



The Call of the Wild

Jack London



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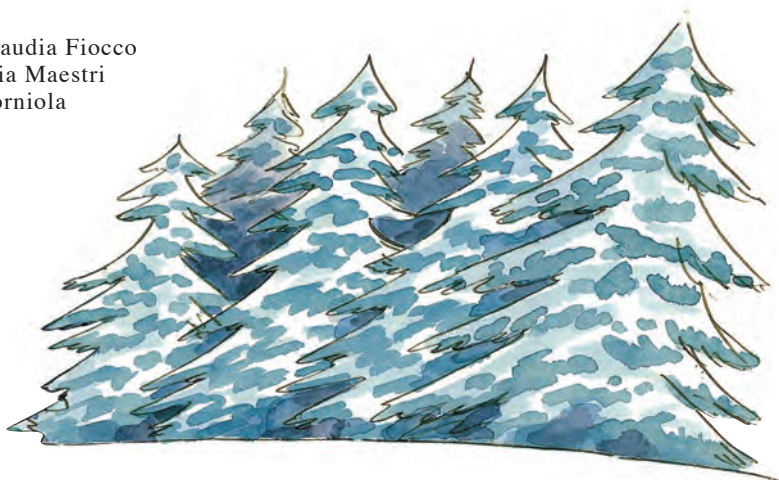


Illustrated by Alfredo Belli

Retold by Gina D. B. Clemen

Editors: Victoria Bradshaw, Claudia Fiocco
Design and Art Direction: Nadia Maestri
Computer graphics: Simona Corniola
Illustrations: Alfredo Belli

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First edition: May 2002

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and give you any other information concerning our material.
info@blackcat-cideb.com
blackcat-cideb.com

ISBN 978-88-7754-859-7 Book + CD

Printed in Italy by Litoprint, Genoa





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The text is recorded in full.



These symbols indicate the beginning and end of the extracts linked to the listening activities.



Courtesy of California State Parks

Jack London.

A NOTE ON THE AUTHOR

Jack London was born in San Francisco, California, in 1876. He grew up in the poor part of Oakland, a city near San Francisco. As a child books were his only companions. He always went to the Oakland Public Library and read as many books as possible! The librarian Ina Coolbirth became his great friend and teacher. Some of his favorite authors were Melville, Kipling and Balzac.

Jack London finished school at the age of fourteen. His family was poor and he could not go to high school. Jack went to work at Hickmott's Factory.¹ He worked long hours and was paid very little money. He dreamed of adventure, travel and excitement. He wanted

1. **Factory** : a building where products are made in big quantities.

to see the world. Factory life was not for him. He began drinking as a teenager and this became a serious problem later on.

At the age of seventeen he decided to see the world. He became a sailor on a schooner¹ and sailed to the North Pacific Ocean to hunt² seals.³ Ten years later he wrote about his terrible experiences at sea in the book *The Sea Wolf*. After almost eight months at sea he returned home but could not find work. He decided to visit other parts of his country.

He began traveling across the United States and reached New York. Here he went to prison for thirty days for vagrancy.⁴

In 1894 he returned to his home in Oakland. He had no money and no work. At the age of nineteen Jack London decided to return to high school. He knew that a good education was the key to a better life. He wanted to learn as much as possible about everything! He went to high school in the day and worked at night and on weekends.

Jack wanted to improve himself and read a great number of books on all subjects. He made new friends and began speaking better English, listening to beautiful music and appreciating art. He also began writing his first stories and poems.

In 1896 gold⁵ was discovered in the Klondike Region in northwest Canada. Jack was excited about this news. He wanted new adventures, and he hoped to find gold and become rich.

He and some friends went to the Klondike. In Canada they built a small boat and traveled up the Yukon River. The Arctic weather and

1. **schooner** :



2. **hunt** : kill.

3. **seals** :



4. **vagrancy** : living and traveling without a home or a job.

5. **gold** :



the difficult living conditions made him very ill. He left the Klondike with no gold but with many ideas for his best stories.

The Call of the Wild (1903) tells us about the adventures of a great dog during the Klondike gold rush.¹ It was immediately successful and became a classic. With this book Jack London became a major American writer with a very original style.

In 1906 he wrote another exciting dog story called *White Fang*.

In 1913 Jack London was a rich and famous writer. People all over the world read his books. Some of his other books are *Martin Eden*, *The Sea Wolf*, *Tales of the Fish Patrol*, and *The Son of the Wolf*.

Jack married twice and had two children. Unfortunately, he had big financial problems because he spent all of his money on his friends, on drinking and on his beautiful new home. During the last years of his life he had serious health problems. He died on November 22, 1916, after an intense and adventurous life.

