

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Jack London** was born in San Francisco in 1876. Life was hard when Jack was growing up and he started working when he was 10. He did a variety of jobs, some legal<sup>1</sup>, others not, and even spent some time living as a tramp<sup>2</sup>. In his free time he went to the library and spent many hours there reading.

In 1894 he went back to school, and published his first short story *Typhoon off the Coast of Japan*. Then in 1896 he went to the University of California, Berkeley, but had to leave because of money problems.

In July, 1897 he left for the Klondike Gold Rush<sup>3</sup> in Alaska. Like many others, he became very ill and came home and worked as a full-time writer. He wrote short stories and soon became successful.



In 1903 he wrote the story which made his name<sup>4</sup>: *The Call of the Wild*. His next novel was *The Sea-Wolf* (1904). With his earnings<sup>5</sup> he bought a large farm in California, where he died in 1916.

London was a prolific<sup>6</sup> writer. Between 1905 and 1916 he published 18 novels and six collections of short stories, as well as a play and various works of non-fiction<sup>7</sup>, including a biography<sup>8</sup>. Other works were published after his death.

His most famous novels were *White Fang*<sup>9</sup> (1906), *The Iron Heel* (1908) and *Martin Eden* (1909). However, he was criticized<sup>10</sup> for his writing technique in later life: he took pieces written by other people in news reports, etc. and changed them to his own style. Some people felt it was plagiarism<sup>11</sup>.

- 1 legal ['li:gəl] (a.) 合法的
- 2 tramp [træmp] (n.) 遊民
- 3 Klondike Gold Rush, 1890 年代加拿大育空地區的克朗代克淘金熱潮，道森市是當時的輻輳城市
- 4 make one's name 揚名
- 5 earnings ['ɜ:nɪŋz] (n.) 收入
- 6 prolific [prə'li:fɪk] (a.) 多產的
- 7 non-fiction [nɒn'fɪkʃən] (n.) 非小說類文學
- 8 biography [ˌbaɪ,ɒgrə'fi] (n.) 傳記
- 9 fang [fæŋ] (n.) 牙；犬齒
- 10 criticize ['krɪtə,saɪz] (v.) 批評
- 11 plagiarism ['plɛdʒə,rɪzəm] (n.) 抄襲

## ABOUT THE BOOK

**The Call of the Wild** (1903) is considered by many people to be Jack London's finest piece of writing, and it is widely recognized<sup>1</sup> as one of the classics of American literature.

The main character of the story is Buck, a large dog, who is stolen from his comfortable life in California and sold as a sled<sup>2</sup> dog in the frozen<sup>3</sup> Klondike. Buck's new life is harsh<sup>4</sup> and cruel and he is forced to learn to adapt<sup>5</sup> in order to survive<sup>6</sup>. He works in a team of dogs pulling sleds loaded with mail for the gold prospectors<sup>7</sup> who have rushed<sup>8</sup> to the cold north.



Buck is strong and determined<sup>9</sup> and soon becomes the leader. Throughout the book, as Buck passes through the hands of various owners, he grows closer and closer to his primitive<sup>10</sup> origins and the “call of the wild” becomes stronger and stronger.

The story explores<sup>11</sup> a number of themes which were dear to London. London took a copy of Charles Darwin's *The Origin of the Species*<sup>12</sup> with him when he went to the Klondike and the story strongly reflects Darwin's theory of the 'survival of the fittest'. This law of the survival of the fittest applies<sup>13</sup> to both the animal and human worlds: both men and animals need to use their strength and intelligence to survive.

London was a determinist<sup>14</sup> and believed that our lives are conditioned<sup>15</sup> by what we inherit<sup>16</sup> and the environment which surrounds us. So when Buck lives with Judge Miller he is a pet and lives an easy, peaceful life. His deeper inherited instincts<sup>17</sup> do not appear until he moves to an environment that allows them to develop. These themes<sup>18</sup> are revisited in London's later novel *White Fang*.

