

The Jungle Book Notes

The Jungle by Upton Sinclair

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Author/Context

Upton Beall Sinclair was born on September 20th, 1878 in Baltimore, Maryland. His parents were part of a ruined Southern aristocracy, devastated and impoverished by the Civil War. His father was an alcoholic liquor salesman who moved the family to New York when Sinclair was ten years old. Sinclair was a bright child who began writing short novels in his teens. At age 14, he enrolled in the City College of New York where he continued writing dime novels and pulp fiction which enabled him to support himself during college. After earning a degree in 1897, Sinclair enrolled at Columbia University for graduate studies. Three years later, he married his first wife, Meta, with whom he had a son. Around this time, Sinclair was exposed to Socialism and counted it a life-changing discovery as well as an impetus to action. The Socialist weekly, *Appeal to Reason*, sent Sinclair to the Chicago stockyards on assignment for a journalistic expose. Sinclair worked in the meatpacking plants in the yards, witnessing illegal practices and unsafe food handling which he was to later detail in *The Jungle*. During his time in the yards, Sinclair wrote a number of articles for various magazines, including "Is Chicago Meat Clean?" for *Colliers Weekly*, in April of 1905. At this time, a number of investigative journalists, called "muckrakers" by President Roosevelt, were writing exposes of various industries, including Ida Tarbell, Lincoln Steffens and Thomas Lawson. Their writings greatly influenced Sinclair's own writing.

Sinclair wrote *The Jungle* using details he gathered during his investigation-including the startling exploitation of laborers in the packing plants, the squalor of the yards neighborhoods and the corruption of the Beef Trust. Sinclair's novel was rejected by six publishers and when he announced his intention to publish the book himself in an announcement in *Appeal to Reason*, he received nearly a thousand orders. Doubleday decided to publish *The Jungle*, but not before Sinclair published a number of copies himself.

When *The Jungle* was published, the nation reacted in horror. After reading the novel, President Theodore Roosevelt ordered an immediate investigation into the meat industry, though privately he told Sinclair that he disliked the Socialist polemic near the end of the novel. Within months, two pieces of legislation resulted from Sinclair's novel: The Pure Food and Drug Act and the Meat Inspection Act, both signed into law on June 30th, 1906. Sinclair was an instant celebrity and a Socialist hero, and was finally financially stable. He lamented the fact that the nation focused only on the unsafe food handling aspect of his novel, and ignored the problem of labor exploitation. He famously quipped: "I aimed at the public's heart and by accident I hit it in the stomach."

After the success of *The Jungle*, Sinclair became even more involved with the Socialist movement, running for various offices in state and national elections when he moved to California with his second wife, Mary. He was always beaten and often by a landslide. In 1917, Sinclair resigned from the Socialist Party following a split in ideology. He founded the American Civil Liberties Union in California and continued writing, producing a prodigious amount of novels including, *The Profits of Religion* in 1918, *The Brass Check* in 1919 and *Oil!* in 1927, as well as a number of others. But nothing would equal



the success he enjoyed with *The Jungle*. In 1940, Sinclair began writing a series of novels, called the Lanny Budd Series. One of those novels, *Dragon's Teeth*, won the Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 1943. After his wife died in 1961, Sinclair remarried.

Sinclair died on November 25, 1968 at age 90. He is best remembered for *The Jungle*, the most enduring of the muckraker exposes.

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Plot Summary

Jurgis Rudkus and his family come to America from Lithuania to seek their fortune. They arrive in Chicago's stockyards district, where the gigantic meatpacking plants operate, and find employment performing various tasks in the slaughterhouses. Quickly, the family realizes that their dreams of America and its wealth were painfully far from reality. Instead of being a land of promise, it is a land of interminable toil and poverty. The workers at the meatpacking plants are poorly paid, overworked and subject to unfair labor practices and dangerous working conditions. What's more, the stockyards neighborhood is a pit of poverty and squalor, with rat-infested boarding houses, a smoldering garbage dump on one end of the yards, and a large sewage pit on the other end. Jurgis's family finds that they all must work to survive, including Jurgis's dying father, his pregnant wife, her cousin, her uncle, and her stepmother's children.

All of the family members who work in the slaughterhouses see the unbelievable filth in the factories where the meat is processed and the sickening secrets of meatpacking. Diseased cattle and hogs are processed for consumption, as well as pregnant cows and their fetuses. The sausages are made of a random mixture of animal parts, as well as the dirt, rat carcasses and poison scooped up off the floor. The corruption within the plants runs thick, with bosses demanding "gifts" of money from their workers, and grafting off those in the hierarchy of management.

After a series of tragedies, including a stint in jail for Jurgis, the death of his wife Ona and baby son Antanas, Jurgis flees to the countryside, leaving the rest of the family behind. Once he's away from Chicago, he becomes a transient. He returns to Chicago where he finds himself penniless and starving. He begs on the streets, gets into rows in saloons and is in and out of jail. During one of his visits to jail, he meets a con man named Jack Duane who initiates Jurgis into a life of crime. As a criminal, Jurgis learns about the corruption in city politics, in various industries such as steel and horseracing, in the packing-plants and even in the Chicago police force. Everyone, it seems, is crooked. The elections are fixed and Democratic and Republican Party members pay men for votes. Jurgis even helps out a candidate by bribing fellow workers at the meatpacking plant and offering them money for their votes. After another scrape and some more jail time, Jurgis wanders the streets of Chicago, begging and trying not to starve. He stumbles into a Socialist party meeting and is instantly transfixed by the speaker. He is introduced to a party member named Ostrinski who teaches him the tenets of Socialism. Jurgis is transformed by what he learns: finally there is an explanation for his suffering, and even a way to change it! Capitalism, he learns, is the bane of society, constantly keeping the common worker in poverty while enriching the wealthy. Jurgis finds a job at a hotel run by a Socialist and finds himself obsessed with Socialism. He runs into an old friend who tells him Ona's cousin Marija is living in a whorehouse, working as a prostitute. He finds her addicted to morphine and quite sick and cannot convince her to leave. She tells him to find the rest of the family and he does, supporting them with the money he makes at the hotel. The novel ends with a Socialist polemic supporting the movement and promising that the party will become stronger as time passes and, in the end, will "take Chicago."



Major Characters

Jurgis Rudkus : Main character of the novel. A Lithuanian immigrant who works in Chicago's meatpacking plants and tries to save his family from starvation and ruin. It is through Jurgis that Sinclair reveals the atrocities of the Beef Trust that forced the government to pass regulatory laws. Jurgis becomes a Socialist at the end of the novel.

Ona Rudkus: Jurgis's wife who follows him to America from Lithuania, along with her family. She works in the meatpacking plants and falls into prostitution to keep her family alive. She dies during childbirth.

Elzbieta Lukoszaite: Ona's stepmother, and the mother of seven children of her own. She struggles to keep the family from starving and loses two of her children to early death.

Marija Berczynskas: Ona's cousin, who came to America with the family. A strong, sturdy woman with great spirit. When she arrives, she can perform heavy tasks at the packing plants. She loses her job after joining the union, then falls into prostitution and morphine addiction after Jurgis abandons the family.

Minor Characters

Grandmother Majauskiene : The family's neighbor, also Lithuanian, who explains the swindles of the yards to the family. She is a Socialist.

Dede Antanas: Jurgis's elderly father who accompanied him to America. Worked in the pickling rooms of one of the packing plants but developed tuberculosis and died.

Jokubus Sdevilas: A fellow Lithuanian immigrant who owns a deli on Halsted Street. Befriends the family and is the first to show them around the slaughterhouses.

Jadvyga Marcinkus: Fellow Lithuanian immigrant and friend of the family. She works at the canning factory and supports an invalid mother and three small siblings.

Tamoszius Kuszleika: Fiddler who, for a while, is Marija's fiancée. He is a Socialist.

Jonas Lukoszaite: Elzbieta's brother, Ona's uncle. He comes with the family to America and gets a job at a meatpacking plant. He disappears early in the novel. The family thinks he abandoned them, though he may have been killed on the job.

Stanislovas Lukoszaite: One of Elzbieta's children. He's 13 years old but secured false papers in order to work at a lard can factory in the yards. Developed a phobia about snow after seeing a young co-worker's frostbitten ears fall off. Is killed on the job by rats after having fallen asleep.



Mike Scully: The Democratic 'boss' of the yards. A corrupt politician whom Jurgis consults after becoming corrupt himself during a worker's strike.

Miss Henderson: Ona's superintendent and Connor's former mistress. Draws Ona into prostitution.

Antanas: Jurgis and Ona's baby. He drowns in the muddy water in the road in front of their house.

Vilimas and Nikalojus: Two of Elzbieta's children. They sell newspapers downtown to bring in extra money.

Kristoforas: One of Elzbieta's children, crippled. Dies at the age of three after eating a sausage.

Kotrina: Elzbieta's daughter. Take care of the younger children in the house.

Connor: A boss at the factory where Ona works. Seduces her and pushes her into prostitution. Is severely beaten by Jurgis and manages to put Jurgis on a blacklist, making it impossible for him to find a job.

Judge Pat Callahan: A crooked, xenophobic judge who sentences Jurgis to jail time after he beats Connor.

Jack Duane: A con man Jurgis meets in jail and befriends. He introduces Jurgis to the criminal underworld and, as partners, they rob and beat men in darkened alleys.

Madame Haupt: The midwife who cannot save Ona's life. She haggles mercilessly with Jurgis, while Ona lay dying. Uncaring, it seems. A product of her environment.

Juozapas: One of Elzbieta's children, also a cripple.

Freddie Jones: Son of a wealthy beef baron who, in a drunken stupor, brings Jurgis to his mansion for food and drink and from whom Jurgis steals a \$100 bill.

Buck Halloran: An Irish 'political worker' who oversees the vote-buying operations, the pay-offs for political parties and for city leaders.

Bush Harper: Nightwatchman at Brown's who bought Jurgis's vote when he became a naturalized citizen. He works for Mike Scully as a union spy.

Ostrinski: A Polish immigrant who is a Socialist. He befriends Jurgis and teaches him the tenets of Socialism and how it can overcome the 'evils' of a capitalist society.

Tommy Hind: Socialist owner of Hind's hotel. Gives Jurgis a job and encourages him to tell his story of working in the packing plants to guests.

Mr. Lucas: A Socialist priest and itinerant preacher. He believes the result of Socialism will be a religious renewal. Schliemann and he disagree on this.



Nicholas Schliemann: A Swedish philosopher and Socialist whose socialist polemic at the end of the novel is seen as Sinclair's attempt to convert the public to Socialism. His speech further commits Jurgis to the cause, and gives him hope.



