



Low Life: Lures and Snares of Old New York

By Luc Sante

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Low Life: Lures and Snares of Old New York By Luc Sante

Luc Sante's *Low Life* is a portrait of America's greatest city, the riotous and anarchic breeding ground of modernity. This is not the familiar saga of mansions, avenues, and robber barons, but the messy, turbulent, often murderous story of the city's slums; the teeming streets--scene of innumerable cons and crimes whose cramped and overcrowded housing is still a prominent feature of the cityscape.

Low Life voyages through Manhattan from four different directions. Part One examines the actual topography of Manhattan from 1840 to 1919; Part Two, the era's opportunities for vice and entertainment--theaters and saloons, opium and cocaine dens, gambling and prostitution; Part Three investigates the forces of law and order which did and didn't work to contain the illegalities; Part Four counterposes the city's tides of revolt and idealism against the city as it actually was.

Low Life provides an arresting and entertaining view of what New York was actually like in its salad days. But it's more than simply a book about New York. It's one of the most provocative books about urban life ever written--an evocation of the mythology of the quintessential modern metropolis, which has much to say not only about New York's past but about the present and future of all cities.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

There are very few classics in the field of pop culture--the academic stuff tends to be too dry and the fun stuff is too quickly dated. This book by Luc Sante is the exception--in fluid prose liberally sprinkled with astute metaphors, Sante tells the story of New York's Lower East Side, circa 1840-1920. The personal histories of criminals, prostitutes, losers, and swindlers bring to life the social and statistical history that the author has meticulously researched. Not limiting himself to the usual sources, Sante finds his history in old copies of *Police Gazette* as well as actual police, fire, and social service records. Above all, what really makes this book work is the writing, which brings to life a culture of the streets that continues to form a silent influence on our contemporary popular culture.

From Publishers Weekly

Sante exposes the underside of Manhattan's underclass circa 1840-1919, presenting New York then as already a realm of danger and pleasure.

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From Library Journal

The history of New York City (Manhattan Island) is rich and varied--a veritable gold mine for writers interested in exploring some of its darker passages. Sante, Lower East Side resident, became curious about the area's 19th-century tenement buildings and how their early inhabitants lived, traveled, and were entertained. The four sections of this fascinating and thought-provoking book cover the period 1840-1919, and are entitled "The Landscape" (streets and buildings); "Sporting Life" (theater, saloons, gambling, drugs, prostitution); "The Arm" (street gangs, police, and politics); and "Invisible City" (orphans, drifters, and "Bohemians"). New York's dark side is rooted in its past. Areas such as the Bowery owe their unsavory reputations to their colonial beginnings, and the often tawdry "pop culture" of today began with Manhattan's 19th-century underclass. This book is as lively and vivid as its subject matter. Highly recommended.

- *Howard E. Miller, Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Missouri Lib., St. Louis*

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Alvin Maltby:

Book is to be different per grade. Book for children until eventually adult are different content. To be sure that book is very important for us. The book *Low Life: Lures and Snares of Old New York* seemed to be making you to know about other expertise and of course you can take more information. It is quite advantages for you. The book *Low Life: Lures and Snares of Old New York* is not only giving you much more new information but also to become your friend when you sense bored. You can spend your personal spend time to read your book. Try to make relationship while using book *Low Life: Lures and Snares of Old New York*. You never really feel lose out for everything when you read some books.

Federico Crouch:

People live in this new time of lifestyle always attempt to and must have the time or they will get lot of stress from both way of life and work. So , once we ask do people have spare time, we will say absolutely sure. People is human not really a robot. Then we consult again, what kind of activity do you possess when the spare time coming to a person of course your answer will probably unlimited right. Then do you ever try this one, reading guides. It can be your alternative with spending your spare time, the book you have read is Low Life: Lures and Snares of Old New York.

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Mark Garcia:

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