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| 1 recognize [ˈrɛkəg,naɪz] (v.) 認定；認可       | 10 primitive [ˈprɪmətɪv] (a.) 原始的            |
| 2 sled [slɛd] (n.) 雪橇                      | 11 explore [ɪkˈsplɔːr] (v.) 探索               |
| 3 frozen [ˈfrozən] (a.) 冰凍的；極冷的            | 12 species [ˈspiːʃiːz] (n.) 物種               |
| 4 harsh [hɑːʃ] (a.) 嚴酷的                    | 13 apply [əˈplai] (v.) 應用                    |
| 5 adapt [əˈdæpt] (v.) 適應                   | 14 determinist [dɪˈtɜːmɪnɪst] (n.)<br>因果決定論者 |
| 6 survive [səˈvaɪv] (v.) 活下來               | 15 condition [kənˈdɪʃən] (v.) 決定             |
| 7 prospector [ˈprɒspɛktə] (n.) 探礦者         | 16 inherit [ɪnˈherɪt] (v.) 繼承                |
| 8 rush [rʌʃ] (v.) 奔赴                       | 17 instinct [ˈɪnstɪŋkt] (n.) 本能              |
| 9 determined [dɪˈtɜːmɪnd] (a.) 果斷的；<br>堅決的 | 18 theme [θiːm] (n.) 主題；題材                   |

## BEFORE READING

- 1 What do you know about dogs? Circle the words in the box which can best be used to describe them.

Carnivorous      Undependable      Friendly  
Herbivorous      Dangerous      Useful  
Intelligent      Wild      Loyal  
Faithful      Domesticated      Strong

- 2 With a partner make sentences using the words you circled.
- 3 There are many different kinds (breeds) of dogs, and each breed has a different use. Match the breeds on the left with the uses on the right.
- |              |                                       |
|--------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 Alsatian   | a a lap-dog, to be petted             |
| 2 St Bernard | b a dog for pulling sleds in the snow |
| 3 Pointer    | c a guard dog or police dog           |
| 4 Pekinese   | d a sheepdog                          |
| 5 Husky      | e a gun dog, for hunting              |
| 6 Collie     | f a mountain rescue dog               |
- 4 Have you got a dog? If so, write a paragraph about it. If not, either (a) write about a dog you know well, or (b) write what you think about dogs.

**5** Answer these questions:

- a) What country does Alaska belong to?
- b) Where is Alaska located?
- c) What is the climate like?
- d) What wild animals live there?
- e) Who were the first inhabitants of Alaska?

**6** Why did Alaska suddenly become famous at the end of the 19th century? Tick (✓) below.

- The film industry started there.
- People discovered gold there.
- Men started digging for oil.
- Ice-cream was invented there.

**7** If you were going on a trip to Alaska what things would you want to take with you? Make a list under the two headings.

