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Quicklet on Upton Sinclair's The Jungle

Rebecca Meredith

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ABOUT THE BOOK

IIn researching this book, Upton Sinclair spent several weeks undercover working in the meatpacking industry. His book, The Jungle, which was published in 1906, was written as a composite of figures and fates he encountered. He was called a muckraker in dredging up the truth about the meatpacking industry, and would expose many other social injustices in nearly 90 other books. The awareness he brought, reaching readers emotions in this book are held partially responsible for the passing of The Pure Food and Drug Act and The Meat Inspection Act by President Theodore Roosevelt and Congress.

MEET THE AUTHOR

Rebecca Meredith received her degree in Comparative Literature from Reed College. She has since written lifestyle articles, literary reviews, children's stories and travel accounts. Her interests are wide, and include mythology, food, sociology, philosophy, travel, arts, history, biography, architecture, design, illustration, interview style, new journalism, lifestyle, collaboration, personal development, storytelling, teaching, psychology, and advertising.

EXCERPT FROM THE BOOK

The Jungle traces the story of a family from Lithuania who emigrated to the United States seeking wealth. They come as a couple to be married, an elderly father, a strong large woman, an aunt with several children, some of whom are crippled, and a single, middle-aged man. Together they pool their money and set out together to navigate a foreign country without any English, personal connections, or know-how in this new society. The book can be divided into three parts, which Ive titled Dreams and Disillusionment (1), Deal with the Devil: Fend for Yourself (2), and Rebirth of Hope Through Socialism (3).

In the first section, the family arrives in Ellis Island in New York, makes their way to Chicago, and then step-by-step deals with every possible wrong turn and misfortune as they try to build their new lives and survive. The readers hope for the family is likewise dashed, as each characters misfortune weakens their sense of wholeness and connection to their love for one another.

The story opens with a scene representing a crossroads in which hope and tradition of a couple getting married are pitted against a scenario in which the celebrants take advantage of the innocent for their own benefit, leaving the couple in debt. Old world traditions and hopes. New world greed and disillusionment. The Lithuanian wedding is put on with food and drink offered to the guests, and then guests in turn are meant to offer up a sizable donation to start the couple off on their new lives. Instead, the bartender finds a way to cheat the couple by beginning with one keg half empty and ending with one half full and charging for two kegs; the guests manage to slip outside with their stomachs full and not return, thus avoiding the financial gift they are obligated to offer in good will.

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CHAPTER OUTLINE

- Quicklet On Upton Sinclair’s The Jungle
  - About the Book
  - About the Author
  - List of Key Characters
  - Overall Summary with Embedded Character Descriptions
  - ...and much more
- Upton Sinclair's The Jungle

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