

NAXOS
AudioBooks

Franz Kafka
The Trial

Read by **Rupert Degas**

THE
COMPLETE
CLASSICS

UNABRIDGED

CLASSIC
FICTION

MODERN
CLASSICS

NA74612D



1	Chapter 1 Arrest; Conversation with Frau Grubach then Fräulein Bürstner	6:30
2	K scarcely listened to what was being said...	7:23
3	He paced up and down a few times...	6:29
4	When he was fully dressed...	7:12
5	The people were still at the window...	6:42
6	K stood still, watching them...	7:08
7	K looked on in silence...	6:50
8	'You're way off beam,' said K...	7:07
9	She made a tour of the room...	7:08
10	Then there was some knocking on the door...	5:20
11	Chapter 2 First Hearing	7:14
12	K went further down the street...	6:40
13	Two men were talking just by the door...	6:51
14	K broke off and looked down into the hall...	6:53
15	When K broke off at this point...	7:13
16	'So that's it,' exclaimed K...	1:54
17	Chapter 3 In the Empty Court Room; the Student; the Lawyers' Offices	5:47
18	They were dog-eared old books...	6:01
19	'Do you know the examining magistrate...'	5:52

20	After he had put aside his reservations...	5:47
21	The two had already disappeared...	6:43
22	'Perhaps,' K continued...	6:09
23	'You don't believe I am accused of anything...'	7:19
24	K did not reply...	7:13
25	'Don't you want to sit down here for a bit?'	4:44
26	Chapter 4 Fräulein Bürstner's Female Friend	7:04
27	Frau Grubach felt really quite helpless.	4:47
28	'You asked my friend, in writing...'	5:34
29	Chapter 5 The Thrasher	7:56
30	He dried his face...	6:53
31	Chapter 6 The Uncle; Leni	6:46
32	'And what do you now have to say?'	6:50
33	'My dear uncle,' said K...	6:37
34	In one corner of the room...	7:19
35	Not a word of this whole statement...	7:23
36	Then a noise from the hall...	7:09
37	'No,' replied Leni, shaking her head slowly.	7:06
38	Chapter 7 Lawyer; Industrialist; Painter	6:38
39	'The room the lawyers share is on the second floor...'	7:20
40	Their job was not easy in other respects...	7:39

41	'At times like that, one has to say...'	5:44
42	What did the lawyer want to achieve...	6:31
43	These days shame no longer played any part...	6:49
44	The deputy director...	6:41
45	For no particular reason...	6:21
46	K took the letter and put it in his pocket...	7:23
47	He immediately rode off in a cab...	6:13
48	K pointed at the door.	7:20
49	The sight of the picture seemed...	7:20
50	Once again a girl behind the door began to ask...	6:18
51	The painter had pulled his armchair nearer to the bed...	4:28
52	'Mere legends do nothing to change my opinion...'	7:20
53	'At that stage I'm free then...'	7:04
54	'In saying this...'	4:51
55	K had not been thinking what he was doing...	5:06
56	Chapter 8 Block the Merchant; the Lawyer is Given His Notice	6:50
57	Leni stood by the range...	5:35
58	K turned round.	6:03
59	'I'll probably have to go there more often now too...'	6:06
60	I'm hearing it all now, thought K...	6:54
61	'The way you're sitting there side by side!'	6:32

62	K looked at him for a long time.	6:04
63	K was completely composed when the lawyer had finished...	7:19
64	The man's appearance itself gave nothing away...	7:40
65	From the moment the lawyer started speaking...	5:18
66	Block was very pleased that she had come...	5:02
67	Block glanced fleetingly at K...	4:52
68	Chapter 9 In the Cathedral	7:26
69	K, who otherwise was merely mechanically watching...	6:21
70	K went back to the main entrance...	5:09
71	Smiling, K followed the old man...	6:55
72	Since everything was now out in the open...	6:59
73	K waited for him down below by the steps.	5:05
74	'The doorkeeper deceived the man, then,' said K...	6:15
75	'You know the story better than I do...'	4:58
76	'Opinions differ as to whether the doorkeeper...'	5:49
77	Chapter 10 The End	6:20
78	The girl had meanwhile turned into a side street...	6:21

Total time: 8:21:18

Franz Kafka

The Trial

'A shilling life will give you all the facts,' most of them less outwardly striking than those listed in Auden's poem. Indeed, the life of Franz Kafka may seem a somewhat restricted one. Despite making various journeys, largely within northern Europe, he essentially lived all his life in Prague (a town he described as being a little mother with claws). He had a good command of Czech – the name 'Kafka', incidentally means 'jackdaw' – but as someone born into a German-speaking Jewish family he was, to some extent, cut off from the society around him. Though he was closely involved with one or two women and engaged three times (twice to one Felice Bauer), he never married. He gained a doctorate in law, then was for fourteen years the employee of an insurance company specialising in claims for industrial accidents. The work left him little time for writing. In 1916, for

example, he was in the habit, after office hours, of making the steep walk from his flat in the centre of Prague to his sister's diminutive house in the Castle precincts; there he would write until the early hours of the morning, when he would return to his own lodgings. After repeated bouts of ill health, he died of tuberculosis in 1924, at the age of forty.

