existence, the burden of responsibility and the problems of living in the modern society. The beetle symbolizes inferiority, misery, fear and anxiety, features that can easily be noticed in Gregor's behaviour after his transformation. The novella also explores human relationships in unusual circumstances and their evolution in time. Therefore, I think that this strange short story deserves a chance to impress you and give you food for thought.