**CLOTHES**

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**EQUIPMENT**

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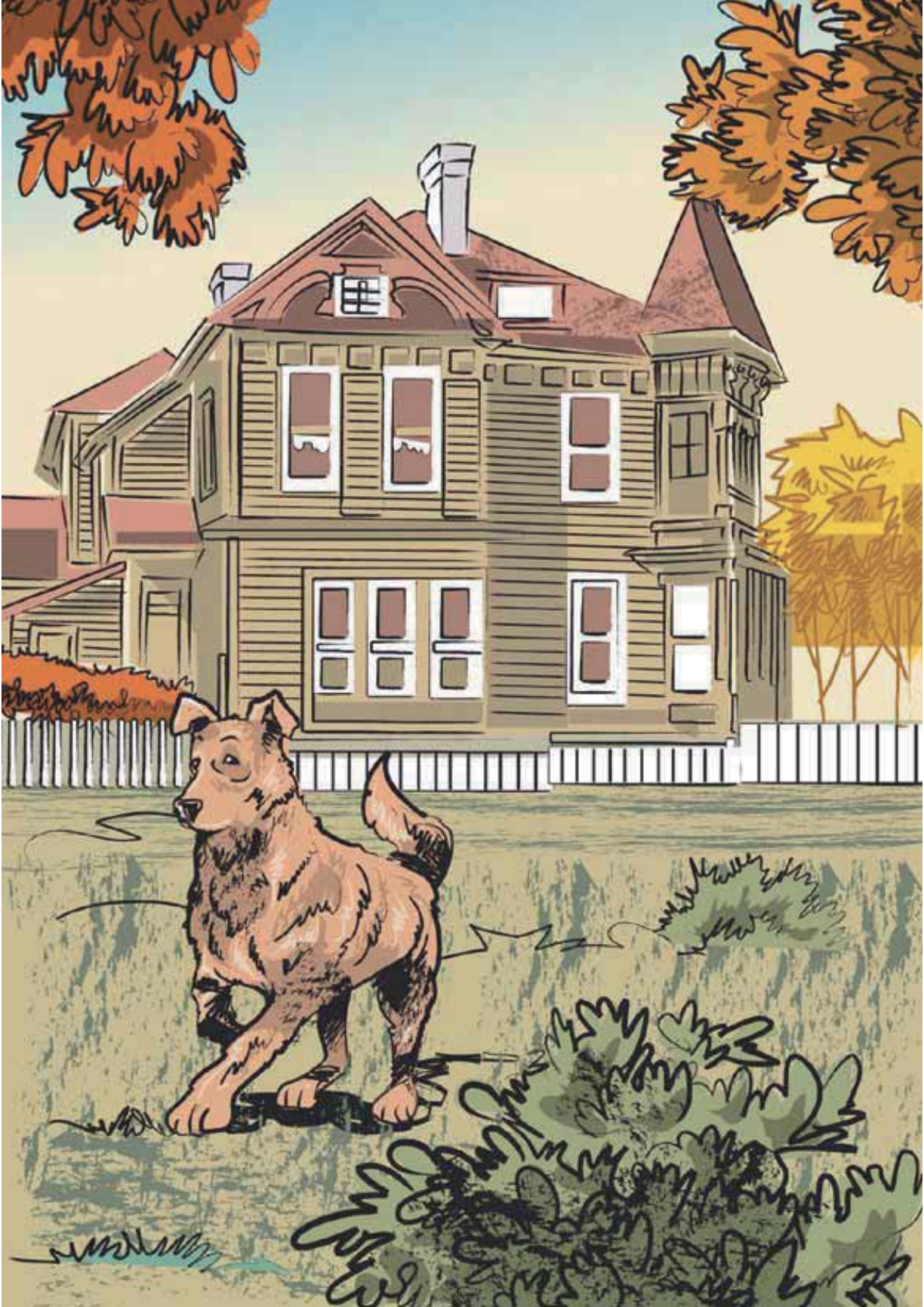
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**8** Would you like to live in or visit Alaska? Why/why not? Tell a partner.



## INTO THE PRIMITIVE



Buck did not read the newspapers. So he did not know that there was trouble ahead. Trouble for every dog with strong muscles and warm long hair, from Seattle to southern California. Some men had found a yellow metal in the Arctic<sup>1</sup> darkness, and thousands of<sup>2</sup> other men were rushing there. These men wanted dogs that were heavy, with strong muscles for working hard and furry<sup>3</sup> coats to protect them from the cold.

Buck lived at a big house in a sunny valley in California which was owned by Judge<sup>4</sup> Miller. And Buck ruled over it all. He was born there, and had lived there for the four years of his life. There were many other dogs, but they lived together in the kennels<sup>5</sup>, or inside the house. But Buck was neither a house dog nor a kennel dog. The whole of Judge Miller's land was his. Buck was king – king over all the creeping<sup>6</sup> crawling<sup>7</sup>, flying things of Judge Miller's lands, humans included.