Objects/Places

Lithuanians : People from Lithuania. This ethnic group immigrated to Chicago in a large wave during the first years of the 20th century. The central family of *The Jungle* lives in a Lithuanian enclave in the yards. Like other Eastern European immigrants, Lithuanians were exploited for labor purposes.

Veselija : A traditional Lithuanian wedding feast. Jurgis and Ona give a veselija to celebrate their wedding but find that the wedding gifts and proceeds from the *Acziarimas* Ceremony are far from enough to pay for the extravagant feast.

Durham's Meat: The meat packing plant and slaughterhouse where Jurgis and a number of family members work. Engaged in illegal labor activities as well as unsafe food handling activities.

Lithuania : The family's home country, idealized in their memories as a beautiful place with lush meadows and green trees and glistening lakes. Ona and Jurgis met and fell in love in Lithuania and the music of their homeland figures importantly into traditional festivities, such as the veselija.

Acziarimas Ceremony : An uninterrupted bridal dance, lasting three or four hours, in which male guests pay for the privilege of dancing with the bride. The money is set aside for the couple's wedding expenses.

The Yards : The neighborhood surrounding the packing plants. A filthy, vermin-infested slum with no sewage system, no sidewalks, a garbage dump where children pick out food for meals, and a cesspool of sewage water which the plant bosses use to cut ice and sell it to the public during the winter. The family lives in the yards.

Brown's Meat : Durham's rival and engaged in the same kind of illegal activities as Brown's. Both plants are egged into fierce competition by the government, though sometimes they work in tandem-when they fix meat prices, for example. Jurgis also works at Brown's during his time in Chicago.

Chicago : The city the family lives and works in. Home to a constellation of huge meatpacking plants and a center for corruption in politics, industry, and government.

Ashland Avenue : A street in Chicago, near the yards where the majority of the saloons are located. The workers spend much of their time and money here, some becoming alcoholics and others organizing union activities at the tables.

Downtown: Section of Chicago where Ona works as a prostitute and, later, Marija as well. Elzbieta's sons sell newspapers downtown and Jurgis, when he's starving, begs there.



Bridewell Prison : The Chicago prison where Jurgis is sent after his many scrapes with the law. He meets Jack Duane here. He also reflects that it's hard to tell which is the prison: inside the bars or outside.

Countryside : Jurgis flees to the countryside of Illinois and Missouri and is rejuvenated by a landscape that reminds him of Lithuania.

Hind's Hotel : Hotel run by Socialist Tommy Hind. A hotbed of Socialist activity and a popular hotel for travelers who enjoy listening to the polemics of the staff.



Quotes

Quote 1: "It is an elemental odor, raw and crude; it is rich, almost rancid, sensual and strong." Chapter 2, pg. 28

Quote 2: "It is a sound, a sound made up of ten thousand little sounds. You scarcely noticed it at first-it sunk into your consciousness, a vague disturbance, a trouble." Chapter 2, pg. 29

Quote 3: "The line of the buildings stood clear-cut and black against the sky; here and there out of the mass rose the great chimneys, with the river of smoke streaming away to the end of the world." Chapter 2, pg. 33

Quote 4: "They use everything about the hog except the squeal." Chapter 3, pg. 38

Quote: 5 "Relentless, remorseless, it was; all his protests, his screams, were nothing to it--it did its cruel will with him, as if his wishes, his feelings, had simply no existence at all; it cut his throat and watched him gasp out his life." Chapter 3, pg. 41

Quote 6: "So from the top to bottom the place is simply a seething cauldron of jealousies and hatreds; there is no loyalty or decency anywhere about it, there is no place in it where a man counted for anything against a dollar." Chapter 5, pg. 70

Quote 7: "And, for this, at the end of the week, he will carry home three dollars to his family, being his pay at the rate of five cents per hour--just about his proper share of the million and three quarters of children who are now engaged in earning their livings in the United States." Chapter 6, pg. 85

Quote 8: "He forgot how he himself had been blind, a short time ago--after the fashion of all crusaders since the original ones, who set out to spread the gospel of Brotherhood by force of arms." Chapter 8, pg. 107

Quote 9: "...all but the bones of them has gone out to the world as Durham's Pure Leaf Lard." Chapter 9, pg. 117

Quote 10: "Here is a population, low-class and mostly foreign, hanging always on the verge of starvation and dependent for its opportunities of life upon the whim of men every bit as brutal and unscrupulous as the old-time slave drivers; under such circumstances, immorality is exactly as inevitable, and as prevalent, as it is under the system of chattel slavery." Chapter 10, pg. 126

Quote 11: "It was piece-work, and she was apt to have a family to keep alive; and stern and ruthless economic laws had arranged it that she could only do this by working just as she did, with all her soul upon her work, and with never an instant for a glance at the well-dressed ladies and gentlemen who came to stare at her, as at some wild beast in a menagerie." Chapter 13, pg. 159



Quote 12: "This is no fairy story and no joke; the meat will be shoveled into carts and the man who did the shoveling will not trouble to lift out a rat even when he saw one." Chapter 14, pg. 162

Quote 13: They were beaten; they had lost the game, they were swept aside. It was not less tragic because it was so sordid, because that it had to do with wages and grocery bills and rents. They had dreamed of freedom; of a chance to look about them and learn something; to be decent and clean, to see their child group up to be strong. And now it was all gone-it would never be!" Chapter 14, pg. 163

Quote 14: "To Jurgis this man's whole presence reeked of the crime he had committed; the touch of his body was madness to him-it set every nerve of him a-tremble, it aroused all the demon in his soul." Chapter 15, pg. 181

Quote 15: "They put him in a place where the snow could not beat in, where the cold could not eat through his bones; they brought him food and drink-why, in the name of heaven, if they must punish him, did they not put his family in jail and leave him outside-why could they find no better way to punish him than to leave three weak women and six helpless children to starve and freeze? Chapter 16, pg. 191

Quote 16: "He has no wit to trace back the social crime to its far sources-he could not say that it is the thing men have called "the system" that is crushing him to the earth; that it is the packers, his masters, who has dealt their brutal will to him from the seat of justice." Chapter 16, pg. 191

Quote 17: "Jurgis could see all the truth now-could see himself through the whole long course of events, the victim of ravenous vultures that had torn into his vitals and devoured him; of fiends that had racked and tortured him, mocking him, meantime, jeering in his face." Chapter 18, pg. 212

Quote 18: "The word rang through him like the sound of a bell, echoing in the far depths of him, making forgotten chords to vibrate, old shadowy fears to stir-fears of the dark, fears of the void, fears of annihilation. She was dead! She was dead!" Chapter 19, pg. 227

Quote 19: "Elzbieta is one of the primitive creatures like the angleworm, which goes on living though cut in half; like a hen, which deprived of her chickens one by one, will mother the last that is left her." Chapter 20, pg. 234

Quote 20: "Only think that he had been a countryman all his life; and for three long years he had never seen a country sight nor heard a country sound!" Chapter 22, pg. 254

Quote 21: "Ah what agony is that, what despair, when the tomb of memory is rent open and the ghosts of his old life comes forth to scourge him!" Chapter 22, pg. 264



Quote 22: "They are trying to save their souls-and who but a fool could fail to see that all that is the matter with their souls is that they has not been able to get a decent existence for their bodies?" Chapter 23, pg. 273

Quote 23: "All of these agencies of corruption were banded together, and leagued in blood brotherhood with the politician and the police; more often than not they were one and the same person,--the police captain would own the brothel he pretended to raid, and the politician would open his headquarters in his saloon." Chapter 25, pg. 303

Quote 24: "All day long the blazing midsummer sun beat down upon that square mile of abominations: upon tens of thousands of cattle crowded into pens whose wooden floors stank and steamed contagion; upon bare, blistering, cinder-strewn railroad tracks and huge blocks of dingy meat factories, whose labyrinthine passages defied a breath of fresh air to penetrate them; and there are not merely rivers of hot blood and carloads of moist flesh, and rendering-vats and soup cauldrons, glue-factories and fertilizer tanks, that smelt like the craters of hell--there are also tons of garbage festering in the sun, and the greasy laundry of the workers hung out to dry and dining rooms littered with food black with flies, and toilet rooms that are open sewers." Chapter 26, pg. 328

Quote 25: "There is one kind of prison where the man is behind bars, and everything that he desires is outside; and there is another kind where things are behind bars, and the man is outside." Chapter 27, pg. 337

Quote 26: "When people are starving and they have anything with a price, I guess you ought to sell it, I say. I guess you realize it now when it's too late." Chapter 27, pg. 348

Quote 27: "To you, the toilers, who have made this land, and have no voice in its councils! To you, whose lot it is to sow that others may reap, to labor and obey, and ask no more than the wages of a beast of burden, the food and shelter to keep you alive from day to day. It is to you that I come with my message of salvation, it is to you that I appeal." Chapter 28, pg. 361

Quote 28: "The sentences of this man were to Jurgis like the crashing of thunder in his soul; a flood of emotion surged up in him--all his old hopes and longings, his old griefs and rages and despairs." Chapter 28, pg. 366

Quote 29: "To Jurgis the packers had been the equivalent to fate; Ostrinski showed him that they were the Beef Trust. They were a gigantic combination of capital, which had crushed all opposition, and overthrown the laws of the land, and was preying upon the people." Chapter 29, pg. 376

Quote 30: "In a society dominated by the fact of commercial competition, money is necessarily the test of prowess, and wastefulness the sole criterion of power." Chapter 31, pg. 403

Quote 31: "And we shall organize them for the victory! We shall bear down the opposition, we shall sweep it before us--and Chicago will be ours! *Chicago will be ours!* CHICAGO WILL BE OURS!" Chapter 31, pg. 413



Topic Tracking: Muckraking

Upton Sinclair spent time working in the Chicago slaughterhouses, working on journalistic articles. *The Jungle*, even though it is fiction, is considered one of the greatest works of muckraking journalism.

Chapter 3

Muckraking 1: Sinclair writes that the government inspector, who was to inspect the cattle for disease and injury, was easily distracted and any number of sick, diseased cattle could be slaughtered and processed for consumption by humans. Sinclair indicates that beef bosses distracted the inspector on purpose.

Chapter 5

Muckraking 2: Antanas, who works in the pickling rooms at Durham's, tells stories of waste products and refuse being thrown into vats of beef and processed for human consumption. These are charges that turn the nation's stomach when they read *The Jungle*.

