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Franz Kafka, *Metamorphosis* (Simplified Edition by ChatGPT)

Part 1

One morning Gregor Samsa woke from uneasy dreams. He lay on his back in bed and felt something strange about his body. When he lifted his head a little, he saw a hard brown belly divided into many small parts. His blanket could hardly stay on him and kept sliding down. Many thin legs moved helplessly in the air before his eyes. He stared at them in shock and tried to understand what had happened.

“What has happened to me?” he thought. It was not a dream. His room was the same small human room as always, quiet between four familiar walls. On the table lay cloth samples from his work as a traveling salesman. Above the table hung a picture of a lady in fur that he had cut from a magazine and placed in a gold frame. Everything looked normal, yet he himself was completely changed.

Rain tapped softly against the window. The gray morning light made him feel sad. “Maybe I should sleep a little longer and forget this,” he thought. But he could not turn onto his right side as he usually did. Each time he tried, his body rolled back again. He tried again and again, closing his eyes so he would not see the moving legs, until a dull pain forced him to stop.

“Oh God,” he thought, “what a tiring job I chose.” Traveling every day exhausted him. He worried about trains, bad food, and strangers he never truly knew. “All of it can go to hell,” he thought angrily. An itch appeared on his belly. When he tried to touch it with one of his legs, a cold shiver ran through him and

he pulled the leg away at once.

He lay back again and sighed. "Getting up early makes you stupid," he told himself. Other traveling salesmen lived comfortably, eating long breakfasts while he rushed from place to place. If he spoke honestly to his boss, he might lose his job immediately. Still, he dreamed of the day he could quit. He needed only a few more years to pay off his parents' debt. After that, everything would change. "But first," he reminded himself, "I must get up. My train leaves at five."

He looked toward the alarm clock. The hands showed half past six. "Heavens!" he thought. The alarm had been set for four. Had he slept through it? The next train left at seven. His samples were not packed, and he felt weak and slow. The office assistant would already have reported his absence. His boss would surely be angry.

Should he say he was sick? That seemed dangerous. In five years he had never missed a day. The boss might send a doctor and accuse him of laziness. Yet, apart from sleepiness, Gregor felt strangely well and even hungry.

While he struggled to decide what to do, someone knocked gently at the door near his head. "Gregor," called his mother softly, "it's quarter to seven. Didn't you want to go somewhere?" Her voice sounded warm and worried.

Gregor tried to answer, but his voice shocked him. It sounded thin and squeaking, as if coming from deep inside his body. Still, the words were understandable. "Yes, Mother," he said carefully. "I'm getting up now." His mother seemed satisfied and walked away.

Soon his father knocked harder from another door. "Gregor, what's wrong?" he called. His sister Grete spoke from the side room. "Gregor, are you ill? Do you need anything?" Gregor answered both of them slowly, trying to sound normal. "I'm ready now."

He did not want to open the door. During his travels he had learned to lock doors at night, even at home. First he wanted to get up quietly, dress, and eat breakfast. Then he would think about the rest. He told himself his strange voice must only be a cold.

Throwing off the blanket was easy; he only needed to push his body slightly.

But sitting up was impossible. Instead of arms and hands, he had only many small legs moving in different directions. When he tried to control one, another stretched out wildly. "This cannot be done in bed," he said to himself.

He tried to move the lower part of his body out first, though he could not even see it clearly. It moved very slowly. Suddenly he pushed too hard and struck the bedpost. Sharp pain shot through him. He realized that part of his body was very sensitive.

Next he tried lifting his upper body. This worked better. His head reached the fresh air beyond the bed. But he grew afraid of falling and hurting himself, so he stopped. It took just as much effort to return to his earlier position, where he lay breathing heavily and watching his legs move without order.

He knew he could not stay in bed forever. Calm thinking was better than panic, he reminded himself. He looked toward the window, but fog covered the street outside. The clock struck seven. "Seven already," he whispered. "And still this fog."

He decided he must leave the bed before quarter past seven. Someone from work would surely come otherwise. He planned to swing his whole body out at once and fall onto the carpet, protecting his head as best he could. The noise might frighten his family, but he had no choice.

