

FRANZ KAFKA

(1883-1924)

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE LIFE AND WORKS



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AN INTRODUCTION

2.

Franz Kafka is well renowned in 20th-century fiction for his haunting, surreal, and existential tone and symbolism. Following his graduation in law from Prague's German University, Kafka embarked on a career in insurance while nurturing a passion for writing. Throughout his life, Kafka battled illness, facing a debilitating lung disease for seven years until his untimely passing. Notably self-critical, Kafka released only a fraction of his literary works for publication during his lifetime.

EARLY HOME LIFE

3.



- ❖ Franz Kafka was born on July 3, 1883, in Prague, Bohemia (part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire at the time) modern day Czech Republic
- ❖ He was the oldest of six in his home. Two younger brothers, both died during infancy, and three younger sisters all murdered throughout the early 1940s in concentration camps.
- ❖ The children were mostly raised by servants in the house as Mr. and Mrs. Hermann and Julia Kafka, were often busy working the family's luxury goods business.
- ❖ Mr. Kafka was known to be a tyrannical patriarch with an ill temper. This dynamic led to later anxiety and severe depression for Franz.

EDUCATION AND YOUNG AMBITIONS OF DR. FRANZ KAFKA

4.



- ❖ In 1901, Kafka enrolled at Charles Ferdinand University, initially studying chemistry but later switching to law.
- ❖ He Completed his final university examination and was awarded a doctorate in law in 1906.
- ❖ Choosing a career proved difficult due to his father's expectations and Kafka's dislike of private legal practice.
- ❖ Held a year-long clerkship in court from 1906, to 1907, which was required for entering civil service at the time.
- ❖ The clerkship, split between civil and criminal courts, didn't seem to benefit Kafka, and he considered it “*a waste of time with no notable achievements*”.

A CAREER TO SUSTAIN..

5.



- ❖ Kafka ensued a 14-year career as at the Workers' Accident Insurance Institute for the Kingdom of Bohemia (1908-1922).
- ❖ Discontent with his job the whole time, insurance only served as means to fund Kafka's writing and personal interests. His "Brotberuf" (bread job)
- ❖ Though Kafka excelled at the insurance firm, and he was employed for over a decade, the dynamic of that environment and the legal realm added to his distain for his reality and influenced some of the bureaucratic themes in his writing.

WORKS, LEGACY, AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO LITERATURE

- ❖ Kafka's literary work includes short stories, fragments of novels, diaries, and correspondence, all which he was unsatisfied with, often burning manuscripts or demanding their destruction.
- ❖ His manuscripts were preserved by his family and eventually entrusted to Max Brod, who facilitated the posthumous publications.
- ❖ His writing is characterized by its exploration of the human psyche, often tunneling into themes of existential despair, isolation, and the search for meaning in a chaotic world.
- ❖ Exploration of existential themes and the absurdity of human existence laid the groundwork for developing existentialism and absurdism in literature.



Novels:

- ❖ "The Trial" (Der Prozess) - 1925 (posthumously published)
- ❖ "The Castle" (Das Schloss) - 1926 (posthumously published)
- ❖ "The Metamorphosis" (Die Verwandlung) - 1915

Short Stories:

- ❖ "The Judgment" (Das Urteil) – 1912
- ❖ "The Stoker" (Der Heizer) – 1913
- ❖ "The Metamorphosis" (Die Verwandlung) - 1915 (published as a novella)
- ❖ "In the Penal Colony" (In der Strafkolonie) – 1919
- ❖ "A Country Doctor" (Ein Landarzt) – 1919
- ❖ "A Hunger Artist" (Ein Hungerkünstler) – 1922
- ❖ "The Bucket Rider" (Der Kübelreiter) - 1931 (posthumously published)
- ❖ "A Report to an Academy" (Ein Bericht für eine Akademie) - 1917

