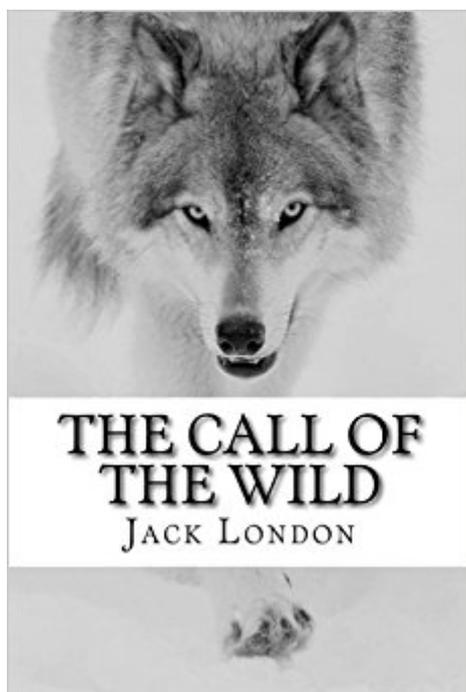


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The Call Of The Wild (Global Classics)



Synopsis

The Call of the Wild is a novel by Jack London published in 1903. The story is set in the Yukon during the 1890s Klondike Gold Rush—a period when strong sled dogs were in high demand. The novel's central character is a dog named Buck, a domesticated dog living at a ranch in the Santa Clara valley of California as the story opens. Stolen from his home and sold into the brutal existence of an Alaskan sled dog, he reverts to atavistic traits. Buck is forced to adjust to, and survive, cruel treatments and fight to dominate other dogs in a harsh climate. Eventually he sheds the veneer of civilization, relying on primordial instincts and lessons he learns, to emerge as a leader in the wild. London lived for most of a year in the Yukon collecting material for the book. The story was serialized in the Saturday Evening Post in the summer of 1903; a month later it was released in book form. The novel's great popularity and success made a reputation for London. Much of its appeal derives from the simplicity with which London presents the themes in an almost mythical form. As early as 1908 the story was adapted to film and it has since seen several more cinematic adaptations.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Jack London's letters about the publication of "The Call of the Wild" reveal an all-too-common story that would make any author and most sympathetic readers cringe. In 1903, Jack London was hard up for cash and had just completed the manuscript. He sold the serial rights to the Saturday Evening Post for \$700 and, since the editors were not all that keen on his first choice, suggested the title "The Sleeping Wolf." (Interestingly enough, the magazine version did not even include what has

probably become the book's most famous scene: when John Thornton blusteringly makes a wager that Buck can pull a sled weighing half a ton.) Soon after, Macmillan agreed to take a chance on the unknown writer and offered to publish the book for \$2,000, with no royalties. By this time, London had warmed to his initial title, "The Call of the Wild," but left the final choice up to his editor. Both the magazine and the book publisher reluctantly used London's now-famous title, and seven years later London wrote to his editor, reminding him of his tin ear: "I'll be damned if that very muchly-rejected title didn't become a phrase in the English language. This is only one of many experiences concerning titles, wherein editors, booksellers, and publishers absolutely missed." But it still boggles the mind that London earned a grand total of \$2,700 for a book that quickly sold more than two million copies. And what a book! I must have read it three or four times as a youngster, but even now, over twenty years since I last picked it up, it still manages to electrify me. "The Call of the Wild" is often cited as the best work of fiction ever written about dogs, but the book is equally about men--and about London himself.

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