

Penguin



Readers



The Call of the Wild

Jack London



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CHAPTER ONE

The man with the club

Buck was a big, strong dog with **thick**, warm fur. He was four years old, and he lived with a rich family in a big house in California.

Buck was part of the family, and everybody loved him. He played with the children and carried them on his back. In summer, he swam with them in the river. On cold winter nights, he lay in front of the fire and slept. His **life** was happy and easy.



But, one day, everything changed for Buck. In 1897, people heard about **gold** in the Klondike, in north-west Canada. Men came from many countries. They hoped to find gold and **become** rich. These men needed dogs to work for them. It was very cold in the Klondike, and the men wanted big, strong dogs with thick fur.

A man called Manuel worked for Buck's family. Manuel needed money. Every day he watched the children playing with Buck. "People will pay a lot of money for Buck," he thought.



One night, Buck's family were away from home. Manuel took Buck to a strange part of town and met a man with a **rope**. The man **tied** the rope **around** Buck and gave Manuel some money. Then, the man pushed Buck into a big, strong box.



The next morning, four men carried the box on to a train. Buck stayed on the train for two days and two nights. Nobody brought him food or water. He was hungry, thirsty, and very angry!

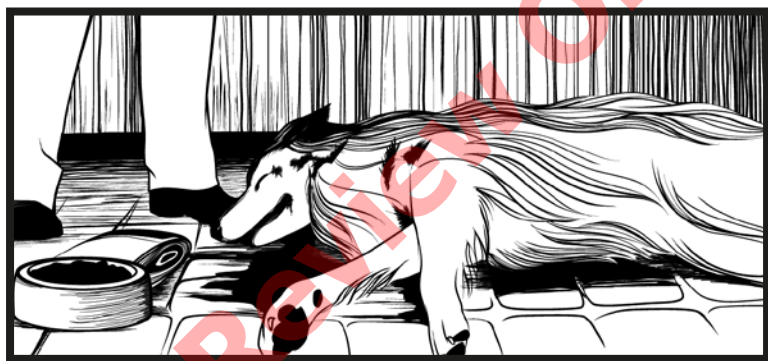
The train stopped at the town of Seattle, and a man in a red shirt came to meet it. This man carried an **ax** and a **club**. Some men carried the box with Buck from the train. They put it down on the ground and sat on a high wall to watch.

The man in the red shirt came up to the box and started to hit it with the ax. Buck was now very, very angry. The box opened, and Buck ran out. He really wanted to **attack** the man. The man hit Buck with the club, hard. Buck **fell** to the ground. He got up, but the man hit him again. Blood ran from Buck's nose, mouth, and ears.



The man hit Buck again and again. After that, Buck could not **fight** any more. He lay on the ground and watched the man.

“Good dog, Buck,” said the man. “You know your place now.” He brought meat and water, and Buck ate and drank.



That day, Buck learned an important lesson. He could not fight a man with a club.

In the next days, many other dogs came. Some came in boxes, and others had ropes around them. All of them were very angry. Then, the man in the red shirt hit them with his club, and they became quiet.

CHAPTER TWO

Into the north

Sometimes, men came and talked to the man in the red shirt. They paid him money and took away some dogs. One day, a man called Perrault came to see the man in the red shirt. Perrault had an important job; he carried letters for the Canadian **Government**. He knew a lot about dogs, and when he saw Buck he was very happy.

“That’s a very good dog!” Perrault said. “How much do you want for him?”

“Three hundred dollars,” said the man in the red shirt.