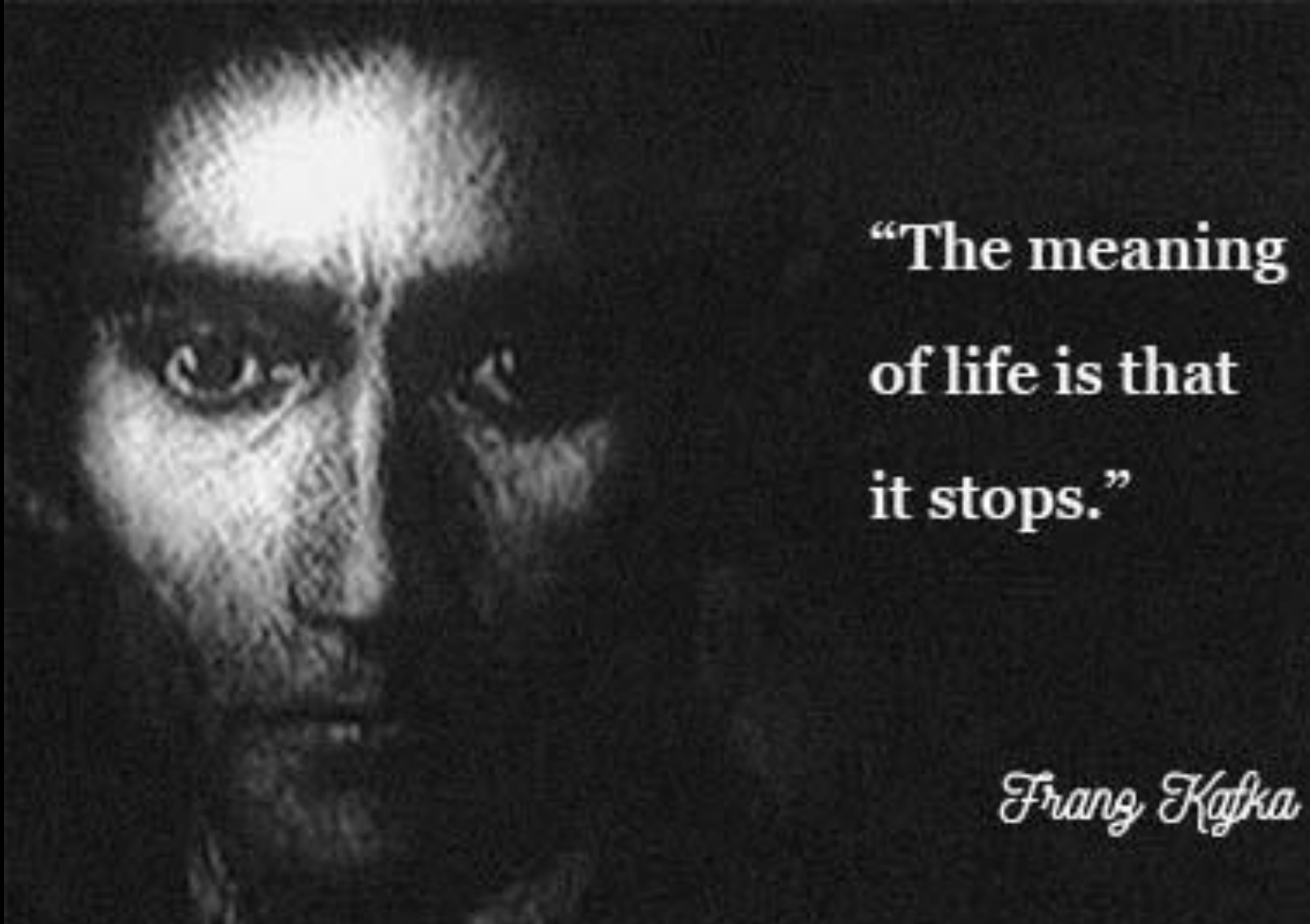
Posthumously Published Works and Collections:

- ❖ "The Trial" (Der Prozess) - 1925 (novel)
- ❖ "The Castle" (Das Schloss) - 1926 (novel)
- ❖ "Amerika" ("The Man Who Disappeared" or "The Missing Person") – 1927 (novel, posthumously published)
- ❖ "The Great Wall of China" (Beim Bau der Chinesischen Mauer) – 1931 (collection of short stories, posthumously published)
- ❖ "The Burrow" (Der Bau) – 1931 (unfinished short story, posthumously published)
- ❖ "The Penal Colony: Stories and Short Pieces" (Ein Landarzt) – 1948 (posthumously published collection)

MENTAL HEALTH AND DEATH



- ❖ Franz Kafka struggled with mental health issues throughout his life, including anxiety, depression, and feelings of alienation.
- ❖ His later years were marked by deteriorating physical and mental health, diagnosed with tuberculosis in 1917, further exacerbating his condition. Despite his illness, he continued to write prolifically, producing famous works like "The Castle" and "A Hunger Artist."
- ❖ In 1923, Kafka moved to Berlin seeking better medical treatment, spending time in various sanatoriums but still finding no relief.
- ❖ Kafka expressed a desire for death as a release from his suffering and passed away on June 3, 1924, at the age of 40, from complications of tuberculosis marking the end of a brilliant literary career, leaving behind a legacy of profound works that continue to resonate with readers worldwide.



“The meaning
of life is that
it stops.”

Franz Kafka

CITATIONS:

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[Franz Kafka - Franz Kafka \(kafkamuseum.cz\)](http://kafkamuseum.cz)
- ❖ Rockefeller, Lily. “Biography of Franz Kafka, Czech Novelist.”
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