PET

1 Decide if each statement is correct or incorrect. If it is correct, tick (✓) A; if it is not correct (✓), tick (✓) B.

	A	B
a. Jack London was the son of a librarian.	☐	☐
b. As a child he did not like reading.	☐	☐
c. When he was a teenager he became a sailor.	☐	☐
d. Education was very important to Jack London.	☐	☐
e. He went to the Klondike and found gold.	☐	☐
f. Jack London was very rich when he died.	☐	☐

1. **gold rush** : a lot of people trying to find gold.



The story takes place in the Yukon Territory in northwest Canada. Gold was discovered in the Klondike region near the Yukon River in 1896.

GLOSSARY



howl



club



crate



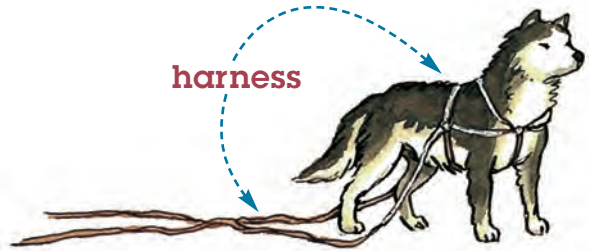
trail



rope



whip



harness



growl



fang



bark



sled

BEFORE YOU READ

1 ANIMALS

A A wild animal is an animal that does not have a home. It lives in its natural environment. Do you know the names of the wild animals in the box below?

WILD ANIMALS

a.

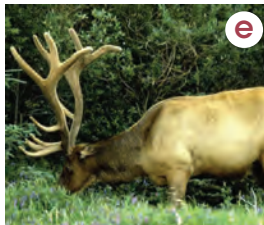
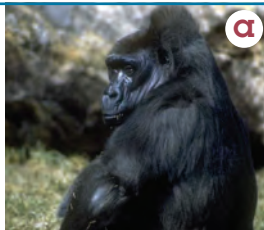
b.

c.

d.

e.

f.



B Do you know the names of any other wild animals?
Discuss with your classmates and make a list.

2 LOOKING AT PICTURES

A Look at the picture on page 11.

- a. Describe the dog.
- b. Where is he?
- c. Is he happy or sad?

B Now look at the picture on page 14.

- a. Where is the dog?
- b. What are the men doing?
- c. What do two of the men have in their hands?
- d. Is the dog happy or sad?

CHAPTER ONE



The Southland

Buck did not read the newspapers. He did not know that there was trouble for every big, strong dog in California. Men found a yellow metal called gold in the Klondike. They needed big, strong dogs with furry coats ¹ to work in the north.

Buck lived in a big house in the sunny Santa Clara Valley. The house was called Judge ² Miller's Place. Around the house there were big gardens, fruit trees and horses.

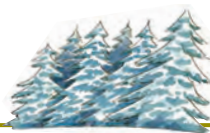
Buck was born here and now he was four years old. There were other dogs too, but they were not important. Buck was the king! Judge Miller's Place was his. He swam and hunted ³ with the

1. **furry coats** : (here) long hair.

2. **Judge** : an important public official; he decides how to punish criminals.

3. **hunted** : killed animals for sport or food.

The Call of the Wild



Judge's sons. He walked with the Judge's daughters. He carried the Judge's grandsons on his back and played with them. In the winter Buck sat at the Judge's feet in front of the fire.

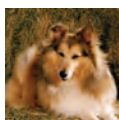
Buck's father was a big St Bernard and his mother was a Scottish sheepdog. ¹ Buck weighed one hundred and forty pounds ² and he was a happy and handsome dog.

In the fall ³ of 1897 men from all over the world went to the Klondike. They wanted to find gold. But Buck did not read the newspapers.

Manuel was the gardener's helper, and he needed money for his big family. One evening the Judge was out of the house and Manuel and Buck went for a walk. No one saw them leave and only one man saw them at the railway station. The man talked to Manuel and gave him some money. Then Manuel tied a rope around Buck's neck. Buck let Manuel put the rope around his neck because he was his friend. But when the other man pulled the rope Buck could not breathe. He was angry and he jumped at the man. The man caught him and suddenly Buck was on his back. His tongue ⁴ was out of his mouth and he was unable to move. In the past no one ever did this to him.

The two men put him on the train in the baggage car. ⁵ When Buck woke up the train was moving. He was angry. The man watched him but Buck was too quick. He bit ⁶ the man's hand.

1. **Scottish sheepdog** :



2. **pounds** : one pound = 0.454 kilograms.
3. **fall** : autumn.