His father, Elmo, a huge St Bernard, had been the judge's inseparable<sup>8</sup> companion<sup>9</sup>. And when he died, Buck took his father's place. He was not so large – he weighed only sixty kilograms – for his mother, Shep, had been a Scottish sheepdog. He had had a good life and he was proud of himself, for he had not become a house dog. Hunting and other outdoor activities had hardened<sup>10</sup> his muscles, and swimming had made him healthy.

1 Arctic [ˈɑːrktɪk] (a.) 北極的

2 thousands of 數千的

3 furry [ˈfʊəri] (a.) 覆有毛皮的

4 judge [dʒʌdʒ] (n.) 法官

5 kennel [ˈkɛnəl] (n.) 狗舍

6 creep [kri:p] (v.) 躡手躡足地走

7 crawl [krɔ:l] (v.) 爬行

8 inseparable [ɪnˈsepərəbəl] (a.) 形影不離的

9 companion [kəmˈpænjən] (n.) 同伴

10 harden [ˈhɑːdn] (v.) 使變硬





This was Buck in the autumn of 1897, when the discovery of gold in the Klondike brought men from everywhere to the frozen north. But Buck did not read the newspapers. And he did not know that Manuel, one of the gardener's helpers, was not a good man. Manuel gambled<sup>1</sup> and wasted the little money he had. And one time when the judge was away on business, and his sons were busy with an athletics<sup>2</sup> club, Manuel did something terrible. No one saw him and Buck go off on what Buck thought was a walk. No one saw them arrive at the railway station, where Manuel sold Buck to a man who was waiting for him.

Manuel put a rope<sup>3</sup> round Buck's neck, under his collar<sup>4</sup>. Buck accepted this because he knew Manuel, but when the rope was given to another man, he growled<sup>5</sup> dangerously. And when the rope was tightened round his neck, he started to choke<sup>6</sup> and jumped at the man in anger.

The man fought him off and forced Buck to lie on his back, and tightened the rope even more. Buck had never been treated so badly<sup>7</sup> in his life, and he had never been so angry. Then his strength drained<sup>8</sup> away and he soon became unconscious<sup>9</sup>. He was still unconscious when the train arrived and the two men threw him into the baggage car.

1 gamble [ˈɡæmbəl] (v.) 賭博

2 athletics [æθˈlɛtɪks] (n.) 體育運動

3 rope [rɒp] (n.) 繩子

4 collar [ˈkɒlə] (n.) 頸圈

5 growl [ɡraʊl] (v.) 嗥叫；咆哮

6 choke [tʃɒk] (v.) 窒息；哽噎

7 be treated so badly 被虐待

8 drain [dren] (v.) 耗盡

9 unconscious [ʌnˈkɒnʃəs] (a.)  
不省人事的

10 whistle [ˈhwɪsl] (n.)

哨子

11 kidnap [ˈkɪdnæp] (v.) 綁架

12 wrap [ræp] (v.) 覆蓋

13 waterfront [ˈwɔːtə,frʌnt] (n.) 濱水區

14 barman [ˈbɑːrmən] (n.) 酒吧店主

15 daze [deɪz] (v.) 使眩惑；使昏迷

16 brass [bræs] (a.) 黃銅製的



## TRUST

- Buck goes with Manuel because he trusts him, but Manuel betrays Buck's trust. Who do you trust? Has anyone ever betrayed your trust?



When he woke up he heard a whistle<sup>10</sup> blow, and he knew where he was because he had often traveled by train with the judge. He opened his eyes, and he was filled with the full anger of a kidnapped<sup>11</sup> king. The man jumped for the rope, but Buck was too quick for him. He closed his teeth on the man's hand, and held on until he was choked unconscious again.

Later the man, his hand wrapped<sup>12</sup> in a bloody handkerchief, and his right trouser leg torn from knee to ankle, went into a San Francisco bar on the Waterfront<sup>13</sup>. He talked to the barman<sup>14</sup>.

Buck was dazed<sup>15</sup> with horrible pains in his throat and on his tongue. He was thrown down and choked repeatedly, until they managed to cut the brass<sup>16</sup> collar off his neck. Then the rope was removed and he was pushed into a cage.

