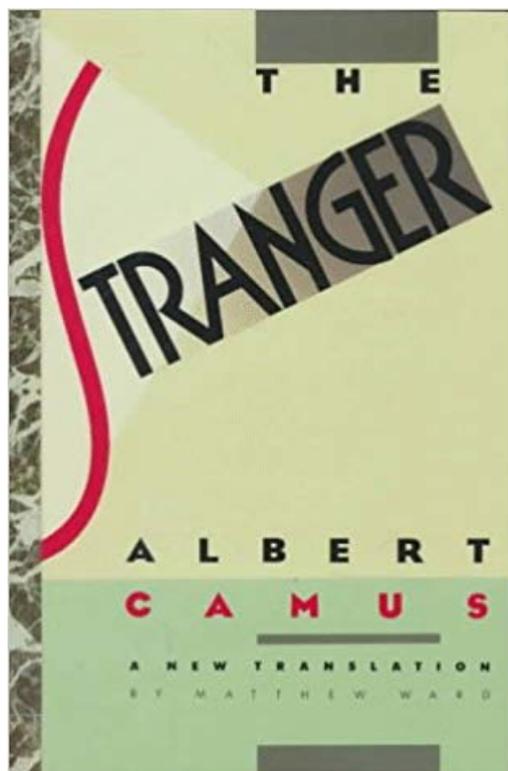


The Stranger *by* Albert Camus



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Since it was first published in English, in 1946, Albert Camus's extraordinary first novel, *The Stranger* (*L'Étranger*), has had a profound impact on millions of American readers. Through this story of an ordinary man who unwittingly gets drawn into a senseless murder on a sun-drenched Algerian beach, Camus was exploring what he termed "the nakedness of man faced with the absurd." Now, in an illuminating new American translation (the only English version available for more than forty years was done by a British translator), the original intent of *The Stranger* is made more immediate, as Matthew Ward captures in exact and lucid language precisely what Camus said and how he said it, thus giving this haunting novel a new life for generations to come. Albert Camus, son of a working-class family, was born in Algeria in 1913. He spent the early years of his life in North Africa, where he worked at various jobs -- in the weather bureau, in an automobile-accessory firm, in a shipping company -- to help pay for his courses at the University of Algiers. He then turned to journalism as a career. His report on the unhappy state of the Muslims of the Kabylie region aroused the Algerian government to action and brought him public notice. From 1935 to 1938 he ran the *Theatre de L'Équipe*, a theatrical company that produced plays by Malraux, Gide, Synge, Dostoevski, and others. During World War II he was one of the leading writers of the French Resistance and editor of *Combat*, then an important underground newspaper. Camus was always very active in the theater, and several of his plays have been published and produced. His fiction, including *The Stranger*, *The Plague*, *The Fall*, and *Exile and the Kingdom*; his philosophical essays, *The Myth of Sisyphus* and *The Rebel*; and his plays have assured his preeminent position in modern French letters. In 1957 Camus was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. His sudden death on January 4, 1960, cut short the career of one of the most important literary figures of the Western world when he was at the very summit of his powers.



Reviews of the **The Stranger** by Albert Camus

Wizer

Albert Camus instills his philosophical teachings and beliefs in his indifferent main character. This quick read was part novel and part exercise in philosophy. Regardless of your beliefs, this book will force you to think about your own purpose, your life and maybe the meaning of your existence in this world and in relation to those surrounding you.

The story was quick, the ideas were big and the characters were an interesting bunch that reminded me of a mix between Hemingway's Lost Generation and Kerouac's Beats. This is a book I would recommend everyone to read. Take a day or a weekend and delve into the mind of Albert Camus. Camus writes in another of his books, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, "There is only one really serious philosophical question, and that is suicide." Once we decide whether or not to live, then all of the other questions that philosophy poses can come into play. *The Stranger*, through Meursault, takes a look at life and asks one simple question: Why?

Questanthr

Monsieur Meursault is a French-Algerian: his mother (Maman) has just died and he attends her funeral. That event is the axis about which the story turns - not so much the physical attendance or even the external events of the funeral, but rather Meursault's psychological reaction to her death. The reader is left to deduce their own 'connections' between the death of Maman and the events that follow - which will ultimately lead Meursault to the guillotine.

The story is full of metaphor and discovery: the sun and light and heat bristle throughout the pages of the story. "She said, 'If you go slowly, you risk getting a sunstroke. But if you go too fast, you work up a sweat and then catch a chill inside the church.' She was right. There was no way out"

The book is short (125 pages) and written in the short sentence, staccato style of writers like Hemingway. The read is easy but the meanings are deeper than the words on the page. By the end the effect is a story told in the detail of two or three times the pages that Albert Camus uses. It is clever and thought provoking and well worth the read!

(Matthew Ward translation)

Ariseym

The Stranger's power is in its brevity. Though the novel can be finished in an afternoon, *The Stranger* is a powerful analysis about the arbitrariness of justice and an exploration of the existential stages of life in which one is expected to proceed through to become a genuine human being. Meursault's initial existence, confined only to his sensory experiences, is woefully inadequate to qualify him as leading the full life that most individuals desire. Meursault's subsequent 'legal troubles' lead him to a far greater understanding of the life to which he is happily a complete and utter subject to. The novel also touches on ideas about determinism and nihilism and critiques the

social structure of relationships and the 'justice system'. Justice, freedom, and of course religious ideas are lambasted by Camus in the text.

Umi

What a great story, I recommend really thinking about this as part of the larger picture too. The narrative is amazing, the meaning behind it is even better. I read the Mersault Investigation after this (which if you like this book I'd recommend) and together they are a thrilling story. Alone even still I'd recommend it.

Legend 33

A challenging book to say the least. I can't help but feel like through out my reading I was on the cusp of "getting" it only to realize I was still not there. Thats is just one of the reasons I find myself inevitably going back to this book in the future.

In sum this is the story of Mersault, a Frenchman living in Northern Africa. The first half of the book tells the story of Mersault's reaction and experiences following his mother's death. The second half details Mersault's views as he goes through a court trial (no spoilers here)

Camus' style is relatively easy to read and Mersault is both relatable and a bit revolting. I found myself agreeing with him on a number of points. Still, he is unrepentant of his actions and he behaves and thinks in a number of ways that are counter to what society may think. In some ways I could draw a comparison between Mersault and Holden from Catcher in the Rye. The last 20 pages or so of the book seem to hold so much depth but are just out of reach.

While I don't profess to be able to analyze this book and understand it, I'll leave that to the academics. But I will recommend this book for anyone who is looking for a challenging and introspective if dark read.

Iesha

In *THE STRANGER* by Albert Camus, the character Meursault is a man apart. Though he exists w/ other humans, he is obviously on an entirely different wavelength! Meursault will commit a heinous crime. He will face the men of the court, along w/ their machine of justice. Thereby, Meursault will cross over into full enlightenment about life, the world, and his place in it. Camus uses this short, simple tale in order to reveal depths that are anything but simple. The astonishing thing about Meursault is that his "philosophy" seems to have come to him naturally, not through study or inculcation. He is what he believes. He walks around being the very indifference of nature. Those around him, be they legal minds, religious leaders, employers, or "friends" and / or "loved" ones, are at once offended and dumbfounded by Meursault's incomprehensible disregard for social norms, traditions, etc. He is an enigma to them. He is unknowable. His final epiphany is incredible. It will echo through your soul...

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