As he rocked back and forth near the edge of the bed, he imagined how easy it would be if someone helped him. His father and the maid could lift him down gently. The thought almost made him laugh, though the situation was serious.

Then the doorbell rang. "Someone from work," Gregor thought, freezing in place while his legs moved faster than ever. The maid opened the front door. Gregor heard a familiar voice. It was the chief clerk himself.

Gregor felt panic. Why had the clerk come personally? Did they distrust him so much? Angry thoughts filled his mind. Without thinking further, he threw himself from the bed. He landed with a dull thump. The carpet softened the fall, though he struck his head and rubbed it against the floor in pain.

"Something fell in there," said the chief clerk from the next room.

Gregor's sister whispered, "Gregor, the chief clerk is here." His father called

through the door, asking him to explain why he had missed the early train. His mother defended him, saying he must be ill. The clerk demanded a clear explanation and spoke sternly about Gregor's poor recent work.

Gregor grew desperate. "Sir," he cried, speaking quickly, "I will open the door at once. I feel dizzy but I am getting up now. I will catch the eight o'clock train. Please do not worry my parents." He hardly knew what he was saying, but he wanted to calm them.

He dragged himself toward the chest of drawers and tried to stand upright. After several attempts he succeeded and held onto a chair for support. He listened carefully to the voices outside.

"Did you understand him?" the chief clerk asked. "He sounds like an animal."

His mother began to cry and asked Grete to fetch a doctor. His father called for a locksmith. Gregor felt strangely calm. They were trying to help him. Perhaps everything would soon return to normal.

Slowly he reached the door and pressed his body against it. Using his mouth, he tried to turn the key. He had no teeth, but his strong jaws managed to grip it. Brown liquid dripped from his mouth as he forced the key to move.

"Listen," said the chief clerk. "He is turning the key."

Encouraged, Gregor pushed harder until the lock clicked open. Breathing heavily, he thought, "So I did not need the locksmith after all." He rested his head on the handle and slowly opened the door.

Part 2

The door opened slowly, and before Gregor could fully turn his body, the chief clerk saw him. The man stood nearest to the door. He pressed one hand over his mouth and stepped backward as if an invisible force pushed him away. Gregor's mother stared at him with wide eyes. Her hair was still loose from sleep. She took two uncertain steps forward, then collapsed to the floor, her skirts spreading around her as she hid her face against her chest. Gregor's father clenched his fists and looked at him with anger and fear. After a moment he covered his eyes and

began to cry.

Gregor remained partly hidden behind the door. Only half his body and his tilted head could be seen. Morning light had grown stronger. Across the street stood a large gray building with many identical windows. Rain continued to fall in heavy drops. On the table lay breakfast dishes. Gregor noticed a photograph on the wall showing himself as a young soldier, smiling proudly in uniform. The sight felt distant, as if it belonged to another life.

Trying to remain calm, Gregor spoke carefully. "I will get dressed now," he said. "I will pack my samples and leave at once. Please let me go to work. You know I am not stubborn. Traveling is hard, but I must work to support my family." He tried to explain his loyalty and his difficult position, begging the chief clerk not to judge him unfairly.

But the chief clerk had already begun retreating. He kept his eyes fixed on Gregor while slowly moving toward the entrance hall. When Gregor continued speaking, the man suddenly turned and hurried away in panic. He stretched his arm toward the stairway as if seeking rescue.

Gregor realized that letting him leave like this would destroy his position at work. His parents did not fully understand the danger, but Gregor did. The family depended entirely on his income. He wished his sister were there; she might calm the clerk. But she was gone, and Gregor had to act alone.

Forgetting his weak control over his body, he pushed himself forward through the doorway. He tried to follow the chief clerk onto the landing. At once he slipped and fell onto his many legs with a small cry. Yet for the first time that day he felt stable. His legs supported him firmly and moved exactly as he wished. Hope rose inside him. Perhaps he could still fix everything.