Muckraking 3: Jurgis watches as pregnant cows, classified by the government as not fit for food, are sneaked past the government inspector and slaughtered for meat. Even more horrible, Jurgis sees the fetus sliced out of the dead cow and processed as meat as well. Charges like this spurred the US government to enact pure food laws.

Chapter 8

Muckraking 4: The factories slow down during certain times of the year, or close down altogether, leaving families to starve. When work hours decrease, workers are still expected to show up for a full day, but are only paid for the hours when work is available. It is an illegal labor practice, but the workers are helpless. This novel helped to shed light on the plight of the laborer.

Chapter 9

Muckraking 5: Jurgis is paid for his vote in an election, and bribed with beer. His co-workers explain the system of graft to him: how his bosses force workers to hand over some of their pay in order for the workers to keep their jobs.

Muckraking 6: Jurgis learns how tubercular steer and hogs are processed for meat. He also learns the "recipes" of Durham's "pure leaf lard": the waste products of the cow, including tongue, heart, and intestines. This is then dyed with chemicals and sold as pure lard. Jurgis also learns that horsemeat was used in Durham's but had temporarily been suspended due to an investigation. Again, this scene was an impetus for the passage of the Meat Inspection Act of 1906.

Chapter 14



Muckraking 7: Elzbieta sees how the sausage is doctored when she works filling casings in the sausage room. She sees how any random mix of animal parts is ground into "sausage." Anything that is spoiled is simply dyed with chemicals like borax and packaged for sale. In addition, she watches as leftovers that have fallen on the floor of the room are scooped up, along with dead rats and other filth, and put into the grinding machine for sausage. Another impetus toward passage of the Pure Food and Drug Act of 1906.

Chapter 23

Muckraking 8: Jurgis gets a job digging conduit tunnels for illegal telephone lines under city streets. The author says Jurgis doesn't know that the project he is working on is an elaborate, illegal plan to connect all the Chicago merchants and major industries and help them crush the workers' unions-the Teamsters. When these conduits are built, this bloc will have the Teamsters "by the throat." If anyone questions the practice, he is paid off and kept quiet. As soon as the conduits are built, the papers investigate and a scandal erupts.

Chapter 25

Muckraking 9: Jack Duane introduces Jurgis to the boss of the Racing Trust-an underground, corrupt organization that fixes races by disabling horses, drugging them, and bribing members of state legislatures.

Chapter 25

Muckraking 10: Jurgis helps Mike Scully fix an election by bribing workers with beer and by buying their votes. Scully hopes that if he fixes the election for a Republican candidate, then he will secure a no-contest election next year in which he will run unopposed. Sinclair exposes the corruption of city politics, which exploited the poor workers of the yards.



Topic Tracking: Socialism

Chapter 6

Socialism 1: Jurgis's neighbor, Grandmother Majauzskiene, tells the family about the endless cycle of immigrants who have been beaten down by the Beef Trust operating in the stockyards. She identifies herself as a Socialist and her discontent is voiced in typical Socialist thought. Jurgis has no idea what the word means, and quickly forgets about it.

Chapter 25

Socialism 2: Jurgis is recruited to work for Mike Scully, who wants to fix an election through bribery and buying votes. However, there is a threat to his uninterrupted corruption—a Socialist candidate who, Jurgis is told, cannot be bought or paid off. And, he is told by Scully's henchmen, are "enemies" of American institutions.

Socialism 3: Jurgis remember that Tamoszius, Marija's ex-fiancé, called himself a Socialist and spent his Saturdays preaching atop a soapbox on the corner.

Chapter 28

Socialism 4: Jurgis accidentally attends a Socialist party meeting and is transformed by what he hears from the speaker onstage—that the squalor and toil of Jurgis's life was not destiny but a result of capitalist greed. This idea changes Jurgis's life and when the speaker asks him if he'd like to know more about Socialism, he is eager but says he doesn't know what Socialism is.

Socialism 5: Jurgis is introduced to comrade Ostrinski, a Polish immigrant who turned to Socialism after working in the yards. Ostrinski begins to teach Jurgis about Socialism, about how the beaten-down working class is oppressed by the rich merchants of Chicago. Jurgis can feel his own sense of injustice returning. He is committed to converting everyone he meets to the Socialist cause.

Chapter 30

Socialism 6: Jurgis is hired at Hind's Hotel and discovers that his boss, Tommy Hind, is the state organizer of the Socialist Party. When Hind finds out that Jurgis is a brand new member of the Socialist Party and a former worker in the meatpacking plants, he is ecstatic. Because the hotel is a hotbed for Socialist activity, as well as a popular inn for Western cattleman, Hind encourages Jurgis to tell his stories of unsafe food handling activities in the processing rooms, and unfair labor practices.

Socialism 7: Jurgis attempts to convince his neighbors in the slums of the merits of Socialism and consistently gets in fights. It seems so obvious to him that Socialism is the answer to society's ills, but not so to other members of the working class who have



long been suspicious of political parties. He becomes even more determined to spread the word and secure rights for the working man.

Chapter 31

Socialism 8: Jurgis is invited to a small get-together with an East Coast magazine editor, a philosopher and a clergyman, at a millionaire's home, for a discussion of Socialism. Nicholas Schliemann, the philosopher, speaks at length about the goals and merits of Socialism, acting as a mouthpiece for the author Upton Sinclair. His speech enralls Jurgis and he feels that, at last, he is getting somewhere in America and that there is something to hope for.

Socialism 9: During the elections, the Socialists take over 400,000 votes in Chicago, which is a staggering increase. It adds fuel to the fire of the cause, making a statement in what used to be corrupt elections.

Socialism 10: Two Socialists are elected to the Illinois state legislature, which is an unprecedented achievement, and many said at the time, the working class speaking out with a vengeance now that they had a voice.



Topic Tracking: Unfair Labor Practices

Chapter 5

Unfair Labor Practices 1: Jurgis witnesses the "speeding up" process whereby the bosses force a pace man to set a nearly impossible pace for the workers on the line, leading to dangerous exhaustion, physical ailments, and the author writes, even death. If the workers do not keep up, they are immediately fired.

Unfair Labor Practices 2: Dede Antanas, Jurgis's elderly father, is offered a job on the condition that he pays his boss a third of his salary. It is just the entry point to a vast system of graft (obtaining money or advantage through the dishonest use power) and Jurgis's first inkling that justice and honesty does not exist in the yards.

Chapter 6

Unfair Labor Practices 3: The workrooms at the meatpacking plants are unheated and dangerous in the winter. Men often suffer frostbite, and in desperation, stick their frozen feet into the steaming carcasses of cattle when the bosses aren't looking. The steam is so thick in the butchering rooms that it creates an extremely dangerous environment where men may be stabbed in a cloud of hot steam, or suffer other injuries. Some men slip on the frozen blood on the floors.

Unfair Labor Practices 4: Grandmother Majauzskiene tells the family that the waves of immigrants was completely designed by Durham of Durham's Meat Packing Plant, simply to supply his own labor needs. He, in essence, created his own immigration policy, bringing unsuspecting families to America under false pretenses, then leaving them to live in abject poverty.

Chapter 8

Unfair Labor Practices 5: Marija's factory closes down suddenly and she is out of a job. In the winter, the factory closed down without warning and without assistance to the workers, leaving them to starve. It reopens on a whim, with no reparations to those who were out of work.

Unfair Labor Practices 6: The bosses don't pay the men for "broken time," which means a worker who worked 50 minutes of an hour and then, in the last ten minutes, found no work available for the last 10 minutes, was not paid at all for the whole hour.

Chapter 11

Unfair Labor Practices 7: The plants bring in extra men, which brings wages down and creates a surplus of labor. It isn't until later that the workers realize the extra men were being trained as strikebreakers.

Chapter 12



Unfair Labor Practices 8: As he's searching for another job, Jurgis reflects that the big plants were in collusion with each other: running the worker ragged with the cruel "speeding up" process, then casting him aside when he became ill from the work, or weak and exhausted. It is a machine with no thought to the worker.

Chapter 15

Unfair Labor Practices 9: Ona confesses that she had been seduced, then blackmailed into becoming her boss's mistress. He had threatened to take her job from her, as well as the jobs from her family members, confronting the family with starvation if she did not comply. This was something that commonly happened to female workers in the yards. Often they ended up as prostitutes.

Chapter 26

Unfair Labor Practices 10: The plants begin rebuilding their work force with prisoners and African-Americans lured North from Southern states. Their living conditions are filthy, and they are often packed 700 to a room. The place is rife with vermin and disease.

Unfair Labor Practices 11: The plants refuse to re-negotiate a contract with the unions and hire scabs (workers crossing the picket line) to take their place. When they finally agree to go to arbitration, and the strike is settled, they refuse to hire union members.

This is illegal.



Chapter 1

A wedding feast takes place in the rear-room of a Chicago saloon, in the stockyards district of the city. The feast is for the wedding of Jurgis Rudkus and Ona Lukoszaite. They are Lithuanians who recently immigrated to the United States along with family members. This feast is a Lithuanian tradition called a veselija. Ona is only 16 years old, blue-eyed and fair, and her new husband, Jurgis, is a burly man with black eyes and thick black hair. All of the guests are Lithuanian, and the room is packed with people—including Ona's stepmother Elzbieta, their neighbor Mrs. Majauskiene (called Grandmother) and Ona's cousin Marija Berczynskas. Marija is a cheerfully overbearing, loud woman. She's short and stocky and works in a canning factory, handling cans of beef that weigh upwards of 14 pounds. Dede Antanas, Jurgis's father, is 60 years old but he looks 80. He's sick and has only been in America for six months. His job at the pickle rooms at Durham's Packing House only aggravates his condition. He was once a scholar, back in Lithuania, who wrote his friends' love notes. Also in attendance at the veselija are Jokubus Sdevilas and his wife Lucija. They keep a delicatessen on Halsted Street. Another guest is Jadvyga Marcinkus, a beauty who paints cans at a packing plant.

The music at this feast plays a vitally important role. The songs inspire visions of home. Tamoszius Kuszleika is the lead fiddler. He taught himself to play by practicing all night after working in the "killing beds" of the slaughterhouses all day. The Acziarimas Ceremony, the highlight of the evening, is a dance that lasts for over three hours. The guests form a ring enclosing the bride, Ona, and men dance with her. When they've had their dance, they donate a bit of money into a hat that Elzbieta holds in her hands. The sum is what the bride and groom live on for their first year, and the way they pay back the unbelievable bills from the feast. But everyone here is very poor, overworked, and sick. They work in cellars with cold water on the floor. They make so little money that they must send their children into the workforce as laborers. But this wedding costs the equivalent of a year's salary in the yards. As the night wears away, many young men sneak out without paying a gift. How will they pay the bills of this feast? Jurgis and Ona leave around three o'clock. The remaining guests have passed out. However, they are all expected at work at 7 a.m. If they are a minute late, they are docked an hour's pay. If they are several minutes late, they are fired. Ona has asked for a day off, the day after her wedding, but she has been denied. There is no mercy in the yards. When Jurgis and Ona arrive at their apartment, he tells her she won't go to work at Brown's and when she says it will ruin them, he says: "I will work harder."



