

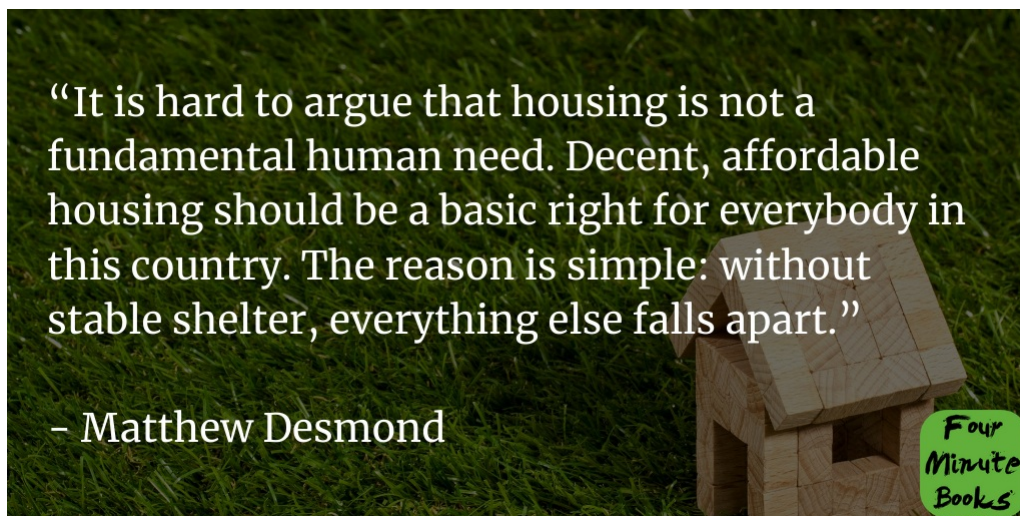
# Evicted Summary



**1-Sentence-Summary:** *Evicted* reveals the awful situation of those living in the poorest cities in the United States by identifying how this situation came to be, the horrendous effect it has on the individuals and families that deal with it, and what we might do to stop it.

**Read in:** 4 minutes

**Favorite quote from the author:**



The other day I was browsing through Reddit when I came across a crazy video that made me stop and watch it all the way through. It was a landlord walking through a house they owned which the previous tenants trashed. There were broken windows, cupboards, and appliances.

Why would someone do such a thing? In this case, the tenants got angry simply because the landlord told them they had to pay rent or get out.

It's certainly fair for people that don't pay for their space to be thrown out. But is it always justified? And how bad is this problem really? You might not worry about being evicted, but for many Americans, this fear is real and too common.

If you're looking to learn more about these issues, then look no further than Matthew Desmond's *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*. It's currently the number one bestseller on Amazon in the Poverty category and will reveal a whole lot about this topic that you never even imagined could happen.

Here are just 3 of the many eye-opening lessons I discovered in this book:

1. Eviction rates have been rising because of high rent, low salaries, and unemployment.
2. The stresses and challenges that families who get evicted have to go through are unbearable.
3. Housing is a civil right and we might be able to give it to everybody by implementing a housing voucher system.

Let's jump right into these lessons and learn more!

## **Lesson 1: Unemployment, low salaries, and high rent make it difficult for some tenants to avoid getting evicted.**

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Evictions are common in the US these days, but it wasn't always this way. Even in the Great Depression communities resisted enough that removal of tenants was rare. In one case, people protested when a landlord tried to eject three families in the Bronx!

So what happened to make them so common?

One of the biggest causes is that rent is going up while incomes are falling. Research by Harvard University confirms this.

According to the census, most of those with lower income have to pay 50% of their earnings on rent. For one in four of these, that number is 70% or more. But comfortable living standards necessitate that rent shouldn't make up more than 30% of your total income.

Many people that struggle to make ends meet have to steal electricity, sell food stamps, or merely hope that someone will give them a roof over their heads.

Another reason for this growing problem is unemployment rates. **Manufacturing jobs, for example, used to be abundant in the US.** Recently, however, they've been outsourced to other countries, leaving many without an income.

In Milwaukee, for instance, half of all working-age black men don't have work. What's worse is that the average person can barely live off of welfare benefits, so it's easy for emergencies to get them behind on rent and risking eviction.

## **Lesson 2: Families who experience eviction go through unimaginable stresses and challenges.**

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Right now it might be difficult for you to imagine the thought of being thrown out of your current living space. You don't realize that people that go through this have to try to find housing and keep their kids clothed and fed all at the same time.

These experiences put burdens like mental illness on families and can even lead to suicide. Half of the moms who get evicted experience symptoms of depression which can drain their happiness and energy for years.

And from 2005 to 2010 housing-related suicides doubled as the cost of rent spiked. **It's grown so bad that psychiatrists refer to eviction as a "significant precursor to suicide."**

Having an insecure housing situation also poses a significant threat to people's employment, making it even harder to make ends meet. You're 15% more likely to lose your job if you get evicted because of how the stress it brings affects your performance.

As if all of these troubles surrounding the event of losing your living space are bad enough, the aftershock is also horrible. Hunger and sickness are more common in the first year after a family becomes homeless.

Not having a phone, electricity, heat, or a mailbox also pose a threat to their wellbeing. They might, for instance, miss benefit letters that come in the mail.

### **Lesson 3: A housing voucher system might let us give the basic human right of shelter to everyone.**

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A house and a home are not the same thing. I can perform structural engineering calculations that someone can use to construct a house. Making a home requires a lot more care and attention. It also allows for safety, learning, and love.

As a culture, we can see the importance of a place to live in the way we talk about it. That's why shelter should be a basic human right that everybody has access to.

Homeless people struggle to connect with others and their children suffer. They can become psychologically unstable and contribute to crime. This harms the community by making it unsafe and decreasing the chances people will work together.

**In other words, it's in your best interest to care about and try to improve the state of the many people suffering from eviction.**

It's time to reconsider our values by revisiting the constitution. If the inalienable rights are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, none of those can be possible without having a home.

An option to solve this is a voucher system where families under a certain income level can get housing assistance. We can limit it so that it only helps them as much as it makes their housing costs 30% of their overall income.

Such a system already works in Great Britain and the Netherlands. And although the idea has its critics, all studies other than one identify that it doesn't negatively affect people's desire to work.

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## Evicted Review

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Wow, *Evicted* opened my eyes to a tragedy that I had no idea existed. I feel so privileged and didn't even realize how good I have it and how unfair it is. At the same time, I wish there was something I could do to help those that are suffering from these issues.

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## Who would I recommend the Evicted summary to?

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The 43-year-old politician that has the power to stop these atrocities, the 19-year-old college student that's considering going into urban planning, and anyone that wants to help uncover a tragic problem and see what they can do to help.