His mother suddenly noticed him moving closer. She jumped up with arms raised and shouted, "Help! Please, help!" She stepped backward without looking and knocked over the breakfast table. A coffee pot fell, and dark coffee spilled across the carpet.

"Mother, mother," Gregor said gently. For a moment he forgot the chief clerk entirely. The smell of coffee made his jaws snap in the air without his control. His

mother screamed again and ran into his father's arms.

Meanwhile the chief clerk had already reached the stairs. Gregor rushed after him, desperate to stop him. The clerk leapt down several steps at once and disappeared, his frightened cries echoing through the stairway.

The escape threw Gregor's father into sudden panic. Instead of calming the situation, he seized the chief clerk's walking stick and a newspaper from the table. With loud stamping steps and sharp hissing sounds, he drove Gregor back toward his room like an animal.

Gregor tried to speak and explain, but his father did not understand his words. Each time Gregor turned his head pleadingly, his father stamped harder. His mother opened a window despite the cold air and leaned out, covering her face with her hands. Curtains flew in the strong draft, and newspapers scattered across the floor.

Gregor had never learned to move backward properly. He struggled slowly while his father advanced with threatening movements. If only he could turn around, he thought, he could return quickly to his room. But he feared his father's impatience and the stick raised behind him.

At last he began turning carefully. The movement took a long time. His father seemed to understand and allowed him space, sometimes guiding him with the tip of the stick. Still, the constant hissing confused Gregor and made him nervous. Near the end he made a mistake and turned slightly the wrong way before correcting himself again.

When he finally faced the doorway, a new problem appeared. The opening was too narrow for his wide body. His father showed no intention of opening the second door to give him more space. Instead, he forced Gregor forward more aggressively, making loud noises as if nothing blocked the way.

Gregor pushed ahead despite the danger. One side of his body scraped painfully against the doorframe, leaving dark marks behind. He became stuck halfway through. Some legs waved helplessly in the air while others were crushed against the floor. He could not move.

Then his father delivered a powerful shove from behind. Gregor broke free and

slid violently into his room, bleeding and exhausted. The door slammed shut behind him. Silence followed at last.

It was already evening when Gregor woke again from a deep, heavy sleep. The room was dark except for pale light from street lamps outside. His body ached. One leg dragged uselessly behind him, injured from the morning struggle.

A smell reached him—food. Near the door stood a bowl filled with milk and pieces of bread. Gregor felt sudden joy. Milk had always been his favorite drink, and his sister must have brought it for him. Hungry, he lowered his head eagerly into the bowl.

But after a moment he pulled away in disappointment. The milk tasted unpleasant. Though he was starving, he could not drink it. Confused and saddened, he crawled back toward the center of the room.

Through a small crack in the door he saw light in the living room. Usually at this hour his father read the newspaper aloud, but now there was silence. Gregor felt proud remembering that his work had allowed his family to live peacefully in this home. Yet fear followed the thought. What would happen now?

He crawled slowly around the room, trying to understand his new body. Twice that evening a door opened slightly and closed again, as if someone wished to enter but lost courage. Gregor waited hopefully near the door, but no one came.

Late at night the gaslight was turned off. Gregor heard his parents and sister walking quietly away together. No one would visit him until morning. Alone at last, he thought about how his life must change.

The large empty room felt strange and uncomfortable. After some hesitation he crawled under the couch. The low space pressed against his back, yet he felt safer there. He spent the night half asleep, waking often from hunger and worry. Each time he reached the same decision: he must remain calm and patient so his family could endure this difficult situation.

Early the next morning his sister opened the door carefully and looked inside. At first she did not see him. When she noticed his body under the couch, she gasped and quickly shut the door again. A moment later she returned, moving quietly as if entering the room of a sick stranger.

Gregor watched closely. Would she understand that he had not drunk the milk? She noticed the untouched bowl immediately. Using a cloth instead of her hands, she carried it away.

Gregor waited anxiously, imagining what she might bring next. Soon she returned with many different foods placed on an old newspaper: old vegetables, bones covered in dried sauce, raisins, cheese, bread, and water. Then she left quickly and locked the door so he could eat without shame.