Chapter 2

The story of how Jurgis and Ona, and their families, came to Chicago is detailed, and the tale of their trials in America essentially begins here. Jurgis was raised in Brelovicz, the Lithuanian Imperial Forest. His brother had been drafted into the army over ten years ago and hasn't been heard from since. His sister married and bought the family house from the father, Antanas, who had decided to leave for America with his son. Jurgis met Ona a year and a half before their journey to America, at a horse fair in Lithuania. She had been just a child then and though Jurgis, passionately in love, offered Ona's father two horses to "buy" her, he was refused because she was too young. Over the next spring and summer, Jurgis didn't forget her. He returned and found that her father had died and his assets were tied up with debt collectors. Elzbieta, Ona's stepmother, and her seven kids, as well as Elzbieta's brother Jonas, remained with Ona. But Ona still wouldn't marry Jurgis because she didn't want to leave Elzbieta. Jonas knows a Lithuanian who had made a fortune in America and so to them, America sounded promising—a chance for riches and freedom. At the last minute, cousin Marija joined them for the trip over. Counting everyone, there are twelve in their party.

They head toward Chicago and the trip goes poorly. They are cheated by officials in America, and tricked into staying at expensive hotels. When they arrive in Chicago, they become lost immediately and a cop puts them on a train to the stockyards. The city is disgusting; dirty, smoky and filthy. The family begins to smell the slaughterhouses and to hear the sounds of the cattle in the pens. "It is an elemental odor, raw and crude; it is rich, almost rancid, sensual and strong." Chapter 2, pg. 28. The sounds from the slaughterhouse are chilling. "It is a sound, a sound made up of ten thousand little sounds. You scarcely noticed it at first—it sunk into your consciousness, a vague disturbance, a trouble." Chapter 2, pg. 29

When they arrive in the yards, they find Jokubus Szedvilas's delicatessen. He sends them to a boarding house, which is a terrible, filthy place where people sleep six to a room, often fourteen, on dirty mattresses on a floor. It's threadbare and rat-infested. The neighborhood is choked with children who run the streets and rake through the city dump nearby. There is standing water, rot, planks, and flies everywhere. "The line of the buildings stood clear-cut and black against the sky; here and there out of the mass rose the great chimneys, with the river of smoke streaming away to the end of the world." Chapter 2, pg. 33



Chapter 3

Jurgis is hired at Brown's Meat packing plant as a shoveler. He'll shovel blood and guts from the slaughtered cattle. He is set to begin the next day so Jokubus leaves the deli in his wife's hands and shows the newcomers around the yards. The cattle pens are innumerable and there seems to be millions of cows. The rail yards carry the cattle to the slaughterhouse where the mechanics of the process are awe-inspiring. 8-10 million cattle, hogs, and sheep are turned into food each year at this plant. Jokubus takes the family through a guided tour of Durham's buildings (Durham and Brown's are rival packing plants). They start at the hog slaughterhouse where the screams of the hogs are so appalling, the female visitors cry. The process of slaughter is so mechanical that the author ponders the fate of the hog - whether there is a place for these hogs after death where their cries mean something to someone, where their lives mean something. It's something the characters might be asking about themselves after a few months in the yards. "Relentless, remorseless, it was; all his protests, his screams, were nothing to it--it did its cruel will with him, as if his wishes, his feelings, had simply no existence at all; it cut his throat and watched him gasp out his life." Chapter 3, pg. 41 A government inspector "inspects" each carcass before it goes into the freezing room, feeling its glands for tuberculosis. But he is easily distracted and any number of carcasses could go right by him without inspection.

Topic Tracking: Muckraking 1

Jokubus cynically points out the signs posted that demand cleanliness. Jurgis can't understand why his friend is sarcastic. Jokubus offers to show the group the room where the spoiled meats go to be "doctored." Every part of the animal is used and processed. Entrails are cleaned to become sausage casings; scraps are used for soap and lard.

"They use everything about the hog except the squeal." Chapter 3, pg. 38

Down the line, workers prepare the carcass. Every hour, four to five hundred cattle are turned into beef. The group watches as men knock cattle over the head with a sledgehammer, and then slide the stunned animal into a "killing bed." The butcher bleeds it and blood collects on the floor faster than the men shoveling it into holes in the floor can clean it up. The carcass is dropped to this floor, skinned and decapitated, then hung back up for cleaning. Jurgis and his family have never seen such efficiency. The packing plant seems to need nothing from the outside world. In their complex of buildings, they have a steam plant, an electricity plant, a barrel factory, a boiler repair shop, a soap and lard factory, a lard can factory, a glue factory, and a number of other processing plants. The plants employ thirty thousand men and support over two hundred fifty thousand people in its neighborhood. Jurgis is so impressed by this that he can't understand Jokubus' cynicism. He is grateful to have a job in the yards.



Chapter 4

Jurgis arrives for work and is quickly trained to sweep up the guts and entrails of the slaughtered cattle, following behind the disemboweller. He makes 17 and a half cents an hour, wading through the steaming hot blood on the floor. He is grateful and even a little proud to have this job. Meanwhile, Jonas has been promised a job by one of Jokubus's contacts and Marija has already found a job at the canning factory, painting cans. Antanas is having great difficulty finding a job, as no one will hire an old man. Jurgis does not want Elzbieta, Ona or the kids working, not with such wonderful free education as is available in America.

Jurgis is already thinking of a home for his family. He has been studying a flier that a man at work showed him. It's a picture of a beautiful house with a happy family lounging on the front porch. The family makes an appointment to see one of the houses and on a Sunday, take a look at one. The house is not at all like the one on the flier. And not only that, it seems that none of the other houses are occupied. The agent is smooth, and speaks their language, but doesn't let them have a word in edgewise. The family is unsure if they should buy the house, as it will take all of their money simply to make a down payment. Jokubus warns them about the "new home" swindle common in the yards, but they decide to buy the house and Jurgis vows to "work harder" to make the house payments. Meanwhile, Jonas has found a job: pushing a truck at Durham's.

The only thing left for the family to do is to sign the paperwork, but Jurgis cannot get any time off from work in order to look over the agreement. The women, accompanied by Jokubus, go to the signing appointment instead, carrying with them all the money they have in the world. When Jokubus reads through the paperwork, he's confused. It's a rental agreement, he says, not a deed. They are wild with uncertainty and run to find a lawyer. The lawyer assures them that the paperwork is legal so, hesitantly, the women sign the papers and hand over their money. When Jurgis hears the story, he is sure they have been swindled, so consults yet another lawyer who also tells them that it all checked out. The "rent" is simply house payments.



Chapter 5

At work, Jurgis learns more and more about the bitterness he sees in his co-workers. The pace on the slaughter lines is excruciating and Jurgis isn't sure how such a pace is humanly possible. He identifies the "pacemakers" immediately. They are huge, highly paid men who work like men possessed, always under the eye of the boss. This is a practice called "speeding up the line," for every man down the line must keep up with the pacemaker's pace or he'll be thrown out for another worker. But Jurgis still loved his job and is surprised to find that most of the men hate their work, hate the bosses, hated the factory, and even hate the city. When Jurgis asks for specific reasons, they tell him to stay and find out for himself.

Topic Tracking: Unfair Labor Practices 1

Jurgis is approached by a delegate from the butcher's helper's union who asks him to join the union. Jurgis is unfamiliar with unions and when he finds out he'll have to part with some of his wages, he refuses to join. Someone has to explain to him that unions are groups of men banded together to fight for their rights in the workplace. Jurgis asks, "what rights?" and that makes the workers angry. Little by little, Jurgis finds out that the unions want to put a stop to the "speeding-up" practice. It is killing some of the men. Jurgis is not sympathetic. If they couldn't keep up, they had better go somewhere else. Antanas finally finds a job, in the pickle room at Durham's. It is shady: a boss has offered Antanas the job only if he parted with a third of his wages. It is a case of graft, the boss trying to add a little extra income to his own wages.

Topic Tracking: Unfair Labor Practices 2

The whole plant is corrupt-the bosses graft off the men and off each other. Durham's owner is corrupt and so on, down the line of managers, superintendents, and foremen. Jurgis thought he'd rise through the virtue of his good work. But no one rose in the yards by good work. "So from the top to bottom the place is simply a seething cauldron of jealousies and hatreds; there is no loyalty or decency anywhere about it, there is no place in it where a man counted for anything against a dollar." Chapter 5, pg. 70

Antanas takes the boss's offer and starts work in the damp pickling rooms as a "squeedgie" man, mopping the filthy floors. After two days of work, Antanas is as bitter as any of the men in the plant. Antanas has seen terrible things in pickling room where men prepared beef for canning. The beef had been in vats of chemicals and the men speared the beef out and dumped it into trucks. After they have speared out as much as they could reach, they emptied the vat on the filthy floor and shoveled up the scraps into the truck. Antanas then has to mop the "pickle" into a hole that connected to a dirty sink. There is a trap in this pipe where the scraps of refuse caught and every few days, Antanas has to clean this out and shovel it into the truck with the rest of the meat.

Topic Tracking: Muckraking 2



Jurgis, as a shoveller, sees even more terrible things. Sometimes pregnant cows will come through the lines and as a rule, the flesh of pregnant cows is not fit for food. But the boss will push the pregnant cow through the line and the inspector will be distracted and the cow will be butchered. Unbelievably, the fetus will also be butchered for meat. In addition, Jurgis has witnessed the processing of "downers," injured cows or sick cows, even cows that arrived on the railcar dead. These cows are processed at night after the inspector leaves. Jurgis is slowly beginning to understand the bitterness in the yards.

