



Upton Sinclair  
**The Jungle**

edition : **divibib**

heed the dirt and noise and squalor about them—it is out of this material that they have to build their lives, with it that they have to utter their souls. And this is their utterance; merry and boisterous, or mournful and wailing, or passionate and rebellious, this music is their music, music of home. It stretches out its arms to them, they have only to give themselves up. Chicago and its saloons and its slums fade away—there are green meadows and sunlit rivers, mighty forests and snow-clad hills. They behold home landscapes and childhood scenes returning; old loves and friendships begin to waken, old joys and griefs to laugh and weep. Some fall back and close their eyes, some beat upon the table. Now and then one leaps up with a cry and calls for this song or that;

and then the fire leaps brighter in Tamoszius' eyes, and he flings up his fiddle and shouts to his companions, and away they go in mad career. The company takes up the choruses, and men and women cry out like all possessed; some leap to their feet and stamp upon the floor, lifting their glasses and pledging each other. Before long it occurs to some one to demand an old wedding song, which celebrates the beauty of the bride and the joys of love. In the excitement of this masterpiece Tamoszius Kuszleika begins to edge in between the tables, making his way toward the head, where sits the bride. There is not a foot of space between the chairs of the guests, and Tamoszius is so short that he pokes them with his bow whenever he reaches over for the low notes; but still he

presses in, and insists relentlessly that his companions must follow. During their progress, needless to say, the sounds of the cello are pretty well extinguished; but at last the three are at the head, and Tamoszius takes his station at the right hand of the bride and begins to pour out his soul in melting strains.

Little Ona is too excited to eat. Once in a while she tastes a little something, when Cousin Marija pinches her elbow and reminds her; but, for the most part, she sits gazing with the same fearful eyes of wonder. Teta Elzbieta is all in a flutter, like a hummingbird; her sisters, too, keep running up behind her, whispering, breathless. But Ona seems scarcely to hear them—the music keeps calling, and the far-off look comes back, and she sits with her hands pressed together over

her heart. Then the tears begin to come into her eyes; and as she is ashamed to wipe them away, and ashamed to let them run down her cheeks, she turns and shakes her head a little, and then flushes red when she sees that Jurgis is watching her. When in the end Tamoszius Kuszleika has reached her side, and is waving his magic wand above her, Ona's cheeks are scarlet, and she looks as if she would have to get up and run away.

In this crisis, however, she is saved by Marija Berczynskas, whom the muses suddenly visit. Marija is fond of a song, a song of lovers' parting; she wishes to hear it, and, as the musicians do not know it, she has risen, and is proceeding to teach them. Marija is short, but powerful in build. She works in a canning factory, and all day long she handles

cans of beef that weigh fourteen pounds. She has a broad Slavic face, with prominent red cheeks. When she opens her mouth, it is tragical, but you cannot help thinking of a horse. She wears a blue flannel shirt-waist, which is now rolled up at the sleeves, disclosing her brawny arms; she has a carving fork in her hand, with which she pounds on the table to mark the time. As she roars her song, in a voice of which it is enough to say that it leaves no portion of the room vacant, the three musicians follow her, laboriously and note by note, but averaging one note behind; thus they toil through stanza after stanza of a lovesick swain's lamentation:—

*"Sudiev' kvietkeli, tu brangiausis;  
Sudiev' ir laime, man biednam,  
Matau—paskyre teip Aukszciausis,*