

FRANZ KAFKA

A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

1883

Franz Kafka was born on 3rd July in Prague, the son of trader Herman and his wife Julie (née Löwy).
Sisters Gabriele/Elli (1889), Valerie/Valli (1890) and Ottilie/Ottla (1892).



1889 – 1893

FK attended German primary school for boys.

1893 – 1901

FK attended German grammar school in The Kinský Palace on the Old Town Square in Prague



1901 – 1906

FK studied law at the German Charles-Ferdinand University in Prague.

1902

In students clubs he met his lifelong friends Max Brod, Oskar Baum, Felix Weltsch and Oskar Pollak. They discussed literature and their own emerging literary careers.

1906

FK graduated as a Doctor of Laws (JUDr.).

1907

FK was employed in Assicurazioni Generali insurance company in Prague.



1908

FK started his career at Workers' Accident Insurance Company. His duty was to look after cases of labour safety and injuries in industrial companies.

FK published for the first time: short stories from the collection *Contemplation* in the Hyperion magazine.

1909

Published short novels and began to write his *Diaries*.

He had been regularly promoted at work.



1910 – 1911

He wrote and published short stories. He attended various lectures, e.g. Albert Einstein's theory of relativity, and also regularly performances of the jidiš theatre from Lviv. There we can see origins of his constant interest in eastern Judaism and reflections of his own Jewish origin.

He began to write the novel *Amerika*.

1912

He first met his later fiancée Felice Bauer. After a month he wrote his first letter to her, by 1917, when this correspondence ended, he had written over 500 letters.

A period of his intensive literary work: he wrote a short story, *The Judgment*, continued with *Amerika*, wrote a short story *Metamorphosis*. In December his first book is published: *Contemplation*.



1913

Intensive correspondence with Felice. *The Judgment* is published in the Arkadia yearbook and also a short story, *The Stoker*, as a book.



1914

In April he got engaged to Felice. In July he cancelled his engagement in a Berlin hotel. He wrote about it in his *Diaries*: "Tribunal in a hotel."

Second period of his intense literary work. A novel, *The Trial*, is written as well as many short stories and fragments.

1915

FK re-established his relationship with Felice. He lived in his own rented flat. He had to look after family matters more because his brothers-in-law were at the frontline of World War I.

There is a longer gap in his literary career. *Metamorphosis* is published.

1916

The correspondence with Felice stagnated. He spent a holiday with Felice in Marienbad.



1917

FK wrote in the Golden Lane at Prague Castle, short stories gathered together in a collection *A Country Doctor*.

In July he got engaged to Felice Bauer for the second time.

In August he experienced an attack of spitting blood. At first he interpreted the outbreak of tuberculosis as only a symptom of a "soul disease".

He took sick leave. He lived with his sister Ottilia on a farm in Sviřem. The so-called *Sviřem notes*, and from them later *Aphorisms* originated here. At the end of December he cancelled his second engagement with Felice.



1918

FK returned to Prague. He lived with his parents, took job in Workers' Insurance Company. He studied Hebrew and interrupted his literary career.

1919

Curative stays in Stüdl guest house in Želízy village north of Prague. He established a relationship with Julie Wohryzková, they got engaged. His father did not approve of his choice.

FK wrote a famous *Letter to His Father* in the guest house in Želízy, but he never gave him this letter.

1920

His health deteriorated.

Sanatorium in Italian Merano. From there he started intensive everyday correspondence with Milena Jesenská, a twenty-four-year-old married Czech intellectual. 134 letters were preserved.

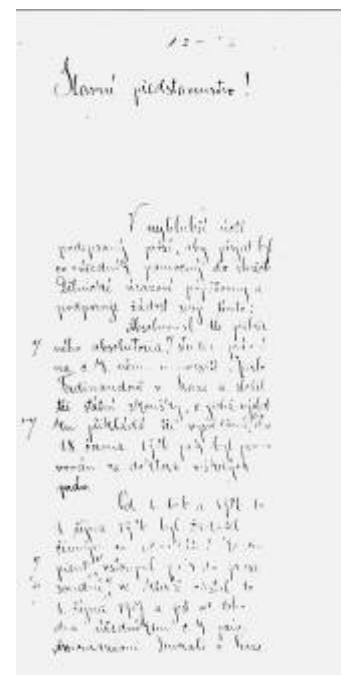
Refreshed interest in literary work, many new short stories were written (the so called "konvolut 1920").

A collection of short stories *A Country Doctor* was published as a book.

1921

FK spent more than 6 months at a curative stay in Tatranské Matliare in the High Tatras in Slovakia. He ended the correspondence with Milena. He almost stopped writing. Correspondence with friends and family.

At the end of August he returned to Prague and took a job. He refreshed his writing *Diaries*.



1922

A two-week winter stay in a mountain guest house in the Giant Mountains. There he started to write the novel *The Castle*. Many short stories and fragments were written. He retired at his own request.

At the end of August he gave up writing *The Castle*. FK wrote to M. Brod his testament: he asked him for the second time to burn all his written inheritance, only *The Judgment*, *The Stoker*, *Metamorphosis*, *In the Penal Colony*, *A Country Doctor* and a short story *A Hunger Artist* should be left.



1923

FK in Prague, studied Hebrew. During his summer stay at the Baltic Sea he met Dora Diamant who came from an orthodox East-Jewish family. Dora became his companion till the end of his life.

FK left for Berlin; lived with Dora in rented flats. Due to the inflation they were hardly able to make ends meet. He wrote fragments and short stories *Return Home*, *The Burrow*, *A Little Woman*, *First Sorrow*.

1924

His health deteriorated again. In March Max Brod and Dora transported Kafka to Prague. FK wrote his last short story *Josephine the Singer, or the Mouse Folk* there.

In April he travelled with Dora to Austria, to a sanatorium in Kierling near Vienna. Larynx tuberculosis disabled his ability to speak. On 2nd June he asked his parents not to visit him. He worked on the proofreading of *A Hunger Artist*.

On 3rd June around midday FK died

On 11th June there was a funeral at the Jewish Cemetery in Strašnice in Prague.

In August a collection *A Hunger Artist. Four Stories* was published.