Gregor's legs moved excitedly. His injuries seemed already healed. To his surprise he felt strong again. The cheese attracted him most, and he ate greedily, enjoying it far more than fresh food. When he finished, he lay still in satisfaction.

After some time his sister unlocked the door softly as a signal. Gregor hurried back under the couch. She entered, swept away the remains with a broom, and removed everything without looking directly at him.

From that day on she fed him twice daily—once early in the morning and once after midday. Gregor's parents never watched. His sister alone cared for him, trying to protect the others from distress. Though he could not thank her with words, Gregor felt deep gratitude as he listened to her quiet movements in the room.

Part 3

Gregor soon learned the new rhythm of his days. Each morning his sister entered quietly while their parents and the maid still slept. Later she returned again after the family's midday meal, when the others rested. She always brought food without staying long, and she carefully avoided looking directly at him. Gregor understood that she wished to spare both herself and him embarrassment, and he tried to remain hidden under the couch whenever she came.

He could not discover what the doctor or the locksmith had said on the first morning. Since nobody understood his speech, no one imagined that he could understand theirs. He listened only to the sounds of their voices through the walls. At first his sister often sighed softly or whispered short prayers while she worked

in his room. Later, when she became slightly used to the situation, she sometimes spoke aloud. “He has eaten well today,” she might say with relief. Or when food remained untouched she would murmur sadly, “He has left everything again.”

Gregor listened eagerly whenever anyone spoke in the next room. He pressed his body against the door so he would not miss a single word. Almost every conversation concerned him. For two entire days the family spoke of nothing else but what they should do now. No one wished to remain alone, and the flat was never empty.

The maid left almost immediately. On the first day she begged Gregor’s mother to release her from service. She departed within minutes, thanking them again and again as if she had received a great kindness, though no one had demanded secrecy from her.

After that, Gregor’s sister helped their mother with cooking. The work was not heavy because no one ate much anymore. Gregor often heard one family member urging another to eat, only to receive a quiet refusal. Even drinking became rare. Once his sister asked whether their father wanted beer, hoping to fetch it herself, but he answered firmly, “No,” and the matter ended there.

That evening Gregor heard something new. His father began explaining their financial situation. He opened a small locked box that he had kept since his business had failed five years earlier. Gregor listened carefully as papers rustled and the lock clicked open and shut.

To Gregor’s surprise, some money still remained from those earlier days. He had believed everything was lost. Interest had slowly increased the small amount. Even more surprising, the family had saved part of the money Gregor had brought home each month instead of spending it all. Hearing this filled him with relief and pride.

The savings were not enough for long, perhaps only one or two years, but they offered security for emergencies. Money would still need to be earned. Gregor worried deeply about this. His father was old and had grown slow after years without work. His mother suffered from asthma and struggled even to move around the home. And Grete—his dear sister—was only seventeen, used to a

comfortable life of music and small pleasures.

Gregor felt shame whenever they discussed work. He would leave the door and throw himself onto the leather sofa nearby, his body growing hot with regret. Many nights he lay awake, scratching restlessly at the leather for hours.

Often he pushed a chair toward the window and climbed onto it. Before his transformation he had enjoyed looking outside, feeling a sense of freedom. Now the view seemed distant and unclear. The hospital across the street, once sharply visible, faded into gray shapes. Sometimes he felt as if the world itself were disappearing.

His sister noticed the moved chair and began placing it carefully by the window after cleaning. She even left the inner window open for him. Gregor wished desperately that he could thank her. Without words, gratitude turned into quiet pain.

Over time he sensed how difficult his presence was for her. Whenever she entered, she rushed immediately to the window and opened it wide, breathing deeply as if she needed fresh air to endure the room. Even on cold days she remained there for a moment. Gregor hid beneath the couch, trembling, knowing she wished to spare him but could not fully overcome her discomfort.

One morning, about a month after his transformation, she entered earlier than usual and found him sitting openly by the window. She froze, then hurried out and closed the door. Gregor quickly hid again, realizing that his appearance still frightened her greatly.