Topic Tracking: Muckraking 3



Chapter 6

Jurgis and Ona are thinking about marrying, but they cannot pay for a traditional wedding feast which the older folks insist upon. Ona suggests getting a job but Jurgis will not hear of it. As they are getting settled in their new house, they meet a Lithuanian woman and her grown son who live a block away-the Majauzskienes. Grandmother Majauzskiene proceeds to tell the family horror stories about the house they live in. The house is not new, as the agent has told them, but is over fifteen years old. Grandmother Majauzskiene has watched four families live in the house, and get evicted from that house for nonpayment. That's the scheme, she tells them, to swindle the poor. Grandmother Majauzskiene believes that the influx of immigrants, in waves of German, Irish, Bohemian, Polish and Lithuanian respectively, is the work of Durham. Yes, the wages are higher, but the immigrants don't discover that the cost of living is also high, until it's too late to turn back. Then, she says, they are like rats in a trap.

Topic Tracking: Unfair Labor Practices 3

She also tells them about the recently passed labor laws, barring children under 16 from working, and how families simply produce false papers to get their children into the factories. They must have the extra money to survive. "And, for this, at the end of the week, he will carry home three dollars to his family, being his pay at the rate of five cents per hour-just about his proper share of the million and three quarters of children who are now engaged in earning their livings in the United States." Chapter 6, pg. 85

Grandmother Majauzskiene is a Socialist, though Jurgis does not know what the word means.

Topic Tracking: Socialism 1

Grandma Majauzskiene then tells them something that breaks their hearts-that they'd have to pay interest on the house payments as well. It is more than half of their monthly payment. It's a terrible blow to the family and they go back home to decide how to compensate for the extra costs. Ona must work, and little Stanislovas, one of Elzbieta's children, must acquire false papers (he is only 13) and work as well. Ona gets a job wrapping and sewing hams. She parts with ten dollars for the job. Stanislovas, after obtaining false papers that make him sixteen years old, gets a job setting empty lard cans under a lard spout. He makes five cents an hour. With Ona and Stanislovas' wages, the family could make the payment and the interest and have just a little left over to save for the wedding feast.



Chapter 7

The family toils all summer and in the fall, they have enough money for Jurgis and Ona to marry. As Lithuanian tradition dictates, they spare no expense in the wedding feast because they'll earn every penny back during the Acziarimas Ceremony. However, this did not happen and after the feast, the family is a hundred dollars in debt-an impossible sum. Meanwhile, Jurgis is coming to understand that he is engaged in a war against corruption and against every other man out there-a war against the world. Ona becomes quite ill but still has to trudge to work. With the terrible Chicago winter coming on, the family faces a number of problems. They don't know that sewage is pooling under the house. They do not know that the milk they buy each day is doctored with formaldehyde to keep its spoilage inconspicuous. The cellars in which a number of the family members work are unheated, leaving the workers frozen to the bone. Antanas's cough grows worse in the pickling rooms and because his feet are soaked in the chemicals that pool on the floor, he develops horrible sores. One day, Antanas collapses at work and is unable to get up again. Tuberculosis is consuming him, though he doesn't know it. When he dies, the family can't afford a funeral-just a hearse. Winter brings disease to the yards. When a man doesn't show up for work, the boss assumes he is gravely ill or dead and steps outside to pick a man to replace the worker from the thousands of starving, frozen men waiting outside the gates for a chance to work. The snow is so deep, and the roads in the yards so ill-managed, that it is often next to impossible to get to work. Stanislovas witnesses a little boy with severe frostbite to his ears have them ripped off when a man rubs them vigorously to try to save them. After that, Stanislovas develops a manic fear of the cold and throws a fit before work each day. The killing beds are always as cold as the chill outside. The blood from the butchering freezes in clumps on the men's clothes. When the boss isn't looking, the men often plunge their feet into the steaming steer carcasses to keep from freezing. During their lunch break, the workers run to the saloons on Ashland Avenue. These saloons are informal union headquarters and general gathering places for the men of the yards. Many workers become alcoholics.



Chapter 8

Marija and Tamoszius, the fiddler, have started courting. Tamoszius is a terrific fiddler, and able to make a nice amount of money playing at local parties. The couple plans on marrying in the spring. She is the capitalist of the family and, with her job, she feels she has her "hand on the throttle." Then, Marija's high-paying canning job is pulled out from under her. The factory shut down with no explanation and no warning. Her co-workers tell her that this is common-after the holiday rush, things slackened and the factory was forced to shut down. Sometimes, it stayed closed until the summer. This, the girls tell her, turned the job into a swindle. While you are wild with joy for the high pay, you ended up using the difference to keep yourself alive during the off time. Marija looks, in vain, for another job.

Topic Tracking: Unfair Labor Practices 5

The workers on the killing beds feel a similar slouch during this period. The beds run for shorter hours. They might have men show up for work at seven in the morning and not have work for them until late afternoon. They stay in the frozen beds, standing around-and not getting paid for their time. When work does arrive, the terrible "speeding up" will take place. Jurgis might spend a full day at work and only be paid for two hours work. Thirty-five cents. If the cattle arrived on the beds in the early evening, they have to be slaughtered that day. It is an ironclad rule at the packinghouse. That means Jurgis might be at work until one in the morning. In addition, the bosses do not pay the workers for "broken time."

Topic Tracking: Unfair Labor Practices 6

Topic Tracking: Muckraking 4

Jurgis is no longer confused when he hears his co-workers talk of union action and of their rights as workers. Now Jurgis feels like fighting, and when the union delegate approaches him again, Jurgis signs up. The delegate explains that success depends on the union's ability to get every worker to join and stay loyal. Soon, all members of the family have union cards. They think belonging to a union will end their troubles, but when Marija's factory closes, it's a confusing blow. Why didn't the union prevent the shutdown, they wonder. Marija promptly attends her first union meeting and makes a stirring speech in which she vents her outrage at the injustice in local labor. Her speech is in Lithuanian, and because the meeting is conducted in English, it is not noted.

Though Jurgis's first union meeting is confusing and raucous, he is hooked. His prior suspicion of the unions melts when he finds he has "brothers in affliction." He sets about to bring everyone he knew into the unions, though he often met with resistance. "He forgot how he himself had been blind, a short time ago-after the fashion of all crusaders since the original ones, who set out to spread the gospel of Brotherhood by force of arms." Chapter 8, pg. 107



Chapter 9

After joining the union, Jurgis enrolls in free night school to learn English so that he might participate in the meetings. He learns about democracy and politics. Jurgis discovers that in America, like everywhere else, the rich men own almost everything. After Jurgis has been working at Brown's for three weeks, a night watchman asks him if he wants to become a naturalized citizen of the United States. Jurgis does and is taken, along with a number of his co-workers, to big gray buildings where he fills out paperwork. Then the man treats them to rounds of drinks and Brown's gives Jurgis days off work to complete the process. Jurgis doesn't realize he's involved in a corrupt operation, though. Men bribe the workers to vote a certain way during elections, paying them for a vote, and giving them free drinks at the saloons where the voting booths are located. Jurgis realizes something is not right when Jonas comes home one night and says that he offered to vote three times for four dollars-and that his offer has been accepted!

Topic Tracking: Muckraking 5

Jurgis's co-workers explain Chicago politics to him: officials, who rule by graft, have to be elected. So, there are two sets of grafters called "political parties" and the party that "buys" the most votes gets elected. The ruler of the stockyards district is an Irishman named Mike Scully. He is a democratic boss and the very illustration of corruption and graft, with his hand in a number of industries in the city. His signature can secure any job in the yards. His supporters have formed a club called the War Whoop League. On election days, these men will be out on the streets in the hundreds, with large wads of money in their pockets. Chicago is a maze of corruption, with bosses who have hands in every industry, every business, and every arm of government. Yet Scully stands as the people's man and workers adored him. The government inspectors are corrupt, too-the American people see their presence in the slaughterhouses and assume that meat is disease-free. They are wrong. The packers themselves appointed these inspectors, and in addition, the rules regarding safe handling are hazy-there are many loopholes. Tubercular steers and choleric hogs are turned into lard and the inspectors are paid off in the thousands to keep quiet about it. Jurgis also hears horror stories from the butchers and learns the "recipes" of Durham's and Brown's goods-tripe, hearts, waste products and tongues, all dyed with chemicals. Up until a year before Jurgis arrived at the yards, they had even used horsemeat. That has stopped, for the moment, because of an investigation. But once in a while, a goat is passed off as mutton. Sometimes men even fell into the vats of lard and perished and it will be days before someone will discover the bones, mixed in with the lard. And "all but the bones of them has gone out to the world as Durham's Pure Leaf Lard." Chapter 9, pg. 117

Topic Tracking: Muckraking 6



Chapter 10

As Jurgis's wages drop, the family begins living hand to mouth again. Marija's savings are almost gone and she has given up the idea of marrying Tamoszius. Unforeseen costs-house repair, insurance-make things worse. The approach of summer brings stifling heat to the killing beds and a plague of flies. The managers and supers watch the workers suffer and feel themselves a class apart. They might be doing as poorly as the worker in wages, but they are of a different class and suffer the requisite snobbery.

"Here is a population, low-class and mostly foreign, hanging always on the verge of starvation and dependent for its opportunities of life upon the whim of men every bit as brutal and unscrupulous as the old-time slave drivers; under such circumstances, immorality is exactly as inevitable, and as prevalent, as it is under the system of chattel slavery." Chapter 10, pg. 126

The canning factory opens again and Marija is overjoyed to have her job back. However, she promptly loses it when she complains to the super that her forelady is short-shifting her on her lard can count. Marija is sure she was fired because of her activity in the union, as the packers have spies in union meetings. Marija searches for another job and loses interest in the union as her search proved fruitless. Eventually she gets a job as a beef trimmer, generally a man's job, trimming the meat of diseased cattle. Meanwhile, Ona is discovering the seedy underside of her workplace. She'd long believed her forelady, Miss Henderson, disliked her. She thought it was because she didn't occasionally give Miss Henderson a bribe, like the other girls. In fact, Miss Henderson is a former mistress of a boss in the same building and has secured her job with a bribe - to keep quiet about the affair. She lives downtown in a whorehouse and during the slack season, a number of Ona's co-workers work for her as prostitutes. Ona becomes pregnant and gives birth to a boy, whom she and Jurgis name Antanas after Dede Antanas. Jurgis rarely sees the child, because of his work schedule. In fact, Ona is unable to nurse her baby because she has to continue working at the factory, sewing hams. Ona becomes more ill.



Chapter 11

When summer arrives, the packinghouses are once again in full swing and Jurgis makes more money-though not as much as he made last summer. The bosses are training new workers, overpopulating the workforce. They are training strikebreakers. The extra workers cause wages to drop, and the grumblings become louder. It seems something is set to happen against the backdrop of the union and packinghouses.