4. **tongue** :



5. **baggage car** : the part of a train where bags are put.
6. **bit** : (bite-bit-bitten) cut with the teeth.

The Southland

That evening the man took Buck to the backroom of a saloon ¹ in San Francisco. The saloon-keeper ² looked at his hand.

"I only got fifty dollars for it," the man said.

"How much did the other man get?" the saloon-keeper asked.

"A hundred dollars."

"That makes a hundred and fifty. That's a good price for a dog like him. Come on, help me put him into the crate."

Buck tried to attack the two men, but they pulled the rope again and again. Buck suffered terribly. His neck, throat ³ and tongue hurt a lot. The men took off the rope and threw him into a crate.

Buck spent the night in the backroom of the saloon. He was very angry. He could not understand why he was there. What did these strange men want? Why was he a prisoner in a crate? Where was the Judge?

The next morning four men took the crate to the railway station. They put it on a train that was going to the north. For two days and two nights Buck did not eat or drink. He was confused and angry. Men on the train laughed at him. He threw himself against the crate. He growled and barked at the men.

Buck was very thirsty but he had no water. His tongue and throat were very dry. His eyes were red and his anger grew.

He was glad for one thing: the rope was off his neck. He did not want another rope around his neck.

1. **the backroom of a saloon** : the room at the back of an American pub.

2. **saloon-keeper** : the man working in the saloon.

3. **throat** :



inside the neck.



UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

PET

1

Read the sentences below and for each question choose the correct answer A, B, C or D.

1. What did men find in the Klondike?
A ☐ Strong dogs.
B ☐ Gold.
C ☐ Horses.
D ☐ Newspapers.
2. Where did Buck sit with Judge Miller?
A ☐ Under the fruit trees.
B ☐ Near the stables.
C ☐ Outside the house.
D ☐ In front of the fire.
3. What did Buck do with the Judge's sons?
A ☐ He walked with them.
B ☐ He carried them on his back.
C ☐ He played with them.
D ☐ He swam and hunted with them.
4. What did Manuel do?
A ☐ He played with Buck in the garden.
B ☐ He put Buck inside a crate.
C ☐ He sold Buck to another man.
D ☐ He laughed at Buck.
5. Why did Buck bite the man's hand?
A ☐ He was hungry.
B ☐ He was playing.
C ☐ He was angry.
D ☐ He was thirsty.
6. How did Buck feel on the train?
A ☐ Hungry but happy.
B ☐ Thirsty, confused and angry.
C ☐ Cold and sleepy.
D ☐ Hot and excited.

2

GRAMMAR CHECK

A Circle the correct Past Simple form for each irregular verb.

e.g.	<i>to take</i>	<i>taked</i>	<i>taken</i>	<i>took</i>
a.	to find	finded	found	founded
b.	to swim	swam	swimmed	swem
c.	to get	getted	gotted	got
d.	to catch	caught	catched	cought
e.	to wake up	woked up	woke up	waked up
f.	to bite	bote	bited	bit
g.	to hurt	hurted	hurt	hurten
h.	to throw	throwed	threw	threwn
i.	to sit	sat	sited	sitted
j.	to spend	spended	spent	spented

B Now choose five of the verbs and write a sentence with each verb about what you did last week.

e.g. *I took the bus to school.*

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.

3

WRITING**WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER ABOUT BUCK?**

Go back to the text and find out the information you need to fill in Buck's ID card!

Name: _____

Age: _____

Weight: _____

Place of birth: _____

Address: _____

Mother: _____

Father: _____

Favorite sports: _____



Signature

4

DISCUSSION

Now ask your partner if he/she has any pets. Use the ID card to ask questions.

e.g. *What's his/her name?*



5

DID YOU KNOW?

Cats meow, horses neigh, birds chirp and cows moo. Now listen to these three sounds that dogs make and write the number next to the correct sound.

a. howl

b. bark

c. growl

BEFORE YOU READ

PET



1

LISTENING

Listen to the first part of Chapter Two and for each question choose the correct answer A, B or C.

1. Four men carried the crate to
 - A ☐ a saloon.
 - B ☐ a garden.
 - C ☐ a train.

2. The fat man wore a
 - A ☐ red hat.
 - B ☐ red jacket.
 - C ☐ red sweater.

3. Who opened the crate?
 - A ☐ The man with the hatchet.
 - B ☐ Buck.
 - C ☐ The four men.

4. The fat man hit Buck with
 - A ☐ a whip.
 - B ☐ a crate.
 - C ☐ a club.

5. The fat man brought Buck
 - A ☐ water and bread.
 - B ☐ meat and milk.
 - C ☐ water and meat.