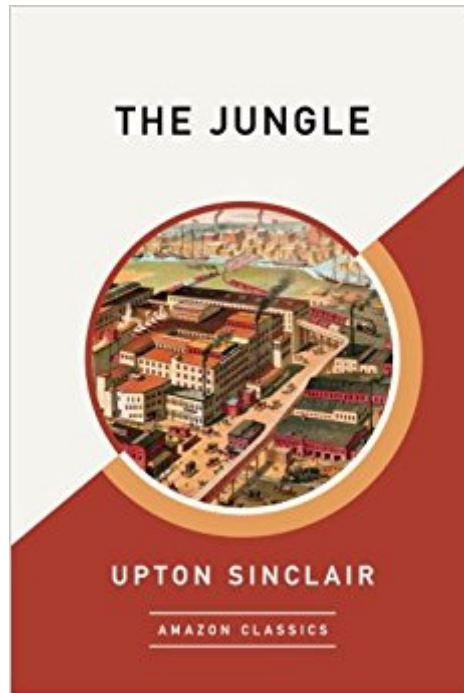




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# The Jungle (Classics Edition)



## Synopsis

Lithuanian immigrant Jurgis Rudkus has invested every last hope in achieving a prosperous new start in a new country. But the only job open to him in the appalling stockyards of Packingtown, Chicago will become a brutal, dispiriting, and dangerous challenge to his pride, his family, his life, and his faith in the American Dream. A scathing condemnation of capitalism, corporate corruption, and the exploitation of the working class, *The Jungle* was a sensation when first published. It stands as one of the greatest and most influential proletarian novels ever written. Classics brings you timeless works from the masters of storytelling. Ideal for anyone who wants to read a great work for the first time or rediscover an old favorite, these new editions open the door to literature's most unforgettable characters and beloved worlds. Revised edition: Previously published as *The Jungle*, this edition of *The Jungle* (Classics Edition) includes editorial revisions.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Born in Baltimore, Maryland, to an impoverished family, Upton Sinclair (1878–1968) was a journalist, editor, political activist, politician, and Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist. At the age of fourteen he enrolled at the City College of New York where, to pay for his education, he began his writing career. It was also during his college years that Sinclair discovered, and embraced, the philosophy that would inform his work, his life, and his political career as a formidable and progressive member of the Democratic Party during the Great Depression. But it was for his novel *The Jungle*—an unsparing indictment of the meatpacking industry—that Sinclair

gained national prominence as one of the most influential muckrakers of the twentieth century.

This book is a conundrum. As noted by my title, the first two thirds is very good, and tells the story of Jurgis Rudkus and his family's ill-fated migration from Lithuania to America. They find their way to Chicago, and then several family members go through a series of highs and lows, finding work, losing work, getting taken by unscrupulous bankers and lawyers, getting injured on the job, being forced into sexual relationships to keep jobs, etc. The early part of the book centers on Packingtown, and this part of the book is riveting and well written. After a series of incredible misfortunes, the main character, Jurgis, takes to the road and discovers a bit of America. This section of the book is also interesting, though sketchy. Clearly, Sinclair was beginning to either run out of gas or run out of interest in the story. In the last third of the book, Jurgis returns to Chicago and attends a socialist rally in which he gets converted to this economic doctrine. At that point, the story of Jurgis is largely abandoned, and the last 15% (on kindle) of the book is a series of speeches and monologues on the wonders of socialism. This section was for the most part unreadable, and this is coming from someone who considers himself a liberal! The end doesn't actually even reference Jurgis, so the reader has no idea what happens to him at the end of the story. He simply vanishes from the narrative. I had considered using this for a college level class in Economic Geography, but the last portion of the book was just too slow and preachy, as others have noted here. What is interesting is that within these pages is a GREAT novel, if only he had concentrated on Jurgis' story. The scenes in the meat packing houses are incredibly well written (and hard to read), but that part of the book is completely wrapped about halfway through. So, in conclusion, this may be a classic, but I believe that judgment is mainly for the first two thirds of the book. As a previous reviewer noted, don't feel bad that you don't read to the end, since the story of Jurgis is concluded earlier than that, as is the narrative.

I loved the character development and description of the Chicago slaughter houses and meat packing industry in the early 1900s. The abuse of immigrants and workers in general was appalling. The harder they worked, the farther behind they were. Jurgis, the main character, was a healthy, strong young man when he came from Lithuania with his fiancée and family. He suffered horrible set back after horrible set back. When he enjoyed his FIRST - in 3 years - full body "bath", in a pond, I had tears in my eyes. (THAT was an awkward sentence but I hope the sentiment came through.) Along the way, Jurgis learned how to read English and learned about politics. He discovered how the meat industry got away with breaking laws and health codes. He became part

of the evil web for a brief time - until they couldn't use him anymore. Then Jurgis discovered Socialism. The last part of the book is about Socialism and although it was very interesting the book ended without mention of Jurgis. WHAT happened to him???? One hundred years later, America still has issues with it's meat industry. PINK SLIME is just one of the problems. The few, rich people at the top will Always try to take short cuts and make more money - even when they already have more than they need. The Jungle is a timeless book. I'm glad I read it.

This book was incredible!!! It was hard to read!! It related the harsh reality of the working conditions in the early 1900's Chicago. It speaks to the extreme and darkside of exploitative capitalism. It also lays the ground work and background on why there was a need for union organizations to protect the rights of workers. Good book for anyone who wants to see how far we have come in this country on protecting the rights of the workers. Still work to be done.

This book will leave you frustrated no doubt. It might make you feel intellectually superior to the characters. But it tells a sad story of struggle and perseverance. We need to know this. Even though the characters are fictitious, the story describes a very real part of our history. There is a reason this is a classic. I love that it makes these classics free so that everyone has the ability to enjoy them.

Lewis' classic story of the plight of immigrants in the Chicago stockyards in the early 1900s is both shocking and depressing - and enough to make one a convicted vegetarian or vegan for life. The story features the experiences of the Lithuanian immigrant family of Jurgens Rudkus as they - enthusiastically and optimistically at first - try to establish a living in Chicago. Their experience is brutal and depressing - just when you think that they might take a step up the social ladder, all hopes are dashed by the occurrence of some calamitous event or other. This happens again and again - often at the hands of political/capitalist cronyism. Even if circumstances were half as difficult as they appear in this story, life would still be a bleak and brutal affair. It is tempting to draw parallels with certain trends in American society today especially as we observe the loss of union power, the decreased earning power of the blue collar worker, and ever increasing economic/political power by the wealthiest among us.

This classic piece of literature gives the reader a glimpse into the life of the European immigrant in the early days of the meatpacking industry. Reading the book will make the modern worker appreciate those who came before us. The many protections that workers have today, as well as

the protections that the consumer has, are often taken for granted. Not after reading Sinclair's book. The end of the book, however, spirals into a Socialist rant that seems to leave the story incomplete. For most upper-level high school students (especially those in Advanced Placement classes), this book is required reading.

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