With his death much of his legacy as a writer was to have been effaced: he had instructed his friend and executor Max Brod to destroy unpublished manuscripts. Brod did not in fact do so, and Kafka's reputation as a writer therefore rests not just on his letters and some short stories (the most famous of which, perhaps, is his 'Metamorphosis', in which the protagonist finds one morning that he has turned into a beetle) but also on three posthumously published novels: *America*, *The Trial* and *The Castle*.

Kafka began writing *The Trial* in 1914, at a time of considerable change in his personal life. In July he broke off his first engagement to Felice Bauer, which had been announced only six weeks before. At the outbreak of war Kafka's eldest sister had moved into her parents' home with her two children, and Kafka found himself obliged, for the first time, to move out. After what had been a break of eighteen months from his writing, he was keen to take it up again, feeling that this activity alone offered him a chance to give sense to what he described as his 'regular, empty, insane life as a bachelor'.

Such a phrase suggests that *The Trial* might be autobiographical in nature, and to some extent the novel does, like many of Kafka's works, reflect certain external aspects of his own life: the protagonist, Josef K, who is thirty years old, lives in what is clearly a large town, in which trams run from one district to another, and the buildings are often tall and

imposing; he works in a markedly hierarchical office, and has little time to pursue his own concerns (though he remains strikingly susceptible to various women he meets). When Kafka returned to his writing in 1914, however, such external factors seemed of less interest to him than his 'dreamlike inner life'.

The physical world in the novel does indeed have a dream-like clarity, strong appeal being made to the senses. When K first appears before a court he finds the court room stuffy, hot and packed with people, many of them wearing long beards which are stiff and sparse; if one put one's hand into these, we hear, 'it was as if one were...developing claws'. Faces, hands, gestures, clothes – all are depicted in very sharp focus: at one point, for example, K, confronted by two double chins, imagines their owners scratching at the folds in their skin. Close attention is paid to apparently banal physical objects, such as notebooks or chairs. Buildings are vividly described,

often in a way which suggests that they are structurally rather odd: a window looks out onto an air shaft and receives almost no light; a pane of glass has been put in crookedly above a door; the steps on a staircase are excessively high. We are shown various parts of the city too. Some are squalid, places where rats jump into a canal to avoid a yellow liquid shooting out of a hole in a wall; some cheerfully demotic; others, like the cathedral square, more sober. For the most part, though, this is a novel whose physical action takes place within four walls.

Such concentration on an enclosed world brings with it an important aspect of the book, perhaps reflective also of Kafka's inner life: a sense of constriction. The court room, as mentioned, is packed, the painter's studio tiny; the pulpit cramped. Characters are frequently obliged to stoop; K once or twice finds it difficult to breathe. Linked to this is the recurring image of K's feeling physically dominated by others – by the guards, by

the deputy director and the industrialist, and of course by his two companions at the end of the novel. This might well reflect Kafka's impressions of his father, a domineering, at times unjust man who frightened him, whom he saw 'shouting, swearing and raging' in the shop he owned, a man who called his employees 'paid enemies' and who evidently said of a clerk of his suffering from lung disease, 'Let him die, the sick dog'. The unease induced by such constriction is a theme which runs through the whole book.

The theme works on another level too, of course. Discussion of Kafka's novels and stories as religious allegories is a notoriously difficult area, one to which it is certainly not possible to do justice in such an introduction. However, there are clearly aspects of *The Trial* which may be interpreted in religious terms. K feels constrained not just physically, but also by the demands of an incomprehensibly vast structure, an all-powerful force: 'everyone is part of the court,' he is told.

He may not understand the workings of the court, or the reasons for his trial, but he is engaged in a personal quest to do so, meeting all sorts of obstacles on the way.

Such obstacles remind us of an aspect of the book which is often overlooked (but which Kafka himself evidently appreciated): its humour. Certain passages are vividly exaggerated, perhaps echoing the performances, known to have made a significant impression on Kafka, given by a Yiddish theatre troupe which visited Prague in 1911. Similarly, some of the characters, like K's impulsive uncle, or the lawyer who feigns illness to ward off visitors, are drawn in rather caricatural fashion. Misunderstanding and misinterpretation run through the novel. When K walks with the usher though the court buildings, for example, everyone stands up. K thinks they are standing up because they think he is a judge; only later does he learn that they were standing for the usher. Verbal

communication can prove difficult too: on one or two occasions K finds himself confronted by arguments that are reminiscent of passages in 'Alice in Wonderland'. However, humorous though all these elements are, they serve also to underline a serious point: K finds himself in an alarmingly odd situation, one which he finds hard to understand.

