

Homeland, John Jakes, formidable novel about the final explosive events of the 19th century,

is the first in a series that will focus attention on a new "Jakes" family, the Crowns.

Many characters and setting is normal for Jakes, however, this story focuses primarily

attention on Paul Crown, a young German immigrant. Paul leaves behind a Germany of cholera,

poverty and political upheaval only to face problems of equal magnitude in America.

Undaunted by a difficult ocean crossing, Paul arrives at Ellis Island penniless but bravely

optimistic about his future. He makes his weary way to the opulent home of his uncle, Joe Crown,

a well established brewer in Chicago. Jakes used the Chicago setting as a backdrop for his "class

struggle" motive which is central to the plot of his story.

Paul's uncle, Joe, and cousin, Joe Jr., are foils in this class struggle that ultimately fractures

the Crown family and forces Paul to leave his Uncle's home to find work on his own. The

behavior and work ethic of Joe Jr. who is born to wealth and privilege in America, is juxtaposed

with that of immigrant Paul. The author pictures Joe Jr. as spoiled and with out focus, especially

when compared to Paul's mature approach to life and work.

Jakes utilizes the character of Paul to introduce the reader to the fledgling business of moving

pictures. Paul is fascinated with this new art form which involves him in many adventures

including war, a brush with death, and marrying his first love.

This first novel of the Crown series does a credible job in setting the stage for future

adventures of Paul Crown and his budding new family.

REFERENCE

Jakes, John. Homeland. New York: Bantam Books. 1994

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