Topic Tracking: Unfair Labor Practices 7

At Marija's old factory, the girls' wages are cut in half and they walk out on the job, striking. A new union emerges out of this difficulty, but their strike fails as the rush of new labor fills their positions. As he witnesses all these difficulties, Jurgis comes to realize that the factories are really one firm: the beef trust. All are in collusion with each other, fixing prices. Voting time comes around again and Jurgis accepts the bribes for his vote, though he knows by this time it is wrong. But, he thinks, his refusal will not make a bit of difference and the extra money will. The seasons turn and winter approaches again. The deadly cold and snow of winter returns and Jurgis is once again struggling through gigantic snowdrifts, carrying Ona and Stanislovas to work. Then, one day, a terrible blow: Jurgis has an accident at work. The company doctor tells him that he'll be laid up for months with a severe ankle and foot injury. The accident poses a terrible problem for the family. Without Jurgis' wages, they might starve.



Chapter 12

After Jurgis has been in bed for three weeks, he limps back to Brown's to get back to work, though he is far from healed. He discovers that his boss has kept his job for him and goes back to work happily. Unfortunately, the pain in his foot is horrendous and by the end of the day, he is weeping in pain. Finally they call an unaffiliated doctor who tells Jurgis that he has a twisted tendon in his ankle and will have to be in bed for two months. If he tries to go back to work before then, there is a good chance that he'll become lame for the rest of his life. So the family has to make due without Jurgis's wages. Ona and Stanislovas struggle through the snow and Stanislovas' mania about the snowdrifts returns. Jurgis has to beat him every morning to get him to head out to work. Jurgis discovers Ona's bankbook and sees that they have three dollars left to them in the world. Around this time, Jonas disappears. He'd recently been very unhappy living in the house, where he paid good board but never had enough to eat. He'd been working at Durham's for two years now, yoked to a half-ton truck in the cellars. The family believes that Jonas has deserted them, though there is an equally good chance that he'd been killed and the bosses are covering it up. In any case, Jonas' disappearance cuts the family's income by a third and they decide that two more of the children have to leave school and go to work. Vilimas, eleven, and his brother Nikalojus, ten, become newspaper boys and start bringing home forty cents a day. Spring arrives and Ona grows more ill. In April, the doctor tells Jurgis that he can go back to work, but when he shows up at Brown's, the boss tells him that he could not keep the job for him. So, Jurgis takes his place outside the gates with the hungry mob looking for a job-but this time he is no longer strong and fresh, and is thin and haggard. Jurgis searches for a job for weeks but there is not a job to be found in the yards. Jurgis sees the bitter cycle of the yards.

Topic Tracking: Unfair Labor Practices 8

As Jurgis comes to know the men who are also looking for work, he found they often have the exact same story as he. They are overworked and underfed and finally, when a disease descended, as it must, they lost their jobs.



Chapter 13

One of Elzbieta's children, Kristoforas, dies after eating a diseased sausage. He was Elzbieta's favorite-three years old, a cripple with rickets and a congenital dislocation of the hip. The family has no money for a hearse but Elzbieta insists on a proper funeral for her child, so Marija donated some money and Elzbieta goes door to door begging. Meanwhile, Jurgis is still unemployed and becoming more desperate for work. He realizes, as he paces before the gates of the packinghouses, that there are stages of unemployment. He had reached the lowest-he is willing to work in the fertilizer works. The fertilizer works is set apart from the other parts of the factory. All the waste products end up here and are made into fertilizer, gelatin, albumen, glue, etc. Jurgis, after hearing about the horrors of the fertilizer plant-how the smell nearly chokes you and how the smell bleeds into your skin so that people around you become ill-takes the job because he has to feed his family. Jurgis's job is to shovel fertilizer into carts. He suffers through dust storms of fertilizer - his eyes burn, and he vomits. He's happy to have a job. Because the summer brings relative prosperity (there is enough work, debts are being paid), and because the boys are picking up bad habits, the family decide that their work as newspaper boys should end in the fall, and they'll return to school. This means, though, that Elzbieta must begin working and Kotrina, Elzbieta's daughter, will take over the domestic duties. Elzbieta gets work at a sausage machine, filling casings with the meat. It is deadly dull work and she sees first hand what these factories call sausage - poisonous mix of random byproducts.

"It was piece-work, and she was apt to have a family to keep alive; and stern and ruthless economic laws had arranged it that she could only do this by working just as she did, with all her soul upon her work, and with never an instant for a glance at the well-dressed ladies and gentlemen who came to stare at her, as at some wild beast in a menagerie." Chapter 13, pg. 159



Chapter 14

As they work in their respective wings of the packinghouses, Jurgis and Elzbieta see the swindles first hand. For instance, whenever meat is so spoiled that it can't be used for cuts, it is canned or made into sausages. The workers are instructed to fill these spoiled and discolored sausages with chemicals that make the spoilage less apparent. Elzbieta has to trim the spoiled sausages, which have been treated with borax and glycerine, as well as trim meat that has fallen on the rat-infested floor. When the shovelers come by, they shovel the bread, rats and spoiled meat into the sausage vats. "This is no fairy story and no joke; the meat will be shoveled into carts and the man who did the shoveling will not trouble to lift out a rat even when he saw one." Chapter 14, pg. 162

Topic Tracking: Muckraking 7

Ona is now terribly ill and the family's life is becoming even more desolate. Jurgis is drinking heavily now. He begins to resent his family for the bonds he felt they kept him in. Baby Antanas is sick with measles and Ona is pregnant again. This is a dreadful development, for Ona is too sick to have a baby. She's developed a horrific cough, like the one that killed Dede Antanas. Jurgis and Ona quarrel regularly now and Ona has fits.

"They were beaten; they had lost the game, they were swept aside. It was not less tragic because it was so sordid, because that it had to do with wages and grocery bills and rents. They had dreamed of freedom; of a chance to look about them and learn something; to be decent and clean, to see their child group up to be strong. And now it was all gone-it would never be!" Chapter 14, pg. 163



Chapter 15

Jurgis thinks something is terribly wrong with Ona, something that she and Elzbieta aren't telling him. Ona is constantly terrified, often has fits of sobbing and seems hysterical all the time. As winter approaches, the hours for the family increase at the factories. Ona and Elzbieta are working 15-16 hours a day. Near Thanksgiving, a terrible snowstorm descends on the city and the next morning, Elzbieta tells Jurgis that Ona did not come home that night. Jurgis goes looking for her, and spots her trudging through the snow. She tells him that the streetcars had stopped running and she'd had to stay with her friend Jadvyga Marcinkus. Jurgis wonders why Ona is sobbing and trembling. Clearly, something is wrong.

One night near Christmas, Marija and Elzbieta come home, exclaiming that Ona had not met them after work. Jurgis thinks she is just at Jadvyga's house again but when he goes there, Jadvyga says that Ona isn't there-that she'd never been there. He searches all over for her and at her workplace, a man tells him that there is a great traffic jam downtown and perhaps that is what is holding her up. Jurgis tells him that Ona never goes downtown and the man exchanges a knowing glance with a female worker, which Jurgis catches. He spots Ona in a car on Ashland Avenue and follows her home. When he follows her inside, Elzbieta tries to intercept him, lying about where Ona has been, but by this time, Jurgis's suspicions are thick. He confronts Ona and a terrible fight ensues. Ona has a convulsive fit and tells him that she has been spending her evenings in Miss Henderson's whorehouse. Connor, the boss at her factory, had tried to seduce her and demanded that she sleep with him or she'd lose her job and he'd be sure to find a way to take the jobs away from all her family members. So she became Connor's mistress for the good of the family.

Topic Tracking: Unfair Labor Practices 9

Jurgis is blind with fury. He runs down Ashland Avenue, heading for the factory, looking for Connor and when he finds him, he beats him severely. "To Jurgis this man's whole presence reeked of the crime he had committed; the touch of his body was madness to him-it set every nerve of him a-tremble, it aroused all the demon in his soul." Chapter 15, pg. 181



Chapter 16

Jurgis is charged with assault and battery and after savoring that moment of satisfaction from beating the man who corrupted his wife, Jurgis begins to realize that what he has done will be bad for the family. Ona will lose her job. In his jail cell, Jurgis is tortured by thoughts of the hardship his family will suffer with him in jail and unable to work. Judge Pat Callahan, an ex-butcher who is now a corrupt politician-conservative and xenophobic-hears Jurgis's case. He deals Jurgis a \$300 bond which Jurgis cannot pay and Jurgis is sent to Bridewell jail. "They put him in a place where the snow could not beat in, where the cold could not eat through his bones; they brought him food and drink-why, in the name of heaven, if they must punish him, did they not put his family in jail and leave him outside-why could they find no better way to punish him than to leave three weak women and six helpless children to starve and freeze?" Chapter 16, pg. 191 He stays there through Christmas and wonders how it is that the prisoner receives three meals a day while hard working families starved. "He has no wit to trace back the social crime to its far sources-he could not say that it is the thing men have called "the system" that is crushing him to the earth; that it is the packers, his masters, who has dealt their brutal will to him from the seat of justice." Chapter 16, pg. 191



Chapter 17

No one in the family comes to visit Jurgis and he thinks about them constantly. He has a new cellmate, an articulate safecracker named Jack Duane. He is a cheerful man who tells Jurgis stories of intrigue and rebellion. It seems to Jurgis that Duane has struck back at the world, walking the underbelly of the city and engaging in crime. Everyone in the prison knows Duane by name.

On the day when Jurgis is to be tried, Elzbieta and Kotrina are sitting in the gallery. Connor testifies that Jurgis attacked him after he'd fired Ona, and denied Jurgis' side of the story. With an alliance between corrupt politicians and the packinghouses, there is no chance for justice. Jurgis is sent back to prison for thirty more days. One day Stanislovas visited him, telling Jurgis that Ona is incredibly ill and that the family is nearly starving. Marija has injured her hand and cannot work and Ona, of course, has been fired. There is nothing Jurgis can do.



Chapter 18

Jurgis is set free without a penny in his pocket and marches home-a 20-mile walk. When he comes upon the house, it looks different-it has been repainted. He slowly realizes that new people live there. In a rage he asks neighbors where the family has gone and finally traces them to Aniele Jukniene's boarding house, where they first lived after coming to Chicago. "Jurgis could see all the truth now-could see himself through the whole long course of events, the victim of ravenous vultures that had torn into his vitals and devoured him; of fiends that had racked and tortured him, mocking him, meantime, jeering in his face." Chapter 18, pg. 212 When he walks in, he hears Ona screaming in pain upstairs. When he rushes to her, Marija, whom Jurgis barely recognizes as she is so thin, intercepts him. Ona is giving birth, she tells him, but far too early. There is no money for a doctor and Ona is dying. Jurgis demands that they pool what little money they have and find someone to help his wife.