It may be appropriate at this point to say something about the translation. Those Prague contemporaries of Kafka's who were writing in German often sought to compensate for their relative isolation from the mainstream of the language by expressing themselves in very florid fashion. Kafka's reaction against this led him to write in what is generally held to be a very clear, natural style; it is also, no doubt, the reason why his language can be repetitive at times. I have generally attempted to reflect this feature (while remaining aware that the effect might sound odd) since such repetition, like the striking passive

construction at the end of the first sentence in the novel, seems to me to be at the heart of the work: energetic though he often is, K is indeed repeatedly constricted by events. A further challenge for the translator arises from Kafka's presenting K's story in two ways: at times as subjective direct experience, at others as 'objective' narrative. The shifting which occurs between the two modes can make for difficulty and here it has not always seemed desirable to translate literally; I have, though, tried as

far as possible to remain faithful to the original. On occasions I have strayed slightly from the ideal of accuracy in order to make the text more immediately intelligible to a listener, for example by indicating which character is speaking. I hope that my approach has done no disservice to Kafka; I hope above all that the translation will prove a useful aid to understanding an author who has helped us see the inner life of our age.

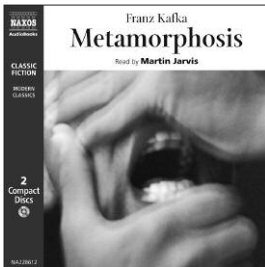
Notes by David Whiting

Cover picture: istockphoto

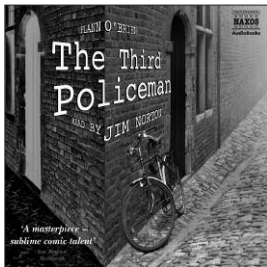


Rupert Degas can be heard reading *True History of the Kelly Gang*, *PS I Love You, If You Could See Me Now*, *Lord Loss*, *Demon Thief*, *Slawter* and *The Saga of Darren Shan*. He is also the voice of Pantalaimon in Philip Pullman's *Northern Lights*. He has lent his voice to numerous cartoons, including *Mr Bean*, *Robotboy* and *Bob the Builder* and has performed in over thirty radio productions, including *The Gemini Apes*, *The Glittering Prizes* and *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. He spent eighteen months in the West End performing in the comedy *Stones in his Pockets*. He has also read *A Wild Sheep Chase* and the *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle* for Naxos AudioBooks.

Other works on Naxos AudioBooks

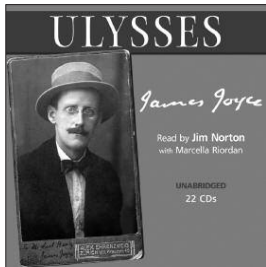


Metamorphosis (Kafka)
read by Martin Jarvis
ISBN 9789626342862

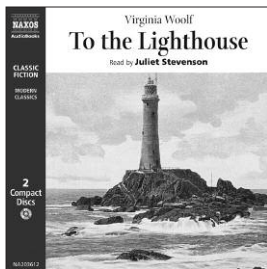


The Third Policeman (O'Brien)
read by Jim Norton
ISBN 9789626344552

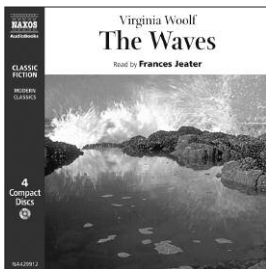
Other works on Naxos AudioBooks



Ulysses, unabridged (Joyce)
read by Jim Norton with Marcella Riordan
ISBN 9789626343098



To The Lighthouse (Woolf)
read by Juliet Stevenson
ISBN 9789626340363



The Waves (Woolf)
read by Frances Jeater
ISBN 9789626342992

Recorded & edited at Q-Sound Studios, London
by Adam Hejal
Translated by David Whiting
Mastered by JD Evans

Franz Kafka

The Trial

Read by **Rupert Degas**

A new translation by **David Whiting**

Josef K is thirty years old. He lives in rented accommodation in a large town and works for a bank. One day, although he has done nothing wrong, he is arrested. Two guards appear and start to intimidate him. He is not told the nature of the charge. And so begins a nightmare of successive scenes – an irregular magistrate's office, a bizarre court appearance, his arresting guards being flogged... Franz Kafka began this piercing vision of state control versus the individual in 1914 and, finished by a friend after his death, it became one of the most prescient and influential novels of the 20th century. This new translation by David Whiting brings out the immediacy of Kafka's writing, and shows why *The Trial* (Der Prozess) has become a classic.

CD ISBN:

978-962-634-464-4

View our catalogue online at
www.naxosaudiobooks.com



ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. UNAUTHORISED PUBLIC PERFORMANCE,
BROADCASTING AND COPYING OF THESE COMPACT DISCS PROHIBITED.
© 2007 NAXOS Audiobooks Ltd. © 2007 NAXOS Audiobooks Ltd.
Made in Germany.

Total time
8:21:18