Wanting to ease her suffering, he spent hours dragging a bedsheet onto the couch and arranging it so that his body would remain completely hidden beneath it. When she returned later, she left the sheet in place. Gregor thought he saw a brief look of gratitude in her eyes.

During the first two weeks his parents never entered his room. They praised Grete outside the door for her courage and care, though earlier they had often called her lazy. Now they waited anxiously nearby while she cleaned, asking many questions when she came out. His mother especially wished to see him, but his father and sister prevented it, fearing the shock might harm her.

Gregor listened to these discussions closely. Secretly he hoped his mother might visit someday. She might understand him better than Grete, who was still young despite her bravery.

Meanwhile Gregor discovered new abilities. With little to do, he began crawling along the walls and ceiling. Hanging upside down felt wonderful. He could breathe more freely, and his body swung lightly in the air. Sometimes he even released his grip and dropped to the floor without injury. These movements gave him strange pleasure.

Soon his sister noticed marks left by his feet on the walls. She decided that the furniture blocked his movement and should be removed. Alone she could not move heavy pieces, so she chose a time when their father was away and brought their mother to help.

Gregor heard his mother's uncertain voice approaching. He quickly pulled the sheet lower over himself and remained still. His sister entered first to check the room, then guided their mother inside.

The two women began pushing the heavy chest of drawers. Their breathing grew strained as they worked. After many minutes his mother suggested leaving it where it was. She feared empty walls would make Gregor feel abandoned. Softly she added that keeping the room unchanged might help him return to normal one day.

Hearing her words moved Gregor deeply. Until that moment he had believed he wanted more empty space. Now he realized the furniture connected him to his human past. Without it he might forget who he had been.

But Grete disagreed. She insisted the furniture must go so he could crawl freely. She believed she understood his needs best. Finally his mother gave in and helped her continue.

As the women struggled with the chest of drawers, Gregor grew increasingly distressed. The scraping sounds and hurried voices surrounded him like an attack. They had already removed objects dear to him. Now they planned to take away his writing desk—the place where he had studied as a child and worked as a young salesman.

He could not bear it any longer. When the women paused to rest in the other room, Gregor crawled out from under the couch. Unsure what to save first, he moved in confusion until his eyes fell upon the picture of the lady in fur hanging on the wall.

Driven by sudden determination, he hurried upward and pressed his body tightly against the picture, covering it completely as if protecting it from removal. The cool glass touched his belly, and he held it firmly, ready to defend the last object that still belonged to his former life.

Part 4

Gregor clung tightly to the picture on the wall. The smooth glass pressed cool against his body, and he spread himself across it as widely as he could. He felt that this picture, more than anything else in the room, still connected him to his past. If they removed it, nothing would remain that proved he had once lived here as a human being.

In the next room the women rested, breathing heavily after their effort. Gregor listened anxiously. He hoped they might give up and leave the furniture where it was. For a moment there was silence, broken only by quiet whispers between mother and daughter. Then their footsteps returned.

Grete entered first. She stopped suddenly when she saw Gregor on the wall. Her eyes widened, but she forced herself to remain calm. Quickly she stepped back and pushed her mother toward the door, trying to prevent her from seeing him. “Come back for a moment,” she said urgently.

But their mother had already noticed movement. She looked up—and saw Gregor spread across the picture. At first she simply stared, unable to understand what she was seeing. Then fear overcame her. She cried out loudly and collapsed onto the sofa, her arms stretched helplessly.

“Mother!” Grete shouted. She ran to her and tried to wake her. Gregor, startled by the scream, released the picture and dropped to the floor. He rushed toward them without thinking, worried for his mother.

Grete turned and saw him coming closer. Panic filled her face. She seized a bottle from the table and waved it toward him. "Stay back, Gregor!" she cried. The words hurt him deeply. It was the first time she had spoken his name with fear instead of kindness.

Gregor stopped immediately. He did not want to frighten her further. Grete hurried to the window, opened it wide, and breathed deeply while still watching him. Cold air rushed into the room. Gregor retreated slowly toward the wall, trying to appear harmless.

