



King Leopold's Ghost by Adam Hochschild I Summary & Study Guide

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Leopold II, King of the Belgians, privately controlled and owned the Congo Free State from 1885 to 1908. In 1908, the area was annexed by Belgium as a colony known as the Belgian Congo. Leopold used his personal control to strip the county of vast amounts of wealth, largely in the form of ivory and rubber. These labor-intensive industries were serviced by slave labor, and the local peoples were forced to work through various means, including torture, imprisonment, maiming and terror. Christian missionaries and a handful of human rights organizers internationally publicized these atrocities. Slowly, various nations, including Great Britain and the United States of America, began to object to Leopold's tyranny with the result that the country's administration was transferred to Belgium. Little changed inside the country, however, until the ivory and rubber were exhausted.

This study guide includes the following sections: Plot Summary, Chapter Summaries & Analysis, Characters, Objects/Places, Themes, Style, Quotes, and Topics for Discussion.

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