How Albert Camus’s *L’Étranger* became *The Stranger*

Literary translation and the long life of a classic

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Albert Camus’s *L’Étranger* has been best-seller for so long, we forget it was ever anything else. But literary classics are made, not born: though *The Stranger* was a book very few readers understood or appreciated when it was published in 1942, it became a household name—a regular on lists of the great books of the 20th century. Alice Kaplan delved into publishers’ archives to uncover a key episode in *L’Étranger*’s career: the first translation of the French novel into English, in the United States and in England, four years after its publication—in 1946, when the war in Europe had been over for only a year. This is a tale of two cities, involving an author, his publishers, his translator, and his readers and reviewers.