After a few moments their mother regained consciousness. She sat up weakly, asking what had happened. Grete answered gently, hiding Gregor from view as best she could. But before long their mother saw him again and cried out once more.

At that very moment the front door opened. Their father had returned home.

Gregor heard heavy steps and the sound of a walking stick striking the floor. His father entered the living room and demanded an explanation. Grete rushed toward him, speaking quickly and pointing toward Gregor's room. Her frightened voice made everything sound far worse than it was.

Their father appeared in the doorway wearing a new uniform. He now worked as a bank messenger, dressed in a dark blue coat with gold buttons. The clothes made him look stronger and more serious than before. Gregor felt a strange mixture of pride and fear when he saw him.

The father stared at Gregor with hard eyes. "What has happened?" he asked sharply. Without waiting for an answer, he advanced into the room.

Gregor backed away slowly, hoping to calm him. He wanted only to return peacefully to his room. But his father misunderstood the movement as an attack. His face grew red with anger.

On the table lay a bowl filled with apples. His father grabbed one and threw it. The apple struck Gregor's back but rolled away without serious harm. Another followed, hitting him more painfully. Gregor tried to escape, but his injured leg slowed him.

Then a third apple flew through the air and struck deeply into his back. This

one remained stuck in his body. A sharp burning pain spread through him. Gregor stopped moving at once, unable to continue.

His mother rushed forward, crying and begging her husband to stop. She wrapped her arms around him, pleading for mercy. Only then did the father lower his arm.

Gregor lay motionless, breathing weakly. The apple remained lodged in his back, and he felt too tired to remove it. Slowly the room grew quiet again. His father helped his mother away, and Grete closed the door firmly behind them.

Darkness filled the room. Gregor could barely move. The wound caused constant pain, and he no longer had the strength to crawl along the walls or ceiling. He remained mostly in one place, drifting between sleep and waking.

Days passed. The apple stayed embedded in his back, slowly rotting there. His family no longer removed it. Perhaps they were afraid to touch him. Gregor accepted the pain as part of his existence.

Life in the household changed. The door to his room was now often left slightly open in the evenings so that he could observe the family from the shadows. They no longer lived comfortably. All three had begun working.

His father left early each morning in his uniform. His mother took in sewing for shops, working late into the night despite her weak health. Grete found employment as a salesgirl and spent evenings studying shorthand and French to improve her position.

Gregor watched them quietly while they sat together after dinner, tired and silent. Sometimes his father fell asleep at the table still wearing his uniform. His mother and sister gently woke him and persuaded him to go to bed.

Gregor felt both pride and deep sorrow. Once he had supported them; now they struggled without him. He realized how much they suffered because of his condition.

One evening three lodgers arrived to rent a room in the flat. They were serious men with long beards who demanded cleanliness and order. To satisfy them, much of the furniture from the living room was moved into Gregor's room. The space became crowded with unwanted objects.

Gregor no longer minded the clutter. He rarely moved anyway. His appetite weakened, and food often remained untouched. Grete still brought meals, but she no longer watched him closely. Her visits became quick and practical rather than gentle.

Sometimes the charwoman, an older cleaning woman hired to replace the maid, opened his door boldly and called him “old dung beetle” without fear. Her rough manner surprised him, yet he almost preferred it to silent avoidance.

One evening Gregor heard music from the living room. Grete was playing her violin for the lodgers. The sound reached him softly through the open door. The music filled him with emotion stronger than anything he had felt since his transformation.

Drawn by the sound, he crawled slowly into the living room. He wished only to listen more closely. The music seemed to speak directly to him, reminding him of his secret plan to send Grete to a music school someday.

He imagined keeping her with him forever, protecting her from the harsh world. Lost in these thoughts, he moved further into the room without realizing how visible he had become.

The lodgers noticed him first. They stood abruptly, pointing in disgust. The violin fell silent. Grete stared at Gregor, her face pale and tense.

Their father hurried forward, apologizing to the lodgers and trying to push Gregor back toward his room. The men declared they would leave immediately and refused to pay rent.

After they withdrew, the family gathered together in exhaustion and anger. Gregor remained in the doorway, listening.

