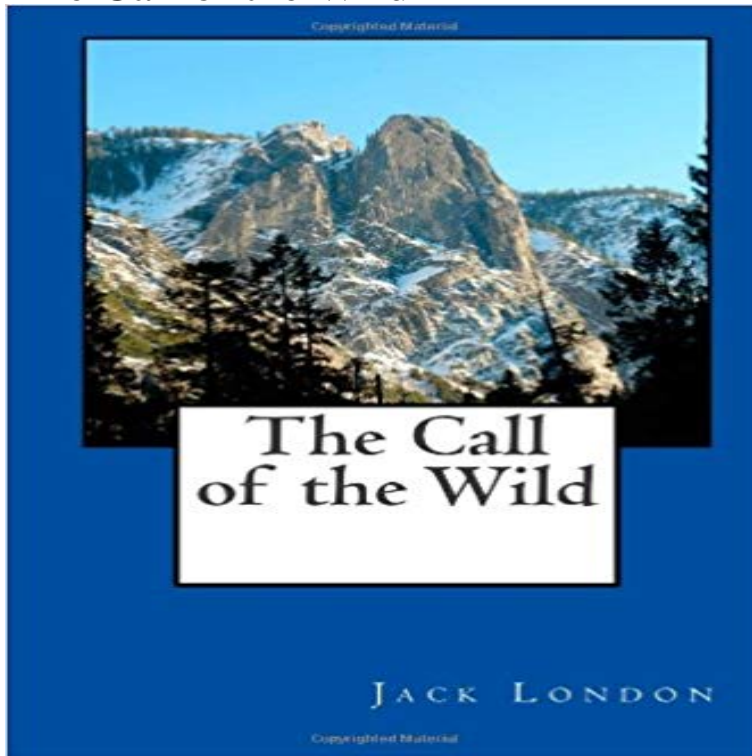


The Call of the Wild



From Wikipedia: The Call of the Wild is a novel by American author Jack London published in 1903. The story takes place in the extreme conditions of the Yukon during the 19th-century Klondike Gold Rush, where strong sled dogs were in high demand. After Buck, a domesticated dog, is snatched from a pastoral ranch in California, he is sold into a brutal life as a sled dog. The novella details Bucks struggle to adjust and survive the cruel treatment he receives from humans, other dogs, and nature. He eventually sheds the veneer of civilization altogether and instead relies on primordial instincts and the lessons he has learned to become a respected and feared leader in the wild. London lived for most of a year in the Yukon and gained from that experience material for the book. The story was serialized in the Saturday Evening Post in the summer of 1903 and released a month later in book form. The great popularity and success of the story made a reputation for London, with much of the story's appeal based on the simplicity with which he presented the themes in an almost mythical manner. As early as 1908 the story was adapted to film and has seen several more cinematic adaptations since that time. Buck did not read the newspapers, or he would have known that trouble was brewing, not alone for himself, but for every tide-water dog, strong of muscle and with warm, long hair, from Puget Sound to San Diego. Because men, groping in the Arctic darkness, had found a yellow metal, and because steamship and transportation companies were booming the find, thousands of men were rushing into the Northland. These men wanted dogs, and the dogs they wanted were heavy dogs, with strong muscles by which to toil, and furry coats to protect them from the frost. Buck lived at a big house in the sun-kissed Santa Clara Valley. Judge Millers place, it was called. It stood back from the road,

half hidden among the trees, through which glimpses could be caught of the wide cool veranda that ran around its four sides. The house was approached by gravelled driveways which wound about through wide-spreading lawns and under the interlacing boughs of tall poplars. At the rear things were on even a more spacious scale than at the front. There were great stables, where a dozen grooms and boys held forth, rows of vine-clad servants cottages, an endless and orderly array of outhouses, long grape arbors, green pastures, orchards, and berry patches. Then there was the pumping plant for the artesian well, and the big cement tank where Judge Millers boys took their morning plunge and kept cool in the hot afternoon. And over this great demesne Buck ruled. Here he was born, and here he had lived the four years of his life. It was true, there were other dogs, There could not but be other dogs on so vast a place, but they did not count. They came and went, resided in the populous kennels, or lived obscurely in the recesses of the house after the fashion of Toots, the Japanese pug, or Ysabel, the Mexican hairless, strange creatures that rarely put nose out of doors or set foot to ground. On the other hand, there were the fox terriers, a score of them at least, who yelped fearful promises at Toots and Ysabel looking out of the windows at them and protected by a legion of housemaids armed with brooms and mops. But Buck was neither house-dog nor kennel-dog. The whole realm was his. He plunged into the swimming tank or went hunting with the Judges sons; he escorted Mollie and Alice, the Judges daughters, on long twilight or early morning rambles; on wintry nights he lay at the Judges feet before the roaring library fire; he carried the Judges grandsons on his back, or rolled them in the grass, and guarded their footsteps through wild adventures down to the fountain in the stable yard, and even beyond, where the paddocks were, and the berry patches.

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