

Doctorow's Ragtime: A Journey through Early 20th-Century America



E.L. Doctorow's Ragtime: "Ragtime" (Bloom's Guides (Hardcover)) by Sophia Money-Coutts

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 966 KB

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Print length : 105 pages



E.L. Doctorow's *Ragtime* is a sweeping historical novel that explores the complexities of American society during the early 20th century. The novel's diverse characters and intricate plotlines offer a vivid portrait of a rapidly changing nation.

The novel is set in New York City in the years leading up to World War I. The city is a melting pot of immigrants from all over the world, and the novel follows the lives of several different families as they navigate the challenges and opportunities of life in the New World.

One of the novel's main characters is Coalhouse Walker Jr., a talented musician and inventor. Coalhouse is a proud and independent man, but he faces discrimination and prejudice because he is black. Despite the challenges he faces, Coalhouse refuses to give up on his dreams. He

eventually becomes a successful businessman and inventor, but his life is tragically cut short by violence.

Another main character in *Ragtime* is Tateh, a Jewish immigrant from Eastern Europe. Tateh is a skilled craftsman and a loving father. He dreams of a better life for his family in America, but he also faces discrimination and prejudice. Despite the challenges he faces, Tateh never gives up hope. He eventually becomes a successful businessman and artist, and he helps to build a better life for his family.

Ragtime is a complex and multi-layered novel that explores a wide range of themes, including immigration, social change, racial tensions, and the American Dream. Doctorow's writing is lyrical and evocative, and he creates a vivid and unforgettable portrait of early 20th-century America.

Themes in *Ragtime*

Ragtime explores a wide range of themes, including:

- **Immigration:** The novel follows the lives of several different immigrant families as they navigate the challenges and opportunities of life in the New World. Doctorow explores the different ways that immigrants contribute to American society, and he also examines the discrimination and prejudice that they often face.
- **Social change:** The novel is set during a period of great social change in America. The country is rapidly industrializing, and the population is becoming increasingly diverse. Doctorow explores the impact of these changes on American society, and he examines the tensions between tradition and modernity.

- **Racial tensions:** The novel explores the racial tensions that existed in America during the early 20th century. Doctorow does not shy away from depicting the racism and violence that black people faced during this time period. He also examines the ways that racism affects the lives of white people.
- **The American Dream:** The novel explores the American Dream and the different ways that it is defined by different people. Doctorow examines the challenges and obstacles that people face in pursuit of their dreams, and he also explores the ways that the American Dream can be both a source of hope and inspiration.

Characters in Ragtime

Ragtime features a large and diverse cast of characters. Some of the most notable characters include:

- **Coalhouse Walker Jr.:** A talented musician and inventor. Coalhouse is a proud and independent man, but he faces discrimination and prejudice because he is black. Despite the challenges he faces, Coalhouse refuses to give up on his dreams.
- **Tateh:** A Jewish immigrant from Eastern Europe. Tateh is a skilled craftsman and a loving father. He dreams of a better life for his family in America, but he also faces discrimination and prejudice. Despite the challenges he faces, Tateh never gives up hope.
- **Mother:** A young woman who is trying to find her place in the world. Mother is a complex and conflicted character. She is intelligent and ambitious, but she is also vulnerable and insecure. She is searching for love and meaning in her life, but she is not sure where to find it.

- **Father:** A wealthy businessman who is trying to find meaning in his life. Father is a successful man, but he is also bored and unfulfilled. He is searching for something more in his life, but he is not sure what it is.
- **Younger Brother:** A young boy who is growing up in a changing world. Younger Brother is a curious and imaginative boy. He is eager to learn about the world around him, but he is also struggling to find his place in it.

Style and Structure of Ragtime

Ragtime is written in a lyrical and evocative style. Doctorow's prose is often compared to that of James Joyce and William Faulkner. The novel is structured as a series of interwoven narratives. The different narratives follow the lives of the different characters, and they gradually come together to form a complex and multi-layered portrait of early 20th-century America.

Legacy of Ragtime

Ragtime has been praised by critics for its rich characters, complex plot, and lyrical prose. The novel has been adapted into a film, a stage play, and an opera. It is considered one of the most important American novels of the 20th century.

Ragtime continues to be relevant today. The novel's themes of immigration, social change, racial tensions, and the American Dream are still relevant to the world we live in today. The novel is a powerful reminder of the challenges and opportunities that we face as a nation.



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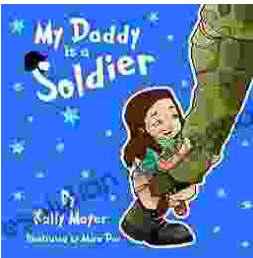
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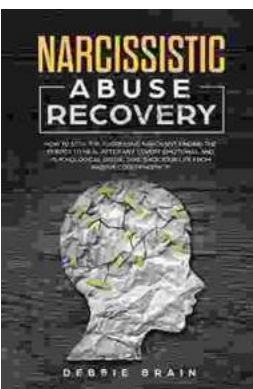
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