Grete spoke firmly. “We must get rid of it,” she said. “We have done everything we could. We cannot live like this anymore.”

Her words struck Gregor more deeply than any wound. He understood that she no longer saw him as her brother. To them he had become only a burden.

Quietly he turned and crawled back into his room. He felt no anger, only sadness and acceptance. For the first time, he believed that his disappearance might truly help his family.

Part 5

Gregor moved slowly across the floor of his room. The effort exhausted him, and each movement sent pain through his injured back where the apple still remained. Behind him he heard his family continue their discussion in low voices. Grete's words echoed again and again in his mind: they must get rid of it. He understood now that she no longer believed he could return to being human. Perhaps she was right.

The living room soon grew quiet. Chairs scraped softly as the family rose from the table. One by one the lights were turned off. Gregor remained alone in darkness. Through the open doorway faint light from the street lamps fell across the floor, but it did not reach him where he lay.

He felt strangely calm. For many days he had eaten almost nothing, and now even hunger seemed distant. His body felt light, almost empty. Thoughts came slowly, without fear or anger. He remembered earlier times—traveling by train, carrying samples, planning to send Grete to study music. Those memories no longer hurt him as they once had. They seemed far away, like scenes from another person's life.

Gregor thought about his family. He imagined his father walking proudly in his uniform, his mother resting peacefully without worry, and Grete playing the violin freely again. The idea that they might live happily without him no longer felt unbearable. Instead it gave him comfort.

He remained still for a long time. Outside, the night deepened. Somewhere a clock struck three. Gregor noticed that breathing had become difficult, yet he did not struggle against it. His thoughts grew weaker, drifting like fading light.

Just before dawn he turned his head toward the door one last time. He felt affection for his family and wished them well. Then his body slowly relaxed. Without pain or struggle, Gregor Samsa died.

Early that morning the charwoman arrived. She was a strong older woman who was not easily frightened. As usual she knocked loudly and entered without

waiting. Seeing that Gregor lay motionless, she poked him gently with her broom. When he did not move, she pushed harder. Realizing he was dead, she opened the door wide and called loudly into the flat.

“Come look,” she shouted. “It’s dead now. It’s lying there completely dead.”

Gregor’s parents and sister hurried in, still partly dressed. They stopped at the doorway and stared. For a moment none of them spoke. Gregor’s father crossed himself quietly. His mother sighed deeply, as if a heavy weight had lifted from her chest. Grete stood silently, watching without tears.

The charwoman smiled proudly, pleased to have brought important news. She offered to remove the body at once. No one objected. With little effort she swept Gregor’s remains onto a shovel and carried them away.

Soon afterward the lodgers appeared, expecting breakfast. When they learned that food would not be served and that they must leave immediately, they protested angrily. Gregor’s father stood firm and pointed toward the door. The men gathered their belongings and left without paying rent.

After they were gone, the family felt an unfamiliar sense of relief. For the first time in many months the apartment seemed quiet and open. Sunlight entered through the windows, bright and warm.

The father suggested that they all take the day off from work. Letters were written explaining their absence. Then the three of them left the flat together and boarded a tram to the countryside. None of them had done such a thing for a long time.

They sat close together, enjoying the fresh air and gentle movement of the tram. Outside, spring had begun. Trees showed new leaves, and the sky appeared clear after many gray days. The family spoke calmly about their future.

They realized that although life had been difficult, their situation was not hopeless. Each of them now had employment. With careful saving they could move to a smaller, more comfortable apartment suited to their new circumstances.

During the ride the parents noticed how much Grete had changed. She had grown into a young woman, strong and healthy despite recent hardships. Her tired expression faded as she stretched her body and looked out the window with quiet

hope.

The parents exchanged a glance. Without speaking directly, they both understood the same thought: it was time to think about Grete's future, about finding her a good husband and allowing her to begin a new life.

The tram continued forward into the bright morning. The family sat together peacefully, leaving behind the dark months that had passed. Their worries seemed lighter, and for the first time in a long while they allowed themselves to look ahead with hope.