

Beyond the Silk Mills

Leslie Rupley



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Emma, a Jewish immigrant to New Jersey in 1900, dreams of the wealth that will usher her family into high society. She defies the odds for a poor immigrant woman to succeed in her own business ventures, finagling her way to success and prosperity, but at a terrible price. Emma's husband Meyer disdains wealth and has a passion for workers' rights that stems from his days as a weaver in the Jewish ghetto of Lodz, Poland, where he was an activist in the socialist Labor Bund. When he unionizes his comrades for the historic Paterson Silk Strike of 1913, their lives change forever. Their daughter, Sophie, is forced to choose between her parents, and the choice leads her to the tenements of New York's Lower East Side, unlikely friendships, pregnancy, and newfound love. Beyond the Silk Mills is a compelling saga of family discord, ambition, romance, and regret. The Epstein family's struggle during the early twentieth century in New York City and Paterson, New Jersey, illuminates the roots of modern feminism and contemporary labor issues.



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