Chapter 19

Jurgis begs midwife Madame Haupt, a fat Dutchwoman, to help Ona. He doesn't have nearly enough money to hire her and she haggles with him relentlessly, torturing Jurgis who is only thinking of his dying wife. Finally she agrees to help Ona. When they arrive at the house, the women force Jurgis to leave. He goes to a nearby saloon where he is known and the barkeep gives him a free meal and a drink. He spends the night there and when he returns to the house in the morning, he sees Madame Haupt coming down the stairs covered in blood. She tells Jurgis she'd done her best; the baby is dead and Ona is nearly dead. Jurgis runs upstairs to hold his wife. She dies in his arms, at 18 years old. "The word rang through him like the sound of a bell, echoing in the far depths of him, making forgotten chords to vibrate, old shadowy fears to stir-fears of the dark, fears of the void, fears of annihilation. She was dead! She was dead!" Chapter 19, pg. 227



Chapter 20

Ona will have to be buried in a Potter's Field and Elzbieta begs money from her neighbors so that Ona can have a mass. Meanwhile, Jurgis is mad with grief. Elzbieta and Marija beg him to pull himself together because the family is starving. "Elzbieta is one of the primitive creatures like the angleworm, which goes on living though cut in half; like a hen, which deprived of her chickens one by one, will mother the last that is left her." Chapter 20, pg. 234

Jurgis finds his job at the fertilizer works is gone. He soon realizes that he has been blacklisted, thanks to his beating of Connor. He has no chance at a job, his friends tell him. Jurgis moves downtown to look for a job and gets a chance through an accidental meeting of an old union buddy on his way to work at a machine factory. He says the foreman will find him a place at the Harvester Works. Jurgis quickly realizes that Harvester Works is a good place to work-an innovative workplace where workers are treated well with large workrooms, a cafeteria, reading rooms and good treatment by the bosses. Jurgis begins making parts for the harvesting and mowing machines turned out by the factory. He is paid nearly two dollars a day and after work, he re-enrolls in night school to improve his English. Things are turning up when, on the 9th day, the department closes until further notice.



Chapter 21

Money is low again and Baby Antanas is cold and hungry. While Jurgis looks for a new job, Juozapas, another of Elzbieta's sons, scours the dump for food. One day when he is digging through garbage, a well-dressed woman stops him and asks about his family's problems. She tells him she is a settlement worker and will come to the family's boarding house to hear more. She is shocked by filth and blood smeared on the walls. Elzbieta tells the woman about their tragedies and the woman bursts into tears. She sends them a basket of food and gives Jurgis a letter to take to the superintendent of a mill in the steelworks in South Chicago-her fiancée. When Jurgis arrives at the steelworks, he is interviewed by a company timekeeper and given a job moving steel railroad ties with crowbars. The factory is 16 miles away and it takes Jurgis two hours to get there. He decides to move into a lodging house nearby and come home on Saturday nights with his pay for the family. At work he witnesses many accidents, due to risky shortcuts. He burns his hand helping a man who has been badly burned, and is out of work for 8 days, recovering. Elzbieta has found a job scrubbing the floors of the packers' offices; Marija works as a beef trimmer and the children continue selling papers. As spring arrives, the horrible roads in the yards flood with mud and water. One day when Jurgis arrives home, he spots a crowd gathered in front of Aniele's house. Baby Antanas has fallen off the sidewalk-a platform of boards five feet above the street-and drowned in the muddy river below. He is dead.



Chapter 22

Jurgis is again mad with grief but this time he has to escape. He rail-hops a train car headed west and as he passes into countryside, he is overjoyed. He has never dreamed that America could look like this. "Only think that he had been a countryman all his life; and for three long years he had never seen a country sight nor heard a country sound!" Chapter 22, pg. 254 He eats at farmhouses, swims in the creek, and travels the countryside. His lost vigor returns. Jurgis makes a conscious decision not to work for the farmers he meets because none of them can promise to keep him through the winter. Instead, he'll become a tramp, stealing potatoes and apples from farms, and becoming a part of the tramp community, taking harvest work here and there. He frequents saloons and prostitutes. One night, he comes upon a house owned by a Slav and they speak of the old country, but when he sees the Slav's wife bathing her infant, he bursts into tears and flees. The memory of Antanas cuts him like a knife. "Ah what agony is that, what despair, when the tomb of memory is rent open and the ghosts of his old life comes forth to scourge him!" Chapter 22, pg. 264



Chapter 23

In the fall, Jurgis heads back to Chicago. When he goes back to the steel-mill and harvester works, his jobs are gone. He keeps away from the stockyards, avoiding his family. He finally gets a job after telling the man interviewing him that he'd never worked in Chicago before, escaping the blacklist. Jurgis is now digging tunnels for telephone wires. He learns later that the City Council has passed a bill allowing a company to build phone conduits under city streets for crooked purposes.

Topic Tracking: Muckraking 8

It doesn't matter to Jurgis-this is a job that will last through the winter. Jurgis spends much of his free time in the saloons. His job is tough and dangerous, and the workers are treated poorly. It does not occur to Jurgis that his work is helping Chicago merchants put down the Teamsters. One day Jurgis is injured, smashed by a loaded car. He spends Christmas in the hospital and though he enjoys his stay, he is unaware of the scandals and investigations into that particular hospital-charges that doctors performed bizarre experiments on patients. When he is released, Jurgis is still not fit for work. Once again, he has no money and has lost his place at the boarding house. He hops from saloon to saloon and one night, attends a religious revival to find shelter and heat. Jurgis is cynical of the sermons and the talk of sin and redemption. Jurgis wants to know what the preacher could possibly know about suffering. It is January 1904, and the country is on the verge of a depression. Factories shut down every day. Sin is far down on the list of concerns among the people who are starving. Jurgis begins begging to stay alive. "They are trying to save their souls-and who but a fool could fail to see that all that is the matter with their souls is that they has not been able to get a decent existence for their bodies?" Chapter 23, pg. 273



Chapter 24

One day, Jurgis begs from a well-dressed young drunk with a wad of money in his pocket. His name is Freddie Jones and he is from a wealthy Chicago family. He takes a boozey interest in Jurgis and insists that Jurgis come home with him for food and drinks. He hands Jurgis a \$100 bill and asks him to get him a cab. Jurgis thinks about robbing him but hesitates and before he knows it they are at Freddie's mansion on Lake Shore Drive. Freddie's father is a Beef Trust man, Jones the Packer-once Jurgis' boss. The mansion is beautiful. Freddie demands that the servants prepare a tray full of exotic food and wine for Jurgis. While Jurgis wolfs down the meal, Freddie tells him the colorful story of his family-the scandals, the marriages to royalty, and so on. When Freddie passes out, the butler harasses Jurgis and turns him out. But Jurgis has managed to hold on to that \$100 bill. Now he must cash it.



Chapter 25

The chances of finding someone to cash a bill that large are slim. He goes to a saloon where the bartender is alone and asks him to change the bill. The man steals Jurgis's money and a terrible row ensues. Jurgis is arrested and sent to jail. In court, no one believes that a homeless man would have a \$100 bill. He is found guilty almost immediately. Jurgis doesn't know that the bar owner has paid off the cops, and the bartender is a henchman who hustled votes for the judge. So Jurgis is sent to jail again and meets up with Jack Duane, who is also in jail again. When they are released, Duane draws Jurgis into a life of crime. The two of them begin robbing men on darkened streets. On the first heist, Jurgis scores 93 dollars, then reads about the incident in the newspaper. The man they robbed had been badly hurt and Jurgis feels ashamed. Then Duane introduces Jurgis to the big crooks and hold-up men in the saloons and whorehouses of Chicago. Jurgis begins a life of crime and learns just how corrupt the city is. "All of these agencies of corruption were banded together, and leagued in blood brotherhood with the politician and the police; more often than not they were one and the same person,--the police captain would own the brothel he pretended to raid, and the politician would open his headquarters in his saloon." Chapter 25, pg. 303 Chicago is "owned" by an oligarchy of merchants and a huge army of graft is necessary to purchase power. Twice a year, during the spring and fall elections, businessmen spend millions of dollars, handed out by a graft army, to buy votes. In addition, they bribe lobbyists, legislators, and corporate lawyers. The police force forges alliances with the barkeepers and the underworld of crime is spurred on by laws bought by dollars. Duane introduces Jurgis to Buck Halloran, an Irish political "worker," who brings Jurgis in on a plan to pick up Buck's city laborer's payoffs. Jurgis' life of crime continues and he falls in with more criminals. He learns about the Racing Trust, which owns legislatures in every state where it does business.

Topic Tracking: Muckraking 9

When the elections roll around, the criminals do big business, yet Jurgis is tired and wants to go into politics. Jurgis runs into Bush Harper, the night watchman at Brown's, who had helped him become an American citizen through bribes. He is now a union nark and tells Jurgis that a strike is nearing. Bush Harper is the right hand man of Mike Scully and Harper wants Jurgis to help him with an intricate plan between the Democrats and Republicans, which includes payoffs and trades. A new party in the stockyards-the Socialists-compromises the election. The word reminds Jurgis of Tamoszius Kuszleika.

Topic Tracking: Socialism 2

Topic Tracking: Socialism 3

Jurgis's job is to go back to work in the yards, get active in the unions and secure votes for the Republican candidate. Then, as part of the plan between the two parties, once the Republican is elected, Mike Scully will run unopposed as a Democrat the next year.

Doyle wins the election for alderman thanks to Jurgis's bribery and illegal voting tactics. Jurgis has joined the corrupt.

Topic Tracking: Muckraking 10



Chapter 26

After the election, Jurgis becomes Scully's consultant. He inquires at the boarding house about Elzbieta and finds that she'd gone downtown. In May, the contract between the packers and unions expired and threat of a strike loomed large. The old scale dealt only with the wages of the skilled workers, though 2/3 of the labor force is unskilled. The Packers, though they are making higher profits than ever before, are unwilling to raise the base wage. In June, all the packinghouse cities in America find that their workers have gone on strike. Scully wants Jurgis to work as a scab—a worker breaking the picket line—and tells him he didn't need him in politics. Jurgis is disappointed, but when back to work, he is well paid for his scab status. The newspapers, in full swing of yellow journalism, want to see violence in the yards between the scabs and the striking workers, but there is no violence. The strikers, instead of attacking the scabs, counsel them to see the virtue of the union's position. Meanwhile, Jurgis becomes a boss in Durham's killing rooms and finds that the demands on the workers during the strike are lessened. Many of the scabs are uncooperative and unwilling to work very hard. The packinghouses have recruited African-Americans from southern states, as well as prisoners, not telling them beforehand that they'd be working as scabs. Lodging conditions are horrible.

