The Jungle Chapters 9-13 Assignment and Study Guide

Chapter 9
1. List three ways in which Jurgis changes due to his involvement with the union.
2. Find an example of Sinclair’s muckraking in this chapter.
3. Who is Mike Scully and what is the source of his power?
4. In this chapter, Sinclair points out many terrible examples of corruption in the meatpacking business. Which of these incidents do you think is the most horrible?

Chapter 10
Vocabulary
*contingencies* - chance or accidental occurrences
*furies* - from Greek and Roman mythology, three female spirits, who punish the doers of unavenged crimes
*neuralgia* - a severe pain along the course of a nerve

1. Critics believe that Sinclair, a socialist, strives to illustrate to the reader the flaws in a capitalist economy. One of the themes of this novel is that “a capitalist economic system promotes a harmful lifestyle.” Cite two incidents from this chapter to support this theme.
2. Why does Marija lose her job at the canning factory? What lesson does she learn from her mistake?
3. State a theme from this story based on the following excerpt and explain:
“But there was no place a girl could go in Packingtown, if she was particular about things of this sort; there was no place in it where a prostitute could not get along better than a decent girl. Here was 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 was exactly an inevitable, and as prevalent, as it was under the system of chattel slavery. Things that were quite unspeakable went on there in the packing houses all the time, and were taken from granted by everybody; only they did not show, as in the old slavery times, because there was no difference in color between master and slave.”
4. Jurgis is delighted with the birth of his son, Antanas. In what way does Sinclair use the story of the baby’s birth to further condemn the American economic system?

Chapter 11
Vocabulary
*superfluity* - excess, overabundance
*inexorable* - unchangeable
*privation* - the lack of ordinary necessities of life

1. Why do the packinghouses hire extra employees? How does this excess of employees impact Jurgis?
2. Which of the elements of naturalism are present in this novel? (Look up “naturalism” in your literature book). Cite an incident from the story to support each element you select.
3. Sinclair often describes Jurgis with animal imagery. For example, in this chapter Jurgis is likened to “some monarch of the forest that has vanquished his foes in fair fight, and then falls into some cowardly trop in the night-time.” Find an additional example of animal imagery in this chapter. Keep notes on this type of imagery as you read the remainder of the novel. (*the final exam may contain such a question—annotate!)
4. What is Jurgis’ only consolation in his dreary life?
Chapter 12

Vocabulary

*penury*- lack of money; extreme poverty

1. Cite evidence for the fact that Ona doesn’t confide in her husband. Why do you think she fails to do so?
2. One of the themes of this novel is that immortality is inevitable in a capitalistic society. Find an incident from this chapter that supports this theme.
3. Jonas disappears one day in early spring. Where do you think he is? (predict and explain).

Chapter 13

Vocabulary

*albumen*- a protein substance found in animal tissue (spelled albumin now)
*charnel*- a building or place where corpses or bones are deposited
*magnanimity*- being generous in overlooking injury or insult
*obdurate*- hardhearted; not easily moved to pity or sympathy
*perversity*- stubbornly deviating from what is considered to be right
*piecework*- work for which one is paid at a fixed rate
*ptarmigan*- a brownish bird
*voluble*- talking a lot

1. In this chapter, Sinclair continues his expose of the flaws in capitalism by relentlessly describing the problems working class people like Jurgis must face. Which of the incidents in this chapter do you think is the most horrible? Based on that incident, what do you think Sinclair is saying about capitalism?
2. Why does Jurgis decide the boys must return to school? What theme from *The Jungle* does this incident support? Explain.