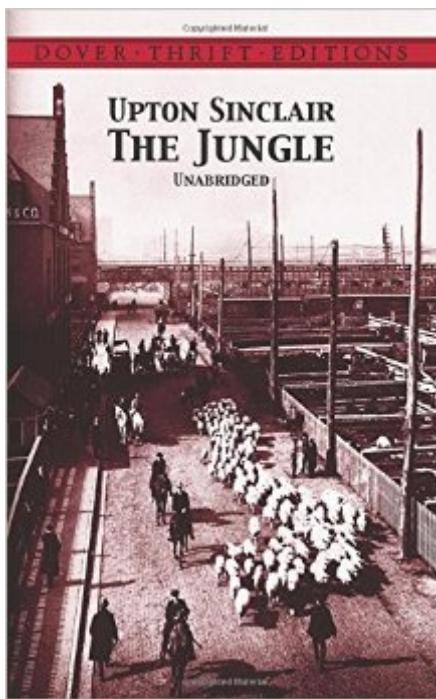


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# The Jungle (Dover Thrift Editions)



## Synopsis

An ardent activist, champion of political reform, novelist, and progressive journalist, Upton Sinclair is perhaps best known today for *The Jungle* — his devastating exposé of the meat-packing industry. A protest novel he privately published in 1906, the book was a shocking revelation of intolerable labor practices and unsanitary working conditions in the Chicago stockyards. It quickly became a bestseller, arousing public sentiment and resulting in such federal legislation as the Pure Food and Drug Act. The brutally grim story of a Slavic family who emigrates to America, *The Jungle* tells of their rapid and inexorable descent into numbing poverty, moral degradation, and social and economic despair. Vulnerable and isolated, the family of Jurgis Rudkus struggles — unsuccessfully — to survive in an urban jungle. A powerful view of turn-of-the-century poverty, graft, and corruption, this fiercely realistic American classic is still required reading in many history and literature classes. It will continue to haunt readers long after they've finished the last page.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Lithuanian immigrant Jurgis Rudkus and his new bride Ona, along with several other extended family members, try to survive in the "Back of the Yards" district of Chicago. Strapping Jurgis quickly finds employment in the meat packing business and the family begins to eke out a very modest living. The appeal of home ownership quickly becomes their undoing. They invest their life savings as the downpayment and due to unplanned costs of homeownership (interest, taxes, repairs, etc), they quickly fall behind in their finances. This requires all family members to seek employment,

which allows them to hold their heads above water. Unfortunately, the seasonal swings of work, ill health and brutal Chicago winters lead to further financial struggles. A variety of further circumstances such as death, illness and infidelity lead to choices that continue to test the morals of the characters. Each struggle with the choices necessary for their survival. All are changed forever by the "evils" of the system. The story details the horrific working conditions of the Stockyards laborers, the deplorable practices followed by the meat packing industry itself and the corruption associated with a capitalistic system. Yes, socialism is an underlying theme in this novel that becomes more evident at novel end. Overall a very well written novel that provides a glimpse into the despicable conditions endured by the labor force of the Stockyards. No issues with the Kindle edition.

Upton Sinclair's "The Jungle" is one of the handful of books throughout all of history, perhaps, that have encapsulated the crying voices of the oppressed. While many readers and politicians at the time of its publication (and since) have focused on the intolerable conditions in which American food products were produced, the major thrust in "The Jungle" is not in regards to the ill-treatment of our food; it is in regards to the ill-treatment of our workers. The repeated sufferings of Jurgis and his family are akin to an overwhelming symphony of sorrowful songs. As his family is driven deeper into debt, his body worn down, and his life's zeal and love slowly strangled, Jurgis' desperation becomes palpable, and if you can't sympathize with his feelings at the loss of his family's home--a structure they worked so hard for--check your pulse. You might be dead. The book contains some of the most horrific depictions in all of literature, including a mercifully oblique reference to a child's death by being eaten alive by rats. Although the novel focuses on Jurgis primarily, it is the children--the laboring little people--who elicit the most sympathy in this reader's view. Struggling to support their family, escaping extremely dangerous situations (one little girl is nearly dragged into an alley and raped), sleeping on the street, and begging desperately for food--the appalling conditions being visited upon children as described in "The Jungle" still have the power to arouse strong anger and outrage, over a century after its initial publication. One of the greatest social novels ever written, "The Jungle" is a moving tribute to the millions of immigrants who did come here legally, who did find jobs, who were ready to work for their slice of the American Dream, and who survived (barely) despite being swindled, stolen from, lied to, oppressed, turned out, ignored, and abused, almost from the very first step they took into the United States. The recent punditry over immigration that has dominated the national debate should serve as a reminder of the timelessness exhibited in Upton Sinclair's seminal masterpiece.

We last saw Chairman of the Board Juan Cabrillo in "The Silent Sea" (3/10), as he was trekking across the frozen wastes of the antarctic. He had become separated from the crew of the "Oregon" and believed dead. The Chairman and his motley crew are all together again in the latest collaboration from Clive Cussler and Jack Du Brul. "The Jungle" begins with one of the better Prologues of a Cussler novel in some time. Set in Eastern China, 1281 A.D. We are eyewitnesses to the battle tactics of General Khenbish, who is in the employ of the great Khan. We learn the history of the three tents that precede each battle; and the first known uses of lasers and dynamite on the battlefield. A walled village is obliterated because its leader dared to provoke the wrath of Khan. It is the independent observer who accompanies Khenbish that is the real surprise at the end of the opening chapter. The story leaps from the past into the present, just four months ago. The tendrils that connect the two begin to reveal themselves; and the adventure begins. The summary of "The Jungle" alludes to their many types: real, imagined, physical, and political. Readers will enjoy finding their way through all of them. It's easy to see why the "Oregon" files have eclipsed the Dirk Pitt series. The writing here is far superior to what the two Cusslers are generating together. A hat tip to Upton Sinclair, whose book inspired the title.

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