"All day long the blazing midsummer sun beat down upon that square mile of abominations: upon tens of thousands of cattle crowded into pens whose wooden floors stank and steamed contagion; upon bare, blistering, cinder-strewn railroad tracks and huge blocks of dingy meat factories, whose labyrinthine passages defied a breath of fresh air to penetrate them; and there are not merely rivers of hot blood and carloads of moist flesh, and rendering-vats and soup cauldrons, glue-factories and fertilizer tanks, that smelt like the craters of hell—there are also tons of garbage festering in the sun, and the greasy laundry of the workers hung out to dry and dining rooms littered with food black with flies, and toilet rooms that are open sewers." Chapter 26, pg. 328

Topic Tracking: Unfair Labor Practices 10

The men start working in more than once place and Jurgis takes payoffs to overlook it. Finally the packers agree to arbitrate and the unions accept their offer. Men are to be rehired with no discrimination against union members, but that does not happen. In fact, bosses make sure not to employ union leaders. The union goes on strike again.

Topic Tracking: Unfair Labor Practices 11

With things reaching a crisis level, the packers begin constructing a new labor force including the old scabs and new, even more unruly workers. They gamble, drink and take prostitutes. Sickness and venereal diseases run rampant in the packinghouses where they pack meat with their bare hands. Jurgis has a nasty temper, and is as ruthless with the workers as his bosses had been with him, and takes to drinking even more. There are riots in the streets, police beating and looting, and nothing is heard of it. One day, Jurgis comes upon Connor in a whorehouse and without thinking, begins to



beat him senseless once again. He doesn't know that Connor is one of Scully's biggest men and this time, no one could get Jurgis out of trouble, though Harper reduced his bail. After paying his bail, Jurgis flees town again.



Chapter 27

Jurgis is back at his tramp lifestyle once more but this time he is an alcoholic. Competition for work on the road is fierce and the threat of starvation is grave. "There is one kind of prison where the man is behind bars, and everything that he desires is outside; and there is another kind where things are behind bars, and the man is outside." Chapter 27, pg. 337

Back in Chicago, Jurgis runs into Alena Jasaityle, a guest at Jurgis' wedding feast. She gives him Marija's address and when Jurgis arrives at the house, he realizes it is a whorehouse. At that moment, the police raid and chaos ensues. When Jurgis sees Marija, she looks gaunt and sick. At the police station, she tells him that Stanislovas had died a horrific death, devoured by rats at his workplace when he'd fallen asleep. She also tells him that the family is not bitter that Jurgis had abandoned them and that he should go see them. Marija says to Jurgis: "When people are starving and they have anything with a price, I guess you ought to sell it, I say. I guess you realize it now when it's too late." Chapter 27, pg. 348



Chapter 28

After appearing in court, all the prostitutes, including Marija, head back to the house. Jurgis cannot help but notice how terrible Marija looks. She tells him she is addicted to morphine, and then tells him about her life of prostitution. There is a black-market import of foreign girls, she says, and even she is marketed by her ethnicity-she is called Lithuanian Mary. She gives Jurgis the family's address in the "ghetto district" but Jurgis is hesitant to go even though Marija insists that they'd be overjoyed to see him. Jurgis puts off seeing the family for shame and meanwhile, happens upon that same hall where another meeting is underway, albeit without the festivities of the earlier meeting. The place is filled with people and they are incredibly enthusiastic, so Jurgis joins them. His mind is preoccupied, however, with his family and he soon falls asleep. The woman to his left tells him, after the man next to him has nudged him, that if he tries to listen, he might be interested. She calls him "comrade." Jurgis sees that she is mesmerized by the speaker onstage. He is a dark-bearded man and his words move everyone in the building. Soon Jurgis is mesmerized too. The speaker speaks of the interminable toil of the worker's life, of the squalor in which he and his family are forced to live. It is not fair and the fight is on to change it. It is time to stop believing that it is the natural order of things, because it is not.

"To you, the toilers, who have made this land, and have no voice in its councils! To you, whose lot it is to sow that others may reap, to labor and obey, and ask no more than the wages of a beast of burden, the food and shelter to keep you alive from day to day. It is to you that I come with my message of salvation, it is to you that I appeal." Chapter 28, pg. 361

The words hit Jurgis like a lightening bolt and as beaten down and defeated as he is, the speech brings back his own toil and squalor in vivid color and his sense of injustice returns. He is a new man. "The sentences of this man were to Jurgis like the crashing of thunder in his soul; a flood of emotion surged up in him-all his old hopes and longings, his old griefs and rages and despairs." Chapter 28, pg. 366



Chapter 29

When the speech is over, the audience starts singing the Marseillaise. Then the speaker stands to answer questions and Jurgis doesn't understand a thing. When the meeting ends, Jurgis is shocked back into reality when he realizes he is still just a bum. But he feels determined to know more about the speaker and his cause.

Topic Tracking: Socialism 4

Jurgis finds the man backstage and when he asks his questions, the man asks him if he'd like to know more about Socialism. Jurgis has no idea what Socialism is. The speaker introduces Jurgis to a man named Ostrinski, whom everyone calls Comrade Ostrinski. He is a little Polish man who speaks Lithuanian and who works as a pants-finisher in the ghetto district. He tells Jurgis about Socialism and Jurgis tells him the story of his time in America. Since Jurgis has no place to go, Ostrinski offers Jurgis his kitchen floor. The explanation of Socialism is complicated and Jurgis struggles to understand. Because workers are dependent on a job, they bid against each other and wages drop because no one can get more pay than the lowest man will agree to. This leads to the development of two classes: the capitalist class (merchants and bosses) and the proletariat (poor workers). "To Jurgis the packers had been the equivalent to fate; Ostrinski showed him that they were the Beef Trust. They were a gigantic combination of capital, which had crushed all opposition, and overthrown the laws of the land, and was preying upon the people." Chapter 29, pg. 376

This is unacceptable to the Socialists. They are preparing the proletariat for a revolution against those who oppressed them and are gaining political strength. They have locals in every big city and published weeklies in a number of different languages. The party is controlled by its own membership and has no bosses. One of the biggest principles of the party is that of no compromise. After learning the tenets of Socialism, Jurgis is blissful. He finally understands how the Beef Trust worked, and how it has kept him down. It isn't fate; it is greed. He learned from the Socialists that capitalism is dangerous because it breeds greed and greed has kept people in squalor and endless toil.



Chapter 30

Jurgis finally goes to see Elzbieta and she is happy to see him. He wants to tell her all about this wonderful thing, Socialism, but she is unmoved. She only cares if Jurgis brings home some money and if agreeing with him about Socialism means money, she'll agree with him. Jurgis gets a job as a porter in a hotel called Hind's. Ostrinski tells Jurgis that Tommy Hind is the best boss in Chicago. He is the state organizer of the Socialist party and Socialism is close to his heart, and he fights tirelessly for its success. He employs only Socialists.

Topic Tracking: Socialism 6

The hotel clerk and his assistant are both Socialists. The hotel does great business because all the radicals stay there and commercial travelers find it fun and interesting to listen to the impassioned speeches by the staff. Hind brings Jurgis off his chores to tell the western cattleman who come to Hind's what he'd seen on the killing beds, as well as the secrets of all the other Trusts. Jurgis often gets in fights with his neighbors as he tries to convert them. It is all so obvious to Jurgis; he can't understand the resistance.

Topic Tracking: Socialism 7



Chapter 31

After getting a job, Jurgis tells Marija she can leave the whorehouse now that he is making enough money for the whole family. She tells him she can't leave, that she is addicted to dope and is unemployable. Elzbieta is now ill and the boys are unruly after their years on the streets selling papers. One night, a day before the election, a friend of the hotel, named Fisher, asks to see Jurgis. Fisher is a millionaire, dedicated to settlement work and lives in the slums of Chicago. He is not a Socialist but is sympathetic to the cause. That night, he means to host a get together at which the editor of a big East Coast magazine, who writes against Socialism, will be present. Fisher wants Jurgis to tell this editor about the "pure food" he saw processed at the packinghouses. In addition to Fisher and the editor, named Maynard, Harry Adams is there along with some other Socialists, including a young college woman. Mr. Lucas is a mild-mannered cleric and itinerant evangelist. Nicholas Schliemann is a tall, bearded Swede who was a professor of Philosophy before coming to America. He is a Socialist who fully believes in the proletariat revolution and Jurgis is drawn to him immediately. He has an opinion on everything and the discussion moves from religion, to philosophy to politics, and ultimately, to Socialism. During the discussion, Mr. Lucas and Nicholas Schliemann agree on nothing even though they are of the same party. Maynard, the editor, points this out and Schliemann speaks at length about Socialism's breadth of ideas. The Socialist, he says, believes in the common ownership and democratic management of the means of producing the necessities of life. He also believes the way to do this is the class-conscious political organization of the workers, the wage earners. Schliemann and Lucas agree on this much but not more. Lucas is a religious Socialist, seeing a religious end as the result of Socialist means. Schliemann assumes a free-association end-anything is possible and it will be better. He goes on about the wastes of competition (capitalism) and what they breed: vice, industrial warfare, graft, overly wealthy people, and so on. He stresses the importance of intellectual production over capitalistic production, as well as "the positive economies of cooperation" and possible Utopian societies. But most of all, he decries the trials of wage-slavery. This last section of the *Jungle* is generally agreed to be Sinclair's polemic for Socialism, voiced through Nicholas Schliemann. "In a society dominated by the fact of commercial competition, money is necessarily the test of prowess, and wastefulness the sole criterion of power." Chapter 31, pg. 403

Topic Tracking: Socialism 8

Jurgis is again blissful and revitalized. Things are so clear-not only the injustice, but also the way to overcome it. On Election Day, the Socialist party takes 400,000 votes, which is an enormous increase...350% over four years. The Socialist party takes votes all over the country.

Topic Tracking: Socialism 9

In fact, in Illinois alone, two men are elected to the state legislature.



The Jungle ends with a plea to organize against the evils of capitalism and that, by that means, "Chicago will be ours." "And we shall organize them for the victory! We shall bear down the opposition, we shall sweep it before us-and Chicago will be ours! *Chicago will be ours! CHICAGO WILL BE OURS!*" Chapter 31, pg. 413

Topic Tracking: Socialism 10