



# The Spirit of Youth and the City Streets

*Jane Addams*

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## **The Spirit of Youth and the City Streets** Jane Addams

In "The Spirit of Youth and the City Streets," Chicago's Nobel Peace Prize winner Jane Addams examines the causes for the discontent of youth in the city and argues for the importance of providing direction and focus for the pent-up energies of young men and women. When this book was first published in 1909, Addams was the most famous woman in America. A celebrity and a spiritual leader, she was widely regarded as practical, realistic, and endowed with a special insight into the problems of urban America. The Spirit of Youth and the City Streets--her favorite of her own books--establishes Addams as an accomplished writer as well as a reformer. In this compact volume she examines the causes for the discontent of youth in the city, chiding educators for their "persistent blindness to youth's most obvious needs." Addams argues for the importance of providing direction and focus--for example, through public recreation, practical education, and experiences in the arts--for the pent-up energies of young men and women. She takes a realistic view of their basic social and sexual drives and their disaffection and alienation in an industrial world. At the same time, she rejects the hereditary explanations for delinquency that prevailed in her day.

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